

September 25, 2024

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Jeffrey P. Geoghegan, CPA 
Executive Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

RE: Annual Report of the Endowed Chair Program Entitled “Aetna Chair of Writing”

RECOMMENDATION:

In accordance with statute, the Board of Trustees directs the submittal of the annual report prepared by the University Administration to the Office of Higher Education concerning the endowed chair expenditures for the Endowed Chair Program entitled “Aetna Chair of Writing”.

RESOLUTION:

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees acknowledges receipt of the annual report concerning the endowed chair expenditures for the Endowed Chair Program entitled “Aetna Chair of Writing”; and directs the submittal of these annual reports to the Office of Higher Education.”

BACKGROUND:

The Aetna Chair of Writing is under the direction of Professor Brenda Jo Brueggemann and is funded jointly by the UConn Foundation and the Office of Higher Education Investment Fund. It was established during the 1988-89 fiscal year as authorized by C.G.S. Section 10a-20a. Subsection (f) of the statute states that “the Board of Trustees shall submit annual reports to the Office of Higher Education concerning the endowed chair expenditures.”

The 2024 annual report consists of a financial report and a narrative report by Professor Brueggemann.

Attachments



DATE: August 30, 2024

TO: Jeffrey Geoghegan
Executive Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

FROM: Margaret McCarthy
Associate Vice President of Financial Operations and Controller

RE: Aetna Chair of Writing

Enclosed are the financial reports for the Aetna Chair of Writing program, under the direction of Professor Brueggemann, for fiscal years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively. The report provides the separate financial operations of the program managed by the University and the UConn Foundation, along with the combined total. The expenditures for fiscal years 2024 and 2023 totaled \$36,866.73 and \$41,116.65, respectively.

Professor Brueggemann has provided a narrative of the writing program's operation for fiscal year 2024, which is also enclosed. Section 10a-20a (f) of the Connecticut General Statutes requires an annual report approved by the University's Board of Trustees to be submitted to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) for the Endowed Chair of Writing.

Additional notes are provided on the financial report disclosing the year-end balances of the Foundation and OHE endowment funds.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you should have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

University of Connecticut and
University of Connecticut Foundation
Endowed Chair in Writing
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

	University	Foundation	Combined Total
Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2023	\$ 49,488.53	\$ 47,726.40	\$ 97,214.93
<u>Revenue</u>			
Transferred From Office of Higher Education	26,134.53	-	26,134.53
Pooled Endowment Income Allocation	-	36,948.13	36,948.13
Transferred From UConn Foundation	34,420.73	(34,420.73)	-
TOTAL REVENUE	60,555.26	2,527.40	63,082.66
<u>Expenditures</u>			
Salary & Wages	16,498.40	-	16,498.40
Printing and Binding	2,963.09	-	2,963.09
Travel	4,135.33	-	4,135.33
Conferences and Meetings	8,628.79	-	8,628.79
TOTAL Contractual Services	15,727.21	-	15,727.21
Office Supplies	641.12	-	641.12
TOTAL Commodities	641.12	-	641.12
Research incentives	500.00	-	500.00
Student Aid Fees	3,500.00	-	3,500.00
TOTAL Sundry Charges	4,000.00	-	4,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	36,866.73	-	36,866.73
Ending Balance as of June 30, 2024	\$ 73,177.06	\$ 50,253.80	\$ 123,430.86

This endowed chair is not supported by any University funds, but the University maintains accounts which receive revenue from the Foundation and the Office of Higher Education (OHE). These University accounts disburse the funds in support of the program including all funds transferred from the Foundation and the OHE. There were transfers from the OHE totaling \$26,134.53 and \$9,394.56 in fiscal year 2024 and 2023, respectively. The first column above summarizes the University's revenue and expenditure activity for this chair. The Foundation also disburses certain expenses directly to third parties on behalf of the University as included above in the second column in fiscal year 2024, although there were no expenses in fiscal years 2024 and 2023.

The Aetna Chair of Writing has funds held at the Foundation and the OHE. The Foundation endowed fund was established with a gift of \$506,989 (amount permanently restricted) in 1986 and was valued at \$943,501.65 and \$890,314.85 at June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively. Those values include accumulated gains/losses on the original gift. The spendable portion of the Foundation endowed fund was \$50,253.80 and \$47,726.40 as of June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively. The OHE endowed fund was established with \$500,000 of state funds and is invested in the Endowed Chair Investment Fund (managed by the State Treasurer). The interest earned on this fund supports the Aetna Chair of Writing. The value of this fund was \$514,069.45 and \$505,779.58 at June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively. The value includes principal of \$500,000 and interest of \$14,069.45 and \$5,779.58 at June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively.

University of Connecticut and
University of Connecticut Foundation
Aetna Chair of Writing
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023

	University	Foundation	Combined Total
Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2022	\$ 40,293.97	\$ 49,034.42	\$ 89,328.39
<u>Revenue</u>			
Transferred From Office of Higher Education	9,394.56	-	9,394.56
Pooled Endowment Income Allocation	-	39,608.63	39,608.63
Transferred From UConn Foundation	40,916.65	(40,916.65)	-
TOTAL REVENUE	50,311.21	(1,308.02)	49,003.19
<u>Expenditures</u>			
Salary & Wages	4,871.49	-	4,871.49
Printing and Binding	2,197.00	-	2,197.00
Travel	1,256.66	-	1,256.66
Conferences and Meetings	10,285.55	-	10,285.55
TOTAL Contractual Services	13,739.21	-	13,739.21
Office Supplies	800.95	-	800.95
TOTAL Commodities	800.95	-	800.95
Student Aid Fees	21,705.00	-	21,705.00
TOTAL Sundry Charges	21,705.00	-	21,705.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	41,116.65	-	41,116.65
Ending Balance as of June 30, 2023	\$ 49,488.53	\$ 47,726.40	\$ 97,214.93

The Aetna Endowed Chair of Writing

<https://english.uconn.edu/aetna-chair-of-writing/>

at The University of Connecticut

Report of expenditures, support, and initiatives for 2023-2024

August 22, 2024

Aetna Chair of Writing, General Notes, 2023-2024

Prepared by: Brenda Brueggemann, Aetna Chair of Writing

The 2023-2024 Aetna Advisory Board, members met for the annual Advisory Board meeting on May 21, 2024. Present at that meeting were the following board members: Pamela Bedore; Lisa Blansett; Scott Campbell; Ellen Carillo; Tom Deans; Hannah Dostal; Sean Forbes; Serkan Görkemli; Sara Harrington; Blair Johnson; Douglas Kaufman; Adam McClain. Rebecca Troeger also joined the meeting.

Reports from all who received Aetna funding for 2023-2024 were shared, in summary. Requests for the 2024-2025 year were then discussed. A final Aetna budget expenditure of \$60,000 was unanimously approved, by vote of all present, for 2024-2025. Details of those requests and sources are included in the budget that accompanies this report.

For the 2023-2024 year, and again, for the 2024-2025 year forward all Aetna Advisory Board members were once again asked to serve on at least one Aetna-supported prize committee (unless they were on sabbatical, research leave, etc.) Additional faculty from the Department of English also served on several of the Aetna-supported prize committees where need and fit were matched; the Department Head of English works with the Aetna Chair in making assignments to those committees from the general department faculty. In all, there were six (6) Aetna writing prize awards categories this year and the total number of UConn faculty and graduate students serving as readers and committee members for those prizes was thirty (30).

For the second year in a row, no Aetna Writing in the Disciplines (WID) writing awards (for undergraduates) in 3 categories – Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences & Engineering – were given again; lack of a robust support system and the need to establish a better intake platform for all these submissions were elements. Efforts were made in Spring 2024 to hopefully rectify this situation and restore the awards for the 2024-2025 cycle.

Two Aetna Prize Award events were held in the 2023-2024 year. First, in Fall 2023 (on Oct. 9, 2023) an afternoon tea was hosted for the Aetna Graduate Awards: the 2022-2023 Support for Writing Awards; the 2023 Graduate Teaching of Writing Award; and the 2023 Graduate Critical Writing Award. These graduate students – whose specific projects and

awards were outlined in the 2022-2023 report submitted on August 20, 2023 – were honored at that event and all were asked to speak for a few minutes about their various awarded projects or prize-winning submission: Luisana Duarte-Amlendáriz; Madison Gehling; Adam McClain; Hannah Taylor; Mackenzie Bergan. The second award event was held on Friday, April 19, 2024 – as a closing event for the 2024 Conference on the Teaching of Writing. This late afternoon celebration included brief readings from the 3 undergraduate award winners of the 2024 First-Year Writing Prize:

- First Place: Michelle Martula, “Photographs of My Perfect Childhood”
- Second Place: Maylis Pabon, “I don’t hear you, so I don’t see you.”
- Third Place: Ngan Tran Phuong (Sofia), “Future Generations – The Ending or the Beginning.”

Additionally, a brief reading and remarks from the winner of the Aetna Graduate Critical Writing Award (Kyle Labe) for his paper, “The Queer Norm of Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*.” Remarks were also given by the co-winners of the 2024 Aetna Graduate Teaching of Writing Award, Kyle Barron and Wei-Hao Huang.

Aetna Chair of Writing, Discretionary Funds, 2023-2024.

There were three uses made of Aetna Chair of Writing discretionary made this year:

- Professor Oliver Hiob-Bansal, APiR-English, \$500, for his research study investigating how UConn entering students use the Guided Placement Survey (GPS) and choose their FYW course by conducting focus group interviews with a sampling of those students.
- \$500 support to host (deaf) writer, Sara Nović, in a reading from her NYTimes notable novel, *True Biz*. Nović gave a reading and answered questions from students in attendance on February 6, 2025. Her book was a required text in several UConn classes during Spring 2025. A blogpost in UConn’s “[Disability and Access Collective Blog](#)” also summarized the event and its significance: [Sara Nović Shares Some True Biz with UConn Students and Faculty](#)
- \$200 support for refreshments at the Aetna Celebration of Student Writing, Wilbur Cross Reading Room, April 19, 2024.

Aetna Chair of Writing, Graduate Awards, 2023-2024

Six (6) research and travel awards were given this year:

1. Brandon Hurst (English). Brandon Hurst.

“R Programming for Literary Studies.”

The Aetna GSW funding I received supported my travel to the 2024 Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria. The skillset and tools acquired during the weeklong R Programming for Literary Study workshop I attend will further enhance the research I am currently conducting in my role as Assistant Editor at Melville’s Marginalia Online (MMO) and provide a valuable knowledge

base/toolkit for future projects. Immediately, my participation in the course will allow me to take on an additional role as Technical Design and Analysis Contributor, using the workshop to refine a textual sentiment analysis tool I am developing for MMO. This tool, which will add to the site's current suite of visualizations, will dynamically map the sentiment trajectory of the texts Melville read. On that same graph, the content he marked will be highlighted, with marking type, sentiment score, and page number visible on mouseover. Importantly, the entire graph will also allow for one-click navigation to any page of the digitized facsimile of Melville's marked copies. Findings from this tool will supplement an in-progress, collaborative article with MMO's General Editor, Steven Olsen-Smith. The article is a computer-assisted study of Melville's marginalia German Pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer and its influence on his late revisions to the unfinished *Billy Budd* manuscript. The course will also build my knowledge of stylometry, which will be essential to creating and integrating new source detection tools at MMO—or any digitized text(s)—in addition to aiding the in-progress study of Schopenhauer and *Billy Budd*. These tools promise to inform and bolster my computer-assisted study of Thomas Hardy. The multimodal article I am in the process of revising for publication investigates the impact of the intertextual, material text ecosystem)—including Hardy's reading, marginalia, commonplacing, and publication venue)—on the composition of his final prose works: the serialized *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved*, and the novels *Jude, the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved*. The code written during the workshop will strengthen the current deployment and analysis of quantitative and computer-generated evidence in the piece. Finally, my work on sentiment analysis and stylometry during the workshop will inform and enhance a presentation I will deliver to fellow digital humanists at Luleå University of Technology (LTU) later this month. In the long-term future, these technical skills will be invaluable to my future research efforts and facilitate the development of trail-blazing technological tools, enabling new computer-assisted methods and evidence for studying the intertextual relationships between reading and writing.

2. Psyche Ready (English).

The \$500 awarded was used to reimburse interview participants for my dissertation, an IRB-approved qualitative study investigating the academic experiences of students with mental illness. I have thus far conducted 10 in-depth, open-ended interviews with UConn students, collecting over 14 hours of rich data. Although my analysis is still preliminary, the results have already proven to be surprising, fascinating, and profound. I recently shared some of my early findings in a panel presentation at the Rhetoric Society of America (including my gratitude to this board) and I have no doubt that the findings of this project will contribute to the field of writing studies and future research supporting the success of this group of under-studied students.

3. Marie Nour Nahkle (English).

In the Fall of 2023, I was honored to receive the AETNA graduate award, which granted me the opportunity to attend an online course hosted by the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research on the Algorithmic Sublime. This unique course delved into the emerging concept of the Algorithmic Sublime by exploring its intersections with aesthetics and digital developments and ultimately attempting to define the concept. This experience was extremely valuable for my own research as a Romanticist interested in the Sublime and its contemporary applications. Additionally, it helped bridge my interests in the Sublime with my interests in the teaching of writing. I came out of this course with several ideas---which might be developed into a writing project---on the use of the concept of the Algorithmic Sublime in the writing classroom, especially by encouraging students to critically examine digital spaces and the influence of AI and other digital technologies as well as the impact these elements have on our engagement with and creation of digital worlds.

4. **Madison Noel Gehling (English).**

Funding for presiding over a roundtable focused on youth pedagogy and youth writing projects at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. Additionally, I will be presenting on a special panel on the construction of nationalist language in the nineteenth century. Funding would cover my attendance at the conference (and ability to be at both sessions in-person). **“A Kid’s Seat at the (Round) Table: Teaching the Middle Ages for Youth Audiences” description (presiding):** For this roundtable, creative educators, museum curators, librarians, performing arts directors, and scholars will share their insights, experiences, and pedagogical approaches to teaching with the Middle Ages in their learning environments. Primarily, our goal is to provide a workshop-style space to discuss how educators approach writing and language (through sound? through performance and play? through original translations?) to demystify and de-homogenize the Middle Ages, and to continue the work of resisting top-down models of knowledge while centering youth identity and learning. Presenters will speak about the highs and lows of pedagogical play and experimentation in teaching medieval source material, as well as medieval reception and youth medievalism materials in their learning environments around the world. We had so many people apply to take part in this roundtable that we had to petition for multiple sessions (which were approved!). **“Beyond the limit of the world’: The Transformative Power of Slumber in Nineteenth-Century Medievalism” description (presenting):** With the fall of Camelot and King Arthur’s flight to the Isle of Avalon comes his transformation into the sleeping king—a mytho-folkloric figure who is not dead, only waiting for the right moment to return to their people. This is a common motif in folklore studies, and it is easy to see why these stories of mysterious sleep were particularly resonant for nineteenth-century writers: a powerful figure, often associated with the very making of their nation, provides an outlet for art about contemporary tragedy and struggle in the tale of their disappearance; in turn, they grant hope and righteous purpose in the promise of their waking and return. Sleep

was a restorative act for more than just the mind and body; it held the power to renew an entire nation's identity.

British nineteenth-century writers often attempted to connect the past and the present via their literary depictions of slumber, waking, and the liminal spaces between. Their ideology—that the virtues of the past may be reawakened in the present—was unquestionably tied to contemporary projects of nationalism and colonialism. This project takes on a multifaceted approach to analyzing the ideology of slumber in medievalist literature: I focus on the rhetoric which emboldened the projects of British colonialism and the construction of national heritage, looking specifically to the language, which was used in these descriptions of sleeping, dreaming, and waking. Additionally, I also supplement my work with folklore studies—how stories and legends are transmitted within a community, and the importance of cultural memory—as well as the study of nineteenth-century medical writing, approaching sleep from the medical humanities perspective to amplify our understanding of how terminologies are often co-opted for propagandistic purposes. This interconnected approach reveals new ways to understand the nationalist ideologies of medievalism—and by extension, how recognizing the aesthetic, scientific, linguistic, and mnemonic connotations of slumber might impact our sense of nineteenth-century nationalism as a whole.

5. Mckenzie Bergan (English).

Funding for a presentation at the Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA) on March 9th, 2024 -- presenting a paper that looks at the way characters in gothic children's and young adult literature engage with collective writing practices and community archives. The two novels I discuss, Claire Legrand's *The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls* (2012) and Tiffany Jackson's *White Smoke* (2021), ask questions about how community trauma is circulated and recorded. Further, it examines the impact that these archives make on future generations and how children use the writing of the past to interrupt inherited cycles of violence. While Legrand's novel shows how the limitation of access to community writing creates opportunities for violence to regenerate, Jackson's text shows how active participation in accessible composition for all community members provides a path forward to witness and begin to atone for the violence of the past. This project will explore how literature for young people navigates community writing archives and how it looks to them to continue circulating and contributing to accounts of community trauma in productive ways.

6. Daniel Healy (English).

The Aetna Graduate Support for Writing award materially supported my dissertation work toward what is becoming its third chapter. It enabled that chapter to exist. An extraordinary woman named Helen De Kroyft, a then-widely famous blind memoirist and epistolary religious author, acts as the central subject for this particular stretch of my overall study of 19th-century American Deaf, blind, and deafblind writing. De

Kroyft attended the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind as a young adult after a carriage accident and illness resulted in her blindness. While other subjects of my dissertation have manuscripts and ephemera housed in the school's archives, now under the banner of the New York Institute for Special Education, De Kroyft's papers are housed in the University of Rochester's Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservations in the city of her birth. The GWS award allowed me the resources on top of my own limited capacity to be able to travel to Rochester, NY and stay for three days of work across two institutions. In the RBSCP library, I examined three boxes of De Kroyft's vast constellation of correspondence, visiting cards, and financial and legal documents related to publishing, real estate, philanthropy, and everyday home life. In addition, a trip to the Rochester Public Library led me to the Rochester Historical Society's possession of De Kroyft's railroad passes and her customized writing desk. My travel led me to a new understanding of De Kroyft's financial acumen in securing a place of her own and in helping others, her canny borrowing of extant form and content in writing, and the lending of her own image to cultivate a base of subscribers.

Graduate Critical Writing Award, Kyle Labe (English).

"The Queer Norm of Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*"

About the winning essay, one member of the award committee noted that it "conducts a careful textual reading of a challenging topic (to say the least) and persuasively argues for a new reading of *The Changeling*. [The essay] walks the reader through an argument which recognizes and restores agency to the characters, while recognizing and acknowledging the complexities the author's own argument may raise in the minds of readers." Another committee member remarked that the essay "very carefully and brilliantly situates the argument in terms of existing secondary criticism on the play and crip theory" and noted that it is "expertly researched" and offers an "original, exciting, and innovative argument." This committee member also mentioned that the essay is "written with a powerful, clear, and concise style as well."

Graduate Teaching of Writing Award, co-winners:

Kyle Barron and Wei-Hao Huang (English). \$250 each.

Connecticut Writing Project 2023-2024, Aetna Chair Support

Prepared by: Melanie Hepburn and Jane Cook

For the 2023 Connecticut Writing Project (CWP) Summer Institute (SI), we used \$14,017 to award 6 Fellowships to teachers to attend the Summer Institute. Notable among these are Amanda Peterson and Stacey Landowne, two veteran teachers who worked together during the 2023 SI on an inquiry research project related to using personal narrative to improve

school gravity, and who presented their project and how they applied their research through examples of their students' work on May 11, 2024 at the 2024 CWP SI Orientation for the new 2024 SI cohort; Beth Richmond, a Reading Specialist and instructor for students with learning challenges in a kindergarten through grade five school, who furthered her reading comprehension inquiry research begun during the 2023 SI by expanding her classroom library with fiction and nonfiction award-winning picture books, with an emphasis on featuring authors and topics from diverse backgrounds ; and Dan Murphy, a high school English teacher at the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford, who applied for the 2023 SI at the recommendation of his administrator who suggested it as worthwhile professional development that would also help him gain English graduate credits so he could ultimately receive his Early College Experience (ECE) certification, thus expanding UConn's pool of ECE teachers across the state.

This coming summer 2024, we accepted nine participants for the Summer Institute, but conflicts that ranged from issues with children to summer teaching to a death in the family have forced three to defer their acceptance. As a result, we will only be awarding six Fellowships. Included among these is one of our own English PhD candidates (Margaret Bugingo) who received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Rwanda, one who has more than 15 years of multinational experience in secondary and postsecondary academic settings, and one who has worked as a freelance writer and editor and is a published poet.

Since CWP received special two-year only pandemic-funded grants from the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) and the federal government under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), we have been able to award all 6 educators in this year's cohort fellowships that will cover their full tuition to attend the 2024 SI and to plan and implement the SI, which includes supporting activities after the SI ends. Due to some educators withdrawing from last year's SI, we only used \$14,017 of the \$24,000 awarded for the summer 2023 institute. Therefore, I am requesting \$33,983 for the Summer 2024 institute—the customary \$24,000 we have received since the 1980s and the \$9,983 rolled over unused funds from this year that were not used due to grant funds that must be expended before the end of the fiscal year.

UConn Creative Writing Program, 2023-2024, Aetna Chair Support

Prepared by: Sean Forbes, Creative Writing Program Director

Aetna Money Spent from Creative Writing Program FY 2023-2024

Amount Requested: \$6,000

Amount Used: \$4,292.49

*Discretionary Funds Used: \$282.25 (to purchase Honors cords for graduating seniors who completed the concentration in creative writing)

Poetic Journeys: \$925.72

Printing and reception for UConn Poetry Transportation project. (Printing costs: \$625.75 and Catering costs: \$299.97 from Gansett Wraps).

Under the direction of Sophie Buckner who served this academic year as the Graduate Assistant Director of the Creative Writing Program, and in collaboration with undergraduate students from the UConn Design Center Studio under the direction of Professor Bianca Ibarlucea, six posters were designed featuring short excerpts of poems by five undergraduate students and one graduate student, respectively: Italia Anaya, Julian Chandler, Ava Reilly, Anshul Rastogi, Jenna Ulizio, and Anh Le. The student graphic designers were: Yihan Luo, Val MacNeill, Devin Mulready, Mikayla Rafala, Tomaso Scotti, and Johan Velez. The Poetic Journeys Release Party was held on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 5:30 PM in the Fine Arts building.

Aetna Celebration of Creative Nonfiction: \$366.77

(The original amount for this line item was \$2,000, but \$500 was allotted for dinner of which \$366.77 was spent. The other \$1,500 was used for other Aetna funding). The spring 2024 Aetna Celebration of Creative Nonfiction was held at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Storrs Center on Thursday, March 7, 2024 with our featured writer: Gina Barreca. The celebration honored and recognized the winner of the 2024 Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award: undergraduate student Gabrielle Wincherhern, who read an excerpt from her winning nonfiction essay.

Gina Barreca has appeared, often as a repeat guest, on 20/20, The Today Show, CNN, the BBC, NPR and, yes, on Oprah to discuss gender, power, politics, and humor. Her earlier books include: the bestselling *They Used to Call Me Snow White But I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor; It's Not That I'm Bitter, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying About Visible Panty Lines and Conquered the World*; and *Babes in Boyland: A Personal History of Coeducation in the Ivy League*. Her latest books are part of a series she's editing on Fast Women for Woodhall Press; these including *Fast Funny Women: 75 Essays of Flash Nonfiction* (2021), *Fast Fierce Women* (2022), and *Fast Fallen Women* (2023). Of the other seven books she's written or co-written, several have been translated into other languages—including Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese and German. Called “smart and funny” by People magazine and “Very, very funny. For a woman,” by Dave Barry, Gina was deemed a “feminist humor maven” by Ms. Magazine. Novelist Wally Lamb said “Barreca’s prose, in equal measures, is hilarious and humane.” Her work has appeared in most major publications, including The New York Times, The Independent of London, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Cosmopolitan, and The Harvard Business Review; her blog for Psychology Today has well over 7.5 million views. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Connecticut, and she’s also the winner of UConn’s highest award for excellence in teaching.

Long River Review Production: \$2,000

Partial support —other funding from Creative Writing Program, the Collins Prize, and journal sales. This marked the 27th edition of the Long River Review, UConn’s award-winning art and literary journal. Under the direction of faculty advisor Ellen Litman, 15 undergraduate students worked tirelessly to produce the journal in collaboration with the UConn Design Center Studio. 600 copies were printed. The Release Party took place on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 4:30 PM at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Storrs Center.

Aetna Creative Nonfiction Award: \$250. Awarded to Gabrielle Wincherhern

Aetna Translation Prize: \$250. Awarded to Ashley Pizzo

Aetna Children’s Literature Prize: \$250. Awarded to Rylee Thomas

Long River Review Graduate Writing Award: \$250. Awarded to Zeynep Özer

First-Year Writing Program, UConn, 2023-2024, Aetna Chair Support

Prepared by: Lisa Blansett, FYW Director

We were awarded \$8,500 by the Aetna Advisory Board. We were able to spend \$7,000 on Storrs projects, leaving unspent \$1,500 earmarked for Stamford. The following sections outline how Storrs funding was used.

UCONN FIRST-YEAR WRITING PRESENTS
COUNTERSTORIES, CO-CONSPIRATORS, AND COMPOSITION
19th Annual Conference on the Teaching of Writing

FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH EVENTS

TEACHING WORKSHOP
LED BY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
AJA J. MARTINEZ
WITH ROBERT O. SMITH

With readings by the winners of the “Aetna First-Year Writing Award” and the “Aetna Graduate Teaching of Writing Award”

1:00–3:00 pm **3:30–4:30 p.m.**

**NORTH READING ROOM
WILBUR CROSS BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, STORRS**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RSVP'ING FOR THESE EVENTS, SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT FYW.UCONN.EDU/CTW-2024

UCONN FIRST-YEAR WRITING PRESENTS
COUNTERSTORIES, CO-CONSPIRATORS, AND COMPOSITION
19th Annual Conference on the Teaching of Writing
2024

AJA J. MARTINEZ
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

WHY “COUNTERSTORIES, CO-CONSPIRATORS, AND COMPOSITION”?

The theme strives a light on narratives pushed to the fringe, working our understanding with doubt, complexity, and an abundance of possibilities. Aja J. Martinez emphasizes the relational nature of narrative and theory, and by recognizing the value of counterstories in education, we challenge the notion of a privileged free stories worthy of scholarly attention. This act of inclusion demands a re-examination of history, a re-evaluation where all voices find their rightful place.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, STORRS
SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH, 2024
FYW.UCONN.EDU/CTW-2024

SPONSORED BY

AETNA CHAIR OF WRITING
AND
AMERICAN STUDIES

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS, LEARNING COMMUNITIES
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

UCONN CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Aetna Celebration of Student Writing, Teaching Workshop, and the Conference on the Teaching of Writing (\$3,500): Combining the Aetna Celebration of Student Writing and the 2024 FYW Conference on the Teaching of Writing has proven to be a productive collaboration. At both of these events, undergraduates, graduate students, and shared their creative, critical, and collaborative work. Friday also included a teaching workshop led by our keynote speaker, Aja Martinez, and her writing partner, Robert J. Smith. We also collaborated with Fairfield University to share costs on travel and lodging. The success of the multi-event, two-day event has suggested we consider collaborating with other units both inside the English Department and across campuses to permanently expand the conference and its offerings. We hosted 84 participants at the CTW, with 8 panels and 7 poster presentations.

Faculty Scholarship in Writing Studies: \$2,500

APIR faculty member Oliver Hiob-Bansal attended the Dartmouth Summer Seminar for Writing Research over the 2023 summer. His work there focused on how social-group affiliations and identities affect students' placement into FYW courses. Dr. Hiob-Bansal analyzed data from more than 9,000 responses to the FYW- Guided Placement Survey (from May 2022 to present). As a participant in the Summer Seminar for Writing Research, Hiob-Bansal was able to take advantage of more sophisticated quantitative and qualitative analysis methods and tools. The research was then used to further scholarship in the field: Hiob-Bansal and Director Lisa Blansett collaborated on a presentation about Directed Self Placement and the UConn Guided Placement Survey at the 2024 Conference on College Composition and Communication in Spokane, Washington. [FYW CCCC Spokane 2024 Blansett Hiob-Bansal.pptx](#) Using Oliver's empirical research and Lisa's analysis of the field and practices, they were able to demonstrate that "while many writing programs are working toward socially just, antiracist, anticolonial, and equitable approaches to placement, bias can still creep into the tools we use for placement, despite their many promises. Even the most innovative processes supported by current field research and practice are not immune to implicit bias. Blansett and Hiob-Bansal suggested possible remedies and areas for further research.

FYW Course Development Funding Storrs.

\$2,500 requested; \$1,000 spent

Three adjunct faculty applied for and were selected to participate in a coached course development project. Coaching those three adjunct faculty members were three APIRs (Tom Doran, Howard Fisher, and Danielle Gilman) providing one-on-one support as adjunct faculty developed new syllabi aligned with the values, goals, framework, and learning objectives for ENGL 1007 courses at Stamford and Storrs. The Deans Office required that the grant applicant, Lisa Blansett, present on the initiative on April 15, 2024 (see [CLAS Teaching Conversation Spring 2024.pptx](#)). Although the Stamford campus had been awarded \$1,500 for faculty development last year, the funds could not be put to use.

Writing Center, UConn, 2023- 2024, Aetna Chair Support

Prepared by: Tom Deans, Writing Center Director

Approved requests from last year and updates/reports.

- \$400 to fund an honorarium for an outside workshop or webinar leader for staff development. We're considering Timothy Oleksiak from UMass Boston, who is working on a book about queer adaptations of peer review.
 - Report: We did invite a speaker to campus, Brad Hughes from U Wisconsin/Madison, who did 1 session with tutors, 1 with graduate students, and one for faculty, but were able to get funding from English and CETL and therefore didn't dip into this Aetna Allocation

- \$400 to pilot and assess new efforts to better connect the Writing Center to FYW sections. Next fall we will be pivoting away from our longtime partnerships with First-Year Experience and CAPS Writing Fellows due to shifting priorities in those programs. This will give us more capacity to experiment with a “fellows-lite”/embedded tutor program in 1003 and 1004 sections and/or incentivized/required tutorials for students in those sections. This \$400 could help us fund food and coffee tutor/instructor planning meetings, fund complementary events like Multilingual Coffee Hours, and so some student-driven assessment of the pilot.
 - Report: We did invite FYW instructors to require Writing Center appointments but did not end up hosting any events of the sort we describe here, so we didn’t spend the fund. We’d like to try again with a similar “Flipped Writing Center” initiative, described in the 2025-26 request.
- While we did not use the funds allocated for the purposes above, we do plan to use \$500 to fund an event coming up in later May: a community outreach partnership with Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy. Graduate and undergraduate Writing Center tutors will do a one-day session with high school students, coaching them on cover letters and applications for summer jobs. The \$500 would go to tutor wages and food for the event.

UConn-Waterbury Campus, UConn, 2023-2024, Aetna Chair Support

Prepared by: Ellen Carillo, Writing Coordinator

The Waterbury campus appreciates the funding provided by the Aetna Chair of Writing for Academic Year 23-24. Thanks to this funding, FYW faculty members were able to receive \$75 as compensation (to put toward books) for their participation in our meetings and professional development workshops. The funding also supported refreshments during Academic Integrity Awareness Week.

Compensation for adjunct faculty: \$346.89

Refreshments for Academic Integrity Awareness Week Open Houses: \$9.48

Total Spent: \$356.37

Total Requested: \$400

ADDENDUM:

**Additional Aetna Chair of Writing Report
submitted to UConn Provost's Office, August 2024**

ENDOWED FACULTY ANNUAL IMPACT

INSTRUCTIONS

Please share your accomplishments by completing the form below by June 30.

Please write in a first person narrative and utilize a conversational style of writing, using a layperson's language to the extent possible. See an example here.

If there are any questions regarding the report or the form submission, please contact The UConn Foundation Office of Donor Relations and Stewardship at chairreports@foundation.uconn.edu.

Endowed Chair/Professorship Title* **Aetna Endowed Chair of Writing.**

Faculty Name **Brenda Jo Brueggemann**

Email. Brenda.brueggemann@uconn.edu

Message of Gratitude*

Please start with a personal message of gratitude to your donor. Explain what their support means to you – your research, scholarship, and outreach activities. How has this endowment impacted your work throughout this academic year? How does holding this position motivate you? Suggested word length is 500 characters.

Every year, the impact of the Aetna Endowment on writing related prizes, events, and awards at UConn is felt measurably – reaching hundreds of people directly and perhaps several hundred more in expanding circles. The funding received appears on dozens of students and visiting writers/scholars resumes and advances their own careers, expanding the reach of their writing and research.

Teaching and Research Highlights*

How did your endowed chair/professorship help enhance your research? How did your instructional methods and mentorship aid students in their intellectual interests and professional development? Suggested word length is 500 characters.

As the [Aetna Endowed Chair of Writing](#) at UConn I not only receive a teaching course release annually – that affords me more time to carry out research and also to carry out the duties of overseeing the many prizes and events that are funded by this endowment – but carrying the title of the award does matter, I believe, when I apply for internal or external funding.

In 2023-2024 I published several articles and presented at several conferences/events, but most importantly, the long-term research project I have been invested in took some giant strides. [The Mansfield Training School Memorial and Museum @ UConn project](#) accomplished the following in 2023-2024:

- Adding nearly 20 new blogposts to the project website in Summer and Fall 2023
- Receiving 2 additional internal grants related to the project from the UConn Humanities Institute and the CLAS-DEI initiatives
- Giving two major public presentations in April 2024: at the UConn Humanities Institute (April 17) and then at the Mansfield Town Hall (sponsored by the Mansfield Historical Society) on April 26, 2024.

In my other research, I also completed a 3-year editorial collective collaboration with 8 other (all more junior) scholars around the U.S. – as the editorial leader – for an edited collection titled *Disability, Access, and the Teaching of Writing* (forthcoming in the National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE] Press, Spring 2025).

Faculty editor and coordinator of the [Disability and Access Collective \(DAC\) Blog @ UConn](#). I oversee 5 student writers-editors, and we meet 4 times each semester. Funded by a CLAS-DEI grant.

TEACHING:

I taught 3 courses at UConn this year that were all connected to my own research and writing: an interdisciplinary, cross-listed graduate seminar on “Doing Disability Studies in the Humanities” (Fall 2023); and two undergraduate courses in Spring 2024: “Disability in American Literature and Culture” (AMST / ENGL 2274W) and “Women & Gender in the Deaf World” (ASLN / WGSS 3254).

I continued to engage summer teaching at the [Bread Loaf School of English](#), working with high school teachers from all over the U.S and connected with 25 other senior faculty in English & the Humanities (who are on the faculty there with me). This summer 2024 I taught a 6-week seminar on “The World of *Jane Eyre*” – the most critically-written about novel in the English language with many angles from gender,

feminist, postcolonial, racial, and disability studies and over a dozen film productions, dance performances and plays, connected literary texts.

In summer 2024, I coordinated a 4-hour working group event on “The History and Legacies of Disability Institutionalization in the U.S.” – from funding received with a CLAS – DEI initiative grant. The 8 scholars in this working group came together across 4 U.S. time zones to present and share their research under this general topic (many of them doing the work also in Native American and Indigenous Studies) and to begin a conversation about the possibilities of a much more significant two-day symposium on this topic (hopefully hosted at UConn in Fall 2025).

Publications, Conferences, and Awards*

Please highlight some of the awards, publications, conferences, seminars, and/or creative works that you have received this academic year. We encourage you to select a few you are most proud of and share why they are impactful. Suggested word length is 500 characters.

GRANTS RECEIVED:

- UConn Humanities Institute for the Mansfield Training School Memorial & Museum @ UConn, specifically to host the April 2024 event with them and to plan out a traveling poster-board exhibit (for schools and local New England historical societies and libraries) on the Mansfield Training School. \$5000
- CLAS – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion grant to plan and host the Summer 2024 working group, “History and Legacies of Disability Institutionalization in the U.S.” \$5000
- Closing out the work and funding (in Spring 2024) from the UConn Senate’s JEDI Initiative funds for “The Mansfield Training School Project. \$20,000

PUBLICATIONS:

Disability, Access, and the Teaching of Writing. Co-editor on the “Disability, Access and the Teaching of Writing Collective” (Stephanie Wheeler, Molly Ubbesen, Lauren Obermark, Tracy Morse, Craig Myers, Brenda Brueggemann, Elizabeth Brewer Austin, Dev Bose). NCTE Press, forthcoming 2025.

The Disability and Access Collective (DAC) Blog @ UConn.

The Mansfield Training School Memorial and Museum @ UConn.

Chapters in Books

“Disability Studies: In a Positive Psychology Perspective.” with Jessica A. Gallagher. Eds. Erin Andrews, Kara Ayers, Dana Dunn, and Michael Wehmeyer. [forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Disability*, 2nd Edition, Oxford UP.]

“*Ad Astra Per Aspera* (to the stars with difficulties).” *Placing Disability: Personal Essays of Embodied Geography*. Susannah Mintz and Gregory Fraser, Eds. Palgrave, 2024.

“Disability Studies and Rhetoric.” *Cambridge History of Rhetoric: Volume V 1900-present* (Daniel M. Gross, Steven Mailloux, LuMing Mao, Eds.) [forthcoming, 2025]

PRESENTATIONS:

“Expanding Deaf Narrative: Scholarly, Critical, Creative, and Production Approaches.” MLA Special Plenary Session, Philadelphia PA. 6 January 2024.

*Panel organizer and moderator.

Service and Public Engagement*

How did your work contribute to service and public engagement initiatives throughout the past year? Please highlight the activities that were most meaningful to you (e.g. committees that led to policy change or furthering the field). Suggested word length is 500 characters. Suggested word length is 500 characters.

Two very well-attended academic + public events in April 2024 on the Mansfield Training School Memorial & Museum @UConn project

1. At the [UConn Humanities Institute, April 17](#). 70+ people in-person and another 60 on the Zoom webinar
2. At the Mansfield Town Hall (sponsored by the Mansfield Historical Society), April 26. Approximately 100 people in-person and another 40 on the Zoom webinar.

Academic Programs and Faculty Development (Optional)

How did you and/or your work enhance the quality of academic programs and faculty development within your school/unit? Suggested word length is 500 characters.

My work in disability and deaf studies (through courses and research) helped garner a \$100,000 Mellon Foundation grant for the Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) program at UConn – with approximately one-third of that funding targeted to build disability studies courses and a minor program at UConn.

I have continued (for the second year) as the Faculty Editor & Organizer for the Disability and Access Collective (DAC) Blog. We published 50 pieces in academic year 2023-2024!

Presented to the WGSS “methods” graduate seminar in October 2023 on “doing disability and gender research.”

Developed a new course (for UConn's new CCC+) on "Professional and Technical Writing for Social Justice" (ENGL/ WGSS 3020W). Co-developed a new course (with Prof. Laura Mauldin) on "Gender, Disability, and Labor" for [WGSS](#) and the new [Department of Social & Critical Inquiry](#).

Looking Ahead*

What might be in store for you next year? Is there an activity that particularly excites you that you would like to share? Suggested word length is 200 characters.

Begin the oral history project/narrative collection phase of the Mansfield Training School project

Present in a featured session at the [American Studies Association](#) conference in Baltimore, MD on November 15 about the Mansfield Training School project

In Fall 2024 the Mansfield Training School project team will write for two more significant external grants:

1. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to fund an archeological study of a potential burial site at the UConn Depot Campus (Mansfield Training School grounds)
2. Connecticut Humanities Organization grant (target: \$40,000) to: develop the project website; begin the oral history project; continue the documentary film taping; complete the traveling poster board exhibit for New England schools, libraries, historical societies.

An application for collaboration and funding from the UConn Humanities Institute and the UConn Human Rights Institute will also be made to plan a 2-day symposium at UConn in November 2025 on "The History and Legacies of Disability Institutionalization in the U.S."

Finally, I look forward to my new involvement and faculty status in the [Department of Social and Critical Inquiry](#) as we begin to build a disability studies minor and offer new courses in disability studies.

Photo (Optional)

We highly encourage you to submit a headshot along with 1-3 meaningful photos that best capture the spirit of your work in the past year (e.g. a photo of your research team in the lab or in the field). Files must be high resolution and in one of the following formats: jpg, gif, tif, or bmp. Please provide a brief description of the photo(s).

see photo at Dept of Social & Critical Inquiry website here: <https://social-critical-inquiry.uconn.edu/>

Description: Mansfield Training School Memorial & Museum @ UConn project team presentation at the UConn Humanities Institute, April 17 2024. Back row, left to right: Madison Bigelow (English), Jess Gallagher (UConn

alum, English; Human Rights M.A Columbia University); Brenda Brueggemann (UConn faculty, English & Social and Critical Inquiry). Front row, left to right: Collin Lemontagne (Political Science), Ally LeMaster (Journalism & English), Ashten Vassar-Cain (Human Rights & Psychology/ minor, American Studies).

*CLAS Communications (Bri Diaz) has the original files for this photo.

Purpose	FY24 Request	FY24 Spent	FY24 Unspent	FY23 Links	FY25 Request	FY24 Links
Tom Deans - Writing Center (WC)	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$800.00	Request	\$800.00	Request & FY24 Report
Lisa Blansett - First Year Writing	\$8,500.00	\$7,000.00	\$1,500.00	Report	\$8,500.00	Request
Jason Courtmanche - CT Writing Project	\$24,000.00		\$24,000.00	Request	\$24,000.00	email conf., no report yet as of 5/14
Scott Campbell - Hartford Campus	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	Request	\$500.00	Request
Victoria Ford Smith - Graduate Research & Travel Awards	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Request	\$6,000.00	email conf., no report yet as of 5/14
Sean Forbes & Ellen Litman - Creative Writing (CW)	\$6,000.00		\$6,000.00	Request	\$9,000.00	Request
Ellen Carillo - Waterbury Campus	\$400.00	\$356.37	\$43.63	Request	\$375.00	Request
Rebecca Troeger - Avery Point	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a	\$2,000.00	Request
Danielle Gilman - Stamford Campus	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a	\$750.00	Request
Brenda Brueggemann - Aetna Chair Discretionary	\$3,200.00		\$3,200.00	Request	\$2,075.00	
Brenda Brueggemann - Special Requests					\$5,000.00	
Brenda Brueggemann - FYW & Writing in the Disciplines					\$1,000.00	
Reported Charges, unknown context		\$4,509.68				
TOTAL	\$49,400.00	\$11,866.05	\$42,043.63		\$60,000.00	