



fall
2018

Rocky Mountain

Writing Centers Association

Letter from the RMWCA President

These are exciting times for the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association. Our first elections under our new membership system have just concluded, and we have a fine group of writing center professionals across the Rockies who are stepping up to serve our community. I'm personally looking forward to working with all our new board members in this new era. If you are interested in serving RMWCA, please drop me a line at clint.gardner@slcc.edu.

We have many service opportunities, such as committees to develop association resources, or hosting sponsored educational events like webinars or book club discussions. We also need particular help in making connections across our broad region. Why not join in?

The most exciting thing on the horizon for RMWCA, however, is our TutorCon held in conjunction with the Colorado and Wyoming Writing Tutor Conference on February 15-16, 2019 at the Auraria Campus in Denver, Colorado. The theme of this year's conference is "Interdisciplinarity, Diversity, and Collaboration." I find that theme particularly compelling and useful in the continuing development of writing centers, and hope that you consider writing a proposal. You



Above: RMWCA President Clint Gardner.

may find the call for proposals at rmwca.org. Look for TutorCon 2019 link on the front page. I am really looking forward to the collaborative work on promoting writing centers and writing center scholarship that we can accomplish together over the next two years. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Clint Gardner
President, Rocky Mountain
Writing Centers Association

To stay updated, visit the IWCA and RMWCA websites:
<http://writingcenters.org/>
<http://www.rmwca.org/>

Meeting Students Where They Are: Adventures in the RIDES Program With English Language Learners

Matthew Candelaria, Caila Garcia, Jorge Rojas, and Laura Ruzicka - Peer Tutors

What It Is and Who It's For

Metropolitan State University of Denver is proud to serve students from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, and languages. Reflective of the student body, the Writing Center receives a client base that is just as diverse. Many of these students come in to get help with English language skills, which was tricky to manage with the Writing Center's philosophy of prioritizing global concerns like planning, composition, and thesis development. To manage this, the Roadways Into Developing English Skills (RIDES) program was launched in the Spring of 2018 to assist students with English language skills like grammar, usage, vocabulary building, and conversational competency. Though RIDES was originally intended for those whose native language is not English, a few native English speakers have enrolled into the program with the intention of better understanding the ins-and-outs of English grammar and usage. This is a great example of the Writing Center's emphasis on teaching clients how to proofread, rather than editing for them. Addressing every concern in a session can be tough, especially if the student is struggling with lower order concerns. When this is the case, it's harder to work as much on the higher order concerns list. RIDES allows students to spend more time with consultants learning skills that will make it easier to focus on global aspects of a composition.

How It Works and How It's Going

RIDES is a student-centered semester-long program. At



Above: Tutors Matthew Candelaria, Calia Garcia, Larua Ruzicka, and Jorge Rojas at the Metropolitan State University of Denver's Writing Center

the beginning of each semester, students are paired with a specially trained consultant for a 30-minute appointment one or two times per week for the duration of the semester. During the first session, the student works with a consultant to decide which aspect of English language learning they would like to focus on. Each student's sessions look different, which is the program's biggest strength. Some consultants follow a more direct approach using modeling, error pattern analysis and scaffolding to assist with the practicalities of writing in English. Conversely, one of the RIDES consultants focuses on conversational skills, where the student keeps a vocabulary journal and practices grammar with their classmates. In this instance, the student is focusing on long-term learning by practicing their language skills outside of the session. Where earlier versions of writing labs forced students to "correct" their writing, the program focuses on equipping students with tools to be agents of their own learning. In other words, RIDES tutors don't simply "fix" the students' writing. Rather, students are taught how to identify issues and how to resolve them in a collaborative environment. The developers of the program anticipated 20-25 students to enroll during the first semester, but by the end of the initial enrollment period, more than 30 students had signed up. The demand is still growing, and the first semester isn't over yet! In order to expand on the project, the Writing Center is training more consultants and seeking to make the project more well-known. The Writing Center is enthusiastic to see the new development of the program. Meanwhile, the MSU Writing Center is focused on serving the entirety of our students' needs - both local and global.

TUTOR CON 2019: INTERDISCIPLINARITY, DIVERSITY, AND COLLABORATION

Auraria Campus: Denver, CO

The University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the Community College of Denver are pleased to host Tutor Con 2019, a joint conference of the Colorado and Wyoming Writing Tutors Conference (CWWTC) and the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association (RMWCA) on February 15 - 16, 2019.

Register online at <https://rmwca.org/>.

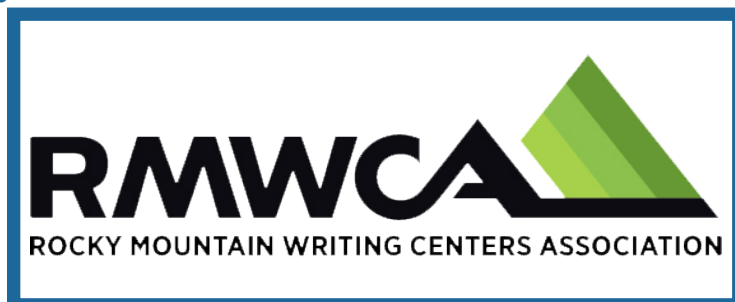
Meet Your New and Returning State Representatives!

Jessica McDermott - Colorado State Representative

Our fall election brought a number of new faces to the RMWCA Board, and a number of new State Representatives! We're excited to welcome Nick Cenegy, Erin Strickland, Rachel Herzl-Betz, Michelle Szetela, and Jess McDermott as new State Reps, and we're thrilled to have Katie Denton and Matthew Drollette continue to represent their respective states for RMWCA. State Reps play an important role in forging a network and sense of community among writing center professionals in their states and by acting as a point of contact and liaison between individuals and the RMWCA Board. Our State Reps help keep us in touch with one another and help ensure our individual voices are heard at the organizational level. Expect to hear from your State Reps, and be sure to reach out to them when you have something you want others in your state to know.

With that, we are pleased to introduce you to the following folks: Nick Cenegy, the new Arizona State Rep, directs the writing center at the University of Arizona's Think Tank. Nick is relatively new to Arizona and includes among his priorities learning more about Arizona's educational institutions and their writing support and then connecting those centers and communities. Erin Strickland, Montana's new State Rep, is a graduate program coordinator and multilingual specialist at Montana State University. Like Nick, Erin said in her candidate statement that she looks forward to learning more about the different writing centers in her state.

Rachel Herzl-Betz, State Rep for Nevada, is an administrator at Nevada State College's Writing Center. She is an author and teacher with



Above: The new RMWCA logo

scholarly interests that include disability, accessibility, and representation. The State Rep for Utah, Michelle Szetela works in both college and high school settings. A language arts teacher at Copper Hills High School, and lecturer at Salt Lake Community College, she spent a number of years fostering collaborations between the two schools before establishing a thriving writing center in the high school.

Katie Denton, of University of New Mexico, is continuing her role as NM State Rep, and we are lucky to have her. Katie's goals include supporting an active, inclusive community of writing center professionals in her state. In a post-election development, Jess McDermott of the Community College of Aurora volunteered serve as State Rep for Colorado. You might recognize Jess's name from her time as RMWCA Tutor Rep. As Tutor Rep, Jess was instrumental in conducting surveys that would help shape the revamping of our website, and she played a huge role in planning our Tutor Talk webinar series. We know she'll do excellent work as a point of contact for writing center professionals in Colorado.

Similarly, Matt Drollette is also moving to a new position. After great work as the Wyoming State Rep, Matt is beginning his first term as RMWCA's Affiliate-Representative for IWCA. Matt has graciously agreed to continue his service as Wyoming State Rep as necessary but is looking for others who might be interested in filling his shoes. Finally, the State Rep position for Idaho is vacant—for now! If you are involved in writing center work in the Gem State and would like to get more involved with RMWCA, serving as a State Rep is a fantastic opportunity to connect with the writing center professionals in your state and others in our region. You can find out more about the position by going to the "About" section of the RMWCA website, or by getting in touch with any member of the RMWCA Board or other State Reps.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: TUTOR CON 2019

The theme for the 2019 Tutor Con is "Interdisciplinarity, Diversity, and Collaboration," and we encourage broad interpretations of that idea. We invite proposals from peer and professional tutors, writing consultants, faculty, and administrators. Proposals are due by December 7, 2018.

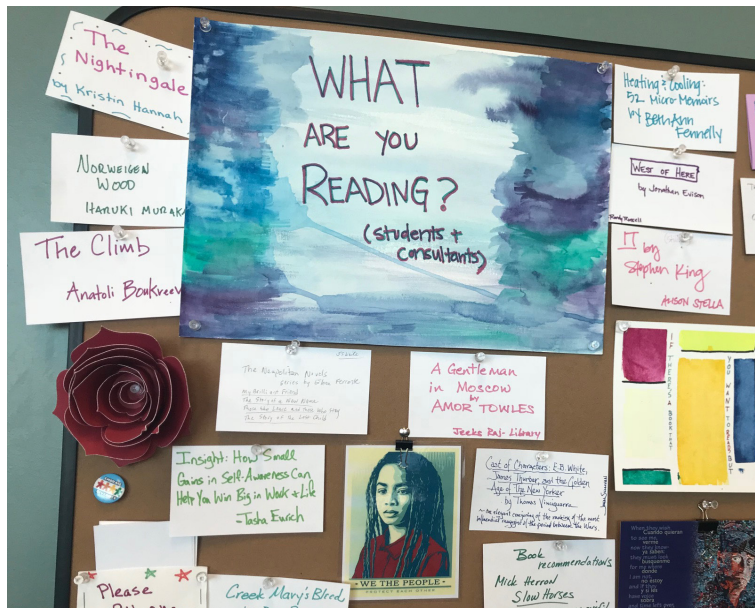
Please visit <http://www.cwwtc.org>
for more information and to submit a proposal.

Creating a Welcoming Space in the Writing Center

Julie Voss, Writing Center Director - Front Range Community College, Westminster Campus

Last year, we looked around at what had become a bit of a dusty room, with huge whiteboards on the walls that we never used, and some “art” we purchased circa 2005 or so. We decided it was time to give the place a facelift, and to put students at the heart of it.

The first thing we did was have the walls covered in a fresh coat of paint with a blue accent wall; we removed the whiteboards, tossed out the outdated handbooks and handouts, and broke out the Clorox to freshen everything up. We created a free library for students to leave books or to take them, and we hung two huge bulletin boards. On one board, we ask, “What are you Reading?” and have students and consultants post whatever books they are reading at the moment. On the other, we display writing by our consultants along with photos, mostly of them reading at our annual faculty reading night. We set up a coffee station that we stock with coffee, hot chocolate, tea, and the occasional snacks. We set up cushy chairs in the back of the room with some fresh plant cuttings and magazines between them. We have a poetry wall with a magnetic poetry board and framed poems. We made a display featuring our literary journal, HOWL, and framed the previous covers, which feature artwork by our students. Next to that, we have photos of students reading at the HOWL event and copies of the literary magazine available for everyone to read. We secured a little money from our diversity committee to buy posters and note cards from the Syracuse Cultural Workers site, and we have their art sprinkled all throughout the room.



Above: The “What are you Reading?” board at the Front Range Community College Writing Center.

My favorite additions are the two creative projects we did as consultants. In one, we got a water painting lesson from one of our artist/consultants and we all wrote a favorite quote about reading or writing, which we then hung from a tree branch in the back of the room. We also wrote a love note, of sorts, to our students, using Popsicle sticks. The top stick says, “What we love about our students,” and then each stick below that is one thing that each consultant loves about our students.

The effect of this renovation and this outward display of respect for our students has been that students increasingly come just because it feels like a comfortable, creative, and welcoming space. As much as we strive for the center to be cozy, we also want it to be a place that inspires writing, so nearly everywhere you look, you will see writing – poems, stories, quotes, even song lyrics. They come for help, and sometimes they just come to work because it has become their safe space on campus. We share a wall with the Math Center, and their tutors would come over to hang out with us, so of course we teased them about how boring their room was. They ended up hanging up some student posters and tomorrow, actually, we are meeting with them to help them paint watercolor equations and math quotes (if there is such a thing!) to hang in their Center.

I would encourage everyone to just take a look around their Centers and see if students are at the heart of them, and if not, maybe you can add a few small touches to make it feel like a real writers’ space, a place that is just for them.



Above: (Left) Free library for students. (Right) Popsicle stick “love notes”.

2018 RMWCA Election Results

The Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association is proud to announce the results of the 2018 elections.

Lisa Bell will serve as President Elect for two years, and then move into the role of President for the subsequent two years. She will serve alongside Clint Gardner as President/Past President. Kelly Webster has been excused from her duties as Past President due to her demanding new position at the University of Montana.

The following positions will serve until 2020. Jamaica Ritcher has been re-elected as Outreach Coordinator. Aubrey Julianna Baucum will be the new Tutor Representative. Matt Drollette takes on the role of IWCA Affiliate Representative. Jess Carroll will be our new Secretary. Heather Graham will serve as Web Editor for three years.

See page 3 of our newsletter and learn about our new and returning State Representatives!

Want More Writing Center Love?



Join the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association (RMWCA)!

RMWCA is a regional chapter of the International Writing Centers Association covering Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

RMWCA membership provides many benefits, including:

- Access to robust travel and research grants
- Seed money and grants for sub-regional conferences and gatherings
- An annual webinar series led by experts in our region
- Discounted registration from the RMWCA conference.

As of July 1, 2018, memberships will be:

- \$100 for higher education writing centers*
- \$50 for high school writing centers*
- \$30 for individuals.



Questions? Contact Elizabeth Kleinfeld, RMWCA Treasurer, at ekleinfe@msudenver.edu.

*everyone associated with that writing center will be considered a member of RMWCA