INTRODUCTION WEEK AND PROGRAM SUPPORT COMMITTEE 2016
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Letter of Interest

In applying to a position for the FYW Introduction Week and Program Support Committee my qualifications meet at the intersection between my professional and personal experiences. I subscribe to a classroom model that seeks to deconstruct writing as a singular, individual activity by promoting diverse classroom activities that emphasize peer work and thinking through community. I would like to erase the notion that thinking happens in independent silos, as this breeds intellectual disunity in our writing communities and is detrimental to responsible composition. By participating in the FYW Introduction Week and Program Support Committee I hope to create and establish new classroom models that encourage empathetic thinking and writing, which begins with establishing relationships between student and instructor and between students.

I have specific goals for FYW Introduction Week and Program Support Committee 2016:

I. QUEERING QUERIES
As an advocate of queer-feminist pedagogy, I place the question at the center of my own writing and the writing of my students. In the past my students have seen the paper project as a search for a correct answer, rather than an opportunity for what I call messy thinking. I have refashioned my assignments as projects that queer queries, in an effort to encourage students to write in the realm of the uncanny and unanswerable. I urge students to question their doubts and skepticisms, to use writing as a curiosity cabinet, a place to explore wonder and question. Writing with risk pivots on the fascination with the unknowable. As such, I support the FYW goal of inquiry driven writing, as composition should open avenues of investigation not foreclose them. I hope to incorporate this line of thinking into the revision process of the FYW curriculum and resources.

II. DIVERSITY
I would like to continue the conversation within the FYW community of diversity. Last year’s work saw a fundamental shift in constructing provocative questions in the baseline syllabi, which spoke urgently to social issues in our global community. I hope to continue adapting these issues from the current baseline syllabi in order to sustain a long-term dialogue that centers on diversity. Further we created panels for discussions of instructor and student safety and classroom environment(s) during Introduction Week that not only spoke to the program’s pedagogical goals but our values as a learning community here at UConn.

Since I worked on the Implementation Committee last year I am an ideal candidate for any position that requires reorganizing and updating material for FYW. The major work of the FYW Introduction Week and Program Support Committee is curriculum development and resource development, and it is in these projects that I facilitate an environment of listening and collaboration with my peers. An advocate of avant-garde pedagogies, I find intellectual strength in projects of adaptation and synthesis of ideas.
This makes me a strong asset on team projects that reimagine and build on a core system of values that highlight the question in writing, rather than writing as solely an answer.

As a PhD student in Medieval Studies, I am accustomed to working between departments; adopting and adapting varied pedagogical approaches and transforming ideas that appear dissimilar into the familiar. In terms of liaison and communication, I am a generous colleague and see opportunity in cooperation. That first email or phone call to a new TA must represent the ethos of our community in FYW, English and Medieval Studies, and I am situated at the crossroads of this vibrant, compassionate, and innovative community.

Thank you for your consideration,
Micah