

Non-Tenure Track Candidates

Leigh Elion has been Assistant Teaching Professor of English and the Director of the Writing Center at Oxford College of Emory University since 2019. She is also a storyteller and researcher for Unexpected Atlanta, designing and providing public history tours that bring a public rhetorics perspective to Atlanta's history and especially its contributions to civil rights achievements. Prior to joining Oxford (a unique two-year SLAC within Emory), she was a Lecturer in the UC-Santa Barbara Writing Program, and prior to completing her PhD at UW-Madison, she adjuncted at multiple institutions in the Boston area. This combination of roles – as a non-tenure-line instructor and administrator in a variety of institutions and regions, and now also as a practicing public rhetorician – reflects the experiences of rhetoricians both within and beyond the academy. She is equipped to draw on this wide variety of experiences shared by non-tenure-track RSA members (and potential members) in service to the RSA board.

Her rhetorical interests include study of public spaces and public memory, visual and sensory rhetorics, and food-ways and cultural rhetorics, with particular focus on the rhetorics of urban development. She is a community-engaged scholar who combines qualitative and critical research methods, and she is well familiar with the challenges (and opportunities) that non-tenure-track status can confer on sustaining a research and writing agenda, on community building, and on a sense of belonging in the field. She currently serves on the review board of the Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics and also has a record of leadership on the boards of other professional organizations, including the Southeastern Writing Centers Association Board and the International Writing Centers Association Board, where she has contributed to enhancing the inclusivity of grants, awards, and conferences. She would especially look forward to bringing these perspectives to thinking innovatively with RSA members about new possibilities for supporting the vitality of rhetorical study beyond traditional career development pathways.

Michael Ristich is an Academic Specialist in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures (WRAC) at Michigan State University (MSU). He teaches across the department's programs, which includes First-Year Writing, Experience Architecture, and the Graduate Program. As part of the First-Year Writing Program's administrative team, he serves as the Online Curriculum Coordinator. He also teaches in MSU's Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities. At the same time, his thinking, reading, and writing about democratic engagement, political rhetoric, teaching and learning, and critical and rhetorical theory extends beyond the university-setting. He recently completed a two-year stint on the RSA Career Development Committee. In addition, in 2019, he was appointed as a trustee on his local school board before being elected to a six-year term in 2020, during which time he has served as Board President. As a member of the Board of Directors, he would hope to advance RSA's goal of creating and sustaining a large and dynamic community of practitioners that reflects the diversity of rhetoric studies as an area of academic inquiry and the promise of rhetoric studies as an area of professional practice and knowledge. Too, he recognizes that RSA's membership is uniquely equipped to engage some of our most urgent political issues. Consequently, he would be eager to work with other members to seek out and create opportunities for public-facing work that both honors RSA's long history and orients it towards new possibilities.