

DSU Library Departmental Annual Report
Writing Center

1. Department Overview

a. Writing Center Mission Statement

- i. The mission of the Dixie State University Writing Center is to assist students in developing, drafting, and revising their writing through peer-to-peer consultation and small group instruction. We strive to create an academic community of strong and confident writers, both at Dixie State University and in the southern Utah community.

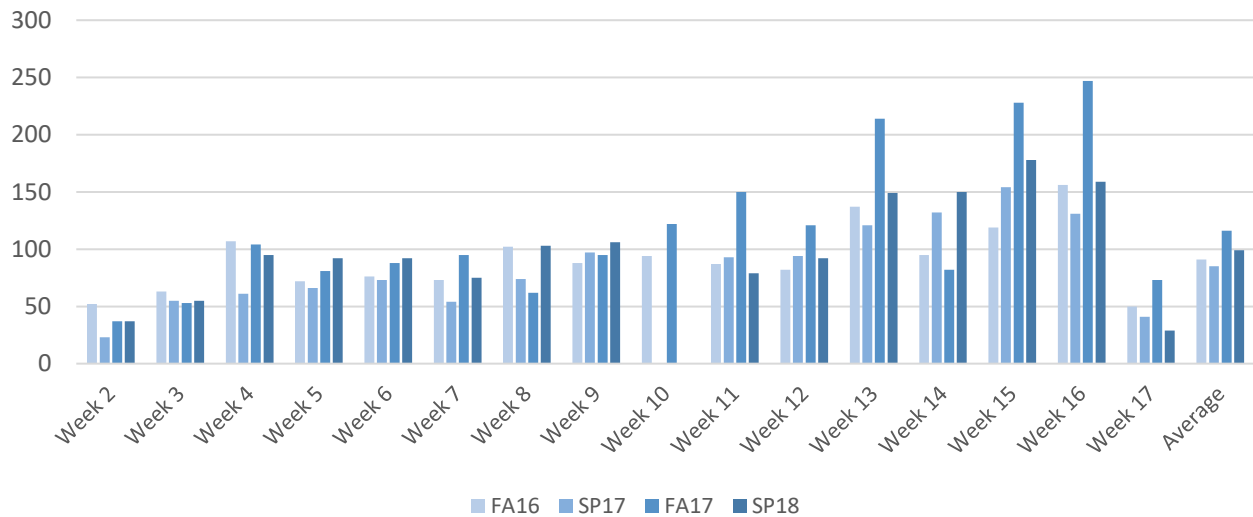
b. Writing Center Learning Outcomes

- i. Students who visit the Writing Center will demonstrate appropriate use of tone, voice, and formality across multiple rhetorical situations.
- ii. Students who visit the Writing Center will demonstrate a strong grasp of standard English conventions and methods of documentation.
- iii. Students who visit the Writing Center will recognize writing as a recursive process and will effectively implement writing feedback into their own writing.
- iv. Students who visit the Writing Center will benefit from increased confidence in their writing.

c. Department Highlights

- i. During the fall 2017 semester, the Writing Center completed 1,852 consultations, a 46 percent increase in total consultations over the spring 2017 semester (graph provided on next page).

Total Consultations by Week and Semester



- ii. The Writing Center introduced a variety of new services intended to meet students' individual needs more effectively: specialized departmental tutoring, synchronous online tutoring, and off-site tutoring.
- iii. Between the fall and spring semesters, the number of specialized tutoring sessions that the Writing Center completed with psychology students increased by 70 percent, from 125 specialized sessions in fall to 212 in spring.
- iv. Between the fall and spring semesters, the number of synchronous online tutoring sessions that the Writing Center completed increased by 67 percent, from 67 online tutoring sessions in fall to 112 in spring.
- v. During the fall semester, the Writing Center began accepting student-referrals through Starfish. By implementing the referral program, the Writing Center can now reach out to individual students who may need additional writing instruction. Additionally, the program opened new avenues of communication between the Writing Center and DSU's faculty.
- vi. With the introduction of online tutoring in the fall, the Writing Center was able to help one of DSU's students without the need of an ASL translator. Using the "chat" function within the online tutoring software, the student

was able to collaborate with a tutor at his own convenience, rather than having to schedule a time to attend the Writing Center with a translator.

- vii. During the spring semester, the Writing Center helped a student with dyslexia earn high grades on her writing assignments for a variety of courses. The student saw such an improvement in the quality of her writing that she brought homemade cookies and brownies to the Writing Center as a thank you to the entire staff for helping her succeed.

d. Staff Accomplishments and Honors

- i. This year, five of the Writing Center's tutors (almost half of the entire staff) were nominated for student of the year awards in their individual departments: Cora Hamer (Dance), Kimberly Gubler (Music), Kelsie Orton (Psychology), Hanna Pollock (Media Studies), and Braxton Thornley (English).
- ii. One of the Writing Center's tutors, Kelsie Orton, was awarded student of the year in the psychology department.
- iii. One of the Writing Center's tutors, Cambron Sherman, was accepted into a graduate program for psychology, and three other tutors will be applying for graduate programs within the next year.
- iv. In an online survey of students' perceptions of the Writing Center's staff, students who visited the Writing Center overwhelmingly agreed (based on a six-point, Likert-type scale) that the Writing Center's staff is both knowledgeable and respectful and employs active teaching techniques to involve students in the tutoring process.

2. Department Effectiveness

a. Mapping and Assessment Results for Department Objectives

- i. One of the division's primary goals is to "expand resources and enhance services," which correlates with the university's core themes of learning and engagement. In order to support this goal, the Writing Center has expanded tutoring services to online and remote locations and will continue to develop these programs further. Additionally, the Writing Center has instituted a new assessment plan and routinely measures

students' perceptions of the Writing Center, and its services, through targeted surveys.

- ii. The division's third goal is to "remove barriers to access and improve efficiencies," which correlates with the university's core themes of learning and opportunity. The Writing Center has supported this goal by routinely updated and redesigning its website in order to improve usability and is currently revamping its website again to match new web design templates provided by the university.

b. Department Mission and Goal Fulfillment

- i. The Writing Center has effectively supported the division's goals listed above. The Writing Center is currently assessing its efficacy as it relates to the center's learning outcomes through a control-group study. Although those results are forthcoming, they will explore the Writing Center's impact on student retention, in-class performance, and overall academic achievement. The Writing Center has, however, completed assessments of student and faculty perceptions of the center. These assessments suggest that both students and faculty view the Writing Center as highly effective in achieving its goals.

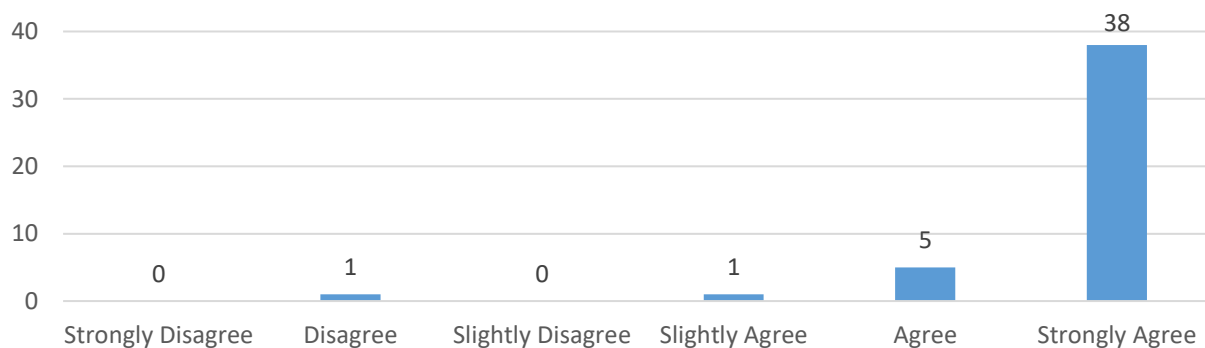
c. Department Effectiveness Quantitative Data

- i. The Writing Center is currently conducting a control-group study and analysis to assess its impact on student retention, in-class performance, and overall academic achievement. Results are forthcoming.
- ii. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Writing Center completed 3,343 consultations, a 23 percent increase in total consultations over the previous academic year.
- iii. In an online survey administered to faculty on their perceptions of the Writing Center, the Writing Center found that most faculty believe that the Writing Center is effective in helping their students become stronger writers. However, from this same survey, the Writing Center also found that many faculty members have misconceptions about the Writing Center's services. In order to respond to these misconceptions, the Writing

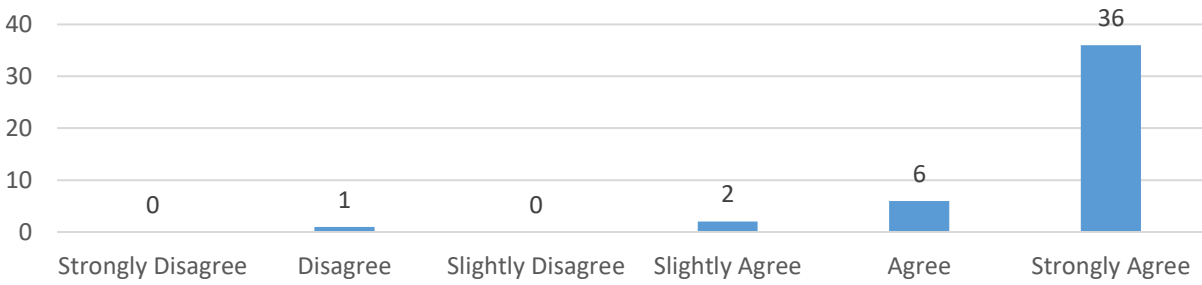
Center plans on increasing its engagement with faculty and has added a “faculty resources” page to its website.

- iv. In an online survey administered to tutors who work in the Writing Center, the Writing Center found that its tutors are confident in their ability to provide effective feedback to students and believe that the Writing Center is highly effective in helping students become stronger writers. In a separate online survey administered to its tutors, the Writing Center found that its tutors also believe that the Writing Center is a positive work environment and enjoy tutoring at the center.
- v. In an online survey administered to students who visited the Writing Center, 83 percent of respondents strongly agreed that their tutor was respectful, and 83 percent of respondents strongly agreed that their tutor was a knowledgeable source of information. Additionally, 75 percent of respondents strongly agreed that their tutor answered their questions, and 78 percent strongly agreed that their tutor involved them in the tutoring process (graphs provided below).

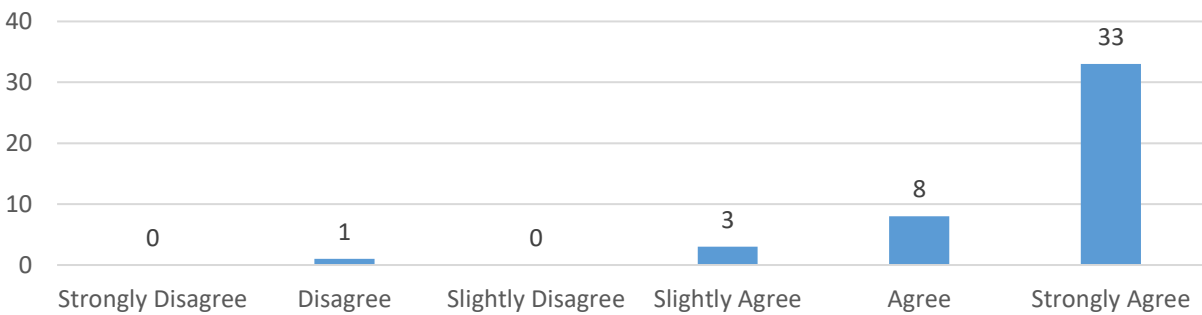
My tutor was respectful.



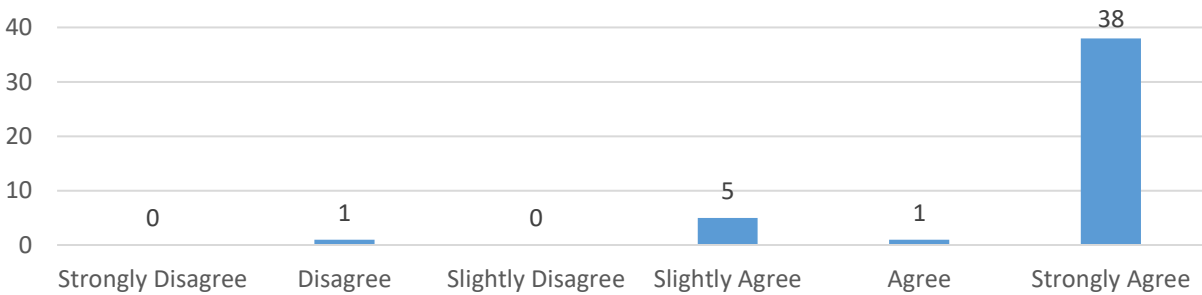
My tutor was a knowledgeable source of information.



My tutor answered my questions.



My tutor involved me in the tutoring process.



3. Planning for the Future

a. Departmental Goals for the Upcoming Year

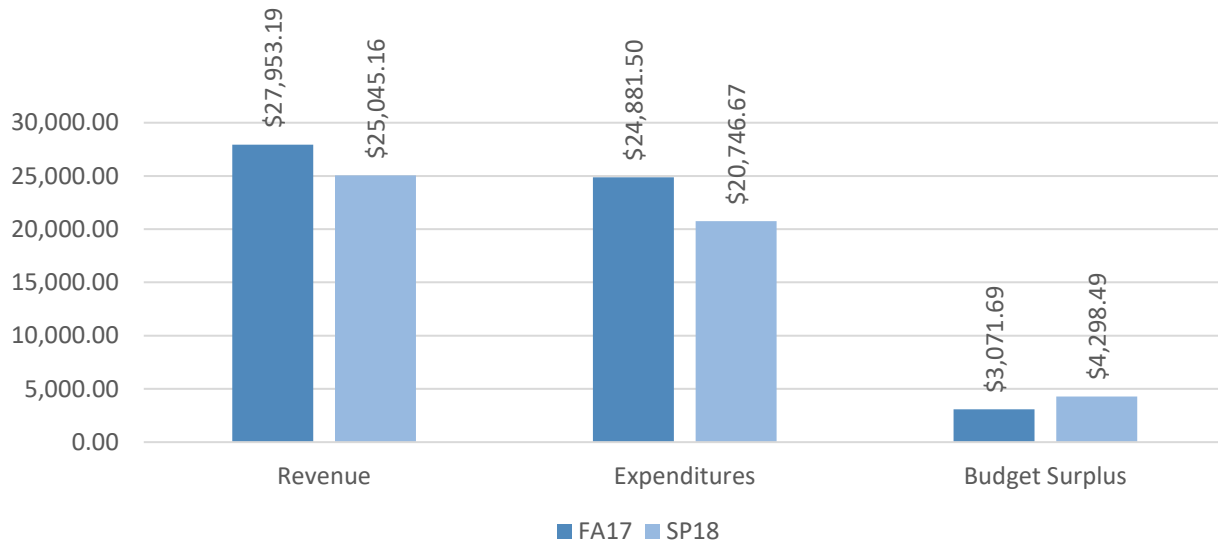
- i. The Writing Center's goals for the upcoming year will be refined after reviewing the results of its effectiveness study. The goals as they currently exist are provided below:

1. Develop multiple advertising strategies to reach both faculty and students in order to increase the number of consultations the Writing Center completes each year.
2. Work with department chairs to further develop the Writing Center's departmental tutoring program.
3. Improve the quality of tutoring in the Writing Center by instituting a continuing education program for the Writing Center's tutors and implementing CRLA certification into the Writing Center's tutor-training courses.
4. Assess the Writing Center's current traffic and capacity by reviewing week-by-week, day-by-day, and hour-by-hour consultation data to accommodate students' tutoring needs as efficiently as possible, with tutoring hours corresponding directly with demand.

b. Needs (including budget) for the Upcoming Year

- i. The Writing Center will need to hire additional tutors (2-3) to meet increasing demand for tutoring consultations.
- ii. The Writing Center will need to purchase three new desktop computers to replace the aging computers in the center.
- iii. The Writing Center will need to add additional tutoring hours to its online tutoring program and change the hours it offers off-site tutoring at the Hurricane Education center.
- iv. The Writing Center will need to expand its departmental tutoring program in order to better serve more of DSU's individual departments.
- v. The graph below provides a summary of the Writing Center's budget to date. Although the Writing Center is currently operating with a budget surplus, summer expenses (approximately \$4,000 before July 1 and approximately \$4,000 after) have yet to be calculated. Consequently, in order to meet its aforementioned goals, the Writing Center will require a 10 percent increase in funding next year.

Writing Center Revenue and Expenditures by Semester



c. Needs (including budget) for the Next 3-5 Years

- i. The Writing Center will need to regularly increase its staff size in order to keep pace with increasing student visitation and enrollment.
- ii. The Writing Center will need to increase the number of online tutoring hours it offers each semester in order to serve DSU's growing online student population.
- iii. The Writing Center will need to increase the amount of tutoring hours offered at the Hurricane Education Center.
- iv. The Writing Center will need to expand its departmental tutoring program every semester over the next five years in order to accommodate each of Dixie State's academic departments. Once the program has developed to the point of covering a majority of the university's departments, the Writing Center will need to embed departmental tutors into the departments themselves.
- v. The Writing Center will need to purchase new and additional computers to support its growing number of tutoring consultations per semester.
- vi. The Writing Center will need to invest in more efficient scheduling and assessment software to manage its increased visitation and provide data on the Writing Center's effectiveness.

- vii. In order to meet the needs outlined above, the Writing Center will need a 10 percent increase in funding every year over the next five years.