

University Writing Center Annual Report (Spring, Summer, & Fall 2014)

Staff:

Brandy James, Director (through Summer 2014)
Duane Theobald, Manager (through Summer 2014); Coordinator (Fall 2014-present)
Stephanie Urich, Receptionist (through Summer 2014); Admin. Assistant (Fall 2014-present)

Overview of Services:

The University Writing Center (UWC) exists to assist students, both undergraduate and graduate, in their pursuit to become better writers and scholars. Through the implementation of thirty-minute and hour-long tutorials, our staff has the ability to assist students from various disciplines with any writing assignment for any particular course. Not only do we provide guidance for students regarding particular written coursework, but we also have the capacity to assist students with other written work (i.e. scholarship essays, letters of intent, creative works). In addition to providing tutorials for students, the UWC also hosts a variety of writing workshops throughout each fall and spring semester. These workshops serve as another opportunity for students to receive individualized attention and assistance with various aspects of the writing process¹.

Overview of Report:

This report serves to detail the activity of the UWC during the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2014 semesters. Below is specific information related to student tutorial attendance, workshop attendance, campus outreach opportunities, and additional ventures that the UWC took part in during the year.

Spring 2014

Student Tutorial Attendance:

During the Spring 2014 semester, the UWC's tutorial figures were a bit lower than the Spring 2013 semester, in large part due to the two weeks of closure due to winter weather. The final figures for both semesters are listed below for comparative purposes:

Spring 2013

*Students Served: 699

*Appointments: 1,708

Spring 2014

*Students Served: 592

*Appointments: 1,408

¹ Beginning in Fall 2014, the UWC discontinued the writing workshop series. As of Fall 2014, the center conducts both introductory class visits and specialized workshops instead, allowing faculty, staff, and students to receive further writing assistance outside of the UWC itself. A more detailed explanation of this change can be found in the Fall 2014 section of this report.

*Visits: 1,601

*Courses Served: 137

*Visits: 1,342

*Courses Served: 134

Also, throughout the semester, Ms. Urich kept track of the number of students we turned away due to lack of availability or tutorial time. The total number of students turned away for the Spring 2014 semester was 101.

A breakdown of appointments based on courses housed in each individual college can be found below. Note that the percentages below are based on how many appointments are categorized under each college and then compared to the total number of appointments during the semester:

*College of Arts and Humanities: 87%

*College of Science and Mathematics: .3%

*College of Social Sciences: 4%

*College of Education: 3%

*Richards College of Business: .1%

*School of Nursing: 1%

*UWC Workshops: 1.6%

*Other: 3%

In terms of tutoring staff, the UWC had 21 First-Year Writing (FYW) instructors and 7 English graduate students serve as tutors. Additionally, both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald conducted tutorials as needed. This is, as a whole, a smaller staff in comparison to Spring 2013. Despite a smaller staff, the UWC was able to operate efficiently and reach many students who needed our services.

Workshop Attendance:

As stated above, the UWC hosts a series of writing workshops during the fall and spring semesters. These workshops serve as another place where students who struggle with writing can come and receive additional assistance in a group setting. In an effort to increase workshop attendance, Ms. James and Mr. Theobald continued to offer workshops two days a week. This, potentially, would allow more students to come to the workshops based on their schedules. For the Spring 2014 semester, all workshops were held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, from 1-2 p.m. The topics for this semester were as follows:

*Developing Ideas: From “Topic” to “Paper”

*Crafting Thesis Statements and Utilizing Topic Sentences

*Developing Strong, Eloquent Paragraphs

*Quote What?: Utilizing Quotations Effectively/MLA at a Glance

*MLA & APA Style Boot Camp

*Revisiting Your Work: Grappling with Graded Assignments/Feedback

*Grammar Check: Correcting Comma Splices, Sentence Fragments, and Weak Verbs

*Polishing and Proofreading Your Writing

*Professional/Technical Writing: The Basics

As a whole, the workshops had lower attendance, in large part due to campus closure and winter weather. Approximately 1.6% of our overall appointment attendance was reclassified as workshop attendance.

Campus Outreach Opportunities:

During the Spring 2014 semester, Mr. Theobald and Ms. James conducted class visits and attended special events in an effort to increase campus awareness of the UWC and the services therein. The total number of class visits and special events attended for the semester was 28. Within the context of a “class visit,” a representative from the UWC gives a brief (15-20 minute) presentation to any given class about the UWC or regarding another topic specified by the professor (grammar presentation, citation style presentation, etc.). Class visits and special events attended during this semester included:

*ENGL 1101

*ENGL 1102

*UTCH 3001

*ENGL 4/5109

*Housing Academic Resource Center (housed within the Department of Residence Life)

*Scholarship Day (hosted by the Office of Admissions)

*Tour of the UWC for Visiting Professors from India (requested by the Office of International Services and Programs)

*Spring 2014 Orientation Finish-Line (hosted by Orientation staff-Office of First-Year Experience)

*Tutoring Initiative in the College of Education (4 separate dates; see larger description below)

In addition to the above visits and events, Mr. Theobald also attended Winter and Spring Preview Days, hosted by the Office of Admissions. These events allowed the UWC to be on display and reach out to prospective students and their parents, making them aware of the resources our office provides and how the students can utilize them (should they attend the university, of course).

As another way to connect to the campus community, the UWC also allowed one undergraduate student from an EDUC course to conduct observations. Throughout the semester, this student came into our office and observed tutorials as part of requirements for his course.

Additional Ventures/Activity:

Despite a slight decrease in tutorial figures, the UWC continued working on previous ventures and created new partnerships with constituents on campus. First, the UWC continued working with the staff at the UWG campus in Newnan, GA, with regards to our satellite location. With the assistance of Cathy Wright, Teri Lewis, and Adrienne Elder, this satellite location has proven

successful, and we look forward to continuing our work with the Newnan Center staff and their students.

Additionally, to keep up with our ever-changing campus environment, the UWC continued operating a Facebook page to help advertise and inform students/faculty/departments on campus of our services and activity. The page has been fully operational since the Fall 2012 semester and currently has approximately 209 “likes,” meaning that 209 people/Facebook profiles are aware of our services, have visited our page, and quite often share our posts and announcements on their pages/profiles. The page is updated 2-3 times a day and gives our office a connection to the vast world of social media and the students/faculty/departments that exists in this space. In addition to the Facebook page, the UWC continued reaching out to faculty and staff on campus more regularly through the use of e-mail “blasts” via various list-servs and the Daily Report (distributed through University Communications and Marketing).

Also, through the continued efforts of numerous campus partners, including the UWC, the Professional Academic Learning Services (PALS) group continued to meet on numerous occasions this semester. This group was formed in Fall 2013 to allow participating learning services on campus a chance to meet, usually once a month, to discuss what each individual service is doing and how, potentially, we can collaborate on projects and assist one another throughout each semester. Both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald regularly attended said meetings and have enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with the representatives from the various services.

In an effort to expand our reach and presence on campus, both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald joined the UWG FERST Foundation for Childhood Literacy committee. Headed up by Dr. Melanie McClellan, professor and interim CSA program director, this group exists to assist the efforts of the Carrollton chapter of the FERST Foundation for Childhood Literacy in their effort to raise funds and awareness for childhood literacy in our community. In a first step to begin raising funds, this committee began planning a used book sale that will ideally take place in Summer 2014 or Fall 2014.

Throughout the latter part of the Spring 2014 semester, the UWC, along with the College of Education (COE), partnered to host several satellite tutoring sessions for COE students who were struggling with writing in their classes. Through working closely with Dr. Cindy Smith, assistant professor of special education, Mr. Theobald, along with two additional UWC tutors, spent four separate days in the COE working with students on various assignments. This arrangement proved to be quite productive and successful, and we look forward to working with Dr. Smith further and, potentially, expanding this service.

Finally, the UWC, along with many other departments and offices, took part in the SACSCOC on-site visit in April. Within this particular visit, both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald served as representatives of the UWC. Additionally, this visit also featured the proposal for the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which, having now been fully approved, will go into effect in Fall 2015. This plan focuses on improving undergraduate writing in the core

curriculum. The UWC's involvement in this plan is both important and integral to the success of the plan itself, and the entire UWC staff (Ms. James, Mr. Theobald, and Ms. Urich) has already begun preparing for the expansion and additional services that we will begin offering in the near future.

Summer 2014

Overview of Report:

This report serves to detail the activity of the UWC during the Summer 2014 semester (Sessions II-IV). The information below will include student tutorial attendance, workshop attendance and campus outreach opportunities that the UWC staff took part in over the course of the semester.

Student Tutorial Attendance:

During the Summer 2014 semester, the UWC's tutorial figures were, on average, higher than the Summer 2013 semester. The final figures for both semesters are listed below for comparative purposes:

Summer 2013

*Students Served: 114
*Appointments: 125
*Visits: 288
*Courses Served: 27

Summer 2014

*Students Served: 138
*Appointment: 138
*Visits: 328
*Courses Served: 22

A breakdown of appointments based on courses housed in each individual college can be found below. Note that the percentages below are based on how many appointments are categorized under each college and then compared to the total number of appointments during the semester:

*College of Arts and Humanities: 13%
*College of Science and Mathematics: .3%
*College of Social Sciences: .6%
*College of Education: 2.4%
*Richards College of Business: 1.2%
*School of Nursing: 16%
*Ignite (XIDS & POLS): 25%
*UWC Workshops: 40.5%
*Other: .6%

During the Summer 2014 semester, the UWC had five English graduate students serve as our primary tutors. Our increased usage for the entire Summer 2014 semester is largely attributed to having more staff than we had previously in Summer 2013.

Workshop Attendance:

As stated above, the UWC has hosted a series of writing workshops during previous fall and spring semesters. However, through our involvement in the Ignite Program, Mr. Theobald, along with the efforts of six English graduate students, created and hosted two targeted workshops during the month of July. These workshops were designed to address problematic areas of writing that this group of students encountered in their classes. During the month of July, both workshops were held on Tuesday evenings, from 7-8 p.m. The topics for these workshops were as follows:

- *Addressing Paper Structure and Grammar Concerns
- *Polishing Your Writing: Editing, Proofreading, and Revision

As a whole, the workshops were very well attended by the students within the Ignite program, with both weeks having consistent attendance. Approximately 40.5% of our overall appointment attendance has been reclassified as workshop attendance.

Campus Outreach Opportunities:

During the Summer 2014 semester, the UWC primarily focused on attending various UWG Orientation events, specifically the Finish-Line sessions. The Finish-Line sessions are designed by the Orientation staff and the Office of First-Year Experience to give all visiting students and parents a chance to meet various representatives from various departments regarding their services. Since the UWC has participated in the Finish-Line sessions previously, we found it necessary to continue our participation. During all of the sessions (14 in total), one or more of our staff members attended, answering questions and passing out promotional items that would serve as a reminder of who we are and how to contact us.

Additionally, the UWC continued our involvement with the Ignite Program, created through the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Office of First-Year Experience. This program is designed to allow at-risk students the opportunity to attend college classes for one month, thereby giving them a chance to acclimate to a post-secondary educational environment and earn college credit. Since these students are considered “at-risk,” their full admittance to UWG is conditional on completing and passing both of the classes (XIDS 2100 & POLS 1101) taken during the month of July. Through close collaboration with Sarah Jones, Assistant Director of First-Year Experience, Ms. James and Mr. Theobald worked to create opportunities for the students to utilize the UWC. As mentioned previously, Mr. Theobald and several English graduate students created and hosted two targeted writing workshops geared toward this group of students. Furthermore, with the assistance of our summer UWC graduate tutors, the UWC was able to offer tutorial sessions for these students. These tutorial sessions occurred both during the UWC’s normal operating hours and several “drop-in” sessions open strictly to Ignite students. In both of these environments, students could come into our space and receive assistance on any writing assignment from either of their classes.

Professional Development

In an effort to stay connected to faculty and staff on campus, both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald attended the inaugural Innovations in Pedagogy Conference here at UWG. Coordinated by Dr. Cher Hendricks, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, this conference gave various faculty and staff members on campus the opportunity to host sessions and workshops where they could share their thoughts, techniques, and research in the field of pedagogy. Additionally, as a way to remind and/or inform attendees of the many support services available, Dr. Hendricks invited the UWC to set up a table for advertising purposes. Both Ms. James and Mr. Theobald passed out promotional items and answered questions regarding the UWC's services.

Fall 2014

Overview of Report:

This report serves to detail the activity of the UWC during the Fall 2014 semester. The information below will include student tutorial attendance, campus outreach opportunities, workshops, and other ventures the UWC staff took part in over the course of the semester.

Student Tutorial Attendance:

Fall 2013

- *Appointments: 2,127
- *Visits: 2,144
- *No-Shows: 298
- *Students Turned Away: 293

Fall 2014

- *Visits: 2,131
- *No-Shows: 146
- *Students Turned Away: 112

Please note that the University Writing Center (UWC) recorded tutorial figures/numbers using the computer software AccuTrack in Fall 2013, a system that sorted all visiting traffic between appointments and walk-ins. For the Fall 2014 semester, the UWC switched over to GradesFirst, a tracking software system that does not differentiate between appointments and walk-in traffic. The number of "visits" for Fall 2014 is a combination of both appointments and walk-ins.

A breakdown of appointments based on courses housed in each individual college can be found below. Note that the percentages below are based on how many appointments are categorized under each college and then compared to the total number of appointments during the semester:

- *College of Arts and Humanities: 83.4%
- *College of Science and Mathematics: .28%
- *College of Social Sciences: 9.1%
- *College of Education: 1.5%
- *Richards College of Business: .98%
- *School of Nursing: .80%
- *XIDS: 1.64%

*First-Year Experience (UWG 1101): 1.12%

*Scholarship: 1.08%

The UWC assisted a large number of students and hosted many appointments during the Fall 2014 semester in part because we had 24 First-Year Writing (FYW) instructors and 11 (4 of whom worked 13 hours a week) English graduate students serve as tutors. Additionally, Mr. Theobald conducted tutorials as needed. Having this number of tutors allowed the UWC to meet with more students and provide the best and most efficient tutorial services possible.

Campus Outreach Opportunities:

Due to an increased demand during the Fall 2014 semester, Mr. Theobald and two English graduate tutors conducted class visits, workshops, and attended special events in an effort to increase campus awareness of the UWC and the services therein. The total number of class visits, workshops, and special events attended for the semester was 81, a significant increase in relation to past semesters. Within the context of a “class visit,” a representative from the UWC gives a presentation to any requested class about the UWC. For a “workshop,” a longer presentation is given regarding another topic specified by the professor (grammar presentation, citation style presentation, etc.). Class visits usually last 20-30 minutes and workshops last 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. Class visits, workshops, and special events attended during this semester included:

- *ENGL 1101 (Class Visits & Workshops)
- *ENGL 1102 (Class Visits)
- *ENGL 4109 (Workshops)
- *COMM 1110 (Class Visits)
- *COMM 4451 (Workshop)
- *FILM 2080 (Workshops)
- *XIDS 2100 (Class Visit)
- *LIBR 1101 (Workshop)
- *UWG 1101 (Class Visits & Workshops)
- *UTCH 3001 (Class Visit)
- *PSYC 1030 (Class Visit)
- *SOCI 3001 (Workshop)
- *Residents Assistant Resource Fair (Department of Housing and Residence Life)
- *Introduction to the UWC Presentation to Incoming International Students (Department of International Services and Programs)
- *Specialized Tour of UWC for UWG 1101 (Drs. Dutt & Fujita)
- *Wolf Wellness Expo (Office of Health Services)
- *Open House for the Housing Academic Resource Center (HARC) (Department of Housing and Residence Life)
- *Conducting a Successful Writing Tutorial—Tutor Training (Center for Academic Success)
- *College Application Essays and Resumes Workshop (Advanced Academy of Georgia)
- *Finish-Line for Spring 2015 Orientation (Office of First-Year Experience)

In addition to the above visits, workshops, and events, Ms. Urich attended Fall Preview Day, hosted by the Office of Admissions. This event allowed the UWC to be on display and reach out to prospective students and their parents, making them aware of the resources our office provides and how the students can utilize them (should they attend the university, of course).

As another way to connect to the campus community, the UWC also allowed one undergraduate student to conduct observations for her EDUC course. Throughout the semester, this student came into our office and observed tutorials as part of requirements for her course.

Workshops

During the Fall 2014 semester, the University Writing Center (UWC) did not offer weekly, scheduled workshops as has been customary in past semesters. Due largely to low attendance and a reduction in administrative staff, the UWC decided to discontinue the workshop series for the immediate future. Instead, our office focused on offering faculty and staff the opportunity to schedule presentations specific to their class' needs (which are represented in our Campus Outreach Opportunities section above).

Additional Ventures/Activity:

The University Writing Center (UWC) experienced some administrative changes upon entering the Fall 2014 semester. Ms. Brandy James, our long-time director, left her post to return to the classroom full-time. As a result, Mr. Theobald assumed full administrative responsibilities and was reclassified as the Coordinator of the UWC. Additionally, Ms. Urich assumed full-time staff status and became the UWC's official Administrative Assistant.

Additionally, as further implementation of the QEP approaches next Fall, the UWC has maintained an active role in various areas of the plan itself. Mr. Theobald has been in conversations and meetings regarding the upcoming ENGL 1101 lab implementation, along with attending "town-hall" meetings with various UWG faculty members and an assessment "working lunch" where both aspects of assessment and areas in which the UWC could improve in assessment were discussed. Both Mr. Theobald and Ms. Urich are excited about the potential trajectory of the QEP and look forward to further talks as the next semester approaches.

To keep up with our ever-changing campus environment, the UWC continued operating a Facebook page to help advertise and inform students/faculty/departments on campus of our services and activity. The page has been fully operational since the Fall 2012 semester and currently has approximately 258 "likes," meaning that 258 people/Facebook profiles are aware of our services and have visited our page. The page is updated 2-3 times a day and gives our office a connection to the vast world of social media and the students/faculty/departments that exists in this space. In addition to the Facebook page, the UWC continued reaching out to faculty and staff on campus more regularly through the use of e-mail "blasts" via various list-servs and the Daily Report (distributed through University Communications and Marketing).

Over the Summer 2014 sessions, the UWC, along with assistance from the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), made significant changes to our website (www.westga.edu/writing) in an effort to make information and materials easier to find and access. This update was officially launched in the Summer but largely utilized for the first time during the Fall 2014 semester. With this updated website, the UWC now feels better prepared to provide information to faculty, staff, and students who may need assistance and would like additional resources to use outside of their time in our office.

Finally, Mr. Theobald, as an administrator for the UWC, has been working closely with Dr. Cindy Smith, assistant professor of special education, in the creation of a College of Education-specific writing center. This resource has been fully operational for one semester and, in speaking with Dr. Smith, the center is running pretty well. While this particular venture is not run exclusively by the UWC administrative staff, Dr. Smith and her graduate assistant did attend the UWC's formal tutor training in mid-August, and Dr. Smith communicates regularly with Mr. Theobald, asking questions and seeking guidance as to how their center can operate as efficiently and effectively as the UWC.

Conclusion

As a whole, this year has proven quite successful for the UWC. The center has continued to grow and expand its reach across UWG's campus. It is our hope that through the continued dedication of the UWC staff, coupled with further QEP implementation, the center will continue to grow and thrive like never before.

University Writing Center

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