

# Summer 2023 ACS Summer Writing Accountability Group Program: Final Report

Nancy Chick, Rollins College

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## Program Description

“The price we pay for the practice of solitary writing is that we often doubt ourselves, we feel as if we lack courage or commitment, we find writing lonely and hard, we can’t get into it. By [writing in community and] refusing the boundaries between individualism and community, between the public and the private..., we can ... forge new, more pleasurable and productive writing selves.”

—[Barbara Grant](#), “Writing in the Company of Other Women,” *Studies in Higher Education*, 2006

In most faculty members’ long “To Do” lists, “*Write that article!*” is often sidelined when urgent but less important tasks emerge. Writing is thus perennially relegated to summer, potentially productive months but also when we’re most isolated from our colleagues. The ACS Summer Writing Accountability Group (WAG) Program is based on the need for accountability, structure, and community in faculty writing experiences. Participants are placed into small, multi-institutional groups that serve as accountability partners throughout the summer.

The program begins with the development of a personal writing plan and a one-hour meeting of all participants. Throughout the summer, participants meet with their accountability group for one hour each week to establish and celebrate specific milestones, track their progress, talk through moments of feeling stuck, share advice on all things writing, cultivate a writing practice they can live with, and (most importantly) get some writing done. The program ends with a celebratory virtual gathering. Here is [the website](#) for the 2023 ACS Summer Writing Accountability Group Program.

## Participants Who Completed the Program

This year, 35 faculty members completed the program. Below are the 9 Writing Accountability Groups, or WAGs. Each group, which chose their own name as part of their first conversation, combined faculty from different ACS campuses, met weekly, and tracked their goals and progress throughout the summer. Below are the participants by WAG:

### ***A Spotlight on History***

- Sara Massey
- Jon Heggstad
- Laura Franey
- Kathy Wiegand

### ***Feed Me While I Write***

- Mengying Liu
- Christal Schoen

- Juan Guevara Pinto
- Molly Brookfield

### ***WAGmates***

- Amber Reed
- Cody Crosby
- Angie Dewberry
- Myra Monreal

### ***ACSribes***

- Kristen Golden
- Jorge Lizarzaburu
- Susanna Weygandt
- Victoria Brown

**Flow Writers**

- Melissa Vise
- Jana Mathews
- Ellen Barnett
- Allison Miller
- David Wood

**NOMADS**

- Andres Romero
- Erika Berroth
- Liz Egan

- Erica Williams

**We Are Greats**

- Bellee Jones-Pierce
- Rebecca Barrow
- Jethro Hernandez Berrones

**Magic 8**

- Li Kang
- Susan Libby
- Matt Cohen

**The Motivators**

- Melissa Johnson
- Yang Gao
- Sarah Breitenfeld
- Courtney Hatch

Below are the participants by campus:

**Centenary College**

- Christal Schoen
- Bellee Jones-Pierce

**Hendrix College**

- Courtney Hatch

**Davidson College**

- Jon Heggstad
- Angie Dewberry
- Rebecca Barrow
- Sarah Breitenfeld

**Furman University**

- Matt Cohen
- Yang Gao

**Millsaps College**

- David Wood
- Kristen Golden
- Laura Franey
- Liz Egan

**Rollins College**

- Jana Mathews
- Myra Monreal
- Victoria Brown
- Andres Romero

- Susan Libby
- Juan Guevara Pinto

**Sewanee-University of the South**

- Molly Brookfield
- Susanna Weygandt

**Southwestern University**

- Sara Massey
- Cody Crosby
- Jorge Lizarzaburu
- Erika Berroth
- Melissa Johnson
- Jethro Hernandez Berrones
- Allison Miller

**Spelman College**

- Kathy Wiegand
- Amber Reed
- Erica Williams

**Trinity University**

- Ellen Barnett

**Washington & Lee University**

- Mengying Liu
- Melissa Vise
- Li Kang

**Confirmation of Regular Virtual Meetings**

The entire cohort (all 36 of us) met in a kick-off Zoom session on June 6, 2023, when we shared Program goals and needs, and where participants first met their WAGmates to set their meeting schedules for the summer. After that, each WAG met virtually every week throughout June and July.

In addition, [this Google sheet](#) served as the Program’s tracking site where everyone shared their projects, goals, and plans, and where each WAG maintained a weekly goal-setting sheet (the subsequent tabs on the Google sheet) for each of their Zoom meetings.

The screenshot below is from one of the WAGs, but the full sheet includes 5 more weeks and the final celebration in over 30 unpictured columns that extend to the right.

The Motivators	WAG Week 1 (June 5-11)	WAG Week 2 (June 12-18)			WAG Week 3 (June 19-25)								
Tuesdays, noon EDT/11am CDT	6/6/2023 4:00 pm EST	WAG Meeting: June 13th @ 11:00 am CST			WAG Meeting: June 21st @ 11:00 am								
Tuesdays at 11:00 CST, except June 21st at 11:00	Kickoff Meeting: June 6, 4-5pm EDT	WAG Meeting: June 13th @ 11:00 am CST			WAG Meeting: June 21st @ 11:00 am								
Name (Campus)	Kickoff Meeting attendance	Writing (or prepping) goal for this week	Progress toward writing (or prepping) goal	WAG Meeting attendance	Writing goal for today's group writing time	Today's writing goal achieved?	Writing goal for next 7 days	Progress toward writing goal from last 7 days	WAG Meeting attendance	Writing goal for today's group writing time	Today's writing goal achieved?	Writing goal for next 7 days	Progress toward writing goal from last 7 days
Courtney Hatch (Hendrix)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Initial literature research to support writing	Worked on collecting and beginning to dig through literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue digging through collected literature research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue literature research, review current state of manuscript draft, and begin to make a plan for revisions	Concluded literature search and notes and began reading through draft.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue reading through draft and noting where revisions are needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Organize methods and analysis materials. This is a double goal while I am on vacation over the next week.	My small task list was completed due to a cleanup that had to be done weekly. WAG meeting complete this goal in 15 minutes.
Melissa Johnson (Southwestern)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Decide on number of chapters and what each one will be about	Had hour long talk with colleague about trophy hunting camp paper. Thought more and jotted notes about chapters for book. Read Sorby and took notes on much of it to help contextualize social history of Mosquito Shore 1740-1790—this all helped, story is developing in my head. Thought a little about how to make the most of my time in Belize in July.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review notes from colleague convo on trophy hunting camp, organize for inputting into manuscript.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I will be on vacation Friday morning through Monday night. But Tues afternoon, Wed and Thurs will work on inputting notes from convo into article ms. (and will force myself to prioritize that rather than playing with book project). Goal is to have that 1/2 completed by our Wed. meeting.	So, I did not do much after a productive 30 minutes during the WAG meeting last week. But I did read and take careful notes on a dissertation that will be central to my book project. (Sorby), and feel that I have a better holistic sense of context for book.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	To input at least three of the suggestions my colleague gave me on the jaguar paper.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I was pleased that I input about 6 of the suggestions that my colleague gave me, and I loved each suggestion off in my notes from that meeting so that they are easier to work with. I chose NOT to deal with the conceptually more difficult ones (re: argument/intervention). For this coming week, I plan to input ALL of his suggestions. I also think it might be helpful for me to reverse outline again, because I think my 'analysis' does things I don't talk about in the section where I set up my paper to begin with. I will leave book project fully behind in these next 6 days.	None. Literally none wrong, I must have more on that week's meeting. I did a reversal saw more what I need the paper
Sarah Breitenfeld (Davidson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Will condense chapter to 7000 words	Goal accomplished, chapter finished.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reread Fall 2023 draft of Pythias article and make plan for revisions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Detailed plan of revisions, begin rereading Pythias (4+ plays)	I read 4 Plautus plays, as planned. I read through my notes on the Pythias paper and now have a general sense of the revisions needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Begin close reading of the Caena.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Read 6+ plays and complete reading notes on relevant characters.	Plays read, notes taken
Yang Gao (Furman)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Have a rough revision for an introduction, create a manageable mess.	Had a rough revision of the introduction (without the final paragraph). Switched gear to revising the analysis part.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue revising the analysis section of the paper.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Keep revising the analysis section and have a decent revision of this section by end of Thursday. Write at least one hour a day on trip to Indianapolis (this Friday - next Tuesday).	Completed a decent round of revision of the analysis section.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Going back to the introduction to sharpen the argument based on revision of the Analysis. May not complete this in 30 minutes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Complete a round of revision and send draft to writing coach by Sunday (6/25).	Submitted second round of writing coach by Wed. received positive feedback!

## Resources

Here is the Program’s [website](#). (See screenshot to the right.) This site provided an easily accessible space for participants to use whether they were in their offices, traveling, or working from home. It contains some writing resources as well as a link to the Program’s accountability site. I invite the ACS to link to this site to showcase the Program.

Launch Meeting: Tue, June 6, 4-5pm EDT  
 Writing & Weekly WAG Meeting: June 12-July 28  
 Final Celebration Meeting: Thu, July 27, 2-3pm EDT

Read more about the Program below.

"The price we pay for the practice of solitary writing is that we often doubt ourselves, we feel as if we lack courage or commitment, we find writing lonely and hard, we can't get into it. By [writing in community and] refusing the boundaries between individualism and community, between the public and the private... we can... forge new, more pleasurable and productive writing selves." — Barbara Grant, "Writing in the Company of Other Writers" (2006)

**Plan Your Summer**

Choose among [these templates](#) to break your project into manageable phases, goals, tasks, and timelines.

**Track Your Progress**

Track your progress at the end of each week, and see how others are doing. (Only WAG Program participants have editing access.)

**Meet with Your WAG**

Set and report on weekly writing goals, and get a little writing done during your WAG [weekly meetings](#). (What's a WAG? See below!)

"I have exchanged the stringent vocabulary of boot camps, coaching and cures for a more enticing set of metaphors... And alongside the puritanical prescriptions of [Robert] Boice and his followers, I suggest strategies for explicitly linking productivity with craftsmanship, people, and pleasure; for example, by reading books and attending workshops or courses that will make them feel more confident in their writing style; by forming collaborative relationships premised on emotional support rather than on disciplinary sanctions; and by seeking out writing venues filled with light and air." — Helen Sword, "Writing Early: A Midlife Memoir" (2016)

## Self-Assessment

I did not do a survey at the end of the Program, so please go ahead and send one from the ACS. The goals for this Program were to provide structure, accountability, and community to support ACS faculty in writing throughout the summer.

## Structure

This Program provides plenty of structure for each of the WAGs and for individual faculty members in a few ways. Perhaps most importantly, it uses a simple weekly

rhythm for the duration of the program. Each WAG determines its own weekly meeting days/times (which became routine of that group), and their [sheet on the tracking site](#) is also organized by week. I also send an email to the cohort every Monday morning, and participants track their progress by the end of each week.

### ***Accountability***

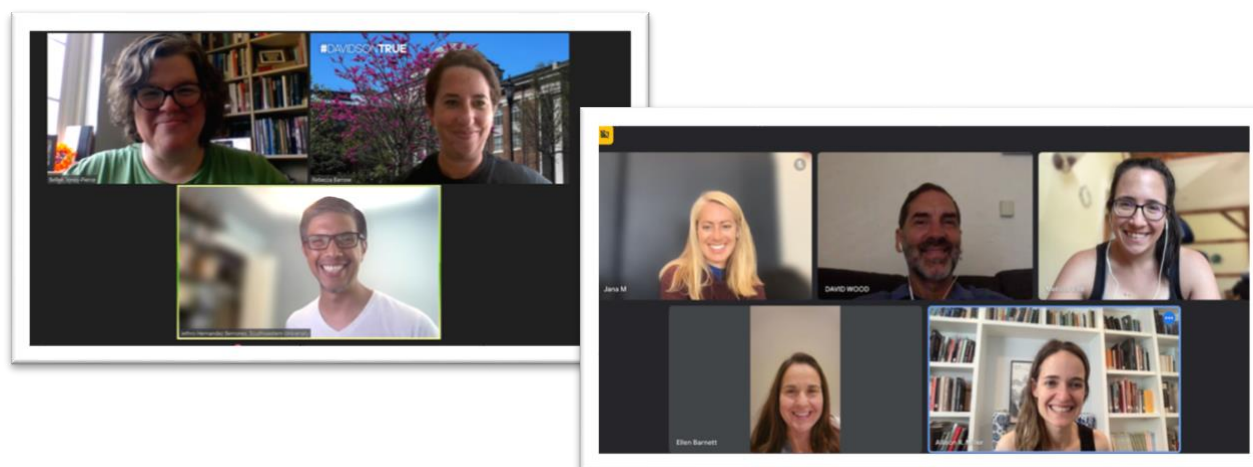
Accountability is the central piece of this Program, so the structure and community aspects of the Program are designed to bolster the sense of accountability participants feel as they go about their work. Participants track their weekly and summer goals in Google site as described above. Each WAG meets weekly to discuss how the week had gone, to write together as companions, and to goalshare for the coming week. While some groups were more successful and consistent than others, it was clear that participants came to appreciate support from one another and to use the WAGs to hold themselves accountable.

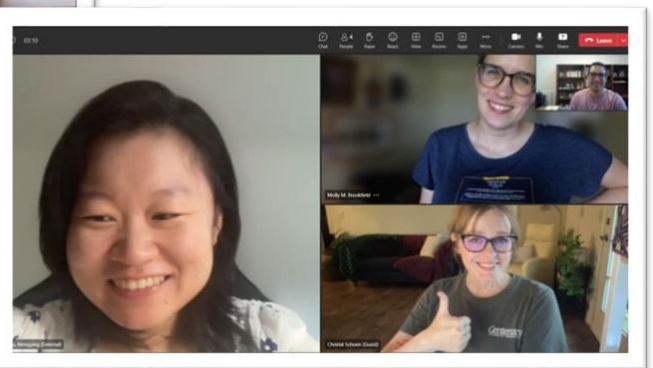
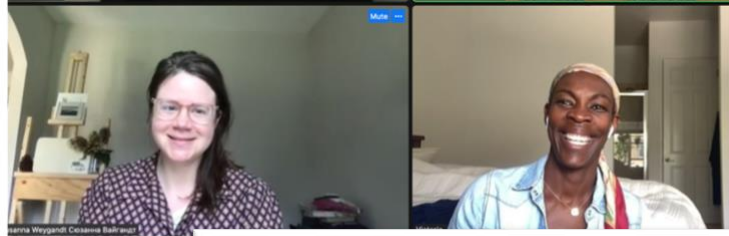
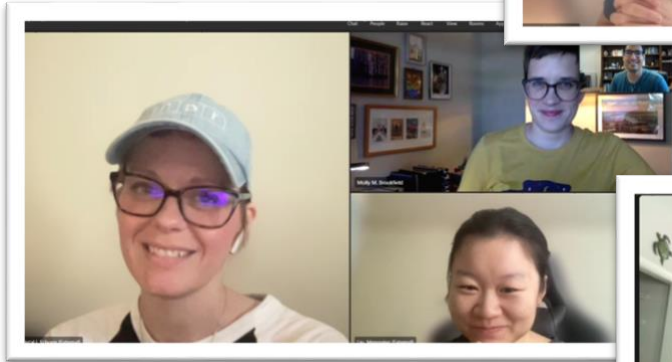
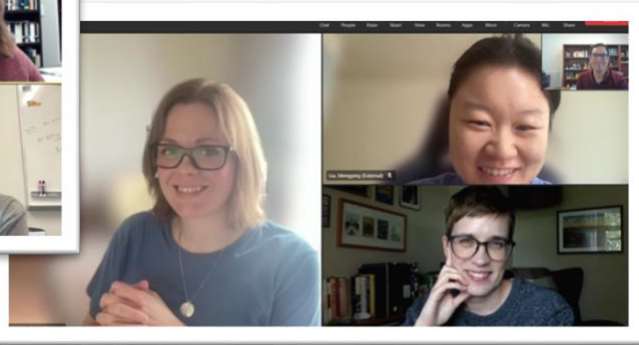
### ***Community***

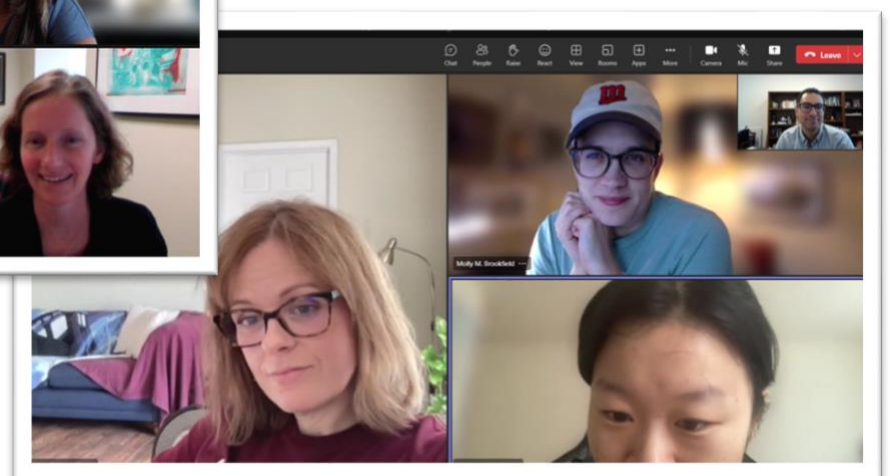
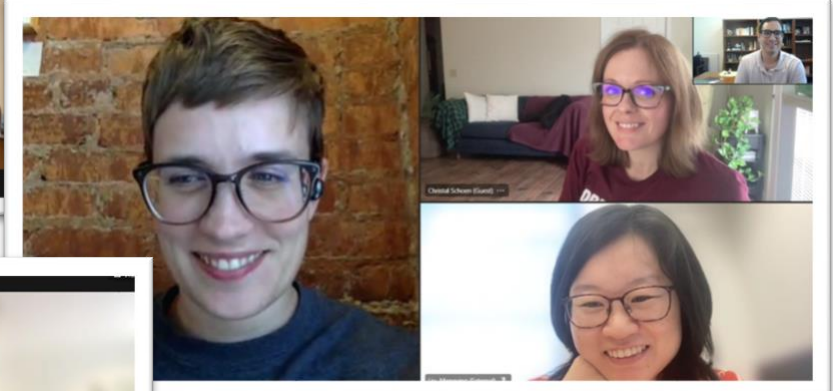
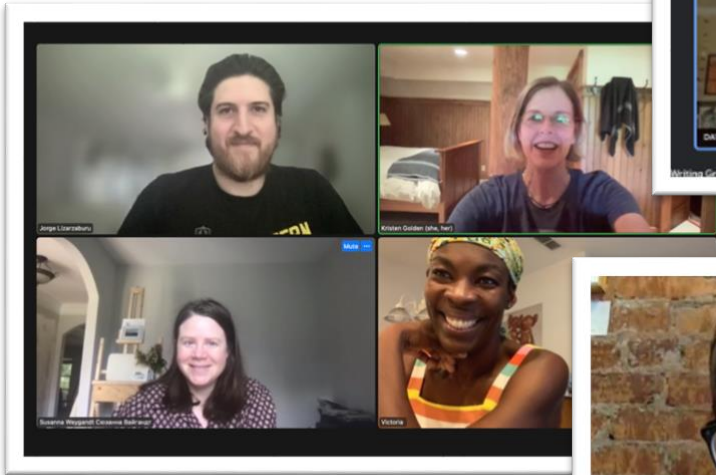
Aligned with the goals of the ACS, the Program aims to establish a sense of community across ACS campuses, so I formed each WAG with campus variety in mind. Participants commented on how much they appreciated these connections throughout the summer, and a few report that they will continue to meet in the future. In addition to continuing to support each other in accountability groups, it is clear that participants made new relationships with their peers at other institutions and should have more robust cross-campus relationships in the future.

Below are some images shared as part of the Program, and below that are some of the unsolicited notes from participants.

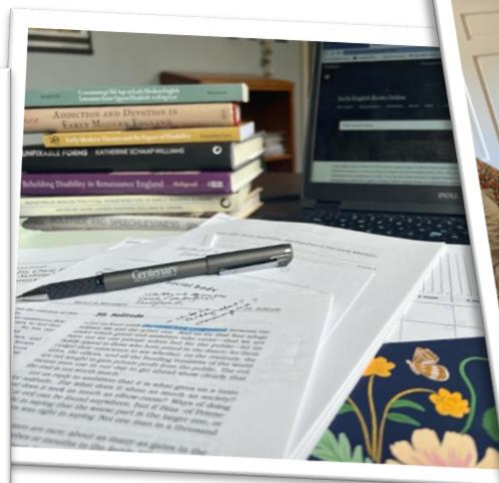
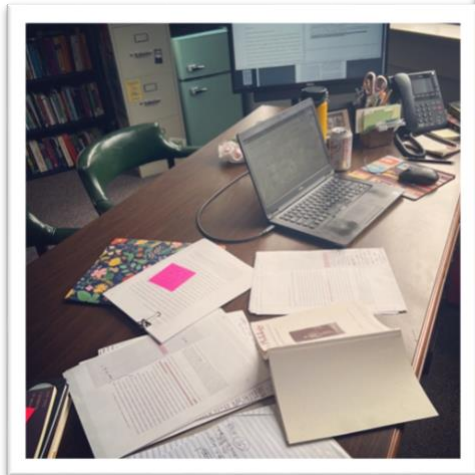
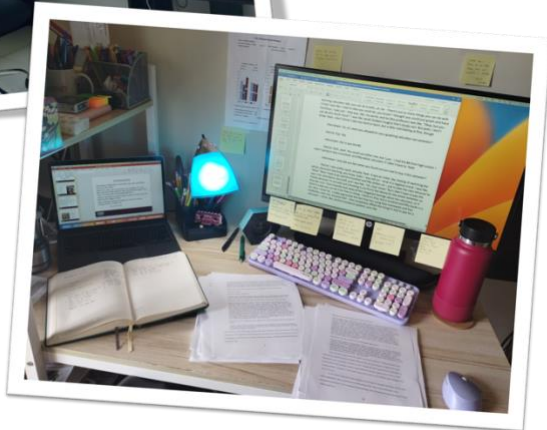
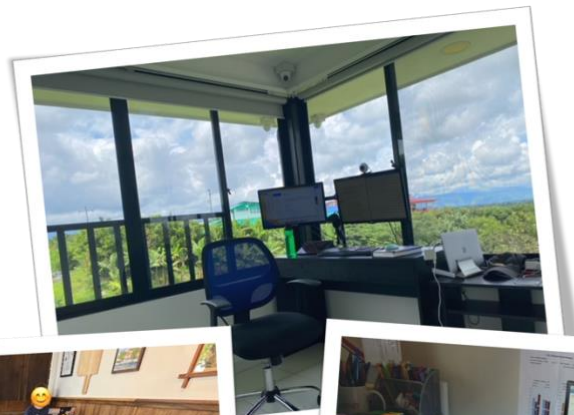
### ***WAG Screenshots***







**Participants' Writing Spaces**



### ***A Few Notes from Participants***

**From:** Christal L Schoen <cschoen@centenary.edu>  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023 at 12:16 PM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: ACS WAG Week 4

Hi Nancy!

Thank you so much for putting this together. I have been more motivated and organized this summer than I normally am. It's absolutely wonderful and I hope to use WAGs continually moving forward.  
Christal Schoen

**From:** Bellee Jones-Pierce <belleejonespierce@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Monday, July 3, 2023 at 11:35 AM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: ACS WAG Week 5: Let's celebrate!

Hi Nancy,

Thank you for this check-in. I needed it. I've felt pretty stagnant and discouraged—like the storm and then Covid completely deflated my momentum—but that's not true. I appreciate you saying so.

Here are a few photos of my workspaces—June 7, June 12, and June 28. I started posting photos like this to Instagram years ago, while I was finishing my dissertation with a toddler and without institutional support (or a library!). They helped then, and they're helping now.

Wishing you a lovely week,  
Bellee

**From:** Barrow, Rebecca <rebarrow@davidson.edu>  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at 3:01 PM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: WAG Final Week: Celebrate!

Hi Nancy,

We are all grateful for this experience, and acknowledge far less progress would have been made had we not been Zooming weekly.  
Rebecca Barrow



**From:** Egan, Liz <eganee@millsaps.edu>  
**Date:** Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 2:58 PM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: congratulations! address?

Hi Nancy,  
You're the best! This has truly been so helpful and such fun ❤️  
Thank you for leading and guiding us all on this wonderful writing journey!  
Warmly,  
Liz

**From:** Melissa Johnson <meljohn@southwestern.edu>  
**Date:** Friday, July 28, 2023 at 12:30 PM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: WAG Final Week: Celebrate!

You probably heard, but our group found this to be enormously helpful for our writing--so thank you! I submitted an article that has been weighing on me since before the pandemic  
Mel

**From:** Christal L Schoen <cschoen@centenary.edu>  
**Date:** Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 9:34 PM  
**To:** Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>, mmbrookf@sewanee.edu <mmbrookf@sewanee.edu>, Juan Guevara Pinto <JGUEVARAPINTO@Rollins.edu>, mliu@wlu.edu <mliu@wlu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: congratulations! address?

Hi Nancy!  
Thank you again for everything. The Writing Accountability Group was a wonderful experience that truly helped me make progress this summer.  
~Christal

**Awards from the Final Celebration**



## Co-Authorship Award

This award is presented to

**Rebecca Barrow & Angie Dewberry**

for working so effectively on the same article across different WAGs (and keeping up with a heavy summer workload) as part of the Summer 2023 Writing Accountability Groups Program sponsored by the Associated Colleges of the South.



Coordinator, ACS WAG Program



July 27, 2023  
Date

## Writing Process Award

This award is presented to

**Liz Egan**

for using such a reflective and agile writing process with effective, purposeful adjustments to her writing schedule and goals as part of the Summer 2023 Writing Accountability Groups Program sponsored by the Associated Colleges of the South.



Coordinator, ACS WAG Program



July 27, 2023  
Date

## Lololol sob Award

This award is presented to

**Bellee Jones-Pierce**

for surviving a powerful storm, the resulting days without electricity (in the heat of summer in Shreveport!), and COVID—and then rejoining her WAG when she was able while also giving herself grace in regaining momentum in her writing as part of the Summer 2023 Writing Accountability Groups Program sponsored by the Associated Colleges of the South.



Coordinator, ACS WAG Program



July 27, 2023  
Date