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## Why did you choose to become an UPCEA Member?

When I choose to become an UPCEA institutional member I didn't really know much about UPCEA. I was recently hired at WMU at a regional location and a large amount of staff were going to the conference in Chicago. I was invited and thought it would be a great place to meet not only co-workers but others in the field. I then went to the regional meeting and they were planning these conferences. I love event planning so I jumped in feet first. Overall, I truly joined for camaraderie and connection. Plus, scratching the event planning itch didn't hurt either.

## How has your Membership contributed to the success of your university?

By being involved with UPCEA I have been able to lead more effectively in my career as well as learn from others. I have a network where I can bounce ideas off of and learn from others successes and failures to contribute to the university as a whole.



Kristin Hrynczuk  
Instructional Technology Specialist  
Western Michigan University

Kristin's career has taken her from student services to instructional support, the majority of time working at regional or remote locations and with non-traditional students. Having honed her skills, Kristin recently began working on the faculty side supporting online learning and development.

## How has the recent pandemic and the need for remote/online education increased the importance of your UPCEA Membership?

It has been a comfort to have a group of like minded people to go through this together. We have been sharing stories, both good and bad about life/work during the pandemic. Being able to connect with others from outside your immediate circle and support one another has been invaluable.

## What specific things have been most impactful?

- Committee involvement
- CORE (member discussion platform) to connect with one another
- Mentoring & guidance from senior leaders
- Connecting with UPCEA staff

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## What specific things have been most impactful?

I make the most of my membership by being a part of the regional planning committee. No matter the amount of time or effort you want to put in, the planning committee has the right fit for you. Within this group I have made friends, professional connections and had a whole lot of laughs!

## How have the volunteer leadership roles that have you served at UPCEA been of benefit to you in your career and/or to the field in general?

I have made many connections with others who have guided me through my career. I was able to develop my own board of advisors for advice and direction who have helped me envision my future in higher education and how to get there. I have grown as a leader and professional and had the opportunity to lead the first ever virtual regional conference, where I became more confident and a stronger leader. I was able to smile through the difficulties and learned that transparency really is the best! This experience showed me I was no longer a "new" professional but a seasoned leader.

## To whom would you recommend an UPCEA Institutional Membership?

I would recommend to anyone new to the field of professional and continuing education to join. The reason I specifically say "new" professionals is that I have not been part of another organization that can so quickly and easily connect you with seasoned professionals and growth opportunities. UPCEA offers networks, professional development certificates and overall a safe space to ask questions and learn.