Reflecting on the busy year in the Center for Writing (where we set a new record of 10,317 one-to-one writing consultations!), we’re eager to share the ways your support has helped the Center continue to grow and innovate, while staying true to our mission of supporting students and educators who practice, teach with, and research writing at the University of Minnesota, throughout the state, and around the world. We hope you’ll take a look at our newly redesigned website, where you can see photos and brief biographies of the current staff, as well as catch up with our community of alums and friends. We hope you’ll update us on what you’ve been doing by answering our 11 Questions for Alumni survey and read the many interesting and inspiring responses from others.

Your Gifts at Work: Student Writing Consultants Present at MWCA

With demand for the Center’s services at an all-time high, staff professional development is more important than ever. With your gifts, we were able to bring four student writing consultants to the October 2013 Midwest Writing Centers Association (MWCA) conference in Skokie, Illinois, to present research or to co-facilitate workshops.

- Audrey Manicor presented “Procrastination Station: Examining the Engine Behind Same-Day Consultations”
- Kristen Nichols-Besel co-facilitated “Why Do You Need to Know That?: An Open Conversation About Client Data Collection and Identity Construction”
- Jasmine Kar Tang co-facilitated “‘Here Comes Trouble!’: Students’ Right to Their Own Language and Our Willingness to Be Disturbed”

MWCA is a welcoming environment for students attending their first professional conference. After returning home, Audrey reflected, “The environment at the conference was inspiring and inclusive, and I enjoyed presenting my own research as a way to both contribute to the dialogue and receive feedback on my project.” The diversity of writing centers represented at this conference opens to participants the broader world of writing center work and deepens their commitment. Jasmine noted, “As someone invested in writing center studies, I appreciated the opportunity to better understand the local and institutional contexts that other writing center professionals work within. I left Skokie feeling motivated and inspired to continue researching and practicing writing consultancy.”

As with past conferences, the experience of traveling and bunking together was an intellectual retreat—participants polishing and practicing their presentations in the hotel room together, attending and discussing sessions led by other writing center practitioners, and reflecting together on the long drive home about how best to bring back these new ideas and energies to our own Center. Reflecting on her experience at MWCA, Kristen stated, “Collegiality and focus on professional development are things I value most about working at the U of M writing center and participating in writing center conferences.”

Student conference registration and travel were made possible thanks to gifts from our alums and friends, so we hope you will consider us in your year-end giving this year (writing.umn.edu/home/giving.html). Even small gifts make a strong statement about the value of the Center for Writing and its staff and clients.
Our C4W alumni family grew even bigger this year with the retirement of longtime Multilingual Learner Specialist Kit Hansen and the graduations and departures of several valued staff members: Tim August, Hillary Campion, Phil Cooper, Tasha Ezell, Tim Gustafson, Josh Katzenmeyer, Bora Lee, Audrey Manicor, Carra Martinez, Justin Miller, Rachel Newman, Tammy Owens, Tom Sarmiento, Scott Seres, Jasmine Kar Tang, Jules Thompson, and Patricia Zanski. We wish them all the best, whether heading off to a new job, a fellowship opportunity, graduate school, or just more time with family and grandchildren!

Thank you, both recent and longtime alums and friends, for your continued support of the Center for Writing, which helps us strengthen our commitment to writers and the use of writing as a tool for critical thinking, learning, and communicating in all fields. Please visit us online or in person to see our work with students via our alumni pages and the new Facebook group.