We in higher education are acutely aware of calls for students to develop their communication and writing skills, calls that echo through our advisory boards, accreditation boards, and national media. We in the Writing Center know answering these calls is also a vital part of our land grant mission. In *Reclaiming a Lost Heritage: Land-Grant and Other Higher Education Initiatives for the Twenty-First Century*, John R. Campbell writes that our land grant mission means we have a responsibility to stimulate our students to “find the truly great resources of the mind, and [to have] the ability to gain wisdom by and for themselves whereby they can make sound decisions that favorably impact society the rest of their lives” (p. 108-109). We believe along with John R. Campbell that these abilities connect to the practice of writing.

In the following pages, the MSU Writing Center tells you about how we are answering that call through the resources we have been given, the partnerships we are forming, and the initiatives we are undertaking to cultivate a culture of writing across MSU that expands scholarly, civic, and professional writing among students and faculty. Recently, we hosted a panel of faculty from Computer Science, History, and English to discuss the intersections between and the responsibilities of those of us who study language and technology. We hope to have more discussions like this one. Be watching for them! Last year, we put out a call through the Integrating Writing into STEM grant initiative. Read about our partnerships that have resulted from this generous donation. Be watching for next year’s faculty innovation grant program in the Spring. You can also read about the learning our tutors are doing as they work with writers from all across MSU. Their work puts them in contact with a diversity of ways of thinking, helping them develop their own critical thinking and communication skills. Writing is happening here. We would love for you to join us!

Michelle Miley
Writing Center Director
Teaching Grants for STEM Faculty

The MSU Writing Center

Last year, we put out a call to STEM faculty to apply for Integrating Writing into STEM grants. These grants ($5000 each) were underwritten by a donation as part of a greater initiative to improve STEM writing. We were thrilled by the response and wanted to work with all the faculty indicating an interest in partnering with the Writing Center. From the applications we received, we awarded five grants to the following faculty members: David Millman from the Gianforte School of Computing; Jean Dixon from the Earth Sciences Department; Haley Dunkel, Marc Mergy, Christa Merzdorf from the Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience; and Charles McLaughlin from the Chemistry Department.

Fall 2018 Grant Recipients

Dr. Millman is improving current tutorial-based learning environments by creating a student-driven learning module. His students develop personalized computer science tutorials for Windows, Mac, and Linux environments for their peers.

Drs. Dunkel, Mergy, and Merzdorf are working with the Writing Center to align their assignments closer to writing pedagogy. Our partnerships includes GTA training, developing writing-in-science resources, and connecting students with tutors and peers.

Dr. Dixon is creating an iterative research project that guides her students through the process of proposing, drafting, revising, and presenting their work. Her course serves five concentrations within the Earth Sciences, as well as Land Resources, Environmental Sciences, and Civil Engineering.

Contact Aaron Yost at aaron.yost@montana.edu if you’re interested in working with the Writing Center. Let’s begin the conversation!

Writing Across MSU (WAMSU)

The MSU Writing Center

In addition to the Integrating Writing into STEM initiative, our donation also provided funding for a new staff member to help us develop Writing Across MSU. We welcome Aaron Yost, Assistant Director of Writing Across MSU, to the Writing Center. Aaron, along with the rest of our staff, is available to work with faculty to integrate writing into course material. The process involves helping instructors:

• articulate goals for writing tasks;
• revise syllabi and writing assignments to reflect those goals;
• envision processes and timelines for writing tasks;
• integrate Writing Center support into course designs;
• reflect upon processes and products;
• evaluate and rework assignments for future semesters.

We will be offering another round of grants for next Fall. Look for details in the Spring 2019 Session Notes!
This fall, we have 23 undergraduates from across the University working as peer tutors at our Writing Center. This talented crew represents an impressive cross-section of MSU’s diverse student body. Currently, we have tutors from every college except Nursing and Gallatin College.

In an average week, those 23 tutors put in a combined 320 hours of work supporting MSU student writers. The tutors work one-on-one with students in face-to-face and synchronous online environments; they facilitate writing groups and writing studios for courses across the curriculum; and they participate in ongoing tutor education by reading, discussing, observing, researching, and mentoring.

If you have students who would make great tutors, please encourage them to apply! The next application deadline is Tuesday, November 13.

What Do Our Tutors Study?

The MSU Writing Center

MSU’s commitment to the peer tutor program underscores its commitment to learning within and beyond the classroom through a hands-on, student-centered curriculum; some of this learning results in research publications and presentations. This fall, we continue to show our work across the continental U.S.:

In October 2018, Junior Juliana Greene, an English Writing major, traveled with MSU Writing Center Director Michelle Miley and Assistant Director for Tutor Education Jess Carroll to Atlanta, GA to present at the International Writing Centers Association’s annual conference.

In November 2018, Junior Hannah Telling, an English Education major and Women’s and Gender Studies minor, will travel with Michelle Miley to South Padre Island, TX to present at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing.

In February 2019, tutors and staff from our Center will be traveling to Denver for the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association Tutor Con. Look for news of that conference in our Spring Session Notes!
The Writing Center Works with Graduate Students

Erin Strickland - Graduate Student Coordinator

We know how much graduate students write: assignments, proposals, grants, personal statements, job applications and thesis and dissertation projects. All that writing can feel isolating and overwhelming – the Writing Center is here to offer collaborative spaces to get that work done.

Writing Groups

Joining a writing group provides a more consistent opportunity for connecting with other writers. Graduate student writers from the same discipline, or completely different ones, meet once a week and work on reading sections of their writing together. Creating a community of writers helps establish writing as a social experience.

One writer states “I really wanted a sense of accountability to help me stay focused, continue to move forward writing, meeting deadlines, and to have some sort of consistent human interaction while writing. It really did feel like a writing community.”

To learn more, contact Erin Strickland at erin.strickland@montana.edu

Follow us @MSUWrites on social media!

Focus Fridays

Focus Fridays are open writing times for graduate students. During Focus Fridays, graduate students have:

- A chance to change up their routine;
- The opportunity to write with other students going through a similar writing process;
- dedicated space for productive writing practices.

Tutors are available to answer questions throughout the event. Coffee and bagels are provided.

The last Focus Friday this semester is November 9. Next semester, Focus Fridays will be on January 11, February 8, and March 8 from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. in the Innovative Learning Studio (ILS) on the first floor of Renne Library.

The MSU Writing Center Is Hiring Graduate Tutors

Do you know a graduate student who would make an excellent tutor? We are looking for exceptional students from diverse disciplines. Candidates should be strong readers and writers who are personable, community-oriented, and intellectually engaged. This is a $14/hr paid position and requires a commitment of 10-18 hrs/wk. PLEASE NOTE: This is not an assistantship position; tuition and fees are not covered.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, résumé, and one letter of reference to erin.strickland@montana.edu. Positions are open until filled.

Apply Now!