



Spring  
2018

# Rocky Mountain

## Writing Centers Association

### Letter from the RMWCA President

Dear Colleagues:

We write on the heels of a productive conference season and during a time of transition for RMWCA. We hope you're enjoying the turn toward spring and the renewal this turn promises.

For the RMWCA, this spring and summer mark exciting changes on the horizon. In an effort to focus on the value RMWCA can bring to you, we've been building a new website that will serve as a gathering ground for our information sharing, resources, and tutor interaction. We've launched our first webinar this spring, which was impressively successful, and we're planning for more. Our peers at the University of Utah and our Colorado/Wyoming colleagues hosted two excellent conferences. We are an active region!

To help us maintain this momentum and build toward more robust benefits for our members, this July we will implement our new and affordable tiered dues structure. The membership dues will allow for both individual and writing center memberships, ensuring our organization remains affordable and accessible. We are very excited about the membership benefits these dues will help to fund, including travel grants and RMWCA Tutor Conference registration discounts. Please watch for further communications as we begin collecting dues this summer.

Finally, we write to announce one more coming change: a transition of leadership. Kelly Webster's time as RMWCA President will come to a close as she transitions to a new leadership role at

the University of Montana. Our great fortune is that Clint Gardner will take the helm. We are confident Clint will help us realize the benefits of our recent efforts. Clint is the right leader at the right time, especially as we aim to develop new opportunities for membership engagement. We're on our way.

Please don't forget to share your good news, questions, and announcements on our list serve [rmwca@uidaho.edu](mailto:rmwca@uidaho.edu). Happy Spring, everyone!

**Kelly Webster, President**  
**Clint Gardner, President-Elect**

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

# Tutor Talk: The First in a Series of Webinars

Jessica McDermott, RMWCA Tutor Rep

On April 3, 2018, the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association held its first “Tutor Talk,” a series of webinars aimed at connecting tutors in our eight-state region. The hope is that through these webinars, writing tutors across our sprawling region can discuss writing center-related topics and share ideas.

Our first “Tutor Talk” focused on how writing tutoring has benefited past tutors. For the webinar, three writing tutor alumni agreed to act as panelists. Each panelist shared a bit about how they marketed their writing tutoring experience and skills during their job searches and how their writing center experiences influence and benefit them in their current work.

Our first panelist was Jasilyn Heaps. Jasilyn began tutoring at Utah State University in 2012, and she is now the assistant director at Utah State University’s writing center. Her writing center interests include tutor education, online tutoring, and writing center research. She recently presented her research on questioning methods at the 2017 IWCA conference in Chicago. Our next panelist was Jenna Rhoads. Jenna tutored as an undergraduate student at Montana State University’s Writing Center. Jenna graduated from MSU last May, receiving her degree in Political Science. Shortly after, Jenna began working for Montana’s Senior U.S. Senator, Jon Tester. She currently works in Bozeman as Senator Tester’s Field Representative and Regional Caseworker. While Jenna doesn’t find much time to write, she finds herself using tools she gained as a tutor in her interactions with constituents, federal agencies, and colleagues. Our final panelist was Amy Whitcomb. Amy holds master’s degrees in both natural sciences and creative writing from the University of Idaho. In addition to professional editing jobs, she has over five years of experience working with undergraduate and graduate students in writing centers at three different universities, most recently at the University of Washington, Tacoma’s Teaching and Learning Center. She has published in *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship and Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* to advocate for students with disabilities and first-generation, multilingual graduate students, respectively. Amy currently works in the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine’s Office of Student and Resident Diversity, where she coaches undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students from disadvantaged backgrounds on the narrative writing sections of their medical school applications.



Amy Whitcomb is an alumna of the University of Idaho. Currently, she coaches undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students from disadvantaged backgrounds at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine’s Office of Student and Resident Diversity.

Each of these panelists touched on how the interpersonal skills they gained as tutors continue to benefit them. For example, Amy Whitcomb commented on how tutoring helped her become a good listener, which continues to enhance her current work. Jenna mentioned how assisting upset students taught her the importance of remaining calm while those around her are under stress. Jenna encounters situations that require her calm demeanor as a caseworker in Montana. Jasilyn explained how she received many job offers when she graduated due to her tutoring experience and English teaching emphasis. In the end, she decided to stay with tutoring because she felt that tutoring is the best form of teaching, allowing her to interact one-on-one and work together with students.

Overall, we felt that our first webinar was a success, and we look forward to offering more “Tutor Talks” in the future. If you are a tutor who has topics you would like us to discuss, please feel free to contact me. We love hearing from you, and we would love to provide tutors with the opportunity to facilitate a “Tutor Talk” on a topic that interests them.

**Contact Information: Jess McDermott**  
[jessica.mcdermott@ccaaurora.edu](mailto:jessica.mcdermott@ccaaurora.edu)

# University of Utah Mini-Regional Conference

Nicole Triptow, Undergraduate Writing Center Coordinator

The University of Utah Writing Center hosted the RMWCA Mini-Regional Conference this year. The conference theme was “Stop, Collaborate, and Listen.” I can say, first-hand, that as an employee of the writing center it was a wonderful learning experience. We were able to practice and learn more about collaboration, not only during the event, but also as we planned the conference.

As we prepared for the event, we learned the ins and outs of what goes on backstage at a conference. I’ve attended conferences before, so I knew what to expect at the event, but I couldn’t believe how much goes into set up. There are more obvious aspects to organize, like catering and the venue, but there are also so many little things that you wouldn’t necessarily think about, such as designing a website, finding hotels and places to visit in the city, designing a logo, choosing materials for swag bags, and so much more. The director organized the employees of the Writing Center into committees, which provided us multiple opportunities to collaborate before the big day.

During the event, employees of the Writing Center participated by staffing the registration table, directing traffic, moderating panels, and attending panels. The conference itself was very successful; we were so pleased to see just over one hundred attendees. The food was delicious, the panels were informative and thought-provoking, and the collaborative activity at the end of the conference was an excellent way to apply some of the ideas we had been discussing during the event. It was great meeting others who were as passionate about writing center work as we are.



Writing Center Tutors at closing session

## Outtakes from the RMWCA Conference

“Preparing for this conference gave me experience and valuable tools that I know will be useful in my future academic career. Not only did I gain experiential knowledge preparing my own presentation, but I learned a great deal from others’ presentations at the conference.”

—Rebecca Purse

“My partners and I drew from our experiences with creative writing (specifically in relation to our poetry class this semester) and tutoring to create our presentation. [. . .] I am so grateful for this experience, and I hope it can inform and improve both my tutoring practice and creative writing going forward.”

—Eliza Broadbent

“This conference setting offered a lot to me because of its overall collaborative nature. All of us who were at the conference had things to present and share that we had spent a lot of time with, but we were also there to learn from each other and take in all that we could from other presenters.”

—Danny Daw

### SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING GATHERINGS AND CONFERENCES

#### IWCA Annual Conference

Atlanta, GA, October 10-13

#### NCPTW

South Padre Island, TX, November 1-4

#### RMWCA Conference

Denver, CO, Spring 2019

# Meet the RMWCA Executive Board Members

The RMWCA Executive Board Members are elected by the membership of the RMWCA. Board Members serve three-year terms. Here are your current members!

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**Kelly Webster**

*President*

Until recently, Kelly served as the Director of the University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center. This Spring, she became U of M's Chief of Staff for the President. Good luck in your new role, Kelly!



**Clint Gardner**

*President-Elect*

Clint is the Program Manager of College Writing and Reading Centers at Salt Lake City Community College. His writing center research includes the work of peer consultants (tutors) in community college writing and literacy centers, and the use of online resources.



**Elizabeth Kleinfeld**

*Treasurer*

Elizabeth is the Director of the Writing Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver. She is an associate editor of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* with research interests in (dis)ability, inclusivity, and feminist leadership.



**Jamaica Richard**

*Outreach Coordinator*

Jamaica is the Associate Director of the Writing Center at the University of Idaho. As the Outreach Coordinator, Jamaica keeps the membership connected through the State Representatives.



**Jessica McDermott**

*Tutor Representative*

Jessica coordinates writing tutoring at the Community College of Aurora where she also tutors and teaches. She recently became a visiting writer for *Our Positive Planet*, a publication that highlights positive environmental changes and movements.



**Lisa Bell**

*IWCA Affiliate Representative*

Lisa is the Associate Coordinator of the Brigham Young University Writing Center. Her research interests include TESOL, online tutoring, and mentoring experiential learning. She also chairs the IWCA Awards Committee.



**Michelle Miley**

*Secretary*

Michelle is an Assistant Professor and Writing Center Director at Montana State University. Michelle's research conceptualizes writing centers as sites that make visible the dynamic and radical relationality of the activity of writing.



**Robyn Rohde**

*Web Editor*

Robyn's position is a new one for the Board. She directs the Writing Center at the College of Southern Nevada where she teaches composition. She also serves as the RMWCA Nevada State Representative.

# 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 for the RMWCA conference

## **As of July 1, 2018, membership rates 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](mailto:ekleinfe@msudenver.edu).

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