

Writing For Humans

Professor Lipscomb

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### Final Portfolio

Before taking Writing 101, I had never really thought about writing. In high school I would complete my essays like clockwork. Read the assignment, find related quotes, follow the five paragraph template, revise, repeat. I never liked or disliked writing, but I saw it as another hassle of going to school. I completed my essays on time, got the A, and forgot about them. I never asked anyone but my dad for feedback, I never talked about what I was writing, I never put any extra effort in, I never cared about what I was writing. After spending these past few months in Professor Lipscomb's class, I have learned a lot about myself as well as the art of writing. I came in expecting to brush the class aside and get a pesky core requirement out of the way, but I am leaving with a new outlook on the writing process, on my writing process.

When Professor Lipscomb first told me that writing was a social activity I rolled my eyes. I disliked sharing my work with others and peer reviewing was my least favorite activity in my high school English classes. I got away with showing my essays to my dad, who used to be an editor, and thought that was all I needed. Frankly, my first thoughts were idiotic. Sharing my writing with others is the most important thing I can do. Listening to others' agreements, disagreements, complaints, and compliments has been invaluable when it comes to improving what I have to say. Without reluctantly giving Professor Lipscomb's advice a chance I would never have identified my bad habits and my writing would have stagnated.

When I first wrote my *Dubliners* essay, I didn't think there was anything wrong with it. I had gone through two drafts myself and I believed it was solid. After showing it to several peers, however, I found that most of them had the same criticisms and compliments. Everyone said it was interesting, but that it had an odd layout. The essay's organization obstructed my argument and I was insistent to the point of monotony on many of my supporting details. I didn't recognize these flaws when going through the essay myself because I knew exactly what I was saying, so I subconsciously overlooked those details. By bringing others into my writing process, I was able to improve my work more quickly and more thoroughly than I ever had in high school.

Before taking Professor Lipscomb's writing class, tone and sentence structure were an afterthought. I managed to get by by trying to sound "academic," using long sentences littered with difficult words and complex grammatical structures. It worked in my philosophy class and in high school, where my essays were mainly for my teachers, but when writing my op-ed and webpage proposal, the lessons I learned from Williams, Birkenstein, and Professor Lipscomb showed me that my half-hearted approach would not work when trying to sway a real audience. In my op-ed I had to get my passion across without being overwhelming. I needed to make every word count and to streamline my sentences to keep the reader's attention and to get my point across within the word constraints. In the proposal, I had to prove that my ideas would be effective and suggest improvements without being too businesslike and dispassionate. The nuance required for each assignment forced me to take the lessons to heart and showed me the importance of remembering that my writing is not only for me.

Overall, the biggest thing I learned was not how to write effectively, but how I write effectively. By going through templates and guidelines, my writing ended up being rote and dull.

After receiving feedback from others and learning various new techniques, I came to realize how my best writing occurs. It doesn't come from exhaustive planning or a structured approach, it comes from running with an idea. In my writing tool the first day contains all of the steps I take to write my first draft. It boils down to coming up with an idea and expanding on it in a very natural, stream-of-consciousness manner. The brunt of my process involves refining and discussing that rough draft. I have found that my talents lie more in the creativity department instead of the technical department, so letting everything pour out and then worrying about the details later allows me to convey my ideas in the best way possible. Without taking this class I would never have figured that out, and I know for certain that it will help me in the future. I'm still not a perfect writer. I'm lazy, I repeat myself, and sometimes I bog myself down with my own arguments, but I'm a far better writer now than I ever was before, and I think that my CFF Proposal and my op-ed on homelessness are the first pieces of writing I have ever actually wanted to improve for me rather than for a better grade.

Writing for Humans is the best class I took this semester. Out of the eight classes I took freshman year, it is one of only three in which I feel that I learned something worthwhile, and one of only two that I was able to put my heart in. On top of learning technical skills and how I write most effectively, I learned how to find inspiration and get passionate about my work, and how to fake it when I can't. The nagging fear that everything I write is terrible still exists. Even after showing this introduction and the following papers to others I'm afraid that they're worse than they were before, but I am no longer afraid of sharing my work with others, imperfections and all.

**Link To Writing Tool:**

<https://magic.piktochart.com/output/5717638-writing-guide-for-students>

## The Bitter Cycle of Homelessness, and Why We Should Care.

When I began my volunteer work with the homeless, I kept hearing the same stories:

"I got sick and couldn't afford to pay rent anymore."

"I couldn't find another job."

"My spouse left me."

"I just want to feed my kids."

Before volunteering to work with people experiencing homeless, I wasn't sure what to believe. I had only passed by and noticed people sleeping on the sidewalks or panhandling. I assumed they were alone and viewed them as another part of city life. But after eating with them and listening to them, my preconceptions melted away. People experiencing homelessness are just that: people. People with jobs, families, educational and physical needs. They just happen to not have a space to call their own.

If you asked a passerby on the street what they thought about homelessness they would likely respond with something like "homeless people are a problem." That statement would be half correct. There is a problem, but the problem isn't homeless people; the problem is that people are homeless, and more are being forced out of their homes every day. We need to try to understand the struggles that these people are going through to help put them back into a space of their own. Realizing there is a problem is the first step towards acting, and we need to act now to prevent more lives from being fractured.

The plight of people experiencing homelessness is more severe than most realize, and growing worse every day. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, the number of people experiencing homelessness in New York City has climbed to levels not seen since the Great Depression. [As of November 2014, over 60,000 people slept in a homeless shelter in New York City each night](#), and only one in five is a single adult. The rest are children and family members. 60,000 people may not seem like much, compared with New York City's total population, but 60,000 is enough to fill a small city.

The most glaring factor contributing to the homelessness levels is the lack of affordable housing. [According to Census Bureau data](#), from 2002 to 2011 39% of the apartment units available to citizens below the poverty level in New York City became unaffordable. During the same time frame, median apartment rents increased by twenty-five percent. There are now fewer housing options for those living below the poverty level. The remaining units are becoming more expensive. More people will be forced into shelters or onto the streets if these trends continue.

But how bad is it? What are the typical living arrangements? There are three common scenarios: couch-surfing, shelter life, and street life. A couch surfer lives with a friend or an acquaintance for a short period of time. Surfers sleep on a sofa or on the floor. Although this lifestyle is one of the least visible and severe, it remains difficult. How would you feel becoming a burden, an unwanted presence in another person's crowded living space? Since couch-surfing is not long term it will quickly transition to shelter or street life, unless someone can quickly find affordable housing.

Shelter life presents many problems, but one of the biggest is the loss of control over one's time and body. Every shelter differs, but all are overcrowded. Since they have to accommodate so many, shelters are forced to impose rigid schedules and regulations. Most have early curfews, set times for mandatory showers, set meal times, and set times in the mornings when the sheltered are forced to leave for the day. People living in shelters must adjust their lives to the shelter's schedule and follow the shelter's rules or risk ejection.

Life on the street is the hardest. There is neither protection nor safety on a street corner or alleyway. Those living on the street need to worry about the elements, thieves, criminals, animals, and all the other dangers of city life. Since many homeless people suffer mental or physical ailments, it can be difficult to acquire medical care without a permanent address.

The numbers of the homeless in New York may be increasing, but swift action can stop the trend. First, the city needs to provide more affordable housing options. Long-term housing assistance and permanent housing are proven to be cost-effective in reducing homelessness. Housing subsidies can make it possible for low-income families to afford an apartment. Permanent supportive housing can be established to assist those with mental illnesses or health problems. The best way to fight homelessness is to prevent it. The government can support people who cannot afford rent due to sudden medical costs, the death or departure of an income source, or an abrupt layoff. A single event can trigger a family's transition into homelessness, but proper support can prevent it.

But where will the money come from? Why should overburdened taxpayers assume these costs? We can pay now or we will pay more later. Housing people who are experiencing homelessness is the best solution for everyone. [It helps lower additional federal costs that come with homelessness, like medical spending.](#) and studies have shown that it costs more to house the homeless in shelters than it does to provide or subsidize housing. It also helps prevent the cycle from repeating itself. Children experiencing homelessness suffer the most. Constant uprooting creates gaps in education. Lack of basic services leads to public health problems. As a result they end up less healthy, undereducated, and less likely to be able to support themselves. Providing stable, affordable housing gives the children a stable address, allowing them to attend schools in their neighborhood and follow structured long-term courses of study, providing them with a

platform for future growth. Feeding, housing and educating people experiencing homelessness will help those in need and will ensure that fewer will need assistance in the future.

But what can we ordinary citizens do? Anything as small as being kind. Giving money and food and just saying hello to street-dwellers shows we acknowledge them as people instead of pariahs.

If you want to do more, volunteer! Organizations like [WIN](#) and the [Grand Central Food Program](#) do great work and can always use volunteers. If you lack the time they also accept donations.

Spread awareness! Many good people do not know the scope and the severity of the problems these people face, or believe [the myths and misconceptions about people experiencing homelessness](#). Homelessness is not a choice. It is a circumstance forced upon those who cannot afford a place to live. If more people are aware, more will help.

Finally, pressuring the government into action is key. Without legislation to force the expansion of affordable housing, it will be difficult to make housing accessible for those who need it. Developers should be required to allocate a percentage of their new construction to affordable living space, at no cost to taxpayers. Write to your elected officials! Organize petitions! [Mayor De Blasio has not followed through on his promises to address homelessness](#), and he needs to be held accountable. The task may seem unassailable, but if more of us contribute, we can make homelessness a thing of the past.

**Changes made:** This is a complete overhaul of the original op-ed. I tried to address the concerns you raised and I switched “homeless people” with “people experiencing homelessness” because I want to define them as people before I define them as homeless, as it is more respectful towards them and I don’t want to seem like I’m holding myself above them. I also tried to tailor it more towards New York City than before.

### The True Storm in "A Little Cloud"

In James Joyce's *Dubliners*, "A Little Cloud's" ending's ambiguity serves a dual purpose. Its low profile is meant to force the reader to focus on the details that hint at Little Chandler's final mindset and thus on the part of the story that is truly important: Little Chandler's inner conflict.

Chandler seems to worship his old friend Gallaher and believe that he can do no wrong, but on closer inspection he may not truly idolize Gallaher, only the idea of Gallaher. Little Chandler views Gallaher as a celebrity-like figure. He fawns over Gallaher's success and adventures in anticipation, but once he converses with Gallaher his illusion fades. He notices that "There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not noticed before" (Joyce). This description shows Chandler's realization that Gallaher is not a refined gentleman returning from London. He sees that Gallaher is losing his hair and that his skin is pale, whereas Chandler is described as having perfect teeth and as a very clean and orderly person, showing that Chandler is in good health and that Gallaher's health is relatively poor (Joyce). After meeting his old friend, he begins to see that Gallaher's lifestyle may not actually be as wonderful as it seemed. On top of his disillusionment, Chandler holds his wife and son above Gallaher when Gallaher is boasting about his adventures. Chandler asserts his humble accomplishment, saying that Gallaher will "put his head in the sack... like everyone else if [he] can find the girl" (Joyce). This is the first time Chandler notes that he has something that Gallaher does not. He is taking pride in his own accomplishments because he is subconsciously realizing that Gallaher's life is not what he truly desires. During his interactions with Gallaher, despite his subconscious disillusionment with him, Chandler still continues to think of him in high regard. That is why his tears of remorse are relevant. After lamenting his life decisions and making his son cry, Chandler realizes what

his subconscious was telling him. His tears are remorseful because he realizes he was foolish and sees that his family is more important to him than Gallaher's flashy lifestyle. Conversely, these passages could be interpreted in a way that suggests Chandler regrets his current life and desires more. Why is there so much evidence supporting both arguments, yet the ending remains equally ambiguous? Simple. The ending is left to the reader decide because it is ultimately unimportant.

The ending of "A Little Cloud" is left ambiguous because it is irrelevant to what Joyce wants the readers to ponder. Compared to the rest of the story, the conclusion is markedly abrupt. It seems out of place because the end of a story is usually what the reader ponders after finishing a story. But the ending of "A Little Cloud" is too sudden to have the reader's thoughts focused exclusively on it. Instead of the ending, they drift towards the bulk of the story: Little Chandler's interaction with Gallaher. This leads to one conclusion, that the focus is intended to be on Little Chandler and Gallaher's exchange. Unfortunately, "A Little Cloud" has not garnered much critical debate, but in what has been written, scholars seem to hold the belief that the ending is an important part of the story (Lazar). It may invite discussion, but that discussion is relatively shallow. Is Chandler remorseful because he realizes his life has been wasted or is he remorseful because his thoughts and actions were foolish? The question is unremarkable, and more importantly it does not give much back to the reader who spent his/her time on the story. I say that the true importance of the story and the question it wishes to ask the reader are contained in the focus of the story, Chandler's meeting with Gallaher.

The message of "A Little Cloud" revolves around coming to terms with one's own life and discovering what one's heart desires. At the beginning of the story, Little Chandler is described as "melancholic, 'but it [is] a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and



resignation and simple joy” (Joyce). This is a seemingly contradictory description. The mentioning of faith and simple joy both have positive connotation while melancholy and resignation are negative. Melancholy is a term associated with depression and sadness, but it can also be defined as sober thoughtfulness or pensiveness. I believe that although Little Chandler embodies some of melancholy's depressing connotation, his character is more closely aligned with the pensive definition. Little Chandler seems to be thoroughly absorbed in his thoughts, shown in the beginning when he is building up his anticipation for meeting Gallaher, in the middle with his passing thoughts of Gallaher and his consciousness of his own words and actions, and at the end when he is consumed with worry. Furthermore, his thoughts are clearly sober for even in his dreams he is realistic noting that “[His poetry] would never be popular... He could not sway the crowd but he may appeal to a little circle of kindred minds” (Joyce). Even in his fantasies, Chandler is not expecting too much. This awareness shows how modest, grounded, and thoughtful Chandler is. With all of his musings and worries, Chandler is a more thoughtful and reflective character than a sad one. This portion of the story is all about giving some insight into Chandler's nature as a person. In focusing on his shortcomings and superficial desires, Chandler is causing the clouds in his heart to gather, creating a calm before Gallaher's storm.

Little Chandler is swept in by Gallaher's grandeur and loses sight of himself, causing a storm in his heart to brew. By the time Chandler meets up with Gallaher, he has convinced himself that Gallaher is leading an amazing life and that he wants to experience that grandness too, but when Chandler and Gallaher are conversing, he is at war with it. Chandler notices vulgar qualities in his friend, but he rationalizes the negative aspects he finds with excuses like “the old personal charm was still there” and that it was only a result of the competitive atmosphere in

London (Joyce). Chandler timidly points out the immorality of Paris, but then turns right around and exclaims that Gallaher must find Dublin dull when compared to all of the exotic locations he has visited (Joyce). Chandler's conscience is sending bolts of truth about Gallaher's life into his heart, but the thunder of Chandler's idolization of Gallaher and his adventures drowns the strikes out. The pivotal moment in Chandler's storm occurs when the topic of conversation shifts to Chandler's family. In spite of his reserved nature, Chandler uses his family as leverage over Gallaher, because it is the only thing he has that Gallaher does not. This is where Chandler's revelation begins to occur. Chandler's sudden pride in his family could signify the start of a panic. He could be subconsciously realizing that Gallaher's life is what he truly desires and is panicking, trying to convince himself that he has something over Gallaher and that his life has not been wasted. On the other hand his pride could be genuine and be the start of his realization that his current life is what his heart has desired all along. All of this conflict takes place in the middle of the story. These internal struggles transfix the reader's focus and dance back and force between each possible conclusion. There is so much hidden in the writing, yet none of it leads to a definite conclusion. Consequentially, the ending does nothing to sway the reader into one direction, instead leaving the conflict unresolved. The ending's purpose is to be meaningless.

The ending of "A Little Cloud" is merely a vehicle bringing the reader to ponder how Chandler's inner storm has affected him. He begins to realize what he wants when he is speaking with Gallaher, but the storm of ambiguity does not stop until Chandler cries at the end. This is made apparent when Chandler returns home and tries reading poetry to his son. This scene is Chandler's attempt to have it all. If his choice between his dreams and his family was an easy one, the storm in his heart would never have existed. He is trying to have both his poetry and his

family, but he needs to see what his heart needs, so the baby wakes up and cries, showing that Chandler cannot have both. Chandler's wife comes down and scolds Chandler, but the only reply he can muster is, "It's nothing.... He... he began to cry.... I couldn't... I didn't do anything.... What?" (Joyce). Chandler's befuddlement is apparent in his feeble reply, but his confused speech is in contrast to the realization manifesting in his normal thoughts. Chandler realizes what he wants, but the information is kept from the reader. Only his teardrops remain, falling because of his regrets, whether they are over the shame of a wasted life or over the shame of losing sight of himself and what he loves, sending the reader back to the middle to decide which side of the struggle to believe.

The middle of the story is the focus because it is where Little Chandler does the brunt of his learning and begins to see what he truly desires. The ending brings the reader back to Chandler's by remaining ambiguous. Chandler's realizations through his heart's storm can still be interpreted as bemoaning his miserable life or regretting his recent actions, but the most important part, his journey towards his revelation remains the same no matter how the reader chooses to interpret his cry at the end. Whether he still wants Gallaher's glamorous life or if he sees that his current life is all he needs, he has still come to terms with his life and what he wants.

## Works Cited

Joyce, James. "A Little Cloud." *Dubliners*. Project Gutenberg. 5 Nov. 2012. Web. 4 Mar. 2015. There are no page numbers in the online pdf, so they are not included in the in-text citations

Lazar, Mary. "James Joyce's "A Little Cloud" and Chandler's Tears of Remorse." *Journal of the Short Story in English* Spring 36 (2001): 41-63. *Journal of the Short Story in English*. 13 June 2008. Web. 04 Mar. 2015. <<http://jsse.revues.org/577>>.

**Changes made:** I axed a paragraph that didn't add to my argument, and I tried to make everything less repetitive and to shift the focus onto the middle of "A Little Cloud." I had the most trouble fixing this, as most people I showed it to were not familiar with *Dubliners*, so they had trouble giving feedback on the details I included.

## CF and You at College Proposal

Prepared by Marcus O'Hara for Ms. Marybeth McMahon, Vice President of Communications for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

### Marcus's Background

I am a student at Georgetown University. I am currently enrolled in David Lipscomb's Writing and Culture class, which has a focus on writing clearly with a focus on a particular audience. In this class I have studied how to effectively write for an online audience and I have some previous experience with web design and programming. As a math major, I believe that the simplest and most logical solution is the best one, and I bring that mentality to this proposal as well.

### Purpose:

The "CF and You at College" page will serve as a comprehensive and accessible resource providing college students with information and support for navigating college life while dealing with Cystic Fibrosis. These pages will cater towards students in high school all the way through college and will help inform, guide, and support them with the challenges and struggles with health, academic, and social aspects of student life with Cystic Fibrosis.

Here are two hypothetical targets for the webpage:

Geoffrey is a 21 year old mechanical engineering major currently attending Rice University in Houston, Texas. Diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis before his first birthday, Geoffrey has been taking inhaled medicines and using an airway clearance vest for a few hours a day, every day. He got through his first two years without too much trouble and visited the care center at the Baylor College of Medicine whenever problems arose, but he has recently started an internship with MCFA. Geoffrey's internship is throwing off his usual treatment schedule and he is having a hard time keeping everything together, a feeling further exacerbated by his desire to go out drinking with his friends.

Anna is a high school senior from San Antonio. At the top of her class, Anna has never had any worries about schoolwork, but she is worried that her treatments and the state of her body will prevent her from enjoying college life fully. Like Geoffrey, she requires treatment for a few hours each day, and she is worried about how her treatment will affect her social life. She wants to attend Georgetown University, but she is worried about being away from home and adjusting to the different climate. She has always dreamed of following her passion for international politics, but now that her dream is within reach

she feels held back by her ailment.

The greatest challenge in creating this page is adequately addressing the needs of Anna, Geoffrey, and every student in between. The pages must be broad enough to be accessible to students of all kinds, while still being specific enough to alleviate their concerns and answer their questions regarding how to manage their lives without neglecting their disorder. Navigability is king; students need to quickly and easily find what they need so that they can get back to their busy schedules.

## **Review of Existing Pages:**

### **Information for Adults with CF:**

The adults with CF page and the corresponding pages serve their purpose. They clearly provide information and are clearly organized. Everything in the subsections is easy to read, and there is plenty of information made available in each one of them. However, the overabundance of links pushes me away from good information. In some areas the information is too dense, which pushes away people like Anna and Geoffrey, or anyone who is looking for some quick information.

### **Strengths**

- **Clear, Easy to Read Information:** The actual information is very well presented. There is not too much technical language bogging down the most important points, and when there is technical language it is presented in a way that is palatable for the uninformed. There is often a progression from broad information down to specific details as one goes deeper into the subsections, which prevents the reader from being overwhelmed. I learned a great deal thanks to the clear writing, and the appreciation will be even greater from those who are physically experiencing what is being described.
- **Speaking From Experience:** Although a bit short, these sections are great. They add a personal touch to the website and make me care about and try to understand the challenges and solutions that people with CF have to face. This aspect will only be magnified when it comes to people like Anna and Geoffrey or any member of the target audience. As people who are experiencing the same problems, they will resonate with these sections far more than I have and the advice given creates a sense of support. The Speaking From Experience sections show that it is possible for people with Cystic Fibrosis to lead normal lives, and, since the words come from people who have the disorder, they do not feel preachy or disingenuous. These pages are invaluable and I recommend making them easier to find and more expansive, because although the technical information is useful, nothing beats personal accounts when it comes to making a person believe.
- **Daily Life:** The tips given in the subsections of Daily Life are incredibly helpful. They

are perfect for a patient looking for quick, easy information or for someone who is quickly browsing through. I really appreciate them because if I was just skimming through I would still see them and manage to learn something. As an added bonus, some of the tips come from actual patients, which gives them the same effect as the Speaking From Experience pages.

- **Bulleting and Bolding:** The bold text next to the bullet points in most subsections does its job very well. It draws the eye of someone who is skimming, so readers of all speeds get the main idea. This is important because it is still effective at drawing teenagers in where a traditional paragraph format would fail.

### Weaknesses

- **The Layout:** Frankly, the layout for these pages repels readers. The information is clear and valuable, but unfortunately it is too inaccessible for most people to reach it. People like Anna and Geoffrey, who have grown up with the internet, will be irritated by the maze of links and will have difficulty finding what they need because of it. This type of information needs to be as accessible as possible for as many as possible, so their perspective is an important one. There is also too much information here to put everything on page, but making it accessible is definitely possible. For a solution we will look at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). It is a shining example of condensing a bevy of information into a neat package. It includes several pictures with bold headlines followed by descriptive captions that are pleasing to the eye but provide enough information up front for a reader to decide if that section is what they are looking for. The links are large and clear, and the site does a great job presenting information in different ways by using lists, graphics, and menus. The foundation is already set by the clear information. Using [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) as a guideline the new layout will allow that foundation to flourish, and the result will be a site that Anna and Geoffrey will want to use, rather than a site they have to use.
- **Not Every Section is Clear and Easy to Read:** Most of the information is well written, but there are sections where things get confusing. The pages about the respiratory systems, especially the “learn about your lungs” subsection, throw too much technical language at the reader at once. These sections caused me to shut down and stop taking in information, and will likely have the same effect on any college student or anyone without prior knowledge. It is crucial to maintain the broad to narrow presentation, otherwise readers get lost and do not reach or understand what they need. Look to the pages about the Gastrointestinal Tract for inspiration. These pages deal with complicated material as well, but they present information in a broad to narrow, easy to digest fashion. Due to this, learning from these pages was easy for me and will be easy for Anna, Geoffrey, and people of all ages. Make sure to use them as inspiration while revising the writing.
- **The Links on the Left of Every Page:** There are a lot of them, but they all look the same. The bullet points are too small to make the main sections pop, so tweaking the font

size and boldness of the links to the major sections would help facilitate navigation.

### CF At School

The “CF At School” section has mostly the same strengths and weaknesses as the “Information for Adults With CF” but with a few key differences. The layout needs to be retooled here as well, but this section does not have the clear writing found in the “Adults” section to fall back on.

- On the plus side the informative animated videos are very clear and helpful for people of all age groups, but they are difficult to get to, further emphasizing the need for a change in layout. Furthermore, the PDF files that are displayed front and center when entering the section are wordy and unattractive and are better suited to a subsection.
- The information is all there, but the layout and wording do a poor job of conveying it to the audience. A younger person like Anna or Geoffrey will be turned off by the way these pages are written, while someone who has not grown up with good internet writing will be confused and turned off by the layout. The readers and I need to be pulled in because the content is so important, but instead we are being pushed away. Again, whitehouse.gov does a great job with laying out and wording its information and it is a great reference point when looking for ways to improve.

### CF and You at College

Please see <http://cfcollege.weebly.com/> for sample pages.

### Format

- **Hub Page:** Like the “Information for Adults With CF” section, this section will have a hub page. Unlike the adults page, the page will have mostly images with limited text. The page will be divided into six sections: Making the transition to college life, academic life, socializing, roommates, speak with students, and health. These topics keep college students in mind and I am taking inspiration from Mountain Dew's website. Mountain Dew's site focuses on a similar demographic and is very picture heavy. While its tone is more action packed, Mountain Dew's site is very effective at bringing my eyes to what is important by keeping its presentation simple. There may be fancy animations and moving parts, but at its core the webpage utilizes a basic grid of pictures with small descriptions and allows the user to go deeper once they see what they want. I am trying to emulate that progression with this hub page, that way students like Anna and Geoffrey can immediately find a base topic and go deeper.
- **Subsections:** After clicking on one of the pictures/links on the hub page the reader will be brought to the subsections. Each subsection will contain information corresponding to its title. Information will be introduced from broad to deep, but instead of using sever links these subsections will utilize expandable text fields that will display more



information with a click, but will not go to a separate page. If there is more information on subjects that are mentioned but it is not related to college life, a link to the page on the site will be provided should the reader want to know more. This sleek approach will let students find what they are looking for and take away what they need, leaving them satisfied but not overwhelmed and guaranteeing a positive experience.

- **Template:** Each subsection will be built off of a template. At the top of the page will be a picture with the subsection's title written across it. Underneath it will be the content headers. These will have a brief description of what they contain, accompanied by a picture and “click to expand” or “find out more” button that will expand the section and provide more information. Using this template for each subsection will give the whole college section a unified feel and will ensure that the reader knows he/she is in the college section and not a different part of the site. This base template takes inspiration from both whitehouse.gov and Dropbox's website. Dropbox's site uses a limited color palette and takes advantage of white space to ensure that the eye moves towards important information whereas whitehouse.gov uses pictures and graphics to draw the eye. The template borrows both philosophies, using pictures with the limited color palette and white space, leaving an elegant, navigable page. We students are busy and we have short attention spans, so I am trying to ensure that every broad topic is instantly noticeable while avoiding garish colors or making the page too busy. By keeping these pages simple I am simultaneously making them easy to go through and recommend.
- **Additional Resources:** One of the best things about the “CF at School” page was that it had links to helpful additional resources. These are pages for students first and foremost, so including online resources for students in general will make this website more user-friendly. Everyone likes being given something useful, even if they do not ask for it, and this section will show that although the site is focused on students with CF, it is focused on making their lives easier, not just on keeping them informed.

### The Subsections:

- **Making the Transition:** This subsection will be geared towards high school students. What is the right school for me? How can I adapt to a new environment? Is there an easy way to set up a treatment schedule? How will I survive without my parents? What are the differences between college and high school? This section will answer these questions and any others that students like Anna may have. The advice given here has the potential to convince a student that college is manageable, and could literally change the trajectory of an unsure patient's life. This page will show Anna that her dream is possible, and will make the college application process less daunting for prospective students by addressing any fears they might have. The additional resources section here would have a link to the care center location page and to sites that have information about different colleges.
- **Academic Life:** How do I tell my professors about CF? How do I prevent my treatments from getting in the way of classes and vice versa? How do I deal with the stress of worrying about grades and my health? This subsection will serve to answer these

questions and any others a student might have about academic matters. Geoffrey is feeling swamped with his work and finds it getting in the way of his treatments, so he could turn to this page to learn ways to manage his time in a way that allows him to stay on top of his schoolwork and internship. This section will explain how to plan one's classes, meeting with a professor or a dean to make sure that everything will be manageable, and taking advantage of a campus's resources to lighten the load. Additional resources could include links to websites that discuss study strategies, a site that sells used textbooks, and other resources that would help a college student on the academic front.

- **Dorm Life:** Should I have a roommate? How can I explain CF to my roommate? What are the struggles of living on a floor with 50+ other people? This subsection will discuss all aspects of living in a dorm, from roommates to communal bathrooms, and guide students through the challenges that come from living in a dorm with CF. Living in close proximity to many people is challenging for all students, and this page will help patients get the most out of living in a dorm. The additional resources would link to sites that give tips on room organization and dealing with the common hassles of communal living.
- **Health:** How can I stay in the best possible shape while managing everything else? Where is the nearest treatment center? How do sex, drugs, and alcohol affect me? The goal of this section is to approach health concerns that revolve around campus culture. Eating healthy, personal hygiene, exercising in a safe way, getting proper sleep, safe sex, safely consuming drugs and alcohol, and avoiding extra contact with germs are all topics that will be touched on. Additionally, there will be a portion dedicated to mental health and dealing with stress. Many college students suffer from anxiety and depression and it is even more important for students with CF to take care of their mental health because loss of motivation could affect their treatment schedules. This section will hold nothing back when it comes to touchy subjects because students need to know how to keep their bodies healthy so that they can fully enjoy their college experience. Leaving out any unpleasant details will be doing the students a disservice.
- **Socializing:** This subsection will address the challenges someone with CF will face when trying to lead a normal social life. It will address the social side of alcohol and drugs, the party scene, the hookup culture, healthy relationships, and all the ups and downs of the social side of college. Additionally it will address comparing risk with reward when it comes to skimping on treatment to have fun and ways to complete treatments without having them interfere with one's social life. This section will be invaluable to high school and college students alike because all college students worry about their social lives as is, and having CF can not make those worries any easier to deal with.
- **Speak With Students:** Speak with students will contain a message board and a chat client for students with cystic fibrosis to contact each other and ask each other questions. The idea behind this is to create a support network and to allow the students to get advice from each other and to learn from their peers' experiences. No matter how comprehensive

the information in the other subsections is, there are bound to be questions left unanswered. The message board would operate like reddit in the sense that one person posts a question or topic and it remains there permanently, open for other users to comment on. The chat function could be kept as a simple IRC chat room for the sake of ease, or it could be built into something more multidimensional like Facebook chat or a private messaging service. This section creates a safe space for students like Geoffrey and Anna to learn from their peers. Students with CF are not alone in their struggles, and the support network this section creates will create a sense of community that might not be possible otherwise.

- **All Subsections:** Ideally, every subsection will contain a portion where college graduates give advice on each topic, a lot like the “Speaking from Experience” subsections in the “Information for Adults With CF” section. This will add a personal touch to every section and make the students more interested in the material being presented. Each subsection will have different additional resources in accordance with each main topic. Borrowing from the adults page again, each subsection will also have the tip boxes containing quick and helpful information. Additionally, each page will contain several relevant pictures to keep the reader interested and to draw his/her eyes towards certain points that need to be stressed.

### **Conclusion**

The reason for this layout is to make the section both aesthetically pleasing and to facilitate a logical progression through the subsections while holding the reader's attention. The end result should appear simple and sleek, never showing more than what the reader wants, but always showing enough to keep the reader interested. Rather than just skimming over everything, the reader will be able to get the same basic ideas by looking at the brief descriptions of each subsection, but will gain a much deeper understanding of what he/she wants and needs to know because he/she is the one control of his/her experience.

**Changes made:** Honestly, not much. I put in a ton of work revising it for its original due date and I am very confident in what I had, so most of what I changed was minor. I added and moved around a few sentences, along with adding a portion about mental health in the health section, as that was one big thing I left out.