Molly Boeka Cannon has taken the place of director of the Mountain West Center, serving jointly as the director of the Museum of Anthropology. She has been at USU since 2010 and has previously worked on Mountain West Center projects.

“The Mountain West Center was created as a center for regional studies to understand people in their place within the Mountain West,” explained Cannon.

The Mountain West Center tells the stories and lived experiences of people in the Mountain West and gives a platform to promote these stories. The center provides many programs to assist in this endeavor, including the Evans Biography Awards, a prize given to the best autobiography, biography, or memoir about someone who lived a large part of their life in the Interior West and the Evans Writers’ Workshop, an opportunity for writers to improve their biographical writing.

Another important program that the Mountain West Center houses is the Bennion Teachers’ Workshop, an annual workshop that connects educators with the latest research and content exploring the concepts upon which democracy is built, the conditions under which it flourishes and the dangers to its existence. The workshop is made possible through an endowment established by Ione Bennion and advanced through the work of the Bennion Fellow, currently held by Julia Gossard, faculty member in the Department of History. The center also contains a variety of collaborative efforts.

“Come to us with ideas and stories and we help you find a way to share those stories,” said Cannon.

Cannon’s new goal as director is to grow the reach of these long-standing programs and increase awareness among students. The center’s programs are applicable to a variety of students and majors, so extending the reach helps them assist as many students as possible. The center will be holding networking events and other student-centered events in the future.

The center also sponsors a variety of scholarships, which in the past have not been competitive. One of Cannon’s goals is to expand the reach of these scholarships and attract more scholarship applications to increase the competition.