

Odegaard Writing and Research Center

Brief 2006-07 Annual Report

To: John Webster, Director of Writing for the College of Arts & Sciences
 From: Leticia Lopez, OWRC Graduate Student Director
 Date: July 16, 2007

This brief report provides information about the OWRC usage and activities during the 2006-07 academic year. Information is taken from the OWRC Quarterly Reports.

As the new director, I am quite proud of what we have been able to accomplish in just under one year. Despite little change in our budget, we managed to increase center attendance by 340% over the course of the academic year and provide service to students from over 150 different departmental units. With a \$20,000 technology fee grant and seventeen writing center consultants on staff, I feel that the OWRC is well situated to make an even greater contribution in the years ahead.

STUDENT VISITS TO CENTER

Student Visits to the OWRC

Quarter	Total Visits	Number of Students	Repeat Visitors	Visits per Student
Autumn '06	1322	745	317	1.7
Winter '07	1248	544	249	2.3
Spring '07	1192	477	286	2.5
2006-07	3762	1766		
2005-06	1,110	593		

Departments Represented

Students from over 150 different departments or academic units have visited the OWRC this academic year. The most commonly represented departments or academic units are listed below.

• Nursing (371)	• Psychology (100)	• Dentistry (63)
• English (369)	• Information School (96)	• Law (54)
• Business (297)	• Education (90)	• Architecture (47)
• Biology (235)	• Sociology (82)	• Art (45)
• Communications (198)	• Economics (81)	• Environmental Studies (40)
• Engineering (168)	• Music (67)	• Computer Science (37)
• Jackson School (167)	• Political Science (64)	• Chemistry (36)

Student Populations

Quarter	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	ESL Students
Autumn '06	661 (88%)	84 (12%)	327 (43%)
Winter '07	443 (78%)	101 (22%)	189 (34%)
Spring '07	426 (89%)	51 (11%)	224 (52%)
Total Students	1530 (86%)	235 (14%)	740 (41%)
Total Visits	3290 (87%)	472 (13%)	1543 (41%)

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Our online student feedback form captures quantitative and qualitative information about a student's perception of his or her tutoring session. The form includes five statements that ask students to mark their level of agreement on a five-point likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 6=strongly agree) as well as 15 short or long responses. There were a total of 132 forms filled out over the 2006-07 academic year.

Statement	Average Score 2005-06	Average Score 2006-07
1.I got the writing help I needed today	4.42	5.29
2.The writing center tutor who helped me was knowledgeable	4.42	5.37
3.I left the session with a clear understanding of what I could do next to improve the writing assignment I brought in	4.35	5.32
4.I learned something about writing that I can use in future projects, presentations and/or papers	4.60	5.06
5.I would recommend this center to my friends	4.51	5.51

Students' qualitative feedback was very positive as well. We include a sampling as an appendix to this report.

RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBRARY

We have collaborated with UW librarians in a number of ways this year. Writing tutors and librarians have worked collaboratively during student visits, both at the OWRC and at the Reference Desk. We have also referred students to the Reference Desk and had students referred to us by librarians. Additionally, writing tutors, who have been trained by reference librarians, frequently aided students in the information research process.

One of the most promising avenues for writing center and library collaboration was the Learn@Odegaard Workshop Series. Last spring the OWRC Director collaborated with four reference librarians to design and lead a writing workshop for undergraduate students and another workshop for the University of Washington Teaching Academy. Both workshops were successful (according to student and faculty feedback) and resulted in subsequent student visits to the OWRC. We are hoping to further develop a variety of workshops on writing and research-related topics that can be offered in collaboration with the library next year.

OUTREACH

Some of the primary outreach activities performed this academic year was networking with other writing centers on campus, publicizing the center to students and faculty, and developing and offering joint tutor-training workshops.

Our most successful outreach efforts to date have been the newly redesigned OWRC website, our bi-quarterly e-mail adverts, newly-designed marketing materials, large posters placed on the 1st and 2nd floor of Odegaard Undergraduate Library, and offering a comprehensive collection of writing center handouts for student and faculty use.

TRAINING

We continue to make significant strides in the area of tutor training. Winter quarter, the OWRC collaborated with the CLUE Writing Center, Shawna Shapiro (graduate ESL specialist), and Priscilla Allen (Campus Programs Assessment Coordinator, English Language Programs) to create an interactive and informative “Working With ESL Students” tutor training workshop. The bulk of this workshop concentrated on raising tutor’s awareness regarding the educational background, strengths, challenges and needs of ESL students, a detailed review of general strategies tutors can implement when working with ESL students, and a rubric they can use to determine whether/how to focus on higher-order or lower-order concerns.

TECHNOLOGY

Last quarter, the OWRC received \$20,000 in Student Technology Fee funds to purchase 1) four desktops computers and productivity software to replace equipment that has long exceeded its useful lifespan and 2) a portable projector, four notebook computers, one laser pointer, and a multifunction printer. We hope to use this technology to work with students on papers they have written on computers, help students with university-level information searches, and to assist students who write in newly emergent multimedia, technology dependent forms.

PLANS FOR THE 2007-08 ACADEMIC YEAR

With sufficient funding and staffing, we would like to make the following innovations:

1. **TRAINING:** The OWRC Director is chairing the newly-created Writing Center Administrators’ Tutor Training Committee. The goal of this committee is to create a multi-center training program over the course of the 2007-08 academic year. In addition, the center will be creating special training sessions to help tutors best utilize the center’s new technology.
2. **STAFFING:** We are currently operating at 90% capacity and have to turn students away on a daily basis. If we receive additional funds, we would like to add an additional tutor and/or increase the number of hours the center remains open.
3. **WORKSHOPS:** In response to a large number of undergraduate and graduate student requests, we would like to further develop our workshop program. Depending on our funding and staffing situation, this may include graduate student writing groups as well as workshops on a variety of writing and research-related topics.
4. **OUTREACH:** We would like to perform active outreach to the graduate-level and underrepresented student population. Virtually all of our traffic to this point has been generated by word-of-mouth. While we are pleased that students have spread the word about the help they have received, we believe that other students could profit from our work. We have resisted promoting ourselves to this point because we have already been working at capacity.

OWRC FACT SHEET

In addition to a 340% increase in student visits to the center, we have also accomplished a great deal during the 2006-07 academic year:

Program Development

- Further developed center policies and procedures
- Redesigned center website; developed website material for students and faculty
- Improved online appointment system and database
- Organized physical space and acquired a sofa and coffee table for student-use.
- Developed and implemented online student feedback forms
- Created 23 comprehensive handouts on a variety of writing and research-related topics
- Obtained a \$20,000 Student Technology Fee grant to upgrade center technology
- Secured over \$500 in free writing and research guides from select publishers

Training Materials and Processes

- Hired 15 undergraduate student and 2 graduate student writing tutors
- Wrote a comprehensive tutor staff manual
- Provided tutors with resources on writing center theory and practice
- Provided tutor training on information research and coordination with librarians
- Provided over ten hours of tutor training

Marketing Materials and Processes

- Created and distributed handouts for faculty and TAs
- Created and posted flyers for students
- Created “Palm card” flyers to be distributed throughout library
- Created large signs to be placed on the 1st and 2nd floor of the library
- Participated in the Resource Fair at the TA Conference for Teaching and Learning
- Gave in-class presentations in the English department
- Participated in TA training for English 131 and Communication

Partnering with Other Programs

- Developed a workshop for the Learn@Odegaard Workshop Series
- Developed a faculty workshop on effective assignment design for the UW Teaching Academy
- Developed relationships with leaders of other UW writing centers
- Met regularly with other writing administrators on campus
- Met regularly with Odegaard reference librarians
- Worked with the CLUE Writing Center and the English Language Program to create a “Working with ESL Students” tutor training workshop
- Reviewer for the 2007 Library Research Award for Undergraduates

APPENDIX: STUDENT FEEDBACK

- *"Thank you for creating this. It has always been needed for all students. However, I will say graduate students are left with the expectation to publish, but a lack of guidance. You can find courses that tell you how to publish, but that is not the same thing as mentored help with your writing topic and writing skills. That is what has always been lacking. Professors don't want to take the time to help you with that. The type of writing that you do in classes does not prepare you to have the skills needed for publishing. Thank you thank you thank you!"*
- *"I was so impressed by the insightful reading Michelle gave to my work, and how she pushed me to clarify and 'tighten' my argument. I felt so much more confident about the piece by the 3rd draft (She helped me twice- once at OWRC and once via email. Both times, the feedback was FABULOUS). What was particularly useful was when she pointed out subtle changes in voice and tone, so that I knew what 'persona' I was projecting in my writing"*
- *"It was really helpful to have Karan model an example of a concept for me. I didn't remember ever learning it before, and he was happy to show me all the examples of how a comma was properly used with dependent and independent clauses. Also, when he wrote down the summaries of each of my paragraphs while I just talked about them it really freed up my mind. It was extremely helpful! :)"*
- *"I was impressed by Tish's ability to help clarify central ideas and excise extraneousness over the course of our session. She helped pave a focused way through a lot of diffusion and was patient and encouraging...the experience absolutely helped me to get more of a sense of where I should go with what I had, also where to avoid...she also conveyed key points about academic paper structure that I had no idea about before our meeting but can now use as good general principles to keep in mind while writing...overall an extremely helpful experience...clearly she's dedicated"*
- *"I was very impressed with Leah. I am a graduate student, and she quickly and clearly outlined several ways that I could improve the writing style of a section of my dissertation that I was struggling with. I received far more assistance than expected in a single forty-five minute session."*
- *"Karan was really good at critiquing my paper, but not in a harsh or demeaning way. He offered just enough suggestions to make me think, but made sure that I was thinking instead of him feeding me the answers. He was also very friendly and outgoing which made it easier to feel comfortable during the session. I never felt like he put himself above me like a teacher, but rather that he came at my paper from a friend level, which was refreshing."*