

2014

The Writing Center Annual Report: 2013-2014

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The University of Montana Writing Center Annual Report AY 2013-2014

I. Summary

The Writing Center: An Environment Where Writers Thrive

As a University hub for campus conversations about writing, the Writing Center administers programs to help undergraduate and graduate students in all disciplines become more versatile and effective writers, readers, and thinkers. In one-to-one and small-group tutoring sessions and in whole-class workshops, tutors help students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses as communicators and to practice strategies appropriate to various writing contexts.

In addition, the Writing Center collaborates with faculty to provide instruction that positively impacts student performance. In an effort to support all writers at the University of Montana, the Writing Center also supports faculty and staff by providing one-to-one consultations on their professional writing projects.

Student and faculty demand for Writing Center services indicates that the campus community is deeply engaged in critical writing practices, that students and faculty see value in Writing Center programs, and that University resources are being marshaled to support student success.

Highlighted AY 2013-2014 Results

The Writing Center's on-going assessment activities indicate sustained undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty demand for Writing Center services. Results suggest that the Writing Center successfully is meeting this high demand and doing so in a way that addresses diverse student and faculty needs. Section III further explains these highlighted results.

- **4,574** 30- to 60-minute undergraduate and graduate student tutoring sessions facilitated (Figure 1)
- **57** different academic areas addressed during tutoring sessions
- **210** discipline-specific, in-class writing workshops facilitated for **4,879** student participants (Figure 2)
- **58** faculty and staff consultations and professional development opportunities facilitated for **159** participants
- **6** Sidecar Project collaborations embedded into writing-intensive courses
- **9,453** instructional contacts made to support students' development as writers
- **7** Writing in the Disciplines Project resources created in collaboration with academic department faculty

Figure 1. Tutoring sessions facilitated, by year.

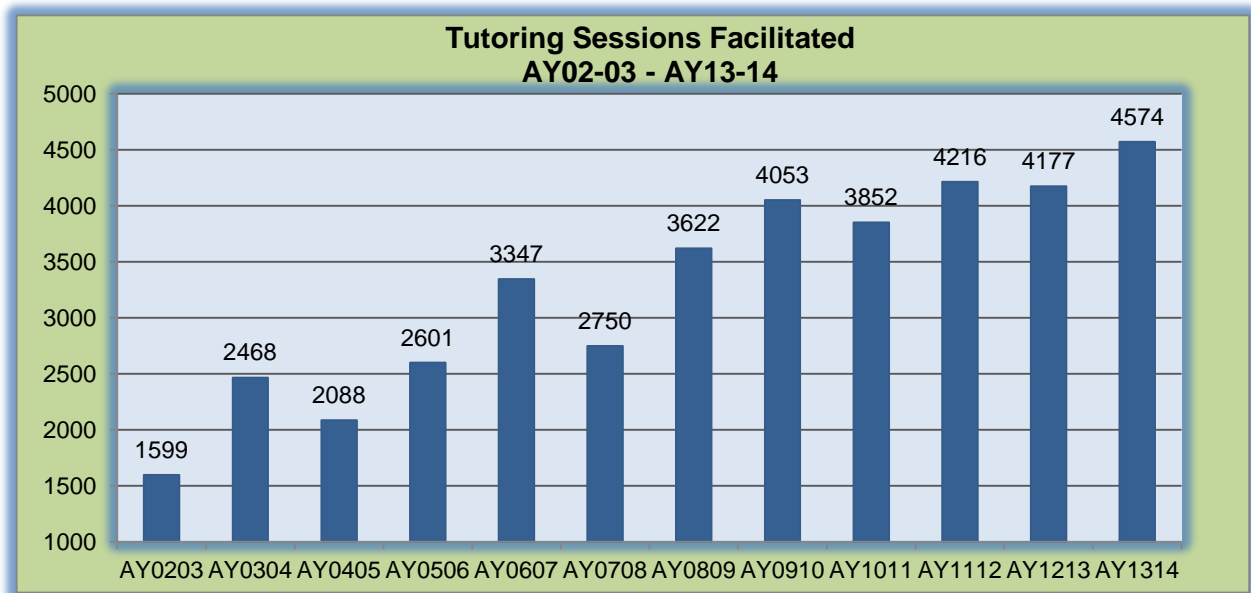
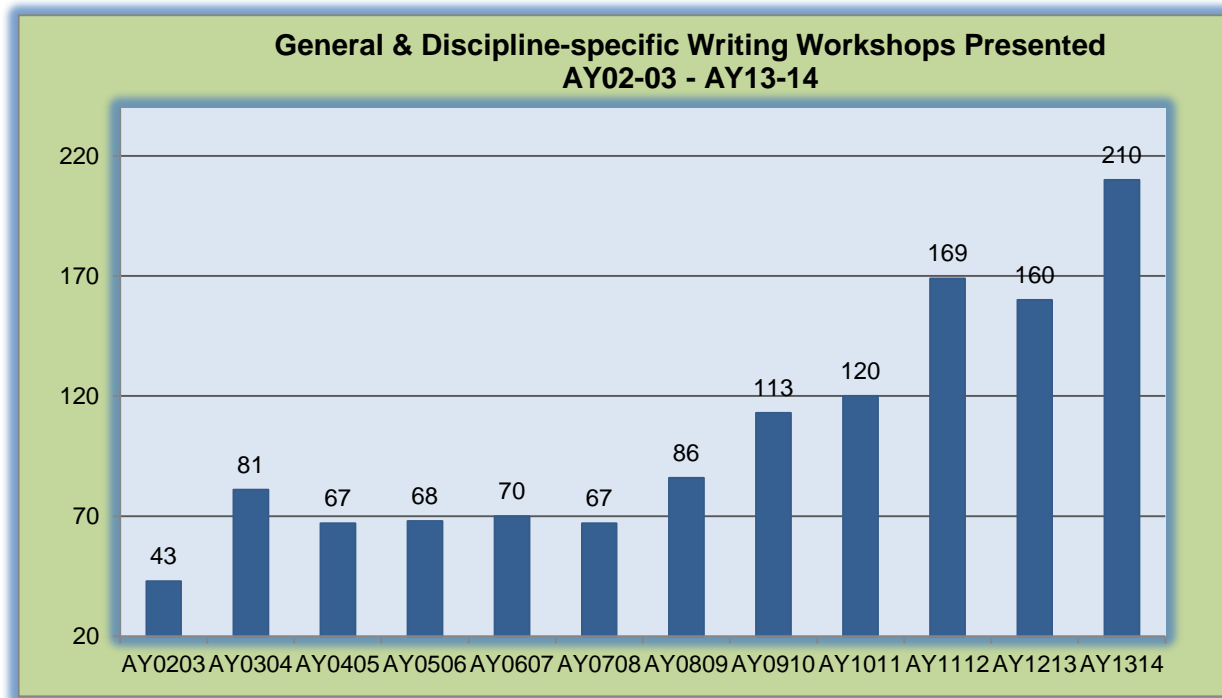


Figure 2. Writing workshops presented, by year.



II. Writing Center Accomplishments in Support of UM's Strategic Issues

Partnering for Student Success

The following Writing Center programs promote achievement of key Partnering for Student Success Strategic Issue objectives. These programs support student retention by directly strengthening students' ability to read, write, and think in an academic context and by enhancing faculty members' ability to support student writers.

Programming for students:

- **Face-to-face and Online Tutoring:** Undergraduate and graduate student tutoring provides student support in the areas of critical thinking, reading, and writing. Tutoring also helps first-year students transition to college writing expectations and graduate students transition to graduate-level writing expectations.
- **Missoula College Tutoring:** Missoula College tutoring meets unique student and program needs.
- **TRiO Writing Mentorship Program:** The Writing Mentorship Program provides new TRiO students with timely student support as they transition to college writing expectations.
- **Workshops:** Writing workshops across the curriculum provide discipline-specific writing instruction.
- **Sidecar Project:** The Sidecar Project engages undergraduate and graduate students in the context of their courses by providing discipline-specific, small-group student writing support over the course of a semester. The Writing Center has collaborated with faculty in the context of the following courses:
 - AAS/HSTA 415 – Black Radical Tradition (Dr. Miller Shearer)
 - BIO 462 – Principles of Medical Physiology (Dr. Minns)
 - COMM 413 – Communication and Conflict (Dr. Sillars)
 - COMM 561 – Qualitative Research Methods (Dr. Ivers)
 - DIS – Drug Information Service, Department of Pharmacy Practice (Dr. Brown)
 - ECNS 488 – Research Methods and Thesis Design (Dr. Dalenberg)
 - EDU 221 – Educational Psychology and Measurements (Dr. Stolle)
 - GLI/PSCI 191 – Political Regimes and Societies (Dr. Saldin)
 - HSTA 469 – Atlantic America Research (Dr. Pastore)
 - SOCI 441 – Inequality and Social Justice (Dr. Kuipers)
 - SOCI 455 – Classical Theory (Dr. Rooks)
 - SW 350 – Intervention Methods (Dr. Wozniak and Dr. Wellenstein)
 - WRIT 101 – College Composition (Prof. Brown)
 - International Students/WRIT 101 – College Composition

- Writing in the Disciplines Project: The Writing in the Disciplines Project provides students with online discipline-specific resources collaboratively designed by academic departments and Writing Center staff. Available resources address writing in Accounting, Economics, Environmental Studies, Literature, Philosophy, Social Work, and Sociology.
- UM Writes Blog: For the benefit of student writers, the UM Writes Blog showcases short pieces by administrators, faculty, and staff who use writing in their everyday lives.

Programming for faculty and staff:

- One-to-one Teaching Consultations: Writing Center consultations with faculty emphasize faculty development by providing individualized feedback and guidance on writing assignment design and response, and by providing ideas for incorporating writing—both graded and non-graded—into courses across the curriculum.
- Professional Development Workshops: Writing Center workshops emphasize faculty development by helping faculty learn to use writing to enhance student learning in any course. For example, Writing Center staff recently collaborated with the Mansfield Library and the Writing Committee to present faculty workshops focused on:
 - Responding to student writing.
 - Supporting student development as information literate writers.
 - Preventing plagiarism through teaching.

Education for the Global Century

The following Writing Center programs promote achievement of key Education for the Global Century Strategic Issue objectives. These programs increase graduate and international student use of one-to-one writing tutoring, and support student retention by strengthening foundational academic programs.

Programming for students:

- Graduate and International Student Instruction: One-to-one and small-group writing tutoring and workshops meet international and graduate student needs and engage students in interdisciplinary problem-solving conversations.
- Writing in Spanish Tutoring: One-to-one tutoring for students writing papers in Spanish supports students as they communicate in a foreign language.

Programming for faculty:

- Global Leadership Initiative Support: In-class workshops tailored to GLI seminar writing assignments and interdisciplinary big questions support students' development as critical thinkers in a global context.
- Working with International Students Support: One-to-one and small-group consultations on how to support international students across the curriculum support faculty who serve a diverse student body.

Discovery and Creativity to Serve Montana and the World

The following Writing Center programs promote achievement of key Discovery and Creativity to Serve Montana and the World Strategic Issue objectives. These programs promote and support student and faculty research, scholarship, and creative work by providing students and faculty with the tools necessary to communicate their work.

Programming for students:

- Research Portfolio Honors College Seminar: The Writing Center's for-credit course (HC 320) offered through the Davidson Honors College supports undergraduate students completing independent research projects in the natural and physical sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts, and humanities. The course also coaches students in presentation techniques for the UMCUR and NCUR settings.
- Poster Workshop: This workshop teaches best practices for poster presentations in the sciences and humanities.
- Abstract Writing Workshop: This workshop teaches how to craft an effective abstract.

Programming for faculty and staff:

- Faculty and Staff Writing Consultations: Writing Center consultations with faculty and staff provide feedback and guidance on how to communicate research projects through writing and for a variety of audiences.

III. Writing Center Assessment

Assessment Activities

The Writing Center is engaged in a number of assessment practices that inform the Writing Center's efforts to marshal resources to positively impact student retention. The following assessment practices currently are a regular part of the Writing Center's assessment cycle.

- University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment: The Writing Center staff collaborate with the University Writing Committee and Associate Provost Arlene Walker-Andrews to administer the University's three-tiered Writing Assessment Project.
- Student Tracking: The Writing Center uses an Access database, which is connected to Banner, to track student use of writing tutoring and to store important information from each tutoring session. The Writing Center tracks the following attributes for each tutoring session:

Areas of Focus	Key Cohorts	Referrals
Class	Location	Tutor
Course	Major	
- Info Griz Reporting: The Writing Center currently is working with Information Technology staff to create reports that will enhance the Center's assessment capabilities.
- Student Surveys: Sidecar Project participants complete a comprehensive survey aimed at assessing students' understanding of the role of revision. These surveys also assess students' perception of their own development as writers during the course of the Sidecar experience.
- Faculty Surveys: Faculty who participate in the Sidecar Project and who collaborate with the Writing Center through other in-class workshops may elect to complete a survey aimed at assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration.
- TRiO Student Survey: TRiO students who participate in the Writing Mentorship Program complete a survey that both encourages the student to reflect on his or her own writing strengths and weaknesses and collects student perceptions of the Writing Mentorship Program experience.
- Tutor Observations and Evaluations: Professional and graduate student tutors in the Writing Center participate in an on-going observation and evaluation cycle. Tutors observe their colleagues and complete observation forms. These forms are used to facilitate discussions about best practices and to inform the tutor evaluation process.

Selected Assessment Results for AY 2013-2014

Student Use Results (Figure 3 and Table 1):

- Student demand for one-to-one tutoring remains high.
 - Facilitated over **4,574** 60- to 30-minute undergraduate and graduate student tutoring sessions.
- International student demand for one-to-one tutoring continues to increase.
 - Facilitated **1,025** tutoring sessions with international students.
- Graduate student demand for one-to-one tutoring continues to increase.
 - Facilitated **548** tutoring sessions with graduate students.
- Student demand for writing tutoring in the context of courses across the disciplines continues to increase.
 - Tutored students writing in **57** different academic areas.
- Freshmen and seniors continue to make up the Writing Center's largest populations of users while sophomores continue to make up the Writing Center's smallest population of users.
 - Facilitated **933** tutoring sessions with freshmen, **1,112** with seniors, and only **570** with sophomores.
- Overall instructional contacts continue to increase.
 - Made over **9,453** instructional contacts with students to support their development as writers.

Figure 3. Tutoring sessions, by class.

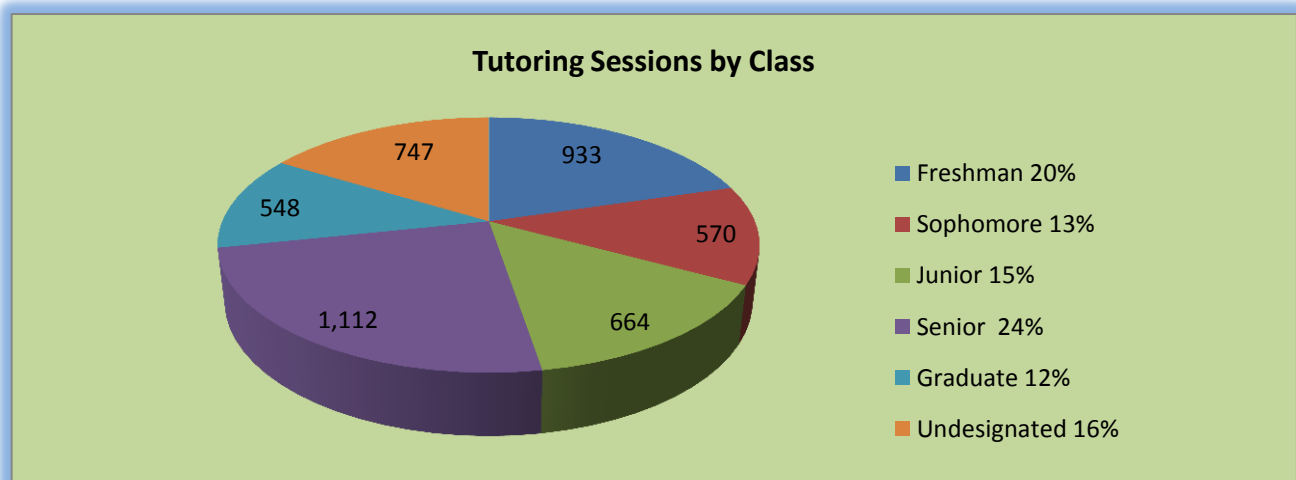


Table 1. Autumn and Spring tutoring session data, by location, type, and class.

Autumn Semester 2013 Tutoring Session Statistics		
	Total Tutoring Sessions	2,360
Location	Missoula College East	141
	LA 144	1,644
	Mansfield Library	277
	Online	24
	Sidecar (in-class tutoring)	274
Student Type	Missoula College (all locations)	290
	ESL/International	428
	TRiO*	227
	WRIT	395
	*Self-identified as TRiO; actual number is greater.	
Student Year	Freshman	507
	Sophomore	287
	Junior	344
	Senior	605
	Grad	268
	Other/Undesignated*	349
	*Includes Sidecar sessions.	

Spring Semester 2014 Tutoring Session Statistics		
	Total Tutoring Sessions	2,214
Location	Missoula College East	128
	LA 144	1,663
	Mansfield Library	277
	Online	18
	Sidecar (in-class tutoring)	128
Student Type	Missoula College (all locations)	226
	ESL/International	597
	TRiO*	257
	WRIT	244
*Self-identified as TRiO; actual number is greater.		
Student Class	Freshman	426
	Sophomore	283
	Junior	320
	Senior	507
	Grad	280
	Other/Undesignated*	398
	*Includes Sidecar sessions.	

Faculty Use Results:

- Faculty demand for in-class writing workshops continues to increase (Table 2).
- Faculty demand for one-to-one consultations on their teaching, and faculty and staff demand for one-to-one consultations on their own writing continue to increase (Table 3).

Table 2. Faculty-requested writing workshops.

Number of In-Class Workshops Presented	Number of Disciplines Served	Number of Participating Students
210	37	4,879

Table 3. Faculty-requested consultations.

Number of Faculty Consultations Facilitated	Number of Participating Faculty
58	159

Sidecar Project Results:

- Embedded Sidecar Project tutoring into 6 writing-intensive courses at the 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500 levels.
- Students and faculty who participated in Sidecar Projects express satisfaction and a desire for additional opportunities to embed small-group tutoring into courses.
- Student participants saw value in the Sidecar experience and made significant revisions to their papers.
 - 92% strongly agreed or agreed that Sidecar sessions were helpful as they wrote their papers.
 - 100% strongly agreed or agreed that Sidecar sessions helped them better understand the expectations of the instructor and assignment.
 - 100% made changes in their papers as a result of the feedback they received during Sidecar sessions.
 - 100% made major revisions (overhaul of ideas, started over, re-visioned the essay) and/or mid-level revisions (organization, further development of existing points).
 - 92% strongly agreed or agreed that giving feedback and receiving feedback from peers was helpful.

TRiO Writing Mentorship Program Results:

- TRiO students who participated in the Writing Mentorship Program became more confident in their ability to write in an academic context and were more likely to use the Writing Center as a resource throughout their time at the University.

IV. Anticipated Needs and Next Steps

The following list outlines those areas in which the Writing Center plans to invest its resources. However, FY15 will prove a challenging year given the significant General Fund, Designated Fund cuts the Writing Center faces. This list reflects the Writing Center's objective to directly support students' success at the University. While the Writing Center is committed to taking these steps to meet anticipated needs, funding will determine the Center's ability to meet these needs.

For Students:

- Revise writing tutoring by-appointment and drop-in hours to ensure resources are marshaled to support high-demand hours.
- Perform outreach to increase sophomore students' use of the Writing Center.
- Provide improved infrastructure to handle growing demand from graduate and international students.*
- Expand Sidecar Project small-group tutoring collaborations to all Colleges.*
- Develop instructional programming specifically designed to support international student writers and the faculty who work with them.*
- Continue partnering with TRiO Student Support Services to provide the Writing Mentorship Program.

For Faculty:

- Continue to expand partnerships with academic departments to deliver discipline-specific writing workshops.
- Continue to expand faculty professional development opportunities. Plan and deliver new workshops on how to incorporate and assess writing in courses across the curriculum.
- Build a more robust relationship with the Global Leadership Initiative by providing support to GLI seminar faculty and to GLI students throughout their academic tenures at the University.*

For Graduate Student Teaching Assistants:

- Develop graduate student teaching assistant workshops focused on assessing student writing.

Other:

- Develop new tutor training opportunities to ensure on-going professional development, especially in the areas of English language learners and graduate student writers.
- Develop more robust reporting capabilities through Info Griz.
- Enact the Writing Center's Hobson's Retain communication plan.

*Asterisked items may require new or reallocated monetary resources.