# The word "Create" and OWCA logo on laptop keyboard.OWCA 2020 Report

August–December 2020



## Introduction

This report serves to publicly document the founding of the Online Writing Centers Association (OWCA) in 2020. This report also serves to archive the history of the association for future reference.

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## History

The OWCA was founded on August 29, 2020, and was announced to the writing center community on October 13, 2020. How we got here is detailed below.

### Online Writing Centers Community

The OWCA started out as the Online Writing Centers (OWC) Community. The idea for both initiatives was formed in 2017 at the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) conference in Chicago.

At IWCA 2017, Cynthia Pengilly, Jenelle M. Dembsey, Beth Nastachowski, and Sarah Prince met in a special interest group on online writing centers (OWCs). They had often felt alone in their OWC work and decided to create an informal network for OWC scholars to connect and share OWC effective practices outside of annual conferences. Over the next 8 months, they worked to create OnlineWritingCenters.org and launched the OWC Community on July 23, 2018.

Between 2018 and 2020, the OWC Community did the following:

* Compiled a searchable database of OWC scholarship
* Hosted special interest groups at IWCA conferences
* Hosted Virtual Conversation Hours on OWC topics
* Facilitated a listserv to connect professionals around OWC work
* Started a 1:1 mentorship program, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to connect writing center administrators with volunteer mentors

### Transition to OWCA

In 2020, the founders decided to transition the OWC Community from an informal network to a professional association that could more sustainably support online writing center professionals during and after COVID-19. Elle Tyson joined as a co-coordinator of the OWC Community in August 2020 and helped to manage the process of applying for legal status.

The steps to creating a non-profit, professional association included the following:

1. Selecting a state to incorporate in. The OWCA chose Ohio—the Founding President's state of residence.
2. Researching Ohio's nonprofit application process and requirements.
3. Drafting Articles of Incorporation that met Ohio and IRS requirements.
4. Having the Articles of Incorporation reviewed by a lawyer.
5. Submitting the final [Articles of Incorporation (Appendix A)](#_Appendix_A:_Articles) and a non-profit corporation application to the State of Ohio.
6. Receiving a Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Ohio.
7. Applying for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS.
8. Drafting and adopting the OWCA bylaws.
9. Submitting a 1023-EZ application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status.
10. Obtaining 501(c)(3) status from the IRS.
11. Creating a non-profit bank account.
12. Submitting for and obtaining Ohio Charitable Registration.

The OWCA Founders used the following resources during this process:

* *The Law of Tax-Exempt Organizations in a Nutshell* by Scott A. Taylor
* Ohio Nonprofit Corporation Law
* IRS Publication 557
* IRS Publication 598
* IRS Instructions for Form 1023-EZ



## 2020 Schedule Overview

### August

* 8/29: Legal incorporation obtained in State of Ohio

### September

* 9/14: Executive Board meeting
* 9/16: Executive Board meeting
* 9/16: Original OWCA bylaws adopted
* 9/16: Founding Officers elected
* 9/20: Executive Board meeting

### October

* 10/2: 1023-EZ application submitted to IRS
* 10/12: Executive Board meeting
* 10/13: OWCA officially announced to writing center community
* 10/13: Open Officer positions and Officer election announced

### November

* 11/6: Deadline to apply for open Officer positions
* 11/18: Executive Board meeting
* 11/18: First amendment of bylaws approved

### December

* 12/18: Executive Board meeting
* 12/19: 501(c)(3) status obtained with the IRS



## Executive Board

The OWCA Executive Board administers the association and votes to approve or disapprove the association's tasks and direction. The Executive Board is staffed by volunteers who are elected and have term limits.

### Executive Board Members

The OWCA had 4 Executive Board members in 2020. Their Officer positions and terms are described in Table 1.

**Table 1. Executive Board Members.**

| **Name** | **Officer Position** | **Length of Term** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Jenelle M. Dembsey** | Founding President | October 2020 to December 2022 *(followed by 1-year term as Immediate Past President)* |
| **Sarah Price** | Founding Vice President | October 2020 to December 2022 *(followed by 2-year term as President)* |
| **Elle Tyson** | Founding Treasurer | October 2020 to December 2023 |
| **Beth Nastashowski** | Founding Secretary | October 2020 to December 2023 |

### Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board met 6 times between September and December 2020. Meeting dates and tasks accomplished are noted in Table 2.

**Table 2. Executive Board Meeting Dates and Tasks Completed.**

| **Meeting Date** | **Task(s) Completed** |
| --- | --- |
| September 14 | * Reviewed Articles I through IV of bylaws |
| September 16 | * Reviewed Articles IV through VII of bylaws * Approved adoption of original bylaws * Elected Founding Officers |
| September 20 | * Approved budget for 2020 and 2021 * Approved free membership for students and professionals * Approved account registration questions |
| October 12 | * Approved updated website content * Approved plans for announcing OWCA to writing center community * Approved election timeline |
| November 18 | * Approved first amendment of bylaws * Elected At-Large Representatives and Student Representatives (terms to begin January 2021) * Approved presentation proposal for Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) conference 2021 * Disapproved sponsorship by Innovative Educators |
| December 18 | * Approved Google Workspace for association data storage * Approved short-term Conference Committee and Grants & Fundraising Committee, to begin in 2021 |



## Budget

The OWCA's 2020 income and expenses from the time of legal incorporation are broken down in Tables 3 and 4 below.

**Table 3. Total Income and Expenses.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget Item** | **Amount** |
| Membership Dues Received | $0 |
| Donations Received *(after PayPal fees)* | $2240 |
| Expenses Paid | -$1488 |
| **Total at End of Year** | **$752** |

**Table 4. Expense Items and Costs.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expense Item** | **Cost** |
| 1023-EZ application to IRS | -$275 |
| Google Workspace | -$99 |
| Website hosting and domain | -$185 |
| Membership plugin | -$149 |
| Other website plugins and features | -$0 |
| ASL interpreting for webinar | -$780 |
| **Total Expenses** | -$**1488** |



## Membership

The information below is based on the members the organization had at the end of December 2020.

### Membership Dues

In 2020, the OWCA offered free membership and had no membership dues. Membership types are described in Table 5.

**Table 5. Membership Types and Dues.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Membership Type** | **1-Year Cost** |
| Student | Free |
| Professional | Free |

### Membership Benefits

OWCA membership included the following benefits:

* Apply to serve on the Executive Board
* Vote in elections for the Executive Board
* Volunteer for an OWCA committee
* Apply for OWCA 1:1 mentoring

### Number of Members

The OWCA had 203 members as of December 31, 2020.

**Table 6. Number of Members by Type.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Membership Type** | **Number of Members** |
| Student | 30 |
| Professional | 173 |
| **Total Members** | **203** |



## Administrative Tasks

The OWCA worked to complete the following administrative tasks in 2020.

### Legal Incorporation in Ohio

***August 29, 2020 • Completed by Founders***

The OWCA Founders submitted the [Articles of Incorporation (Appendix A)](#_Appendix_A:_Articles) and a non-profit corporation application to the State of Ohio on August 29, 2020. The OWCA received approval and a certificate of incorporation from Ohio on August 31, 2020, with the official date of incorporation being August 29, 2020.

With this approval, the OWCA was now a legal entity, and the 4 Founders became the first OWCA Executive Board.

### Adoption of Bylaws

***September 16, 2020 • Completed by Executive Board***

The Executive Board voted to adopt the original OWCA bylaws on September 16, 2020. After the bylaws were adopted, the Executive Board voted to assign Officer positions among themselves. The following positions were assigned:

* Jenelle M. Dembsey, President
* Sarah Price, Vice President
* Elle Tyson, Treasurer
* Beth Nastachowski, Secretary

An election was held in October 2020 for the remaining open Officer positions.

### Amendment of Bylaws

***November 18, 2020 • Completed by Executive Board***

The Executive Board approved the first amendment to the OWCA bylaws that included the following revisions:

* The number of At-Large Representative positions on the Executive Board was increased from 3 to 4.
* A few instances of “by-laws” were changed to “bylaws.”
* A section for “Dates of Adoption and Amendment” was updated to include the date of amendment.

The current OWCA bylaws are publicly available on the OWCA website.

### 501(c)(3) Status

***December 19, 2020 • Completed by Executive Board***

The Executive Board submitted the OWCA’s 1023-EZ application for 501(c)(3) status to the IRS on October 2, 2020. The OWCA received 501(c)(3) status from the IRS on December 19, 2020.

Obtaining 501(c)(3) status means that the OWCA is exempt from paying tax on membership dues and donations. This status also allows the OWCA to apply for reduced costs/fees on services (such as Google Workspace and PayPal), apply for non-profit grants; and apply for affiliation with the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA).



## Events

The OWCA offered the following events in 2020.

### Mentoring Service

***August–December 2020* • *Coordinated by Executive Board***

The OWCA continued the 1:1 mentoring service started by the OWC Community in March 2020. In this service, anyone in the writing center community could submit a request for mentoring on online writing center work and be matched with a volunteer mentor with relevant experience. The OWC Community and OWCA received 23 requests for mentors in 2020.

The OWCA Mentoring & Resources Committee took over coordinating the mentoring service in 2021.

### Webinars

***September–October 2020* • *Coordinated by Executive Board***

The OWC Community and the OWCA offered 3 webinars in 2020. All webinars were free to the public, and the recordings were publicly available in OWCA's Event Archive.

#### Shaping Online Tutoring Practice: Research and Reflection over Replication

***September 8, 2020 • Led by Lisa Eastmond Bell***

As Lisa Eastmond Bell explained, online tutoring at its best is shaped by learners and learning and not simply an attempt to replicate in-person tutoring practices. This webinar touched on the following topics:

* Where we are with COVID-19 and in the process of reflecting on online writing center work
* Benefits of online writing center work
* Synchronous consulting benefits and myths
* Asynchronous consulting benefits and myths
* Multiple options for access and inclusivity
* Writing center values of learning

#### Racial Justice and Online Writing Center Praxis

***October 2, 2020 • Led by Zandra Jordan***

In this webinar, Zandra Jordan introduced the theoretical frame of Womanist Ethics and four parts of this ethic: radical subjectivity, traditional communalism, redemptive self-love, and critical engagement. She then facilitated two activities in Padlet where attendees reflected on their racial justice values and commitments, their vision for a racially just future in their online writing center, and the steps they can take toward implementing that vision.

#### Enacting Antiracism in Asynchronous Writing Consultations

***October 26, 2020 • Led by Eric Camarillo***

The goal of Eric Camarillo's webinar was to reframe the value of asynchronous writing center work and to demonstrate why it should be seen as an innovation rather than a disruption, a valid option for students, rather than a subpar alternative. In particular, this webinar aimed to be generative for writing center practitioners hoping to incorporate antiracist practices into their centers.

### SIG at IWCA Conference

***October 29, 2020* • *Coordinated by Executive Board***

The Executive Board led a special interest group (SIG) at IWCA's Listen. Learn. Lead. online Event. This session introduced the OWCA, our mission and 2021 goals, membership, committee work, open Officer positions, and other ways to get involved. Attendees were also invited to share ideas for resources and support.



## Resources

The OWCA offered the following resources in 2020.

### Scholarship Database

***Coordinated by Executive Board***

The OWCA continued the scholarship database started by the OWC Community in 2018. The database included over 200 articles, blogs, books, and presentations, published from 1987–2020.

The OWCA Mentoring & Resources Committee took over managing the scholarship database in 2021.



## Elections

The OWCA held 1 election in 2020 for Officers on the Executive Board.

**Table 7. Open Officer Positions and Applications Received.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Open Officer Position** | **Election Date** | **Elected By** | **Applications Received** |
| Conference Organizer | November 2020 | OWCA Executive Board | 1 |
| At-Large Representative  *(4 openings)* | November 2020 | OWCA Executive Board | 7 |
| Student Representative  *(2 openings)* | November 2020 | OWCA Executive Board | 2 |

## Appendix A: Articles of Incorporation

The OWCA Founders submitted the following Articles of Incorporationto the State of Ohio on August 29, 2020.

### Articles of Incorporation of Online Writing Centers Association

The undersigned, a majority of whom are citizens of the United States, desiring to form a Non-Profit Corporation under the Non-Profit Corporation Law of Ohio, do hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation:

#### ARTICLE I. NAME AND LOCATION

1.1 The name of the Corporation shall be Online Writing Centers Association.

1.2 The place in the State of Ohio where the principal office of the Corporation is to be located is the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County.

#### ARTICLE II. PURPOSES AND AUTHORITY

2.1 The purposes of this Corporation are:

2.1.1 To provide community and support to individuals aiming to offer dynamic and/or interactive online writing support services, in fully online, hybrid, or on-site contexts.

2.1.2 To engage in, assist and contribute to the support of exclusively charitable, scientific or educational activities and projects, within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended; and

2.1.3 To perform such functions either directly or by making donations, gifts, grants, contributions, loans, guarantees, fellowships, or subsidies out of the net income or principal assets of the Corporation, or both, without limit as to the amount going to any one recipient or in the aggregate to all recipients, including donations, gifts, grants, contributions or loans to or for the use or benefit of other corporations, organizations, foundations, institutions or governmental bodies, but subject always to the provisions of Section 2.3 hereof.

2.2 In addition to, and not by way of limitation of, any authority possessed by it or conferred upon it by law, the Corporation shall have the authority, subject only to Section 2.3 hereof:

2.2.1 To pursue its purposes and conduct and carry on any and all lawful business or activities in connection therewith or incidental thereto, or any part thereof, in the State of Ohio, or in any other state, territory or possession of the United States;

2.2.2 To do any and all acts and things and carry on and conduct all other activities consistent with the purposes set forth above as may be necessary or advisable, suitable, convenient, useful or expedient in connection with, or incidental to, accomplishment of any such purposes, to the full extent permitted by the laws of the State of Ohio.

2.3 Notwithstanding any other provision of the Articles of Incorporation, all work of the Corporation shall be carried on, and all of its funds shall be used and applied exclusively for, charitable, scientific or educational purposes. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member, officer or other individual, except that reasonable compensation may be paid for service, rendered to or for the Corporation and payments or distributions may be made in furtherance of the purposes of the Corporation. Subject to the provisions of Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, governing expenditures by public charities to influence legislation, no substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. The Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a Corporation exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.

#### ARTICLE III. NONPROFIT CORPORATION

3.1 The Corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members.

3.2 The Corporation shall be a nonprofit corporation governed under the State of Ohio.

#### ARTICLE IV. NONDISCRIMINATION

4.1 This corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual preference, status with regard to public assistance, disability or age.

#### ARTICLE V. DURATION OF THE CORPORATION

5.1 The duration of existence of the Corporation shall be perpetual.

#### ARTICLE VI. REGISTERED AGENT AND OFFICE

6.1 The registered agent for the Corporation shall be *[name redacted for privacy]*, whose mailing address shall be the registered office of the Corporation.

6.2 The location of the registered office of the Corporation shall be:

*[address redacted for privacy]*

#### ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP

7.1 The Corporation shall have Members who shall have such voting rights and who shall be ascertained as prescribed in the Bylaws of the Corporation. The Bylaws of the Corporation may establish more than one category of voting Members.

#### ARTICLE VIII. BOARD

8.1 The management and direction of the business of the Corporation shall be vested in its Executive Board.

8.2 The number, terms of office, powers, authorizations and duties of the Executive Board of the Corporation, the time and place of their meetings, and such other regulations with respect to the Executive Board which are not inconsistent with the express provisions of these Articles of Incorporation shall be as specified from time to time in the Bylaws of the Corporation.

8.3 Any action, other than an action requiring membership approval, may be taken by the Executive Board by written action signed by the number of Board Members that would be required to take the same action at a meeting of the Board; provided that all Board Members shall be notified of the text of the written action prior to the signing by any of the Board Meetings. Upon adoption of any such written action all Board Members shall be notified immediately of the effective date of such action.

#### ARTICLE IX. DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY AND ASSETS ON DISSOLUTION

9.1 In the event of liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Corporation, whether voluntary or involuntary, or by operation of law, the remaining property and assets of the Corporation shall be distributed in such manner as the Executive Board of the Corporation, by majority vote, shall determine. Such distribution shall be (a) exclusively for the purposes for which the Corporation is formed or (b) to such organization or organizations created and operated for charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes as shall at such times qualify as being exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any similar federal statutes.

#### ARTICLE X. NO BOARD OR OFFICER LIABILITY

10.1 The Board, Officers and Members of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for the debts or obligations of the Corporation of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the Board, Officers or Members be subject to the payment of the debtor obligations of the Corporation to any extent whatsoever.

#### ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES

11.1 These Articles may be amended in the manner now or hereafter prescribed by law.

#### ARTICLE XII. FIRST EXECUTIVE BOARD

12.1 The number of Board Members constituting the first Executive Board of the Corporation shall be four (4), and the tenure in office for the members of the first Executive Board shall be until the first annual meeting in 2020 and until their successors are elected and qualified. The names and addresses of each of the first Board Members are:

*[addresses redacted for privacy]*

Jenelle Dembsey

Sarah Prince

Elisabeth Nastachowski

Lisa Tyson

#### INCORPORATOR SIGNATURES

In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names this 26th day of August, 2020.

*[signatures redacted for privacy]*

Jenelle Dembsey, President

Sarah Prince, Vice President

Elisabeth Nastachowski, Secretary

Lisa N. Tyson, Treasurer