

August 15, 2014

To: Glynis Ridley, Chair
Department of English

From: Bronwyn T. Williams,
Director, University Writing Center



Re: Writing Center Report AY 2013- 2014

The University Writing Center had a successful year in 2013-14, both conducting routine business and successfully launching several new initiatives. Credit for the accomplishments in the Writing Center is shared by the director, Associate Director Adam Robinson, Program Assistant Robin Blackett, Assistant Directors Ashly Bender, Jessica Winck, Meghan Hancock, and Jennifer Marciniak, as well as the dedicated and talented staff of consultants.

Achievements

1. Writing Center Consultations: The Writing Center had a successful year of consultations. Visits for the 2013-14 Academic Year in Brief:

Fall 2013 –	Belknap	2032 Visits
	Health Sciences	50 Visits
	Virtual	403 Visits
	Total	2485 Visits
Spring 2014 –	Belknap	1638 Visits
	Health Sciences	39 Visits
	Virtual	474 Visits
	Total	2196 Visits
Summer 2014 –	Belknap	347 Visits
	Health Sciences	9 Visits
	Virtual	175 Visits
	Total	621 Visits
Total for 2013-14		5302 Visits

We saw a decrease of 127 visits over 2012-13. This decrease is directly attributable to the bad weather in January and February. While it is impossible to know precisely how many visits were lost, we estimate that the combination of campus closings and students cancelling appointments accounted for more than 300 lost appointments in January and February.

2. Exit Survey Results: Our exit survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the Writing Center, by both quantitative and qualitative measures. Results are attached to this report. Highlights of the survey are:

- In answer to the statement: “My Writing Center consultation addressed my concerns about my writing project,” more than 94% of respondents selected “Strongly Agree” (83%) or “Agree” (11%).
- In answer to the statement: “What I learned during my Writing Center consultation will help me with future writing projects,” more than 94% of respondents selected “Strongly Agree” (66%) or “Agree” (28%).
- In answer to the statement: “I plan to use the Writing Center again,” more than 94% of respondents selected “Strongly Agree” (74%) or “Agree” (20%).
- In answer to the statement: “The Writing Center staff were welcoming and helpful,” more than 96% of respondents selected “Strongly Agree” (86%) or “Agree” (10%).

The qualitative responses on the survey were overwhelmingly positive as well. A small group of suggestions mentioned the space restrictions in the Writing Center and suggested longer consulting sessions. The space issues may be addressed with our proposed move in the Library. We feel the length of sessions is currently the most conducive to effective tutoring.

3. Presentations and Workshops: During the academic year, University Writing Center staff conducted 60 in-class workshops on writing issues and 119 presentations about our services. We also conducted workshops about effective writing for Residence Life, the Cultural Center, and other campus organizations.

4. Virtual Writing Center: There were more than 1,000 visits to the Virtual Writing Center for the second year in a row. We also held our first Virtual Dissertation Writing Retreat in January, details of which are below.

5. Writing Center Web Page: The new website for the University Writing Center went live in February 2014. In addition to being easier to navigate, it contains new resources for student writers, for faculty with questions about teaching writing, and videos about the Writing Center and the new scheduling software. This was a ground-up rebuilding of the website and a substantial amount of time and effort was involved.

6. New Scheduling Software: The University Writing Center researched, purchased, and made the transition to a new, online scheduling system, WOnline. The new system is not only much easier for students and Writing Center staff to use, but also provides easier templates for writing up appointment reports and distributing user surveys. In addition, the new system allows us to conduct our Virtual Writing Center appointments through the software itself, making it much easier to do live, online chat appointments with distance education students.

7. Dissertation Writing Retreats: The spring Dissertation Writing Retreat during May was again a success. In the May retreat, funded by SIGS, 14 Ph.D. students representing four different colleges and seven different disciplines spent a week in the Writing Center working on their dissertations. In January, the University Writing Center conducted its first Virtual Dissertation Writing Retreat for students who were no longer in Louisville, but still working on their dissertations. Four students participated in this pilot project. The exit surveys and discussions with the students indicated that both retreats were overwhelmingly successful.

8. Graduate Student Writing Workshop Series: The Writing Center, in collaboration with SIGS, conducted a series of writing workshops for graduate students on both the Belknap and Health Sciences Campuses. The workshops, some of which were repeated each semester, covered issues including Reading and Responding to Graduate Level Scholarship, Revising Strategies, and Writing a Literature Review. The workshops will take place again in 2014-15.

9. Writing Center Blog: The University Writing Center Blog, to which all members of the staff contribute posts during the year, was viewed more than 8,000 times in 2013-14. In addition, many of the posts have drawn interest from readers outside the UofL community. A popular new feature, called “How I Write” drew contributions from UofL and community members, including President Ramsey, members of the creative writing faculty, and local writers.

10. Social Media – The number of visits to our Facebook page and our Twitter account have both grown substantially during the past year as we have posted more regular updates about our work and about writing issues in general.

11. Writing Center Scholarship: During the 2013-14 academic year a number of Writing Center consultants presented their scholarship at conferences including the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Rhetoric Society of America, the Southeast Writing Centers Conference, the Kentucky Philological Association Conference, and the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing. A UofL panel, including myself, Adam Robinson, Ashly Bender, and Jessica Winck also presented at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference. In addition, Jennifer Marciniak, Assistant Director for the Virtual Writing Center, was recognized by the Southeastern Writing Center Association as Graduate Student Tutor of the Year for 2013-14. Layne Gordon, GTA and consultant, had her article “Tutoring with Genre: Making Connections Between Genre Theory and Writing Center Pedagogy,” accepted for publication in *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*.

12. Campus Outreach: Writing Center staff worked with a number of University programs, giving presentations and conducting workshops. These programs included the Porter Scholars, A&S Advising, UofL Athletics, the Career Center, the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program, Family Scholar House, the Delphi Center, E.S.S.E.N.C.E, Housing and Residence Life, First-Year Initiatives, the Dental School, Student Affairs, TRIO, Ekstrom Library, and the International Center. The presentations given by the Writing Center staff resulted in many students then visiting the Writing Center for the first time.

14. Marketing: Marketing activities this year included contact with most student service offices on campus, and contact with chairs of a number of academic departments. In addition, the

University Writing Center continued a collaboration with Professor Gabrielle Meyer of the Fine Arts Department to hang student art in the Writing Center and sponsored its first art contest – “Writing in the World – in conjunction with the Celebration of Student Writing.

15. Learning Commons: The Writing Center continued to meet with other student support organizations located in Ekstrom Library to coordinate Learning Commons activities. The offices involved are the Digital Media Suite, Media Resources, the REACH Computer Resource Center, the Reference & Information Literacy Department, and the Writing Center.

Plans for 2014-15

University Writing Center Move: The planned renovations to the Ekstrom Library will result in the University Writing Center moving from the third floor to the first floor in summer 2015. Much of our time and energy this year will be spent planning and preparing for the move.

Writing Center Web site: We plan to continue building the new Writing Center website, with a specific focus on providing more resources for faculty.

Dissertation Writing Retreat Study: We are currently conducting research exploring the effectiveness of the Dissertation Writing Retreat.

First-Year Student Research Study: We are planning a research project on first-year student use of the University Writing Center.

Faculty Writing Support: We have had several requests for providing more resources, such as workshops or writing groups, to support the writing projects of junior faculty. We plan to try some pilot programs this year toward this end.

Health Sciences Center Writing Groups: We are attempting a pilot program on the Health Sciences campus of running writing groups for students beginning their dissertation work.

Digital Media: We plan to continue, and expand, our work consulting with students on digital media projects.

