History of the S&T Writing and Communication Center

Dr. Liz Cummins, Chair of the English Department

1996 –1998: The current S&T Writing and Communication Center began as an idea: to support the mission of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program on the University of Missouri–Rolla (UMR) campus. Dr. Elizabeth Cummins, then chair of the English department, recalled how the location was selected: "In 1996, we hired Dr. Linda Bergmann…. I remember taking Linda into the unfinished [Campus Support Facility] for a tour. She spotted the two classrooms on the first floor as an ideal space. One could be used as an office, reception, and tutoring space; the other could be transformed into a computer classroom." S&T benefactors Maxwell Weiner and the Moeller family provided funding for computers, furniture, and other equipment.

1998–2001: As S&T's WAC Director (a 50% faculty and 50% director appointment), **Bergmann** supervised the Center for Writing Technologies and the Dr. Beverley Bowen Moeller Writing Studio. During this period, these spaces were located in the Campus Support Facility (rooms 113 and 114), a former building near the Havener Center, offering writing assistance as well as an up-to-date computer classroom. In summer 2001, Bergmann left Missouri S&T to become Director of the Purdue Writing Center.

Dr. Linda Burgmann
WAC Director (1996-2001)

Dr. Kate Drowne
WAC Director (2001-2014)

2000–2014: From September 2000 to August 2001, Dr. Kate Drowne held a 50% staff appointment as Assistant WAC Director under Bergmann. When Bergmann departed in September 2001, Drowne was appointed Interim WAC Director, continuing the 50/50 faculty–staff split, and in fall 2002, she joined the tenure-track faculty as Bergmann's replacement. Under her leadership, the center gained greater visibility and became known as "the UMR Writing Center," until the university changed its name to Missouri S&T in 2008. The center staff included a graduate editor who provided assistance to graduate students and faculty, but that service was transitioned to the Office of Graduate Studies. Assistant directors included Cynthia Tharp, Dr. Dan Reardon (2009–2011), and Jeanine Bruening, who had been the graduate editor.

2014–2020: In December 2014, Drowne was appointed as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the newly formed College of Arts, Sciences, and Business, and Bruening became Interim Director and soon Director. During this period, the director position transitioned from a half-time faculty role to a full-time staff position. One of Bruening's responsibilities was fellowship advising, that is, helping S&T students write their application essays for outside fellowships. Dr. Jossalyn Gale served as Interim Director for one semester in 2017 while Bruening was on leave, and Brandi Washburn served as the center's program coordinator in 2018-2019.

Writing Center in 2020

Left to right: Keillyn Johnson, Eileen Kordick, Kira Courtois, and Phillip Bode. The three writing consultants, all ETC graduates now, joined Bode for a presentation in 2023.

2020–2023: Dr. Phillip Bode succeeded Bruening as Director, leading its programs, consultations, and outreach initiatives. Prompted by the impending demolition of the Campus Support Facility in 2022, the Writing Center moved out of CSF 113/114 and into 314/315 Curtis Laws Wilson Library, gaining a more visible and central location on campus. "Properly supported by Dr. Kathy Northcut, vice provost of student success, the Writing Center also broadened its mission to include online, multimodal, upper-division, and cross-curriculum support," Bode reported.

2023–Present: Dr. Wes Lewis served briefly as Interim Director, until Dr. Jossalyn Gale was appointed permanent Director in December 2023 and "put boots on the ground" a few weeks later. Shortly before Gale's appointment, the Writing Center officially adopted the name "Writing and Communication Center" (WCC), reflecting its expanded mission to support writing, speaking, and multimodal communication across campus. A year later, the center moved from the third floor to Room 201. The director's position, which includes "WAC Director" as part of its title, is once again a half-time faculty position. As a tenure-track assistant professor of English, Gale continues to teach courses in English. She is working with Dr. Susan Murray, associate provost for teaching and curricular excellence, to survey "courses [across campus] that are currently listed as writing intensive (WI) and communication intensive (CI)" and draft "revised standards."

Dr. Jossalyn Gale confers with Writing Consultant Chris Stewart in Fall 2025.

Writing and Communication Center
Library 201 / 400 W. 14th St.
Missouri S&T
(573) 341-4436