
Retrospective

TIFFANY GAGNON

Tiffany Gagnon's article, "[The Disinhibition of Reddit Users](#)" was published in the *Stylus Knights Write Showcase Spring 2014* special issue and later republished in two different writing handbooks used at UCF: *UCF Writes* and the UCF edition of *EasyWriter*. She also served as assistant editor for Issues 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 7.1 as well as production editor for Issues 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, and the *Knight Write Showcase Spring 2015*.

I've somewhat jokingly said that one of the best things I've ever done was purposely flunk my AP Literature Exam—a serious case of high school senioritis had led me to show up, and then sleep—absolutely ignorant and ungrateful of the opportunity to take it at no cost. What a brat.

However, flunking that exam meant taking Composition I and II at UCF, and I have never regretted that. I may have been grumbling about deadlines at the time, but I can honestly say I thoroughly enjoyed both courses.

Composition was the first time I truly felt I had an active role in something larger than myself (something that "mattered"); to have a voice in research and be part of a conversation. Having my Composition II work, "The Disinhibition of Reddit Users," published in *Stylus* only deepened that. It was validation as a writer and of my analytical skills, and the knowledge that the article did not end with the semester. It went on, and, from my understanding, is still being used as a learning tool in UCF's Composition classrooms. When I first heard that was the case, I was a little taken aback. *Really; you sure? It's useful? They like it?* Mind you, it had also been published in the UCF first-year writing textbook, but imposter syndrome knows no bounds. (Try to nip that one in the bud. You're capable.)

Being invited to review submissions and later copyedit for several issues of *Stylus* was an absolute privilege. It deepened my connection to the journal, and I thoroughly enjoyed seeing other students find their voices in a variety of scholarly conversations. Still today, in any given situation, I find great satisfaction in listening to others and watching them mentally "connect the dots;" those lightbulbs going off.

I am grateful for the writing foundation I was able to form in my first year at UCF, as it helped in my later Public Administration coursework, for sure. Writing has been a large part of my career thus far. For some time after college, in that post-graduation job search funk many of us go through, I was able to freelance copyedit a bit. I was definitely hired in my current role for my writing ability and experience, so I owe where I am now to my time spent developing those skills, to UCF, and to those who gave me opportunities to grow.

One of my identities is certainly *writer*; I am often asked at work to "work magic" on drafted correspondence, articles, and award nominations. I'm the *wordsmith*. In my short time at the Kennedy Space Center so far, I have found one thing to be quite constant: things are always changing to better support the mission. (If you're not changing, growing, and improving, what are you doing, really?) With change brings the need not only for flexibility, but for very clear and transparent communication with customers, and I help deliver some of that through my writing at work.

My advice to current students in first-year writing at UCF? Work hard. Don't blow off your papers or the preparation they need. Find your position and voice in the conversation. You can be a critical thinker all you want, but UCF's first-year composition courses are the foundation to be able to take that critical thinking, translate it into words, and join a conversation.

Happy 10th anniversary, *Stylus: A Journal of First-Year Writing*! I am thankful for the opportunity to share. The journal is special to me, I certainly wouldn't be the same person without it, and I truly do not think I would be where I am today. It is an important part of my story and helped pave my way.

Tiffany Gagnon

Tiffany Gagnon graduated from UCF in 2016 with a B.S. in Public Administration and minors in both Emergency Management/Homeland Security and Psychology. She works at NASA Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in the Human Resources (HR) office, employed under the large administrative contract, Kennedy Institutional Support Services, or KISS. Gagnon is a Program Analyst over the NASA KSC awards and recognition program, is considered the "Center awards writer," and is also the editor of the Center-wide HR newsletter. She expresses incredible gratitude in supporting an agency working toward landing the next man and the first woman on the Moon.