



NORTH TEXAS WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter
Spring 2021

Letter from the President

In 2018, our previous president April Trafton wrote in her Letter From the President, "We adapt to the changing times, sometimes with grace, but always with the same goal in mind: to focus on students and meet them where they are." We are, once again, being asked to adapt to changing times, to navigate an uncertain future, and hopefully to do it with grace.

I'll share a story that I think really highlights how important it is to meet our students where they are. Earlier this year, I had a meeting with some of our student tutors, one of whom spoke up and apologized for sitting on the floor of her bedroom, explaining that it was the best she could do that afternoon. We all responded with our versions of the same thing, reminding her that we're all trying our best, and sometimes our best is making it to the meeting, even if we're curled up in a nest of pillows and blankets on the floor. I kept the meeting short, realizing what was best for our team was not the meeting, but a break.

Our experiences during this past year have all been different, but I know for certain we've all had one goal in mind – to focus on the students. It's been challenging to deal with technology and Zoom fatigue and barking dogs and the pull of our sofas, but knowing that we must serve the students has been a driving force for all of us. Not only have our tutors and professional staff members displayed incredible resilience, they've also worked with students who are pushing through to achieve success under circumstances we never imagined.

Thank you for joining us at this virtual conference when I know you'd rather be offline. Thank you for continuing to support our organization with your participation and thoughtful insights. Thank you for hanging in there with us as we adapt, too. It is my hope that we get the opportunity to meet in person again soon, but until then, let's keep our focus on the students.

NTWCA OFFICERS:

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Mallory Matyk

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Jennifer Phillips-Denny

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Extra! Extra! Future Editions Need News from around North Texas!

From Texas Woman's University:

Jennifer Phillips-Denny and **Daniel Stefanelli** (Texas Woman's University) presented "Which Can Say More, Than This Rich Praise." The Effect of Rhetorical Praise on Students' Motivations for Writing" at the Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference on February 13, 2021.

Daniel Stefanelli (Texas Woman's University), Write Site Program GA and last year's winner of the Mary Nell Kivvikko award has been accepted into the PhD program at Florida State University. They will be pursuing their doctorate in Rhetoric and Composition.

From Dallas Baptist University:

Trisha Gracy, Consultant Coordinator, walks with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management. She holds a 4.0 GPA and will wear the coveted Summa Cum Laude medal. Trisha recently accepted a position in the HR department at Mouser Electronics.

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Consultants:

Ryan Thompson spent his time at DBU working toward a Teacher Certification in 7-12 English Language Arts and Reading. He hopes to inspire middle or high school students to enjoy reading and writing.

Kenean Bekele moves from her Bachelor of Science in Biology study into the world of physical therapy. She begins an internship her field at John G. McHenry M.D. neuro-opathology a few days after graduating.

Karina Baganz earned a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Christian Studies. She marries only two weeks after receiving her diploma and enters graduate studies in psychology at Liberty in the fall.

Eleanor Kriegel wrapped up her Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in English and hopes to find editing work while writing novels and allowing all the characters in her head to escape and pay her rent (or buy her a house).

Your news belongs here!

NTWCA SPRING CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

Roundtable Discussions

10 am: *Managing Mentoring Boundaries* (Mallory Matyk, University of Texas at Dallas). Setting boundaries with student tutors and colleagues can be easy in the physical writing center space. What happens when you spend a year working from home and you invite your students and coworkers into your home for virtual meetings, trainings, and performance reviews? How do you maintain boundaries (or set new ones)? What does the recalibration look like when you return to the physical space?

11 am: *Managing Online Writing Centers* (Carli Varble, Texas Woman's University). During the pandemic, we have all faced challenges and celebrated successes operating our writing centers online. This discussion is an opportunity to discuss what has been effective operating online, as well as challenges faced. In addition to discussing current trends, this will be an opportunity to brainstorm with other writing center professionals how to move forward from here. What aspects of the past year's experiences will we keep the same? How can we best prepare to manage our centers going forward?

Noon: Business Meeting

1 pm: *Tutoring Good Writers* (Jennifer Phillips-Denny, Texas Woman's University). Writing center tutors are really good at triage. Best practices emphasize teaching tutors to focus on higher order writing issues--in other words, writing issues that are the most urgent. It's no wonder then that sometimes "bad" writing is easier to tutor than "good" writing. While tutors feel comfortable in the zones of the most urgent higher order issues, like thesis statements, argument development, and patterns of paragraph development, they also feel comfortable with the most urgent lower order issues, like comma splice and subject/verb agreement. But what are we doing for "good" writers who come to our centers to become "great" writers, those writers that do not have "urgent" writing issues?