

# Beth, Matt, & Marilee Part 1

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## SPEAKERS

Matt Cox, Sharieka Botex, Nicholas Buonanni, Beth Keller, Colton Wansitler, Marilee Brooks-Gillies

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### Colton Wansitler 00:02

Okay, Great. I think everything is working. So I'll start off with some introductions. My name is Colton Wansitler. And I am the interim assistant director at the Writing Center while Trixie is on sabbatical. I'm also a graduate coordinator and consultant at the center. Nick?

### Nicholas Buonanni 00:10

Hi, my name is Nicholas Buonanni. And I am a graduate coordinator at the Writing Center. I mainly am in charge of the schedule and things along that nature. But I've been a part of this group for a little over a year now and so I'm very excited to be part of this.

### Sharieka Botex 00:36

I'm Sharieka Botex um, I'm a, uh, I'll be in the second year in the Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures program, and I'm a graduate writing coordinator and consultant in the Writing Center, and Colin and Nick and Grace have invited me to work on this project with him this summer. So I'm super grateful to get to talk with you all today and learn more about your time at the Writing Center.

### Sharieka Botex 01:15

Dr. Cox:

### Matt Cox 01:18

Um, hi, everyone. For those of you that don't know me, I'm Matt Cox. I am an Associate Professor now at East Carolina University where I have been for the eight years since I left East Lansing since I was in the PhD at MSU. And I now as of two weeks ago am the Director of Graduate Studies so you know, and all the

fun that that entails has ensued, going into a fall pandemic situation, so I'm excited to talk with you all and yeah, that's me for now.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 01:51

I'll go next. It's chronological Beth right?

B

Beth Keller 01:53

Matt graduated, and then Marilee, and then I did so

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 01:59

Yeah. We were all at the center together, so there'll be a lot of good overlap. I'm Marilee Brooks Gillies. I direct the Writing Center at IUPUI, which is Indiana University, Purdue University Indianapolis. And I'm an assistant professor of English. I'll be going up for tenure this year. Super exciting thing to do during a pandemic, um, you know, just when I finally feel like there's some stability in my life and the Writing Center and, and then no, and before that, I directed the Center at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. I really like long University names. So if I ever leave, like, just wonder where I'll end up, but, um, so yes, it's been seven years since I graduated and I did my doctoral work at Michigan State in the rhetoric and writing program with an emphasis in cultural rhetorics, and worked at the Writing Center the entire time.

B

Beth Keller 02:46

Great. I am Beth Keller. I also graduated from the rhetoric and writing program, Michigan State in 2015. I am going into my sixth year at Purdue University Fort Wayne. Formerly Indiana, Purdue Fort Wayne, don't get me started on all that. I also am going up for tenure this year. That's in fact what I was telling Nick. I have time putting all my stuff together that I thought I had organized well, and in fact, I did not organize well, so I'm frantically searching for reappointment forms. Um, I also work at the Writing Center. I tried to recall if I ever had an assistantship at the Writing Center, I'm not entirely sure I might have had one year where I was on assistantship there. But even when I was teaching, I also maintained consulting hours and held various other responsibilities there. I have my PhD is in reading and writing with a focus in digital rhetoric and professional writing. But since I have a lot of writing center experience, going back to 2005, I was in part hired to sort of be a jack of all trades for the English department here before Fort Wayne. So I teach digital things. I teach tech things, but I also teach writing center theory and practice.

C

Colton Wansitler 04:02

Wonderful, thank you so much for that.

C

Colton Wansitler 04:05

So we're going to start our interview questions. And we're going to start off with just gathering some context. And so we want to ask, When did you work at the center, what years? And who was your

leadership team? So any directors assistant directors, if you can recall, like fiscal officers, anything like that.

C

Colton Wansitler 04:29

And then we can go, Matt, Marilee, and then Beth?

M

Matt Cox 04:34

Yeah, we can be we can be chronological here. So

M

Matt Cox 04:37

when I came to the Ph D program at Michigan State in 2007, I moved from Colorado. I had been living in Denver for seven years, I reluctantly packed up and left. And you know, it was interesting because, um, the director of the graduate program at the time, Malea Powell, told me the deal you can have is four years of funding if you want to teach the whole four years, or if you would work in the Writing Center, your first year and your last year, you can have five years. And I was like, Well, that sounds good. Just to be safe. I don't like to be rushed. Um, I had been coming out of working several years as a technical writer in software and Boulder, Colorado. And so it felt really natural to me to go into the Writing Center right away just because it felt a little bit more closer to like an office workplace than going into a classroom where I'd never been before, because I had done my Masters online while working full time. So I actually started the same year Trixie was hired. So I had a couple of weeks at the very end of the summer when I when I arrived from Colorado where Dave shared and was the director of the Writing Center, and Trixie was on her way in, um, and the associate director was Stephanie Sheffield for a few weeks, well, a couple months, actually maybe a year I don't know. Time all runs together at some point. And then Diana Baldwin was hired and Diana Baldwin was the assistant For the Writing Center for for several years, right just left a year or two ago, again, I don't know, years are flying by at this point. So. So that's my recollection of my time in the Writing Center. It ended up being my first year of the five years I spent in the PhD and then my third year, something happened and I was sort of begged and asked to go ahead and take my second Writing Center year early. So I kind of wheeled and dealed. I don't know, I got something out of it I like. I couldn't tell you what it was now, it's been too long ago, but that's how it all went.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 06:32

And so I came in the next year in 2008. And I remember being there the first year because I you know, MSU does that great recruitment for their doctoral program. So I remember meeting Trixie and actually thinking she didn't like me, um, because she's like, very serious, and I talk really fast and I and you know, she had recently relocated from the south and I don't think that helped. And so I was just like, talking a lot and she was like, and so I like 'this person doesn't like me, like, I don't have a chance of working in the center' was kind of how I felt at the time, which is funny now. Um, but you know, 'cause Trixie an I still work together in lots of ways. But, um, yeah, so I came in, and Diana was the assistant director of the entire time and I also would, um, she always got to work early because she has chronic insomnia, which I now have. So I didn't have it at the time. Academia does good things to you, but um, I would show up at like nine for my, like, you know, I had a nine o'clock shift or something, and I would show up at like, 8:30 and like, just go stand back there and talk to her while she was trying to be productive before anyone got

there. And now as a Writing Center director myself I'm like, Oh, God, like that's like, just so y'all know, that's a terrible thing. Um, we love you all, but that's terrible. Um, so I did that to Diana all the time, and Trixie too, but to a lesser extent because her office is like a little bit further down the hall. She kind of like, stop what Diana's office first, which I think is now Grace's office. Um, and so yeah, so I was there in 2008. And I did the fellowship that on that Matt's talking about and I did my first time two years straight there before moving into the classroom, and I came from Central Michigan where I started my master's, I did my Master's in Central and I started my Writing Center experience as a master's student in that center. So I had been doing both teaching and classroom and working at the Writing Center at Central. And so it was a it was a nice transition for me. Although MSU center is much bigger, there's always locations and I worked a lot of my hours in the business communication center. When I first started, I did not like it over there. So I'm happy to talk to you about why. But um, yeah, so I was the co-coordinator of that space at that time. And then then next year, I became the coordinator of the Graduate Writing groups. And I ran the navigating the PhD workshop series, which now there's also a navigating the MA series, of course, and I did that with Elena Garcia. And that was that was a lot of fun. So and then later I taught the course trying to remember now the fall of 2012. And I still teach that course in a fairly similar format, um, in my current center.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 09:03

So, so yeah, I'm rambling, but a lot of a lot of good memories

C

Colton Wansitler 09:08

Thank you.

B

Beth Keller 09:10

Um, so it's funny when Marilee talks about talking too fast because I also do that but not as fast as Marilee. And I have similar experiences. So I started at MSU as a graduate student in a master's program. So I was at MSU for six years. So I have a master's in DRPW, and also my PhD in DRPW. And when I was admitted, probably just based on whatever the fluctuations were up that year, I was admitted to the program without a guarantee of funding. And so, I took a leap of faith, weighing pros and cons, MSU being one of the top programs and still in the country for studying writing. And so my first semester at MSU I was fresh out of undergrad, where admittedly I was a big fish in a small pond, and then I was all of a sudden in classes with folks like Marilee and Matt, I was like, shit, what am I getting myself into? And I remember speaking a lot with Diana Baldwin, and Trixie and also Judy, isn't that, that was her name, right, like the woman who did all the financial things, right?

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 10:17

Great, yeah.

B

Beth Keller 10:18

A lot about, so like Marilee, I would get to the Writing Center early as well, even for my shift or like, if I wasn't in class, if I wasn't teaching, there was no point in me going home. So we would just hang out the

Writing Center. I just kind of assumed, and that kind of trend was present in my undergrad as well as at MSU. So I would get there and I would talk to them about various things and primarily about this idea of like, not having funding at all for anything and Trixie being so generous in finding the opportunities to, I think I ran--God, this going back over 10 years, which is weird--I think I ran a satellite location Holden Hall. I had various other things in addition to consulting to try to give me as much experience but frankly also money to pay for, for things like rent and food and gas to get to school. As luck would have it my best--so that second semester of my first year of my master's, I ended up getting a teaching assistantship and then I was on teaching assistantship for the rest of the what, five and a half years I was there, but I still held various other positions in the center. Like Marilee, I helped out with Graduate Writing groups and navigating the PhD. I'm trying to remember, maybe Marilee, you would remember, if you were still there when a bunch of us put together the navigating the MA stuff? I know Phil Beretta helped a lot with that. I don't remember at what point we had a lot of interest I think, to develop navigating the master's degree. So

M Marilee Brooks-Gillies 11:56

yeah, that was like after I left because you guys got it.

B Beth Keller 11:59

Right. So was it--

M Marilee Brooks-Gillies 12:01

Yeah, like, yeah, I left in 2013. So it'd been like that fall or spring after that

B Beth Keller 12:05

It would have been that those last couple of years that I was there. Um, I can't think of anything else that would be. Yeah. I, it's funny because when Marilee said something about, 'I talked to Trixie and she didn't like me.' I never got that impression, although plenty of undergraduates with whom I mentored and talked, they were like, Trixie doesn't like associate and I was like, No, no, no, no, that has nothing. No, this is just how she is as a director or how she is like a professional academic has nothing to do. I know it's hard, it goes against everything I believe, don't take it personally. Like, this is just, you know, you know, giving sort of suggestions on like, maybe you should talk to her more, maybe you should, you know, that kind of thing. So, but then rambling.

M Marilee Brooks-Gillies 12:53

So yeah, we're talkers. You got three talkers at the same time. I want to add on to that a little bit, because I think part of it is like now that I'm a director to you, I kind of think about how authority plays a role. And so there's this notion of like somebody's in charge, and they're kind of scary, even if they're like, the most lovely person in the world, and Trixie's one of those people she's like, so approachable, open door policy, all of those things, like, you know, so amazing. So I mean, I quickly got over that. But that was just like a feeling for for a couple of months. And she and I have laughed about that since. But Beth mentioned, the

HoldenHall makes me think, too, that it's important to mention that while we were all there, that was when the neighborhood satellite started. So that didn't exist when we all got there that happened like two or three years in where we had the six neighborhoods open up. So when we got there, there was the the primary location in Bessey Hall, and there was a library location that was only open in the evenings, not really our space, just kind of a shared space. And then, um, the location in the business communication center, which is in the Lear center, and that was called "the Place" and it was also a common area and they'd have like Fox News all the time, and I would always go and turn the volume all the way down. Um, yeah, I did not like working over there. Everybody's like in suits, it's a very different vibe. Um, and so those were our like three locations. And then we also had an online location. And when Diana came in, she did a lot of research on second life. So we had a location of Writing Center in Second Life, which we all probably have very strong opinions about as well. And then

B

Beth Keller 14:23

How do I make my avatar sit?

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 14:24

Oh my god,

M

Matt Cox 14:25

I'd like to move in--

B

Beth Keller 14:29

...avatar to like, not straddle a couch, you know?

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 14:34

Oh, we had some good times. Don't make your avatar look like you. Why is your avatar have your same name? I'm like, I like who I am. Um, yeah, we had some growing pains with the Second Life stuff. And poor Diana, she's just like, I want to try thing! Why is this so bad? Um, but yeah, so that was happening. Um, and then the satellite started at that time and then we had more coordinators for those positions. And Trixie went to lots and lots of meetings because they started the neighborhood stuff without really consulting like the people who would have to direct all of these extra things. And they're like, Hey, we're gonna have this and she's like, Oh, good.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 15:13

What do you need to give me for this to be possible? So yeah.

C

Colton Wansitler 15:17



wonderful



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 15:18

Time of building.



Nicholas Buonanni 15:19

I was gonna say, Do you remember the year? off the top of your head?



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 15:24

It might have been like, 2009, 2010? somewhere in there.



Beth Keller 15:28

I think it I can't remember if I-- I feel like, I think I was doing something at Holden Hall that first semester and that would have been fall 2009 and I remember I remember other things attached to that like where I had to park, because I wasn't on assistantships. I had to take the commuter lot bus, you know, and it's bringing back memories right? Like post traumatic stress. Of like, the things I could and couldn't do and where I-- seriously like the number of tickets I got, because I would park five minutes before six o'clock, I would get into arguments with campus like parking and be like, back away from my car jackass, like come on



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 16:09

the parking at MSU, that's like a whole vein of things we can talk about.



Matt Cox 16:13

It's never



Beth Keller 16:14

But, it's interesting knowing like maybe what you studied like space in place like all of that those are the things that I remember factoring into how successful I felt I was, in able to consult students I would show up rushed-- these poor first year students right trembling in their dorm waiting for me to to work with them. And I'm like, it's not about you. It's about the fact that I don't have a parking pass.



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 16:39

Oh, yeah. Oh, parking. So many stories that are probably not that relevant. So many stories.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 16:46

Um, this also makes me think about while we were there, MSU also hosted ECWCA in 2010. And so, a lot of us were involved in some level with that or definitely presented that year and it was of course in the Kellogg center. Um, and the theme was conversions at a vanishing point, and we had these frisbees that were like, flexible, and you could fold them up into a little pocket, and so they vanish at a conversion point, right. And we were all very excited about that. And I hope you got the swag. I didn't do anything else that was meaningful. But that was fun, the frisbees, I remember looking at these catalogs of things that you could get branded. And, you know, deciding deciding with with various folks, you know, just going into to ask Trixie some random question. And then she'd be like, what do you think and, you know, poring through these catalogs, and it was it was very fun. It was a great conference. So that might be thing too, as you're talking to a lot of us from that era. Like, I remember Tiffany Turcotte was on that committee, because there was like a local committee because we co hosted with Lansing Community College. And that was great. I know you guys are hosting again soon. So,

C

Colton Wansitler 17:48

Yes.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 17:49

maybe during the 30th anniversary? It will be in 2022. Yeah. So, nice. Very exciting.

C

Colton Wansitler 17:56

Yeah. And that's, that's really what this project is leading towards. So, we're really excited that you're here. You brought it up. It's all great. Um, can you can you clarify what the six neighborhoods were? And they were..

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 18:11

Holden? We don't know, this was the thing that was weird too--we're all grad students, so like MSU is gigantic and none of us spent any time in the dorms--undergraduates would come up to me and be like where is... and I'd be like, I know we're three buildings are. Like literally like, the one I work in, the one I teach in, and like the one my husband's in a master's program down there and I can tell you where Communication Arts and Sciences is. And over the years, I would learn more, but do you guys remember they were all in dorms? I think

B

Beth Keller 18:40

Yeah, I'm looking up. Isn't this awful? I have like, look up the dorms like Google like what? Yeah.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 18:45



**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 18:43  
Oh, gosh, I just forgot about the Google map for for MSU that was like,

**B** Beth Keller 18:48  
So, there was the Akers Hall. There's Landon, Holden...This doesn't even sound familiar. Okay.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 18:57  
There's another "h," there were like two "h's".

**C** Colton Wansitler 19:01  
Hubbard?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 19:02  
Hubbard, Hubbard, Hubbard and Holden

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 19:06  
Well, the point was right that like every, I don't know what the, the neighborhoods still exist, but there were six of them. And it was so that each like area that because the campus is so big that everybody would have access, you know, without having to go to the centralized portion of campus to get access to things. So, yeah, we're pretty far spread until like the issue that Beth shares about like as a grad student, like didn't typically have to go to these places like figuring out parking and coordinating all that can be difficult especially because most of these hours are in the evening, too. So then you have to get back to your car and it's nighttime, and it's the campus ,and not to mention what hours you're allowed to park and

**B** Beth Keller 19:43  
so, it does look like and they might have like, reorganized, not reorganized, but rebranded them so Case, Holden, Wilson, and Wonders, I kind of think those were, weren't those the three or the four that were in that-- So there was that hub, where tutoring and the Writing Center, and then I think the was like a offshoot of like the Olin health center and they were in one dorm room or dorm, one space in one dorm so that if you were at Case, you had to go to Holden to get those services and then be the closest out see here, McDonald's...(?)

**B** Beth Keller 20:19  
Akers, Holmes, Hubbard...see some of these don't even sound familiar to me.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 20:25

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 20:25  
Yeah, I'm lost already.

**C** Colton Wansitler 20:28  
No worries, I was just curious if they if they've moved since then.

**B** Beth Keller 20:33  
But even just looking at that page from the office of the admissions, like it's much more streamlined now. At the time, it was like we're going to put one on this like part of campus and then these three dorms will use it. We're gonna put one over here and these three blocks to use it here. And so I think, for some reason, the numbers like 7 or 11 total places at the time, like where you could get Writing Center help including the union and library, SAS, all that included it in the main location, some some

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 21:04  
Yeah, we had 10 locations and 90 employees, I think. Yeah, and one of those locations was online. So that was the 10th. That was neighborhoods and then the three locations. So maybe it was 11 with online.

**B** Beth Keller 21:19  
I don't remember. I feel like I read it recently.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 21:22  
But a ton of people like we couldn't fit for staff meetings in Bessey. But we were all technically supposed to be there. That was always a trick. I'm sure that's still a problem.

**C** Colton Wansitler 21:33  
A little bit

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 21:34  
Perennial problem.

**C** Colton Wansitler 21:36  
Um, okay, so what services were offered at the Writing Center while you guys were here? So like writing groups, face to face, stuff like that.

**B** Beth Keller 21:48  
All that we did walk ins, didn't we?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 21:51  
Especially in the library, but um, yeah.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 21:55  
Um, face to face, almost by appointment, online.

**M** Matt Cox 22:00  
Classes,

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 22:01  
Workshops,

**M** Matt Cox 22:02  
Workshops, yeah

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 22:05  
When we do presentations too, I think they were workshops and presentations, and there were a lot of them, I don't know if they're still the same list, it was like pure response was very popular. And we would do workshops in center or in the classroom. But sometimes it was tricky to do them in center because of course, we couldn't consult at the same time. And there was like one on iMovie or like digital movies, um, and we changed it, changed the name of that one to make it less about the technology and more about the you know what it does? That was always kind of tricky. And poster presentations. I gave that one even though I've never made a research poster. Um, PowerPoint, um, plagiarism, you know, avoiding it, obviously. Um, what do you guys remember from that?

**B** Beth Keller 22:49  
I remember doing one on comic, what was it comic?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 22:52  
Oh, yeah. Comic life.

B

Beth Keller 22:56

I wanna say Comic Sans.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 22:59

Everyone wants that workshop

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 23:01

We also I think that grandparents University still a thing, right, that was in the summer. And grandparents would come with, you know, their grandkids. So alumni who are grandparents, and we would offer a number of things and the digital movies one and the comic life one were really popular and so they could do like digital movies of their time there. But like this was before smartphones were like, universally accepted, like things that we just expected people to have. So like people be using, like, we would have like flip cameras and stuff that people could use. Oh, gosh, I did a research project in the center in Graduate Writing groups using flip cameras, where I like had a GorillaPod. And I like, put it in that bookshelf over in the conference room. And like, you know, recorded the whole thing with a flip camera flip camera, which I brought it into my Writing Center a couple years ago for a potential project and like one of the students like what is this?

B

Beth Keller 23:44

I still have mine.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 23:47

Yeah, it was like a big deal at the time.

B

Beth Keller 23:49

Oh, yeah.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 23:51

Yeah.

C

Colton Wansitler 23:52

Well, can I--?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 23:54  
Oh, go ahead.

**C** Colton Wansitler 23:56  
So in a previous interview, we had heard about phone sessions, was that a thing?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 24:02  
Um, not really, although there was arugula

**B** Beth Keller 24:09  
Oh, that's right. So we did have that grammar hotline, because like even I think history that predates the three of us when, there was a grammar hotline so that if you typed in to any search engine "grammar help," Michigan State's Writing Center was the number one pop up and there would be people who would call for various things, but yes, Arugula, which, do we know her name?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 24:33  
We don't know her actual name. And I accidentally nicknamed her that and then it caught on

**C** Colton Wansitler 24:38  
What are you talking about?

**C** Colton Wansitler 24:44  
in like, 2012, no. '14, I started in the center in 2014.

**B** Beth Keller 24:50  
So one time, I was like, I finished an appointment like 10 minutes early and she called, and somebody was like, who wants it? And it was like everybody ducked, right? And I was like, fine, I'll take it. And so I helped her, 'cause she's the one who's always writing something fiction/nonfiction. And she asked me about sentence structure, when really it's a matter of like author choice like, this is a stylistic question oftentimes.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 25:13  
Yeah.

B

Beth Keller 25:14

And I talked to her and I was people were I don't remember why I did it. But I was like, we have a question. I was like, you have called several times in like the last five or six years. And I'm just wondering, because where are you from? She's from New York, because her zip code is I think was 212 or whatever Manhattan's... because it would show up on the on the color of the screen. And I was like, what are you writing? Because we get these like disjointed pieces and she's like, well, I ghost write for a lot of famous people, according to her, and that she just does various projects and had all of these (who knows if they're actually, you know,) these tall tales working Hollywood elites when she was younger, in Los Angeles, it was entertaining. So when I hung up, I was like, I helped her. And I also figured out I was like, guys, she's from Manhattan. And they're like, really? And I'm like, well, that's what she says. So,

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 26:15

Yeah, like once a week, at least, we had the two phones. I don't know if that's I know, it's all been reconfigured, because you have way larger administrative staff now. But there used to just be like the front desk, and then there'd be like this other phone that was over by the mailboxes, and I don't think the mailboxes are there anymore. And so we'd often take the Arugula phone calls, which is based on a word choice question she asked me one time, which is why I call her that. But so we would just take those over on the other phone because it could take a while and she would often just ask kind of questions about word choice or like phrasing, so it'd be kind of like, I'm going to read you two passages. And you'd like to pick, 'tell me when you like better and tell me why.' I remember having like a really long conversation with a about the word bust once. Bust of like, Shakespeare or something that she was referencing? I think I talked about about that one like, we like we conferred, I was like, one moment.

B

Beth Keller 27:05

And she had a character who was moving trash bags, and she needed to know if you step over something, or around something, and I was like, I don't care. You just get out of the way of the trash bags. Like (laughter)

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 27:22

A lot of her questions were like that they were like, it didn't matter. Like the answer didn't matter. It was just kind of annoying, actually. I didn't, you know, it was like, what do you like? And they're like, no, what do you like? You're the reader. I'm like, no, you're the writer. So it's kind of stressful. But funny.

N

Nicholas Buonanni 27:38

I've been there before when she has called, and I had no idea that there was such a long history of her calling the Writing Center.

B

Beth Keller 27:46

I think she predates Matt, you got there in 2007?



**Matt Cox** 27:49

She was definitely calling. Like, early in my time there, she was already. Yeah.



**Nicholas Buonanni** 27:54

I remember the receptionist just being like, can you tell me what to tell this woman? and I was like, sure, I'll talk to her. And it was a question like that. I don't remember what it was, but I had no idea that there was this whole history of her.



**Beth Keller** 28:09

She's probably the writing center's longest client.



**Nicholas Buonanni** 28:12

Yeah.



**Beth Keller** 28:13

Yeah. Which is fascinating, like from that oral history, 30 years. I mean, if we figure, you know, conservatively that she started at 2007, that's 13 years of phone calls. And we virtually know nothing about her except that she's in Manhattan.



**Marilee Brooks-Gillies** 28:35

Well it always felt weird to ask her, because she would always like, she very much wanted to get to the point, you know, which is common in our work, but it's also so different than what we normally do that it just felt difficult to, you know, have a normal conversation.



**Matt Cox** 28:49

I mean, she wanted to get to the point where she didn't want to make a decision because you



**Marilee Brooks-Gillies** 28:52

know, that's true. She wanted to just like really



**Matt Cox** 28:55

should be like, we said, Travis Webster and I used to do impressions of her right and she would be like

should be like, we said, Travis Webster and I used to do impressions of her right and she would be like, would be like, 'now would you say that the trees were more lush or verdant?' Like, you know, it really doesn't matter. You could say they're one, and she would like ask again. And I would be like, how does this matter? and this should ask again. And I was like,

B

Beth Keller 29:14

And she did have that kind of sing-songy, I don't know if it was an accent, kind of voice the way that she would read things.

M

Matt Cox 29:22

Yeah.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 29:23

but we all definitely were like, oh shit, it's your turn. You know, it was like, "not it!"

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 29:28

Like 'I did it last night!.' I remember getting John Lochner to do it all the time. I hope you guys interviewed John Lochner. I should try to get you his info if I haven't already.

N

Nicholas Buonanni 29:35

I got it yesterday from Scott.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 29:38

John's amazing. Um, you should definitely talk to him. But yeah, I think John got stuck with that a lot, while I was there. He was just such like a nice like, guy. He was just, you know, I'll do it.

C

Colton Wansitler 29:51

For so for the sake of time, we're gonna just move, move, move on. So, when you, what do you think of the Writing Center at MSU's history? Like, what comes to mind? Like, are there any significant achievements, or like any like particular, like outreach programs or anything?

M

Matt Cox 30:15

Um, I can't speak for the time before Trixie came, but I remember, like not really knowing what a writing center was, but then, you know, coming out of the corporate world being like having it explained to me and being like, okay, well, that seems pretty straightforward. I get it. This is what we're going to do, now.



And I remember her coming in and just like starting so many new things, and so many initiatives and like, there were so many irons in the fire, right, so to speak. And I just remember being really amazed that our Writing Center did and could do so many things on a campus and for a community. And I was really impressed with that. So that was pretty cool. And it kept happening after I left. I mean, I remember my first couple of years here in North Carolina, I would talk to Trixie, I, you know, I always talk to Trixie and I just remember Trixie being like, 'and then We're hiring this other person in the front office' and I'm like, 'we didn't have that position when I was there' and she's like, 'yeah and then there's gonna be a fourth person over here doing this' and I was like, 'oh my gosh' you know like this is a really ambitious place and I, that really stayed with me, right, and shaped how I saw writing centers, I mean, I helped her for the last couple years I was there I helped her with the sort of WAC with things like the writing across the curriculum stuff and helped her do the workshops on I forget what we call it now there was a whole--

M

**Matt Cox 31:30**

I'm personally but that stupid logo together with the font. Anyway, I was so into it at the time I thought it was so cool. But like I remember all this faculty coming from like Animal Sciences and like we had Saturday workshops and like it was super cool and I just remember thinking like wow, I had no idea right? You know, um so, accomplishment wise, like I personally couldn't point to like one thing, but I will say like, that is one connected Writing Center. That is that is a very center situated space.

B

**Beth Keller 32:00**

To dovetail off of that exactly what I was thinking, they were literally, and figuratively, the center of so many things. If a consultant or a student that they have worked with was wanting to do research in the center, Trixie and the rest of us kind of by proxy, made it happen. I'm thinking of the number of research projects that undergrads would do looking at non native speakers of English. Remember when we did the Myers Briggs test to see how personality types of students and consultants affect the consultation? For me, it gave me, so I'd had experience as an undergrad in a writing center and I came to this like, well-oiled machine that was literally like at the center of education, whether by choice or in some ways, right, like we talked about before, chickens were sort of thrust upon Trixie and those who were running the center like, hey, you're doing this without funding right? When I came back, so my undergrad is from Purdue Fort Wayne. And then I went MSU for grad school, I came back to Purdue Fort Wayne. When I came back to Purdue Fort Wayne, I saw just how important having, I would say having Trixie as a director of a center, and then those people who are trained like I would imagine, like Marie-uh, Marilee underneath her are so important to having a well-functioning center. That is sort of disappointing at the institution that I'm currently in when I see the potential like I've seen what a writing center is capable of doing, and how it benefits in that WAC way to approach the entire university structure to see, I almost in some ways, maybe took it for granted at MSU because I was so focused individually on like, getting out of school and doing well in school. And, not that I saw it as a means to an end, but when you're in an institution where nobody cares about the Writing Center, um, it's, it's yeah, it's just kind of disappointing, I guess you could say. So say that. Yeah, there anything that wanted to be done at the center, Trixie would figure out a way to make it happen.

M

**Marilee Brooks-Gillies 34:10**

Yeah, I have a lot to say about this as someone who directs a writing center now, and I will tell you my first few years directing the Writing Center, I was like, why do not, people don't understand this, why do I not have these resources that I need? And also, how did MSU's Writing Center have so many resources and I

remember Scott and I actually presented with Trixie a couple years ago on this topic, because we felt like, we didn't know what we're doing. And she's like, no, you know what you're doing. And you have far more resources as a grad student at MSU's Writing Center than you do in most programs. So you absolutely know you're doing you've had mentoring in this way, this way, this way, this way, this way, this way, people aren't listening to you, but that's not really your fault. Like, you know what you're doing. Um, and so I feel very confident that I'm good at writing, directing a writing center because I've had that mentoring and guidance and it took a couple years to really trust myself, but because of all the work that we do, we did at the MSU Writing Center and the way that it was anchored to kind of a meaningful, like vision and mission. That you know, even while we were there was that it's kind of infancy when it comes to Trixie director, directorship, and I can't speak to you know, I know Dave Sheridan was there as an interim director for like a year or two before that, and Tim Swenson had been the director for for some time before that, but I don't know and Patti Stock, right, wrote that land grant article, the land grant institution Writing Center article from way back. So um, you know, we knew that it had an important history, but to kind of be there at the beginning of Trixie's time in the center, and now to see what you guys are all up to, and I'm on the ECWCA board, and I still interact with Trixie quite a bit and we're trying to write an article about ranks in our assessment that came from the assessment practices that started in like 2009 created by the assessment committee that still exists there, right? Um, but just everything is happening now, right. There's that consulting work that Trixie's been doing the kind of North/South collaborations in Africa. There's the community stories project, which is like amazing I want to do that project. So all of those types of things and then significant, um, like support and mentorship for other folks, like I think about myself and I think about Scott and think about Robin and countless others who've gone on to direct writing centers or writing programs or like Matt is a graduate director right, Trav is a WAC director, folks who are doing administrative work that have been guided by Trixie and Diana as well at that time and just the legacy is there too, it's in people and like the practices we carry with us into new spaces as well as the the programming that we see.

M

**Matt Cox** 36:38

Um, also like just a really basic level I'll say to like, I came in just thinking of it as funding, right. I didn't know anything about writing centers. I didn't know if I liked them or not. I was pretty neutral. And really, when I met Trixie, I came not knowing--no one told me when I accepted the offer to go to MSU and see that Trixie, there was going to be new Writing Center Director. So, I came primarily to do cultural rhetorics work, because I had spent so much time previous to that working in and doing tech comm work in my master's. And I wanted to do work, especially about around LGBT and queer rhetorics. And I just thought that there would be faculty there who were not queer, but were really supportive. And so when I came in to the Writing Center that first year, and Trixie was the hire, and she was a queer identified person, I was super excited because I was like, Well, I have a chair now. And so she was, you know, my chair of my dissertation from then on. And so I just kind of like fell into that. But, I will say she really shaped how I saw again, how I saw the Writing Center. She was the first person to say to me, like, you need to think of the time you spent in the Writing Center as teaching. It is pedagogical, you are teaching people, because I felt really bad that first year my cohort, there were seven of us, and all of them had either been in the classroom or we're going to be in the classroom and because I had done my master's online while working full time in software, I had not been in the classroom and then I went right into the Writing Center and they kind of teased me a little bit sometimes in our, in our professional seminar. 'oh still haven't been in the classroom, don't know anything about teaching' and I remember Trixie kind of being like, 'stick up for yourself, you are teaching' and so like that still stays with me even though I'm not a writing center person now I'll always be a writing center person, if that makes sense.



**Colton Wessitler** 38:24



Cotton transition 38:24

All right, so, our next question and maybe we've already hit on it, but what is your favorite MSU Writing Center story? I know we talked about arugula, that's gotta be up there.



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 38:45

There's so many I mean, it was just like part of our lives in such a deep way for several years. I'm, that's how I feel. Having one story, one favorite story's really hard.



Matt Cox 38:55

I loved all the pizza nights and lunches, and breakfast meetings, and brown bag lunches, and game nights, and poetry slams, and like there was always something going on. And even if you were just there in a capacity to help other people in a group that you weren't even really a part of you were just there to sort of oversee things or unlock something and you stuck around and stayed with everybody, because they needed you to come in and open the center. That's what I keep thinking of is it was like a hub. It was really like a hub. It was the most comfortable outside of my own home.



Beth Keller 39:30

Yeah, I agree 100%, even though I spent the majority of my time on a teaching assistantship, so I didn't have the Writing Center fellowship, I was always in the writing center. And these guys can attest to it right because I was always there. It was the place that you could go. Even, I remember when some of us, when we got to be older and I don't know like on in school year, I had a key to get into that sort of back hallway door. And some of us would, like do that, like you know, might be seven o'clock at night. We'd go there to study or just to be there.



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 40:04

Yeah, leave the favorite to me.



Beth Keller 40:06

Like I have that expectation, leaving the program like, oh, there should be funding. Not necessarily. I mean, I wasn't stupid that I, you know, not blind to the fact that like I needed to make some of these arguments at my current institution, why there needs to be pizza nights and poetry slams and staff meetings where people get paid. Like, these are the arguments I have to make often. Um, but it was in there. Yeah.



Marilee Brooks-Gillies 40:34

Yeah. When the ceiling tiles I never made one because I like overthought it but



Beth Keller 40:36

B

Beth Keller 40:38

and the wall that we painted?

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 40:39

Yeah, we painted that wall. Talk to Elena (?) about that she has this cross stitch program she used to program the coloring, but we like, we literally had all these paint samples, and we picked out a paint color we liked, which was really sad green color, and Trixie was like no, and then we ended up with all those purples and blues and stuff. And it was like, we assigned each color a letter in the alphabet, and we came in on a Saturday and we taped it up and we like gave all the letters. And then we like, like, there used to be a YouTube video of it, but I think it might have gotten taken down. But we like came in multiple times to just paint that thing. And I'm so happy it's still there, it's beautiful. I want to do it in my center, which is also cinderblock, but forgiveness, not permission, that whole thing. But yeah, that's a good memory. Going to conferences in groups was delightful. We did this one conference, it was the um, The CWPA conference, council writing program administrators, in July. It was 2010. And we had this, it was a collaborative presentation like panel and it was on workshopping because that's what we do, and it was called Bunnies in the Garden, or Organic Mentorship and Writing Centers or Layered Mentorship or something like that. And Bunnies in the Garden though, because Trixie likes these like subversive titles and we had fun with that and we made this like activity sheet to do in the workshop that was shaped like a bunny. Um like, one person came and they're like seven presenter so it was kind of a miss in terms of that but but planning that was really fun, doing The MBTI was really interesting and fun. Just just so much and then like parties that Trixie is like you guys remember the Santa murder mystery Christmas party? That was super fun.

B

Beth Keller 42:18

I was the murderer. (laughter) Once I realized that it was me, then I spent time a lot of the undergrads I was like, here's like \$1,000, I think I had money

M

Matt Cox 42:31

I only cared about eating at those parties. I was at the food table and...(laughter)

B


Beth Keller 42:36

yeah, it's fun like we're we dressed up and things

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 42:39

I always left last because Trixie doesn't like beer, and she would let me and my husband take home all the beer that was (laughter) it was really close, we lived like a mile away. So it was like, not that big of a deal to to stay later to (?). And it was always fine. Watching like, White Christmas in her den. Like, why not? Um, yeah. So parties at Trixie's were fun. Um, I know it's just a social place where you were like constantly talking and thinking about, like learning you were doing, I might say, social.



B

Beth Keller 43:09

I will say too, one thing that stands out and kind of touched on it is that I would usually start consulting at, we open at nine. And I know

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 43:17

We were open for sessions.

B

Beth Keller 43:19

and I would get there early if I wasn't supposed to open at eight, and I would talk to Diana bless her heart. She never told me to leave. Ever. I would talk to her about personal things about, God, applying for jobs. I've been taught all sorts of stuff and I can't thank her enough, like I don't know how I would have gotten through school without, and sometimes Trixie was there but because of where Diana's office was like, right to the first door you could see, I would always go in there. I'd knock, I'd be like 'are you busy?' Of course she's busy, she's reading and writing, her door's shut. As faculty, I get that now where I've got a lot of students, like 'you busy, Dr. Keller?' and I'm like, 'no, come in,' right?

M

Matt Cox 44:01

so, like it's a lie, but I'm saying no.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 44:05

No, it's fine.

M

Matt Cox 44:09

It's fine.

B

Beth Keller 44:10

Like you, if you, we talk, you agree to sign a letter stating that you will write me a letter for my tenure case.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 44:18

(laughter), you will write me a very kind letter.

M

Matt Cox 44:22

But I mean, so many of us, like, you know, in addition to all the Writing Center stuff, like writing, Graduate Writing groups and all that. like. we defended our prospectuses in that space. we defended our

Writing groups and all that, like, we defended our prospectuses in that space, we defended our dissertations in that space, not all of us, but a lot of us and I mean, that space was just,

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 44:36

yeah, it was our home space on campus. I wrote a paper about how writing center like you know, like, I get the critiques about homey Writing Center spaces and all of that, but also the ways that it can function like home, and for writing for for Trixie's like writing center administration course, which I took I audit--I should have audited that course. I took it for credit. I was out of coursework. I didn't need to take any more classes, but that class wasn't offered very often, because Trixie doesn't teach that often or as much, right. And so I didn't want to miss an opportunity to take a course like that with Trixie. So, I took it anyway. And while I was working on exams, which may or may not have been a good idea, but it was this great class, it was good to be able to participate in that way. But it just it touched everything, like the center was just central, like, to our lives at that time. And like, Matt, we had that writing group with Elena, we met in the Writing Center for that group. There's that little table by the fridge and stuff, and we just sit there and,

M

Matt Cox 45:34

and I taught 395 one semester to the Writing Center theory class, and that group of that group of kids, they're all grown up now. Right? But that was like, 2010 or so. So that's been like 10 years ago. Like I'm Facebook friends with most of them now, and they're just like all over. One's like a writer in LA and Hollywood. And like, there's like, oh, Ali, you know, who's in New York City. What's her name? Ali White? Oh, yeah.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 45:55

Oh yeah.

M

Matt Cox 45:56

You know, just like

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 45:57

She works for Google now, I think.

M

Matt Cox 45:58

Yeah. All over doing super cool stuff, right, like, way cooler than me and I just look back and like they were little babies, and it was so adorable. And we made podcasts and it was so fun.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 46:07

Oh, yeah, the podcast assignment.

**M** Matt Cox 46:10  
And now we're, like, all old and grown up and it's like, aw.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 46:13  
well, it's like really kind of alarming actually, that it's going to be 30 years because we were there during the 20th like, that was your last year, Matt, I think right, 2012, and we had a 90's party at Trixie's, so you should definitely do that again. Um,

**B** Beth Keller 46:27  
remember the T-shirts we would get for open mic night?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 46:30  
Yeah, I still have them.

**M** Matt Cox 46:33  
Yeah, my husband still wears some of those shirts even though he's he was never at MSU. But then he'll just walk out in one of them and I'm like, Oh, I remember that shirt.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 46:42  
You guys remember the lip the lip sync we did to help with Sparty, Sparty team? I think that YouTube also took that down because of you know, the time

**B** Beth Keller 46:50  
I thought I watched it recently.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 46:53  
Yeah, but Yeah, we did. We did a lip sync to help. And it was choreographed and it was really complicated and we had to do it a bunch of times. I stood by the printer, which is no longer there, it's on that spot anymore. Um, but yeah, I remember doing that multiple times, wearing one of the T-shirts. That's why I thought of it.

**M** Matt Cox 47:09

I feel like we're still trying to figure that out at other institutions, like how to connect with space. It's so well integrated there. At least it always was, you know, I don't know what it's like now places change. But, you know, I'm sure if Trixie is still trying to do what she's always done, it's good. But like, you know, even where I am now, we have a great director and a great writing center, but it's over in a different spot. And it feels geographically and physically disconnected from where most of us are all the time and it's just different right. You know, it just it just feels different. That community is something really special.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 47:43

Yeah, I'm really lucky to be part of that kind of community still, although it's definitely different to be the director. So it's, you know, I think it's more fun to be a student.

B

Beth Keller 47:54

I should probably clarify. So I was hired on at Purdue Fort Wayne as the Writing Center liaison. I'm going into my sixth year, I still don't understand what that term is. Nobody can tell me, we have a coordinator of the Writing Center. I'm supposed to liaise, I guess between the Writing Center, which is in the library and the College of Arts and Sciences and the English department. What that translates to is I have zero authority, so eventually, I'm supposed to teach the course because I have a PhD. But the course is not required to be a consultant. So guess how many students take the course? None. So check out the course in about two and a half years because of that. So that's

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 48:37

I, um, I'm teaching IU system and Beth's um, institution used to be and IU system kind of, it's complicated, but I actually took your guys's number because my course had a worse name. And I wanted your name. And it made it easier because it was already in the IU system. So fun fact. Yeah. Writing Center Theory and Praxis, which is the same title we had for it at MSU. But yeah. Yeah, helping people understand how important and productive and exciting and fun writing centers can be, I think MSU Writing Center is a really great example of that. And so it's important if for no other reason that it can model that to other centers and you see all the great work that comes out of there. All the great thinking all the people who go on and do other cool things and can connect that in some way to their time in the center.

C

Colton Wansitler 49:25

Great, so I just wanted to check because we are coming up on the hour mark. Are we limited to the hour mark?

M

Matt Cox 49:34

I'm, I am, I don't know if anyone else says just because grad director duties; I have to go talk to our new fall incoming cohort. We're doing meetups on Zoom. So I'm going from one Zoom to another.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 49:44



— So many Zooms today.

B

Beth Keller 49:47

I will have about 15 minutes but I'm open to finishing, have your questions on I can see that we haven't addressed a lot of them. So

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 49:55

yeah, I can give you like 15/20 more minutes

B

Beth Keller 49:57

and re interview us at some point, that's fine.

M

Matt Cox 50:00

Yeah

C

Colton Wansitler 50:01

Well, let's, let's see how many questions we can knock out in a short amount of time. If there's, Matt, if there's anything you want to say before you like, jump out real quick, we can go ahead and

M

Matt Cox 50:13

We got through, I have the questions open in front of me. I know we kind of were in organizational culture, right? Did we get

C

Colton Wansitler 50:21

the last question there?

M

Matt Cox 50:23

So the logistical practical questions, one, two and three, like, we're kind of on that?

C

Colton Wansitler 50:29

We're in the gathering stories, I think, right?

**C** Colton Wansitler 50:34  
Political, university events.

**M** Matt Cox 50:36  
Oh, yeah. Okay. Um, oh, gosh, you know, so much has happened to MSU. Since then, like, obviously, all the Nassar stuff and like national news, and I feel like MSU like completely imploded after I left, right. So in terms of university events occurring, it was interesting because there was some grumbling, like, there are at all universities about the importance of things like athletics and budgets and stuff, right, but that stuff didn't really happen until after we were gone. I do remember a really happy moment in 2008 when Barack Obama was elected the first time I remember spending that with Writing Center people and I remember that feeling like a really special moment, especially since I'm an old person, and I remember how angry I was during the Saddam Hussein time and all of the stuff that had happened. So that felt like a real, a real important moment in 2008. So, I don't know. Yeah, that's my recollection on like world events and University things.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 51:36  
Yeah, Obama came to campus during the his campaigning, and was over by, you know, the, the spirit rock or whatever. And that was kind of, you know, a cool experience to be near. Change, hope, you know, and now, cut to 2020. But (laughter) it was nice in 2008.

**M** Matt Cox 52:01  
A little, cue the little, "this is fine" with all the fires around, right?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 52:06  
Yeah, yeah.

**M** Matt Cox 52:09  
I am going to duck out there right now and I want so that you can keep talking to Beth and Marilee, I will tell you that I'm happy to also talk again if you all would like me to, I'm around. So

**N** Nicholas Buonanni 52:19  
What I can do is I can reach out to you guys and we can discuss a possible time in like a week or something.

**M** Matt Cox 52:25  
A little, cue the little, "this is fine" with all the fires around, right?

Absolutely.

**C** Colton Wansitler 52:26

So do we want to end it here and then we can try and get the six of us back together and start at organizational culture?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 52:36

I'm gonna be gone for a couple weeks so I could do like August, unless you want to talk to me and then talk to these folks again later. If you have like a time crunch

**M** Matt Cox 52:47

I'm around.

**B** Beth Keller 52:48

I'll be around I'm just writing until my hands fall off.

**M** Matt Cox 52:51

Yeah, this was my, this was my summer of no life. So I'm around whenever.

**C** Colton Wansitler 52:56

Great so um, Marilee, it's up to you do you want to keep talking right now and

**N** Nicholas Buonanni 53:02

then we can with the other two in like a week or two finish

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 53:08

sure I'm happy just makes it easier logistically to chat a little bit longer today.

**M** Matt Cox 53:13

Email y'all.

 . . . . .

**S** Sharieka Botex 53:16

(?) He said hello. Bye

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 53:19

Tell Josh and Scott that I say hello

**C** Colton Wansitler 53:27

Marilee, when are you leaving town

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 53:29

Um, Monday?

**C** Colton Wansitler 53:31

Monday, okay

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 53:33

and I'll be in northern Michigan, where Beth just was, I'm so jealous. Yeah, I gotta get out of fucking Indianapolis. I'm sorry. I just

**B** Beth Keller 53:42

Hard like, with COVID hell, I understand why but all plans that we have for the summer was canceled. Yeah. Summer 2020 was just cancelled. Some things were rescheduled like we were going to go to a few concerts. So we're just like, okay.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 54:00

Yeah, I'm just gonna, like go up north and hide. So it's not like I'm, not gonna interact with other people really?

**B** Beth Keller 54:05

Are you going to Charlevoix?

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 54:07

I don't know my parents have been really intense about the distancing. But we're going to go to the east

I don't know, my parents have been really intense about the distancing, but we're going to go to the east side.

B

Beth Keller 54:12

Yeah, cool.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 54:12

At least, yeah. And I hope so.

C

Colton Wansitler 54:15

Well, I think, you know, we can certainly do something in the beginning of August, that's still within this timeframe. And then we can continue from organizational culture.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 54:28

Yeah, whatever you guys think is best. I'm, I'm cool with whatever. I just didn't want to delay you. I know how hard it is to schedule things sometimes.

C

Colton Wansitler 54:35

No worries this, I mean, there's so much here and we I have to go in and fix all the transcriptions anyway. So, I think that there's really appreciated everything, a lot of good information. So

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 54:48

and there's still more.

C

Colton Wansitler 54:49

Right we'll schedule a part two. This is the end of part one.

B

Beth Keller 54:55

When I saw who was on the email, Colton, I was all like, an hour?

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 55:00

I know me too. I was like, uh oh.

**B** Beth Keller 55:04  
Four hours talking about the Writing Center, and how it is

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 55:08  
Easy. Yeah, you're all stuck with all these people telling inside jokes to each other. But you know, at least you know about Arugula too. So there's that. Yeah, we,

**C** Colton Wansitler 55:17  
We called her New York girl. So we've kept the information that she was from New York. And that was,

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 55:23  
that's held forward, that's good

**C** Colton Wansitler 55:25  
She hasn't called in a couple years, though.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 55:27  
Oh, oh, that's kind of surprising and sad. I'm surprised how sad I am actually.

**B** Beth Keller 55:32  
I immediately, based on some of the stuff that I, I can't remember but some of the people who she claims to have interacted with, I mean, like old time movie stars. I'm like, oh, I wonder she passed away.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 55:43  
Huh

**B** Beth Keller 55:44  
Like I have no, I mean, I have no idea how old she was. But hey, was definitely around, like, the time of my grandparents, so. But anyway, okay.

**S** Sharieka Botex 55:55

No, but, it was it was good. I'm looking forward to part two and getting through questions. But I was happy to hear that both of you had some experiences with navigating the PhD and I think somebody said navigating the PhD and navigating the master's. I was like, man, these are the originators. And yeah,

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 56:09

We should talk more.

S

Sharieka Botex 56:11

Yeah, yeah. I would love to hear

B

Beth Keller 56:13

Oh, I think there were a lot of like weekend or MBA folks who had contacted Trixie, or even just being present in having consultations. They were like, can we attend, and some of them started to attend navigating the PhD, even though they weren't PhD students, because they thought, well, there would be some things that we could learn and that prompted us. Put that together.

S

Sharieka Botex 56:34

Yeah. I'm glad they were there. Because when I came in and first started doing it and I felt like I didn't have all the answers all the time. But I learned so much from people who were attendees and like, it helped. It's been helping to, like get me integrated into being in the PhD. program. So I'm grateful for it does a lot to work with all those people and learn from all the people to attend but also have access to the resources that you guys created and stuff for them.

M

Marilee Brooks-Gillies 56:58

It's such a nice workshop, you know, cuz it's like, it's a little intimidating. And then when you're giving, you're like, oh, these are just like people who like want to support each other. And I do know about writing turns out, so I can actually be supportive. And then they can share the things they know. And we all feel good. Not a bad way to spend a Saturday, or Friday or whatever we ended up doing. But yeah, that was that was always really fun. I gave it my first time at the end of my first year. And I remember feeling like, what am I, who am I to tell other PhD students, like I barely have any of this down. So and Trixie's like, you're fine. Just figure it out

N

Nicholas Buonanni 57:35

I'm going to say that I tried to keep the participants a little bit of a secret at first, like you had given us the list, Marilee, and then I reached out to everyone and I was, I was like, I'm just gonna blind copy all time. And I'm going to do a doodle poll so that nobody can see who else has submitted it. And then I was like, okay, so now that I've gotten the cl-, like the groups of people together, I'm gonna do like a regular email and see if they kind of a peek at who it was sent to finally to see who's like in their group. So I'm happy

B**Beth Keller 58:04**

I totally did, and I actually, I appreciate that, Nick, because I was all like, oh, I know these people. I actually haven't talked to them and so long because life came and just sucked everything out of me, anyway. Yeah, like, I need to see Matt and Marilee!. And then I was like, one hour? Ha ha ha...

M**Marilee Brooks-Gillies 58:22**

Right? Well, when Nick first reached out to me, I was like, and he was like, you could do it, like, individually, we could do it in a group. And I'm like, I'd love to do it in a group, if I could do it with people I worked with in their day because I want it to be a reunion and, you know, you kind of riff off of each other. So

N**Nicholas Buonanni 58:38**

It's funny, because that was the original view of this was it was going to be one on one, but then we ended up, our first interview that we did back in February was Julie, and Jill.

M**Marilee Brooks-Gillies 58:51**

Oh, wow.

N**Nicholas Buonanni 58:52**

And so, but we didn't plan necessarily, like it was like one of those things were like, well, maybe we should just do it together. And we realized that in that moment, it was like there they talk with each other, and they help each other remember stuff, and it just became that much more of real stories and not just answering questions because they were with someone they had worked with. And so, since then, although some people would probably prefer to do it on their own, we're trying to do more of the group idea.

M**Marilee Brooks-Gillies 59:22**

Yeah, it's fun and definitely filling in each other's gaps and like, oh, yeah, that makes me remember this. Yeah, so much. I mean, just five years of Writing Center things. And beyond because really, like I still interact with the MSU Writing Center, you know, like, which is great. It's such a nice center. I'm always so jealous, now. Like, look at all that space! Mine is tiny, you know and like oh man, just like thinking about all the money you guys have, like what a great budget. Just a great budget, yeah.

M**Marilee Brooks-Gillies 59:59**

Yeah. Very well resourced, exciting, you know, stable center, like more stable than ever, right? You have all these great new people in there to like, um, you know, Grace and Karen. Just super, super cool.



**C** Colton Wansitler 1:00:13  
Yeah, we're pretty happy to have them. Yeah, yeah, we're

**S** Sharieka Botex 1:00:16  
Very fortunate.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 1:00:18  
Yeah. And all of you, of course. So that's awesome. And, like,

**S** Sharieka Botex 1:00:23  
Part of a nice history like this, like finding out so much about what shapes the space that we're in now, because you see all the good things, but it's beautiful to see how long they've been existing and like, how they came on the place. For sure.

**M** Marilee Brooks-Gillies 1:00:36  
Yeah, and it's really cool to see how it's like change, you know, like that it hasn't just remained static and like, that's all it's possible. You know, so like, there's just really just more and more and like, we're trying to redo my website right now, and I'm like, look at these exemplar sites, and I'm like, they're not perfect, but they have like, all these things we don't. So like, you know, one of the things I really love about MSU's site that hasn't existed forever is the research page about research that's emerged from the center. I think that's a really great way to showcase that the center isn't just about support services, right like that, of course that's amazing and good, but it's like theoretically and pedagogically informed work. And like, here's examples of research coming from not just the directors, but also students in the program like, love that, want that for my center. So, just one of the many examples.

**C** Colton Wansitler 1:01:24  
Well, thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording.