

MEET OUR PROFESSIONAL TUTORS

Lisa Cochran – Writing

Lisa earned her B.A. in Education at Concordia College in Bronxville, NY. She has been on the Cazenovia College staff working as a writing tutor in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for over 20 years. Lisa loves tutoring and enjoys building long-term working relationships with her students.

A long-time Cazenovia resident, Lisa co-managed The Key consignment shop for 10 years, is a past president of the Cazenovia Garden Club, a past volunteer at Caz Cares and taught Sunday school.

Outside of the CTL, Lisa enjoys gardening, decorating, reading and cooking.

Valerie Graziano (“Graz”) - Writing

Valerie has degrees in English, literacy, and public school administration. In conjunction with the academic world, she has worked in the business world for many years in her family business, *Graziano’s Restaurant and Motor Inn*. Previously teaching in both private and public schools at many levels, she is aware of the challenges of incoming freshmen. She is an adjunct in the writing department here at Cazenovia College, sometimes in the business department, and an adjunct at the Pratt Art Institute in Utica. With her wide and varied academic and business background, she relates easily to all students and immensely enjoys working with them on a 1:1 basis.

In her spare time, Valerie helps her 95-year old dad, who still works in the family business every day, and is a mother to her daughter, a new college freshman. She loves the arts and travel. She also enjoys many types of physical activities, from Pilates and yoga, to walking and hiking. Dancing is her passion, specifically the Argentine tango, where you’ll find her honing her skills most weekends.

Pattie Heffernan – Writing

Pattie is a Cazenovia College graduate and fondly remembers her professors who served as role models when she became a teacher. As a student at Cazenovia, she was a member of a committee that designed the Witherill Library with the Director of Libraries from the University of Colorado. He wrote Pattie’s recommendation for the University of Colorado at Boulder, which she attended after graduating from Cazenovia.

She obtained a B.A. in history in Colorado, then returned to this area to teach at Cazenovia High School. Deciding elementary grades would be fun to teach, Pattie obtained her M.S. in Elementary Education from SUNY Cortland. She has taught most elementary grades and achieved certification (K-12) in Special Education and Early Intervention (birth-3 years old).

Tutoring at the college has offered Pattie an opportunity to still enjoy students. Their humor, curiosity, and energy are contagious. She just loves Caz! When she’s not working, she enjoys riding her horse (jumping and dressage), teaching downhill skiing, and cooking.

Jackie Jahsman – Writing

Finding herself as a writing tutor at Cazenovia College was a natural stop for Jackie after retiring from secondary education. Jackie earned her first degree in dental hygiene. Thinking she would like to teach dental hygiene, she earned a B.S. in Biology at St. Lawrence University. It was during her studies there, she realized her true desire was to teach Regents biology to high school students. Jackie has pursued other interests along with her career in education. At one point, she maintained an active dental hygiene license, a permanent teaching certificate, and an associate broker real estate license, all at the same time. Referring to herself as a Renaissance woman, she finds writing tutoring as a way to share her varied interests.

Today, in addition to her hours at the Center for Teaching and Learning, you might find Jackie enjoying a weekly game of Mahjong with her friends, decorating her home, walking the beaches of Florida, or reading cookbooks to try out new recipes.

Sandy Palmer – Writing and Biology

Sandy graduated from St. Lawrence University with a B.S. in biology and then headed to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she was a teaching assistant and researched the web-building behavior of spiders, netting her an M.A. in zoology. Her first full-time teaching position was at Eastern Oregon College at LaGrande in the sparsely populated northeast corner of Oregon. Hoping to return to New York, she got lucky when a mentor from SLU days suggested she apply for a faculty opening at Cazenovia College. She was accepted and enjoyed a 35-year career teaching biology and interdisciplinary courses. Mid-career, Sandy enrolled at SUNY-ESF and got thoroughly involved in studying asexual mites, trying to figure out why they were so successful (evolutionarily) without sex. After 5 years, she completed her PhD.

Total retirement from Cazenovia College was impossible. Sandy missed the students, the intellectual environment, and her colleagues. Tutoring in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was the perfect solution. She loves interacting with the diversity of students who frequent the CTL. They are fun, interesting and dedicated.

Outside of the CTL, Sandy is outside – cycling, hiking, cross country skiing, and growing veggies and flowers. She also plays recorder with a group of friends, belongs to a fantastic book club, and is on the Nelson Town Planning Board.

Linda Smith – Writing

Linda has a MSW and, early in her career, she worked as a school social worker in Massachusetts. She has been employed by Cazenovia College for twenty years. The past fifteen of those years have been spent as a writing tutor for both the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Special Services. She really enjoys working with students, helping them to achieve academic excellence by producing their best work. One of the perks of tutoring for Linda has been her increased knowledge in a variety of subjects, especially art and design, equine studies, and current issues...all by just editing papers!

Linda is very involved in the Cazenovia community. She is an active member of the Cazenovia Garden Club, Friends of the Cazenovia Library, and a docent at the Lorenzo State Historic Site. She is an avid tennis player, cross country skier, and mediocre golfer. Name a game, she will play it. Her favorites are Mahjong, Trivial Pursuit, and any card game.