

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Writing Center

Program Summary

2022-2023

Prepared by: David Hardison (Writing Center Coordinator) and Joshua Geist (English Full-time Faculty)

What are the strengths of your area?: What are the strengths of your area?

The Writing Center has been serving students since 2008. Our goal is to help students become stronger writers, to create writers who are empowered and confident in navigating diverse writing tasks, using the diverse range of skills required throughout the writing process. To that end, our program facilitates tutoring services which are adaptative to a wide range of writing-related needs, offering personalized approaches to students via effective, one-on-one support. That commitment to serving each individual student remains one of our greatest strengths.

1.1 Writing Center Impact on Student Performance

Usage of the Writing Center's services continues to be a strong indicator for student success. This is especially noteworthy of English courses; however, the writing skills we support bolster success in a wide range of other courses as well. Although, for technical reasons, we do not have access to the quantitative data, our most recent collection of survey and qualitative data strongly support the continued need for peer writing tutors as imperative to student success.

1.2 Availability

Following the smooth transition to online writing assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Writing Center has once again transitioned smoothly into a hybridized model as the students have returned to on-campus learning. The Writing Center is available both for in-person consultation as well as a strong digital presence for remote consultation. As a result, our availability for face-to-face writing assistance is good, with 52 hours per week available in Visalia, 24 hours per week in Hanford, and while Tulare's availability for face-to-face has been limited by the availability of staffing, the hiring of a new specialist promises to allow Tulare's in-person availability to match Hanford's at 24 hours per week in the next year. For online consultations, all three campuses have access to our writing center tutors 52 hours per week.

1.3 Usage

Although, for technical challenges, we do not have data on the prior 2020-2021 academic year, Usage through this last academic year was strong. Our combined contact hours across all three campuses totaled 1,146 hours, across 1,524 unique visits and 656 unique visitors. Each attendance report will be attached, indicating the disaggregated data by semester, by course, and by average contact hours.

By semester, Fall 2021 totaled 624 hours, across 820 unique visits and 390 unique visitors, Spring 2022 totaled 425 hours, across 606 unique visits and 265 unique visitors, and Summer 2022 totaled 96 hours, across 98 unique visits and 55 unique visitors.

It is worth noting the prominent representation of the transfer-level English and its support course in the attendance numbers.

Those two courses, English 1 and 301, account for approximately 45% of the total contact time. English 2, Logic and Composition, represents the next highest percentage at 9%.

1.4 Student Satisfaction

As for student satisfaction, no new data on student satisfaction has been acquired as of last program review. However, the common anecdotal evidence and the trends observed by the coordinator, by the tutors, and by the front desk staff, all recognize the prevalence of strongly positive interactions and the grateful attitudes from the students we serve. We feel that last year's data, via the Motherlode Survey, still reflects an accurate representation of the high level of student satisfaction with our services. That survey indicates an overall 97% satisfaction rate with the Writing Center.

1.5 Embedded Tutoring

Embedded tutoring for English now falls under newly created Learning Assistance Program Review.

1.6 Staff and Tutors

Throughout the last year, the Writing Center, in conjunction with the Tutorial Services has made great strides in elevating our training materials and processes in accordance with the standards, outcomes, and assessments of the College Reading & Learning Association's International Tutor Training Program Certification. This allows our writing tutors to benefit from the shared perspectives of tutors from other areas as well. The training includes a range of topics to provide a foundation of best practices encompassing basic tutoring guidelines, dealing with difficult students, ethics in online training, campus resource referral skills, modeling tutor habits, and active listening, as well as guest speakers from various campus programs. Upon approval of an application for certification, which is expected to occur this academic year, we will be able to certify our tutors under the ethos of the CRLA's reputable authority. This program certification will be retroactively applicable for all the tutors who have trained within our program over the past year.

What improvements are needed?: What improvements are needed?

Data collection is an important aspect needing continued improvement. This process began last year, with the adoption of Accudemia for tracking and facilitation. Now that this system is in place, it is important that we continue to gather data, look for more useful data sets to include, and begin looking for ways to use that data. For instance, it would be valuable to have a systematized collection of survey data which will allow for better program evaluation. The functionality for survey dispersal and data collection should already exist within the Accudemia platform, so developing that system should be reasonably achievable on a relatively short timeline and in cooperation with the other Tutorial Service coordinators. Also, it will be valuable to begin collecting more quantitative data to more accurately assess our impact on student success. This can be done through some coordination with our institutional research services.

Operational standards and employee roles is a topic which will be given careful attention to in the upcoming year. This is for two primary reasons: first, the changing educational environment at large, due to COVID and public health concerns, and second, the onboarding of almost entirely new staff across all coordinator positions for the Writing Center and Tutorial Services. For the first concern, many of the norms with which students interact with services and with education in general have changed, and the result and exact nature of that change is far from certain, the trends are unfolding, and our adaptation along with that change is also uncertain, though obviously necessary. As for the second reason, each coordinator is relatively new to their respective programs, and so while the roles and requirements of the positions are clear, the details on how those roles are fulfilled on a regular basis are yet to be formalized. Because the Writing Center coordinator works in conjunction closely with each of the Tutorial Services, it will be important to continue to develop a set of clear objectives and timelines, many of which are already occurring in practice but have yet to be formally documented. Finally, a clarification of faculty and staff roles will be important moving forward. In the transitional period following COVID, all necessary operational tasks were done but without clear distinction of where the responsibility of one position ended and the other began.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: Describe any external opportunities or challenges.

Beginning with the obvious, COVID-19 and public health will continue to impact the Writing Center in a number of ways, some predictable and some less so, in terms of operation, mode, student need, and staffing, to name a few. Many of the foreseeable challenges have been dealt with in some manner, and we will continue to demonstrate the flexibility and adaptive practices which allowed us to operate effectively in the previous year.

One challenge that may present itself in the next year depends on the development of the Embedded Tutoring service under the Learning Assistance program. As a service that provides writing tutors directly embedded within English courses, the growth of that service will predictably reduce the demand of Writing Center tutors for assistance in writing skills. There are many factors which affect the development of the Embedded Tutoring service though, such as instructor interest, the availability of embedded tutors, and the funding available. Because the number of courses served has increased dramatically, the Writing Center will need to maintain awareness of that impact and look for opportunities, for instance, to focus marketing outreach more to courses outside the English department.

Overall SAO Achievement:

Changes Based on SAO Achievement:

Outcome cycle evaluation:

Overall SLO Achievement:

Changes Based on SLO Achievement:

Action: 2022-2023 Implement More Data Collection

Implement Accudemia survey and student success metrics through institutional research

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank:

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Identify related course/program outcomes: 3.1.4 Expand opportunities to collect input from specific student groups (e.g., focus groups, forums, surveys); respond to their needs.

4.1.3 Provide targeted District-wide training on the acquisition and effective use of data for decision-making.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): David Hardison, Writing Center Coordinator, Josh Geist, English Faculty, Writing Consultancy Course (tutor training)

Rationale (With supporting data): There has been a lack of hard data relating to student success that can be correlated to use of writing center for several years. This data will help improve services and identify areas for improvement and success.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 4.1 - Increase the effective use of data and transparency in decision making at all institutional levels from 2021-2025.

District Objective 4.2 - Improve communication practices needed to support organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement across all District units and constituents from 2021-2025.

Action: 2022 CRLA Certification Application

Complete CRLA Certification Application

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank:

Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes: District Objective: 2.3.2 Increase availability and effectiveness of peer academic support resources (such as embedded tutoring/augmented instruction, Writing Center, Math Center, Language Center, general tutorial, supplemental instruction).

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Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): David Hardison, Writing Center Coordinator Johnny Fang, Language Center Coordinator

Rationale (With supporting data): For best tutoring practices and the wide range of skills necessary for learning assistance, the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) provides a host of authoritative scholarship, through their large collection of published works and valuable learning and development opportunities, through conferences and webinars. As such, their certification lends valuable ethos to the programs they authorize for International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) in postsecondary educational institutions, and adopting the requirements for such a certification elevates the effectiveness of those programs.

The education support services have between 40 and 60 tutors each semester. Joining the ITTPC. The certification ensures that our services comply with academically recognized practices, helps strengthen the connection between the curriculum and academic support services, and stays current with resources enhancing student success, and supports qualitative and quantitative data that enriches responses to district objectives.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 4.3 - Improve professional development practices District-wide for all District employees to support equity and operational effectiveness from 2021-2025.

Action: 2021-2022 Increase attendance at all sites

Increase use of writing center services at Hanford, Tulare, Visalia and online through increased visibility on campus, including marketing and outreach.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

Leave Blank:

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Identify related course/program outcomes: District Objective 3.1 Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Erin Alvarez, Writing Center Coordinator, Angela Sanchez, Dean, Educational Support Services

Rationale (With supporting data): Students who use writing center services see more success in their courses. By increasing attendance and use of the writing center services, more students will be more successful in their classes.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

10/14/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

This is a continued action

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

Link Actions to District Objectives

Program Review - Writing Center

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 2.3 - Increase the percentage of students who complete both transfer-level Quantitative Reasoning and English by 10 percentage points by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

Action: 2022-2023 Clarify Faculty and Staff Roles and Responsibilities (formerly 2016-19 - Streamline Writing Center Leadership)

The Writing Center will reduce redundancy, create leadership stability, and increase efficiency by revising its leadership structure.

Leave Blank: Essential for Operation

Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

Leave Blank: 08/01/2018

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Identify related course/program outcomes: 4.1.1 Improve Data Governance practices, including the establishment and publication of clear definitions, responsibilities, and roles, as well as data access, data entry, methodologies, and validation/correction protocols.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Josh Geist, Writing Center Director, David Hardison, Writing Center Coordinator, Angela Sanchez, Dean, Educational Support Services

Rationale (With supporting data): Update:

This follows as a direct response to the district objective to clarify definitions, responsibilities, and roles. Up until now, operating norms are generally stable, but they are mostly the result of individuals in their positions inheriting an understanding of their respective roles from their predecessors rather than clear documentation. Establishing clear distinctions will allow for better understanding of how needs are to be fulfilled and actions are implemented, by whom.

(From 2016-2019)

1. While a request for a split-time faculty coordinator was made as part of our 2015-2016 Program Review, it was not funded. A request for a position under the Learning Assistance designation was made as a part of our 2016-2017 Program Review, but in Instructional Council we were asked to begin the process in Curriculum. The Learning Assistance designation was approved by the Curriculum Committee on Wednesday, October 3, 2018.

2. Faculty leadership is common and desirable in writing centers around the world. The International Writing Centers Association's "Position Statement on Two-Year College Writing Centers" notes that while "writing center administrators should be tenure-stream or continuing contract salaried employees, depending on local context," the Association prefers that "they have faculty status with a minimum of 50% release from their teaching responsibilities per semester to oversee the writing center." Many of our local Writing Centers, including Fresno City College and Fresno State, are helmed by faculty coordinators.

3. Our institution includes two similar positions that might be considered precedent positions for this assignment: Distance Education Coordinator and Curriculum Coordinator. A job description for a Writing Center Coordinator might be modeled on those positions.

4. As a program, the Writing Center is significant. It includes five individual courses, one certificate program, and is considered a unit for program review. Given that each of these entities requires qualified assessment, faculty leadership is appropriate.

5. As we've grown to serve more students and locations, our current faculty director's responsibilities and load have grown beyond what can reasonably be accomplished on top of a full-time faculty teaching schedule.

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6. Our current full-time classified coordinator position is funded through Student Success and not permanently; the Writing Center's leadership needs to be institutionalized.

7. A faculty coordinatorship that replaces the current faculty director and classified coordinator is less expensive than existing structures and contributes to the FON.

Please see "Rationale--Writing Center" in the document repository.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Resources Description

Faculty- New/Replacement - Learning Assistance - Writing Center Faculty Coordinator (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: 1. External Factors

1.1. Professional Organization Support. The International Writing Centers Association's Position Statement on Two-Year College Writing Centers states that "writing center administrators should be tenure-stream or continuing contract salaried employees, depending on local context. It is preferable that they have faculty status with a minimum of 50% release from their teaching responsibilities per semester to oversee the writing center."

1.2. Title 5 Supported Structures. According to Title 5, to collect apportionment for tutoring, a learning center must be supervised by a person with "the minimum qualifications to teach any master's level discipline in which learning assistance or tutoring is provided" (§58170b, §53415). To support this, the Chancellor's Office has an approved faculty discipline/area named "Learning Assistance or Learning Skills Coordinators or Instructors, and Tutoring Coordinators." Faculty in this area must have a master's degree in compliance with Title 5 §53415 as noted above.

1.3. Categorical Funding. At present, the full-time classified Writing Center Coordinator is funded out of Student Equity. If those funds are reallocated, the Writing Center will cease to function.

1.4. AB 705. With the signing of AB 705, COS is moving toward a co-requisite model for English 1. We anticipate an increased demand for Augmented Instruction tutors, who will require training and support.

2. Internal Factors

2.1. Assessment Responsibilities. As a PR unit, the Writing Center is responsible for managing the assessment of its Service Area Outcomes, but also of an academic program (the Writing Center Consultancy Certificate), and five academic courses (Engl 123-126 and 400).

2.2. Course Selection. Writing Center tutor training is currently handled in Engl 123-126, which are subject to course selection within the English department. This makes consistency in Writing Center pedagogy and practice difficult to build.

2.3. Faculty Overload. Any faculty serving as Writing Center Director takes on those responsibilities in addition to an already full instructional load. On-the-job observation and support of tutors, assessment work, program development, and other such responsibilities should be part of a faculty member's workload. Moreover, the current support is in the form of unfunded hourly work. No special line item for the Writing Center Faculty Director exists, so even the funding hourly work is tenuous at best.

2.4. Division of Responsibilities. At present, responsibility and authority over Writing Center policy, practice, and pedagogy rest in three different positions: Writing Center Coordinator (a FT classified position), Writing Center Director (an hourly faculty position assigned by admin), and instructor for 123-126. There is no guarantee these three people will share a vision for the Writing Center.

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2.5 Program Review. As is obvious from the existence of this document, the Writing Center is its own Program Review Unit. No faculty are formally attached to that unit, nor are there any faculty in Educational Support Services outside of the library. This Program Review is being prepared by a classified staff member working out of class and a faculty member from another Division working as a volunteer. As we have said in the Writing Center for some long while now, this needs to be part of a faculty member's load.

For more information, please see "Rationale - Writing Center Faculty Director" in the document repository.

Notes (optional):

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 100000

Related Documents:

[Comprehensive Assessment Cycle.pdf](#)

[Rationale - Writing Center Faculty Coordinator.pdf](#)

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years

District Objective 2.3 - By 2021, increase the percentage of students who complete transfer-level English by 15 percentage points and transfer-level math by 10 percentage point with their first year.

District Objective 3.2 - By 2021, increase the percentage of students in targeted groups who complete transfer-level English (by 10 percentage points) and transfer-level math (by 5 percentage points) within their first year

District Objectives: 2015-2018

District Objectives - 2.3 - Increase course success and completion rates in pre-transfer English, Math, and English as a Second Language courses annually.

District Objectives - 4.2 -Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and communication of human, physical, technological, and financial resources to advance the District Mission.

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 4.2 - Improve communication practices needed to support organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement across all District units and constituents from 2021-2025.

Action: 2019 - Explore opportunities for faculty involvement in Writing Center

The Writing Center will seek out new ways to involve faculty across campus.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Erin Alvarez, Writing Center Coordinator; Josh Geist, Writing Center Faculty Director

Rationale (With supporting data): The Writing Center has a long history of involving faculty in various capacities. Since the reorganization of Academic Services in 2018, faculty involvement has significantly decreased for a number of reasons. In addition to the reformation of the Writing Center Steering Committee, we wish to explore mechanisms for more equitable faculty opportunities in the Writing Center. Ideally, this would include funding faculty in a manner equitable to and commensurate with the Math Lab, which would mean eliminating the faculty budget line item from the Writing Center budget, shifting to paying faculty for hourly work from the overload budget (as it is in the Math Lab, and as it was in the Writing Center in years past).

In addition, we would like to explore opportunities to reach out and involve other stakeholders across campus in Writing Center

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decisionmaking.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action	
Updates Update Year: 2022 - 2023 Status: Continue Action Next Year Increase faculty engagement. Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):	10/14/2022

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021
District Objective 4.2 - Improve organizational effectiveness by strengthening operations of and communication between District departments, divisions, and constituents

District Objectives: 2021-2025
District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.
District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.
District Objective 2.3 - Increase the percentage of students who complete both transfer-level Quantitative Reasoning and English by 10 percentage points by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.
District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.
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District Objective 4.3 - Improve professional development practices District-wide for all District employees to support equity and operational effectiveness from 2021-2025.