TO: The Office of Academic Affairs

FROM: Krishna Winston, Director

RE: Annual Report, 2021–2022

DATE: June 29, 2022

**INTRODUCTION**

The year just concluding has been marked by a number of significant transitions. The end of August 2021 brought the death, in his ninety-first year, of William K. (Bill) Wasch, the Center’s founder, guiding spirit, and loyal supporter. A regular participant, even in his last year, in the courses we sponsored, Bill embodied the commitment to continued intellectual vitality and conviviality in old age that was at the heart of his concept of the Center. As described in the Center’s fall/winter [newsletter](https://www.wesleyan.edu/waschcenter/newsletters/Wasch-Ctr.%20Newsletter%202022-01.pdf), holding the calling hours on the grounds behind the house made that occasion especially meaningful. The Wasch family suggested the Center as one of two recipients of memorial donations, and I had the pleasure of writing thank-you notes for fifteen gifts.

Although the availability of vaccines had allowed the Center to reopen to its residents in March 2021, successive surges of COVID-19—Delta, then Omicron, followed by Omicron variants—have affected occupancy of the Center’s offices and interfered with a return to the sociable interactions, both formal and informal, of the “before times.” Even after the sign-in and mask-wearing mandates were dropped for the rest of the campus, I decided to keep them in effect for the Center. Happily, I have received no reports that office-occupants or participants in the Center’s courses have contracted COVID-19 from exposure there. That has to be considered an accomplishment, especially during the most recent surge, when most of us had the experience of hearing almost daily about double-vaccinated and double-boosted friends, acquaintances, and family members testing positive. Although Connecticut seems to be enjoying a reprieve at present, it is too soon to let our guard down.

As had to be expected, in the course of the last two years several occupants of our offices have experienced serious health challenges or been told they can no longer drive. Accordingly, a number of work spaces will be available for reassignment in the coming year. Because over the last two and a half years many of us have adjusted to spending most of our time at home, the Advisory Board and I will be giving thought in the coming months to activities old and new to lure our colleagues out of isolation.

I hope the coming year will see the Center become once more an attractive gathering place for retired faculty, whether they have offices there or not.

In October 2021 we became aware that the Wasch Center’s Institute for Lifelong Learning (WILL), chartered by the University in 2009, had come under scrutiny as potentially posing competition to an ambitious program of remote courses under development in the strategic planning process. After months of uncertainty and anxiety, we were able, with the support of Provost Stanton and Associate Provost Culotta, to dispel misconceptions that had arisen, perhaps in conjunction with our use of Zoom at the height of the pandemic, which had enabled us to do some limited outreach, with the assistance of the Communications Office, to alumni. We affirmed that our mission, our core audience (people within driving distance of Middletown), and our preferred mode of instruction (in-person) would not conflict with the University’s intentions for extending its educational reach beyond the physical campus. Upon being told that the term “lifelong learning” would no longer be ours to use, we sought and received permission from the Wasch family to honor Bill and Susie Wasch by giving WILL a new identity as the Wesleyan Wasch Center Seminars. For consistency, we have renamed our other signature programs: they are now the Wasch Center Lecture Series, the Wasch Center Oral History Project, and the Wasch Center Alumni College.

[**FROM WILL TO WASCH CENTER SEMINARS**](https://www.wesleyan.edu/waschseminars/courses/past-courses.html)

For reasons not entirely clear to us, enrollments for the spring term (105) fell somewhat below those for the fall (114). We were surprised when Elizabeth Bobrick, a perennially popular instructor, had to cancel the spring sequel to her “Flash Fiction” course, which had failed to reach her desired number of students. Among possible factors in the decline are (1) confusion over the change in name; (2) the delays in publicizing the courses that were occasioned by the scrutiny described above; (3) uncertainty among potential participants during the peak enrollment period as to the safety of gathering in a relatively small classroom while Omicron and its variants were spreading rapidly; and (4) the availability of many other activities—including travel, going to the theater, and eating out—postponed during the past two years. While the latter two factors sound contradictory, that very contradiction between fearfulness and eagerness to return to “normal” can be observed in many settings these days. We do plan to explore a few new ways of making our offerings known, such as placing announcements in local newspapers and on social media, but we are looking for only a modest increase in enrollments to make sure we can cover our costs. The frequency and quality of interactions among instructors and participants in our courses are far more important than mere numbers.

As I described in last year’s annual report, Richard Friswell and I have been collaborating productively on putting together each term’s course offerings. In recognition of that partnership, Rick and I now officially serve as the Wasch Center Seminars’ co-directors. My role in the division of labor can be characterized as largely supportive, advisory, and administrative. Rick’s ability to identify intriguing subjects, recruit expert instructors, and enhance the program’s experiential learning components keeps our offerings varied and attractive. It is particularly gratifying that [Kiplinger’s](https://www.kiplinger.com/retirement/happy-retirement/604819/7-standout-places-to-retire?fs=e&s=cl) June 2022 edition places Middletown at number 7 on its list of “standout” retirement sites, making particular mention of two of this spring’s courses:

What’s that got to do with choosing Middletown as a retirement

destination? Let’s start with the Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong

Learning, which offers low-cost classes taught by retired and current

faculty and other experts. Participants can study topics such as the 19th- century whaling industry, which was a big part of Connecticut’s

economic history. Or, more lightly, the history of humor.

Particular highlights of the most recent term were the daylong symposium on Reconstruction and its aftermath and the paired courses on *Moby Dick* and whaling.

The former event featured Prof. David Blight of Yale, who not only delivered the keynote address but also contributed to the discussion during the rest of the day and served on the concluding panel, which traced an arc from the Jim Crow era to the present. A late but very welcome arrival to the event was Middletown’s state senator, Matt Lesser, who had just declared his candidacy for the position of secretary of the state (a candidacy he has since dropped). Scrupulously avoiding any partisan comments or references to his own campaign, Senator Lesser reflected on the increasing threats to voting rights in the U.S. and the importance of not taking those rights for granted in Connecticut.

The instructor of the course on *Moby Dick* was the distinguished Melville scholar [Mary K. Bercaw Edwards](https://english.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3337/2019/10/bercaw-edwards-cv-1.pdf), of the University of Connecticut’s Avery Point campus. Several participants in her course also signed up for the course on whaling, taught by an energetic and very knowledgeable staff member from the Mystic Seaport Museum. During four engaging sessions in the classroom the class examined historical photographs, heard the recorded voice of one of the last American whalers, learned about the diverse make-up of whaling crews and the hardships of their working and living conditions on long voyages, and had opportunities to examine authentic artifacts, from harpoon tips to a piece of baleen, popularly known as whalebone. The group then assembled at the Seaport for a full day, where, among other things, they toured the living quarters and work areas on the *Charles W.* *Morgan*, climbed the rigging on the *Joseph Conrad*, got the feel of throwing a harpoon, and rowed a whale boat under the direction of Prof. Edwards.

**FROM THE WEDNESDAY TO THE WASCH CENTER LECTURE SERIES**

Duffy White maintained his excellent record of organizing timely and important lectures (see Appendix I). The first two lectures in the fall featured audience members and speakers “socially distanced” in the Woodhead Lounge and wearing masks. In the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Bruce Masters discussed American’s disastrous interventions in that country and Iraq. Next, two Wesleyan students who had grown up in Russia shared some of their experiences of living between two cultures. The final lecture took place back before a sizeable crowd at the Wasch Center, eager to hear Stephen Devoto’s analysis of a case he had encountered as former chair of the Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission. In the spring, Peter Rutland’s lecture on “Putin, Russia, and the West” was delivered on the very eve of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine—evidence of Duffy’s prescience in scheduling the event many weeks earlier. The timing of the last of the four spring lectures, by the co-chairs of the College of Education Studies, was also meaningful: it was followed in a few weeks by the Education Studies majors’ presentations on their capstone projects taking place for the first time in the College’s new home on Mt. Vernon Street.

**WASCH CENTER ALUMNI COLLEGE**

Three retired faculty members served as tutors under the auspices of the Alumni College, which is managed by Richard Adelstein. In the fall, Karl Scheibe was the tutor of record for a senior writing an honors thesis, and he continued to work closely with the student in the spring. Richie Adelstein and Nancy Schwartz also supervised tutorials. With visitors now allowed at the Center, we will remind retired colleagues that we have a formal structure that allows them to continue to offer tutorials and supervise theses, with the assent of their departments, for a modest honorarium.

**WASCH CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

Initiated in 2012 and now ably administered by Allan Berlind, the Oral History Project was conceived by Karl Scheibe as an important contribution the Wasch Center could make toward preserving Wesleyan’s history through the memories and reflections of retired faculty members and administrators. The project currently receives its funding from the Wasch Center’s operating budget, with a generous and much appreciated annual donation from the Library. The interview transcripts are posted in the Library’s [digital collections](https://digitalcollections.wesleyan.edu/object/wessca-ohp?display=list). This year’s interviewees were Barbara-Jan Wilson, Laura Grabel, Bruce Masters, and Rob Rosenthal.

**RECEPTION FOR RETIRING AND RETIRED FACULTY**

In last year’s report, I expressed my hope that this spring it would be possible for the Center to celebrate not just this year’s retiring faculty colleagues but those from 2020 and 2021 as well. As it happened, none of the four members of the 2022 cohort were able to attend, but seven retirees from the previous years accepted the invitation and were lauded by colleagues and, in one case, an accomplished former student (see Appendix II for the program). The speeches were notable for the presenters’ wit, affection, and deep knowledge of the subjects’ scholarship, teaching, and avocations. Dr. Joseph Fins ’82, who attended the reception, remarked upon the genuine warmth and collegiality that characterized the occasion.

Although the event was hosted by the Wasch Center, all credit for the logistical details and funding goes to the Office of Advancement, and I am especially grateful to Jennifer Opalacz for her attentiveness to matters both large and small and her gracious presence during the reception. Carol Scully and several students were also on hand, and Alison Williams captured the event in beautiful photographs, so we were very well taken care of. Here is the [link to the pictures](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rA-HzDEAOaocXRSQw5PsY7NT1886jeaJ?usp=sharing).

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**

In a year repeatedly disrupted by periods of quarantine due to COVID-19 cases at home and in her other department (NS&B), Elizabeth Moemeka remained steadfast and conscientious. Her commitment to the Center can be seen in her caring attitude toward the occupants and other retirees, her responsiveness to requests, and her willingness to engage actively in solving problems and suggesting ideas for making our various undertakings successful. We are very happy to have her employed at .5 FTE during the academic year. Thus far, the schedule devised by Joy Vodak that has her spending Mondays and Fridays at the Center and the other three days across the street in NS&B has been satisfactory; we will have to see how well it works when the Center returns to full occupancy.

For courses still taking place partially or completely on Zoom, Elizabeth organized any support the instructors and participants needed. For instructors using our classroom, she did what was possible to overcome incompatibilities posed by our aging audiovisual equipment. Eventually she proposed a solution: purchasing a laptop to be used in courses and to record the lectures for posting on our Web site. The laptop will also enable us to make the lectures accessible on Zoom; members of the campus community have increasingly come to expect and request a hybrid option. Observing that putting together each term’s Wasch Center Seminar courses was unwieldy and confusing when multiple versions were circulating, Elizabeth came up with another constructive solution: she created a single, readily editable, spreadsheet for gathering all the relevant information, from course descriptions to instructors’ contact information, CVs, and preferred dates and times. We are trying it out for the fall curriculum, and will make refinements as necessary.

The helpdesk student assigned to us this year by ITS, Sarah Rizky Ardhani, proved reliable, competent, good-natured, tactful, and patient beyond the call of duty. Although she often had to rush from an afternoon class to set up the video camera for our lectures, I could always count on her to arrive in the nick of time. She also provided support for the instructors, taking the problems with the aforementioned aging equipment in stride.

**USE OF FACILITIES**

Before the pandemic the Middletown Quaker meeting took place at the Center. This year, once the campus ban on visitors was lifted, I authorized meetings of a writing club to which one of the Center’s occupants belongs, as well as the annual gathering of a local literary club. Details remain to be worked out, but it is very likely that a fall course on Ukraine being planned by Katja Kolcio and Peter Rutland will be hosted by the Center. While the late afternoon and evening hours have to be kept free for our courses and lectures, I welcome opportunties to make the house available for compatible activities.

**FACULTY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The “News and Notes” section of the fall ’21–winter ’22 edition of the [newsletter](https://www.wesleyan.edu/waschcenter/newsletters/Wasch-Ctr.%20Newsletter%202022-01.pdf) offers brief narrative reports by Charles Lemert, Leo Lensing, Priscilla Meyer, Vera Schwarcz, Mark Slobin, Gay Smith, Joop Varekamp, A. S. Wensinger, and me. The information in those accounts will not be repeated here. An impressive number of colleagues responded to my invitation to report on recent professional and community activities and publications. Rather than trying to provide full bibliographic detail in this context, in the coming year I will invite all the retirees to update their CVs for the Center’s records, and will share the new versions with Academic Affairs. This record-keeping seems like a logical addition to the Wasch Center’s activities.

**Alex Dupuy** participated in August 2021 in a panel on “The Rise and Fall of Presicent Jovenel Moïse: Haitian Politics in the Twenty-first Century,” organized by the City University of New York’s Haitian Studies Institute. In October 2021 he participated in a panel on “The Assassination of a President: Haiti before and after Jovenel Moïse,” organized by Trinity College’s Center for Caribbean Studies. In April 2022 he presented a paper on “The Political Economy of Haitian Emigration” at a conference on Haiti’s future organized by the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies and Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Immigration. In May he was interviewed by two reporters from *The New York Times*for a series on the indemnity Haiti paid to France in 1825 in return for recognition of Haiti’s independence. The full report, “The Ransom: The Roots of Haiti’s Misery: Reparations to Enslavers,” appeared later that month in English, French, and Haitian Creole.

In May **Richard Friswell** delivered the Arthur R. Schultz Memorial Lecture to an in-person and Zoom audience of 60 at the annual meeting of the Middlesex County Historical Society, held at Wesleyan’s Russell House. He drew on his recently published historical novel, *Merchants of Deceit*, an imaginative account of the adventures of Samuel Russell in the 19th-century China trade. In addition to teaching two Wasch Center courses on cultural topics, he offered lectures, especially on art history and literature, at a number of senior living communities, museums, libraries, and community centers in Connecticut, and contributed to several adult-education programs. Works in progress include a biography of Charles Willson Peale and a collection of essays on becoming an elder, not elderly.

**Leo Lensing’s** chapbook-length memoir of the American poet Frank Stanford (1948-1978),*“Subiaco’s Unofficial Poet Laureate”: Frank Stanford in High School,* is scheduled to appear with Foundlings Press in Buffalo.

**Clark Maines’s** volume, edited with his wife, Sheila Bonde, *Other Monasticisms, Studies in the History and Architecture of Religious Communities Outside the Canon* is scheduled to appear in August. He and Sheila have completed a six-chapter draft of a digital book, *The**Sensory Monastery.* Co-authored chapters in peer-reviewed volumes include “Tiron on the Edge: Cultural Geography, Regionalism and Liminality,” in *The Regional and Transregional in Romanesque Europe* (2022); “Medieval Monastic Architecture,” forthcoming in the *Cambridge History of Medieval Architectur; and* «Fouilles de la salle capitulaire» in *L’abbaye cistercienne de Preuilly, Une redécouverte* (2021).

This month **Priscilla Meyer** delivered the keynote address at the Wellesley conference “Hidden Nabokov.” One of the three organizers was Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, a Wesleyan alumna. Priscilla has beentutoring a Ukrainian woman in English through Literacy Volunteers. The woman’s parents and younger daughter arrived from Ukraine last week.Priscilla iswriting an article on Russian Realism for the edited volume *Realism and the Novel*.

**Richard Miller’s** article, “Uncertainty in Capital Budgeting: Five Particular Safety- (or Danger-) Margins From the NPV Formula,” was accepted by *The Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, and is scheduled for publication this summer:

**J. Donald Moon’s article,** “Political Liberalism Today,” has been accepted by the *Journal of Social Philosophy* for a special issue on the centenary of Rawls’s birth. In 2021 Don published a review essay on James Gordon Finlayson’s *The Habermas-Rawls Debate* in *Cercles: Revue Pluridisciplinaire du Monde Anglophone*. He supervised a fall senior essay tutorial in Government, and a spring thesis tutorial in CSS. He is volunteering as an ESL tutor for refugees in a program run by Jewish Family Services in Springfield, MA. His two students come from Congo (Kinshasa) and Afghanistan.

**Russell Murphy** has been invitedto contributea series of articles on municipal law to a new *Encyclopedia of Urban Life*.Another possible project would be a critique of the the criticisms voiced by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops of the nation’s policies toward the poor. Russ also mentions “the somewhat puzzling remarks in a recent book” by his Yale Graduate-School classmate and sometime Wesleyan colleague Richard Merelman, now retired from the University of Wisconsin, “listing me among the Yale graduate students who contributed to the success of Yale ‘s Political Science Department in promoting behaviorism and pluralism.” It is not clear whether Russ plans to challenge this characterization.

**Ákos Östör is** working on two digital monographs he began in Italy during and after the 2020 lockdown, a period he described in a piece that appeared in the fall/winter newsletter. Currently he is in Tuscany/ Liguria doing research for “Asmara and Carrara, a tale *and* two cities” project.

**Wallace (Pete) Pringle p**ublished a paper in the *Journal of Molecular Spectroscopy*’s May 2022 issue. For a paper being presented this month remotely at the University of Illinois Champaign Urbana he is helping with structural calculations for the butyl nitrate molecule.

In MayHarvard’s Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library published *Alcimus Avitus, Biblical and Pastoral Poetry, translated and edited by* **Michael Roberts.** His article “Narrating the Saints: Paulinus of Nola and the Beginning of Verse Hagiography” appeared this year in the *Journal  of Late Antiquity*.A paper,“Epilogue: *The Jeweled Style* in Context,” was delivered at a conference, “*The Jeweled Style* Revisited,” held at the University of Erlangen in June 2021. (*The Jeweled Style* is a book he published on late Latin poetry and poetics in 1989.) In October Michael presented a talk on Zoom, “Avitus of Vienne’s *De spiritalis historiae gestis*: Narrating Spiritual History” at a conference organized by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.

**Nancy Schwartz** supervised an undergraduate tutorial in the fall on contemporary Jewish political thought and another in the spring on developments in the Democratic Party since 1964.

In the first year of her retirement, **Ellen Thomas** continued to work with 6 Wesleyan undergraduates to create an inventory of the fossil collections in the Joe Webb Peoples Museum. She organized museum open days, with student presentations, and oversaw the preparation of exhibits of the “Specimen of the Month” in the Science Library. Together with Kate Brunson and Annie Burke she is designing a Web portal for information on the natural-history collection, scheduled to go live this fall. Researchcollaborations with Yale colleagues and with J. Varekamp continue. One Yale Ph.D. student she co-supervised graduated this year, and she is working with 3 more doctoral students. Ellen co-authored fourpapers published this year, and had an additional paper accepted for publication. Ellen also co-authored six abstracts for meetings occurring during the current academic year, three of the co-authors being Wesleyan students or alumni, and six abstracts submitted for meetings in the fall of 2022.

Despite serious health problems, **Khachig Tölölyan** isworking on the final draft of a 25-page memoir on the founding of the journal *Diaspora*, which he edited from 1991 until recently. In retirement he anticipates writing on the Armenian diaspora, with much of the writing in Armenian. A 2016 conference talk Kach gave in Istanbul appeared in 2021 as “The dilemma of identity in contemporary discourse,” in *Critical Approaches to Armenian Identity in the 21st Century: Vulnerability, Resilience and Transformation*.

**Johan Varekamp** advised one E&ES graduate student, Katie Stubbs, on her MA thesis which she defended successfully in April 2022. Joop’s work as curator of minerals in the Joe Webb Peoples Museum continues. In May he and four collaborators presented a

paper on “Eutrophication at Black Rock Harbor (Bridgeport) and in Long Island Sound.” He is working on two manuscripts, one comparing recent lake deposits from Oregon with iron-rich deposits that are >2.8 billion years old, one on “Volcanic volatiles from ash leachates.” He has been asked to contribute to a movie on beavers by a French artist.

Joop’s civic contributions include serving as vice president of Save the Sound, as a member of the education committee of the Connecticut River Museum, and as a member of the Science Advisory Board of the CT Audubon Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center in Old Lyme. An international in-person meeting of the Geological Society of America in Oregon, at which Joop was scheduled to chair a session, deliver two papers, and conduct a fieldtrip, had to go remote.

**Ruth Weissman** continues to serve as editor in chief of the *International Journal of Eating Disorders.* She writes, “My big news is: ‘Ruth Weissman, alarmed by efforts to change the Montana constitution that will reduce environmental protection and limit voting rights, has declared a bid for Representative of MT House District 59.’”

I, **Krishna Winston,** had three translations of works by Peter Handke published in March: *The Fruit Thief*, a novel, and “Essay on Quiet Places” and “Essay on a Mushroom Maniac,” in *Quiet Places*, a volume of essays that includes her earlier translation, “Essay on the Jukebox.” In Middletown she became the convenor of the Sustainable Middletown Team, and was appointed to the Clean Energy Task Force and reappointed to the Resource Recycling Advisory Commission, which she chairs. She continues to serve as president of the Jonah Center for Earth and Art.

**Appendix I: Lecture Series**

**Fall 2021 Lectures**

Wednesday, September 15: Bruce Masters: “Afghanistan and Iraq: How the US Wars to Remake the Middle East Broke the Region”

Tuesday, October 12 3: “The Lives of Students from Abroad at Wesleyan: Duffy White Interviews Sasha Gerber and Tim White from Moscow”

Wednesday, November 10: Stephen Devoto: “Middletown Land Use and Community Values: Illustrated by Recent Decisions in Wesleyan’s Neighborhood”

**Spring 2022 Lectures**

Wednesday, February 23: Peter Rutland: “Putin, Russia, and the West”

Thursday, March 10: Anjua Jain: “Melodrama’s Non-Western Histories and Idioms: The Case of Indian Cinema”

Wednesday, March 30: Duffield White: “How Young Tolstoy Began Writing Prose Fiction”

Wednesday, April 27: Anna Shusterman and Steven Stemler: “How the College of Education Studies Came to Be”

**Appendix II:**

**Program, Celebration of Retired Faculty, May 21, 2022**

A picture containing text, sign, businesscard

Description automatically generated

**The Wesleyan University Office of Advancement**

**and**

**the Susan B. and William K. Wasch Center for Retired Faculty**

**are pleased to honor the following faculty members**

**on the occasion of their retirement:**

**a Retired in 2020 b**

**Richard Adelstein,** celebrated by Lee McIntyre ’84

**Bruce Masters,** celebrated by Gary Shaw, Professor of History

**a Retired in 2021 b**

**William Herbst,** celebrated by Edward Moran, Professor of Astronomy

**J. Donald Moon,** celebrated by James McGuire, Professor of Government

**Thomas Morgan,** celebrated by Tsampikos Kottos and Lutz Hüwel, Professors of Physics

**Ellen Thomas,** celebrated by Ishita Mukerji, Professor of Microbiology &

Biochemistry

**Johan Varekamp,** celebrated by Martha Gilmore, Professor of Earth &

Environmental Sciences

**a and, in absentia, b**

**Irina Aleshkovsky (2020)**

**Jeanine Basinger (2020)**

**Ann Burke (2022)**

**Anne Greene (2022)**

**Joseph Knee (2022)**

**Joyce Jacobsen (2021)**

**Patricia Klecha-Porter (2020)**

**Leo Lensing (2020)**

**Ronald Schatz (2022)**

**Robert Steele (2020)**

**Khachig Tölölyan (2021)**

**Xiaomiao Zhu (2020)**