

University Writing Center

Annual Report: 2019-2020

The mission of the University Writing Center is to foster effective writing strategies that will not only help writers with their current assignments, but also build foundations for success in future academic and professional writing situations.



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

The University Writing Center, located in the D.F. Lowry Building, is an academic support program that provides individual peer tutoring in writing to all UNCP students. The Center is supported jointly by Academic Affairs and the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages and is housed in Student Academic Support and Retention. The Interim Director of the Center, Dr. Michael J. Berntsen, is an assistant professor in the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages. The University Writing Center employs student tutors from all disciplines, paying them an hourly wage for their tutoring services. A Graduate Student Assistant is also assigned to the University Writing Center. The University Writing Center provides one-to-one tutoring in writing to UNCP students who are working on writing related to UNCP coursework, scholarships, or other applications.

This annual report provides usage information gleaned from our database of student records. It also provides updated information regarding improvements, new programs, and other developments that have taken place in the University Writing Center over the past academic year.

If you have questions about this report or would like more information, please contact:

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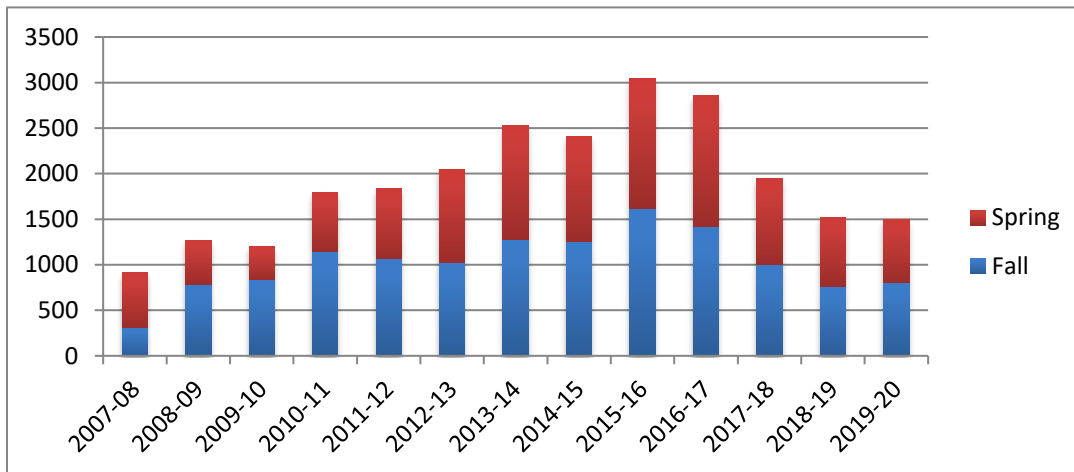
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Writing Center Usage

YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **1493** writing tutorials
- **764** total unique student users
- **368** online writing tutorials

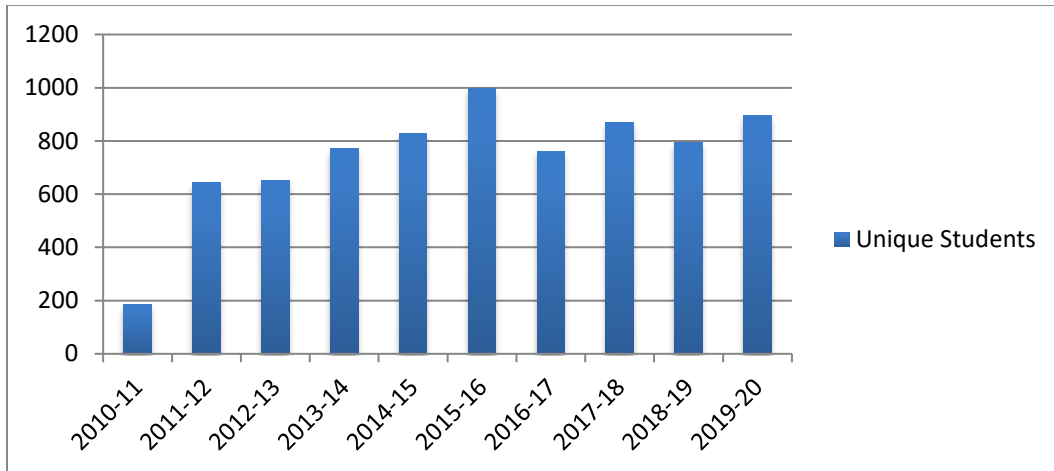
This year saw a decrease of 449 tutorial sessions, with a total of 1493:*



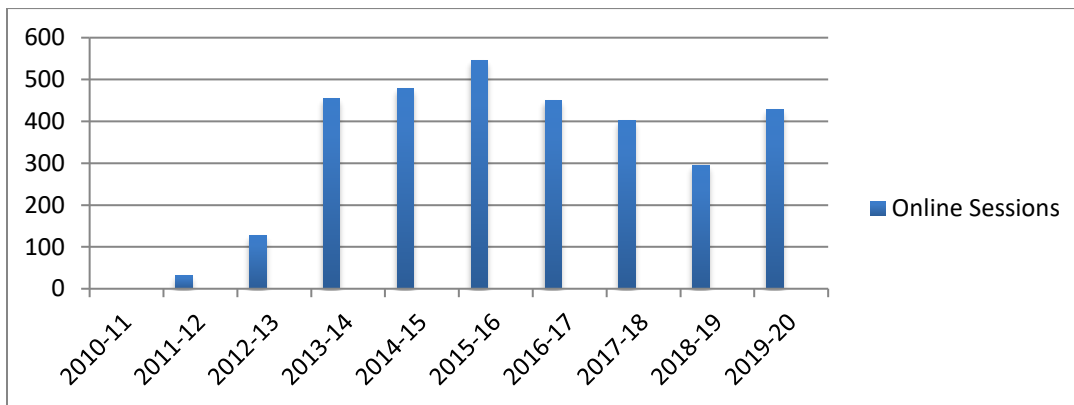
*The decrease in usage can be attributed to several factors related to the additional week for Spring Break and the transition from a totally online tutoring service in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

*The decrease also coincides with the increase use of Tutor.com services offered via Canvas. Based on interviews and surveys from several students, they value Tutor.com and do not often realize that Tutor.com and the Writing Center are separate entities.

The total number of unique users increased by 101 students, to total at 896, 62.6% of students visiting the center returned multiple times. The Writing Center tutored 11.5% of the UNCP student body this academic year:



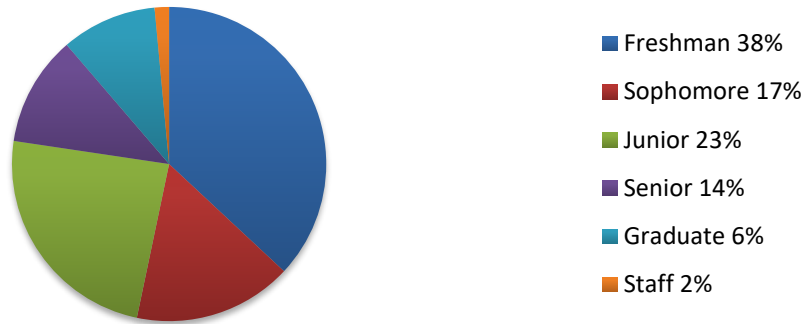
Online appointments increased by 133 compared with last year, with a total of 428:*



*The increases can be attributed to the switch from online only tutoring after Spring Break.

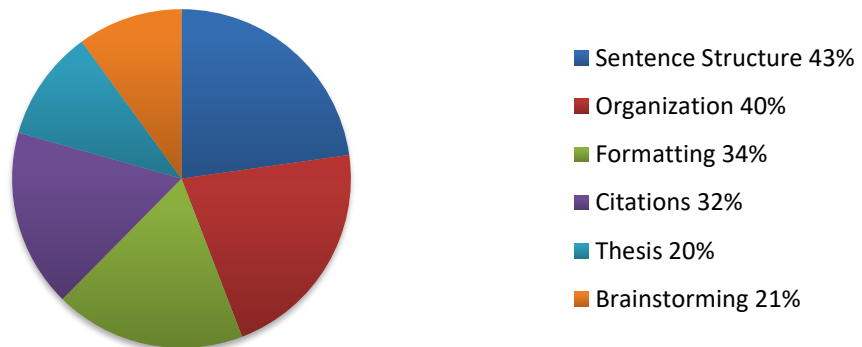
Student visits were made predominantly by freshman, but with a strong mix of upper-level and graduate visits as well:

Visits by Standing



Students requested assistance on various aspects of writing, with many requests focusing on sentence structure and organization:

Student Requests



Note about request data: Students are allowed to select more than one request.

WRITING CENTER USAGE & FUNDING

As is evident in the usage data above, the Writing Center's student usage has grown and slowed significantly over the past five years. In the academic year 2017-2018, the writing center received an initial reduction in budget, which led to limited hours. Dr. Brandy Brown did not complete any Annual Report for 2018-2019, so I cannot reflect any specific information. All the usage data collected for that year and Fall 2019 comes from WC Online, so I can only provide the numbers.

Based on my experience during Spring 2020, I can attest to the proactive work ethics of all the tutors and to the obvious competition with Tutor.com, which has shifted students' attention to this service more than the Writing Center.

Overall, since Dr. Brandy Brown's resignation in Fall 2019, I have attempted to boost the Writing Center's presence on campus, working with the library and various departments to conduct research and style guide workshops.

I created a drop off service for the Writing Center, which has already seen high traffic. This addition should increase tutoring service usages, adding tutoring access to students who have different schedules that overlap with our designated tutoring hours.

As the writing center moves forward under new leadership given the successful director search, I hope that it will continue to focus on staff development and campus outreach.

Technology

WCONLINE

For the past eight years the University Writing Center has subscribed to WOnline, a web-based system that includes the following features:

- A web-based appointment system.
- A database that tracks students and student visits by various attributes.
- A survey tool.
- Usage reporting capabilities.
- Online tutoring capabilities.

ONLINE TUTOING SESSIONS

The online tutoring capabilities feature a web-based platform where students paste or upload documents to a shared space. Tutors and clients can both highlight and modify the document. Communication is carried out through a chat feature. This is a popular feature for online and distance students.

WEBSITE

The University Writing Center's website includes an 'about us' page which includes a mission statement and an explanation of our approach. The website also features a page for faculty, a page with pictures and biographies of the tutoring staff, a page of helpful links, a page that explains how to apply for a tutoring position, and a page explaining our online tutoring platform. Students can make appointments via our website.

HARDWARE

The University Writing Center has six computers that are available for student use, one of which has DSS software installed. One printer is also available. The computers are less than two years old and in good condition. The Writing Center also has a StarBoard projector for presentations and for group writing projects.

Tutor Training & Professional Development

TUTOR TRAINING COURSE

University Writing Center tutors are trained in a full-credit course, ENG 2990: Writing Center Theory and Practice. In the course, students read theoretical and practical texts in the writing center field. They also write three papers, one of which requires research on a writing-center related topic. Each of the three papers is written in a different format: MLA, APA, and Chicago. The class creates a knowledgeable and skilled cohort of tutors in the University Writing Center. This experience and training greatly enhances the students' qualifications for teaching and related careers.

MONTHLY TRAINING SESSIONS

All University Writing Center tutors participate in monthly staff-training sessions. Many sessions this year focused on creating unity and coherence among the staff and new director.

Staffing & Recruitment

WRITING CENTER STAFF:

Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 Staff

Brandy Lyn G. Brown, Director (Fall 2019)

Michael J. Berntsen, Interim Director (Spring 2020)

Graduate Student Assistant Director:

- Jordan Williams (English)

Undergraduate Tutors:

- Meagan Allen (English Education)
- Heather Boggess (Psychology)
- Kayln Brown (Biology)
- Ariana Harrington (English & Religion)
- Elijah Johnson (English)
- Nicole Lawrence (Social Work)
- Alexia McDougald (Professional Writing)
- Lily Monaghan (Psychology)

- Megan Munroe (Professional Writing)
- Brianna Thompson (Information Technology)

RECRUITMENT

To replace graduating staff, recruitment was undertaken in the spring. This consists of emails to all students and faculty announcing tutoring positions available and a job announcement on Brave Opportunities. For consideration, students submit a cover letter, an application form, and a writing sample. They also list at least one UNCP faculty reference. Potential tutors are interviewed and those selected are invited to enroll in English 2990.

University Outreach

CITATION WORKSHOPS

This year, the Writing Center staff developed and conducted several different citation workshops for MLA, and APA citation styles. We conducted four MLA, four APA, approximately 15 students attended the workshops.

LIBRARY RESEARCH PARTY

We worked with the Library Staff to help students with the research stage of their writing.

BUSINESS WRITING WORKSHOPS

Several staff members partnered with Dr. Melissa Mann to provide weekly workshops for Business majors.

GRADUATE RESEARCH & WRITING ACADEMY

For the past four years, the Writing Center has participated in a weekend writing and research workshop for graduate students. Robert Arndt, Amber Hester, Brittani Allen, and Brandy Lyn Brown conducted one Graduate Research and Writing Academy sessions per semester on Saturday mornings.

FRESHMAN SEMINAR

Many Freshman Seminar instructors include the University Writing Center in their course. Some include the Center in their scavenger hunt, some bring their class by the Center, and some invite a representative of the Center to visit their class. We encourage all of the above and hope to strengthen our connection to Freshman Seminar in the coming year.

SPECIFIC COURSES

Many instructors teaching writing intensive courses have included the Writing Center in their syllabus. The instructors recommend, or in some cases require, all of their students to visit the Writing Center. Instructors forward copies of assignments and give us feedback on our work with their students. The Writing Center has relationships with instructors teaching courses in the following areas:

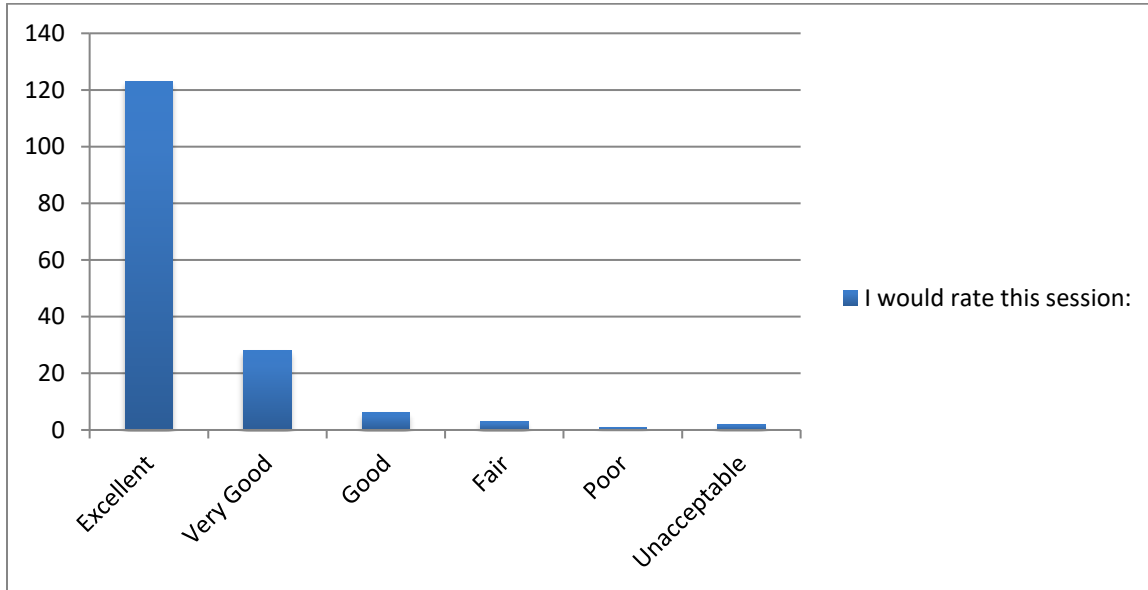
- English Composition
- Intro to Theatre
- History
- Religion
- Mass Communication
- Business Communication

Surveys

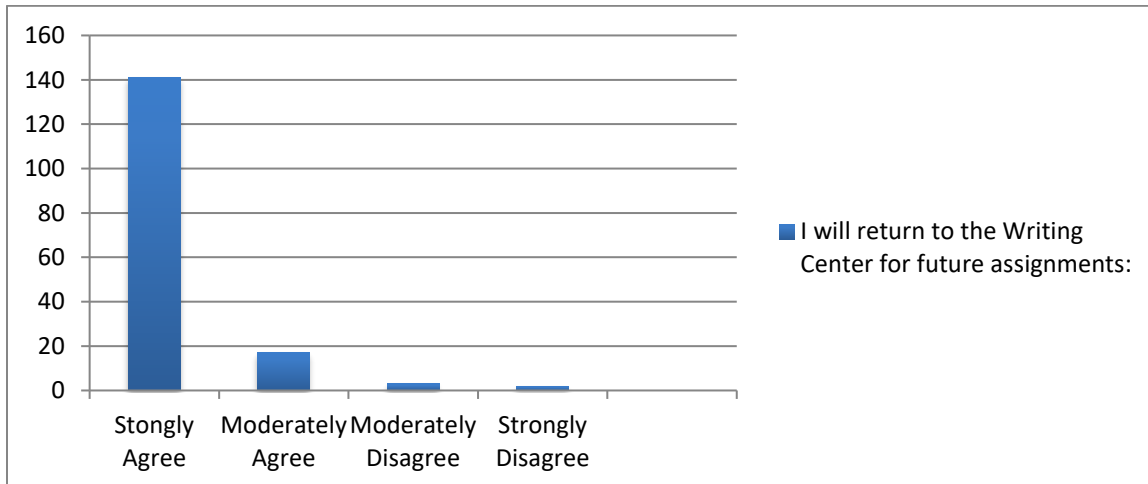
STUDENT SURVEYS

The student surveys were conducted throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. All students who visited the University Writing Center were sent an email with a link to the survey. 147 students responded.

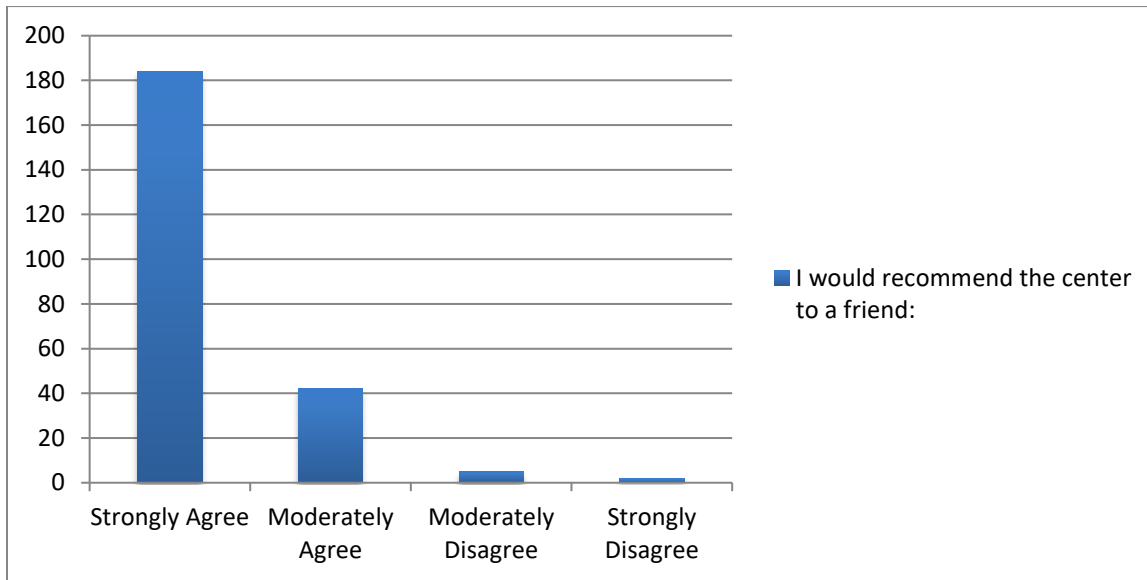
I would rate this session:



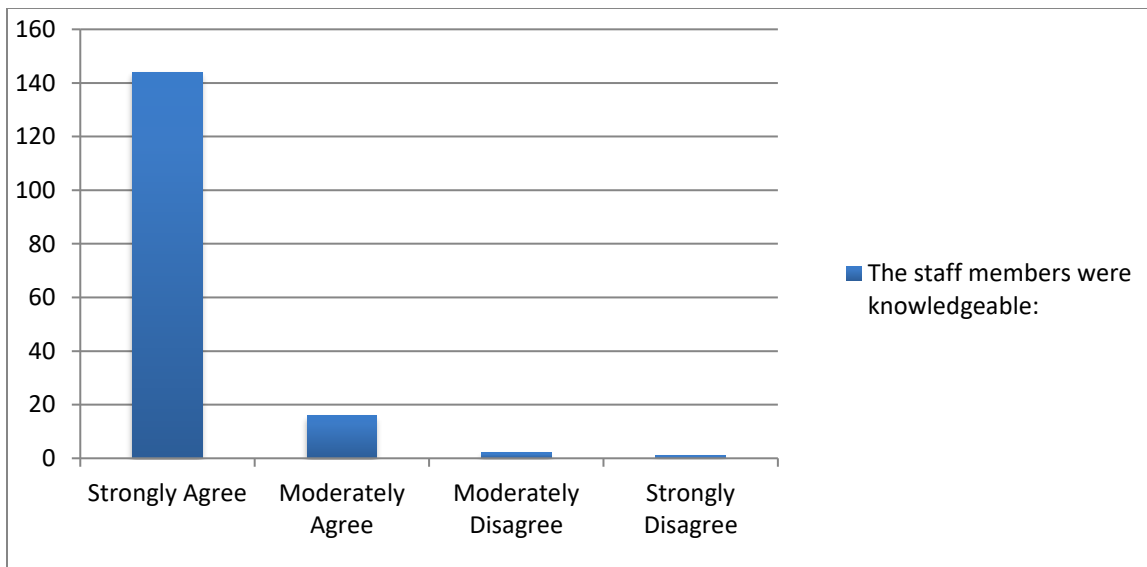
I will return to the Writing Center for future assignments:



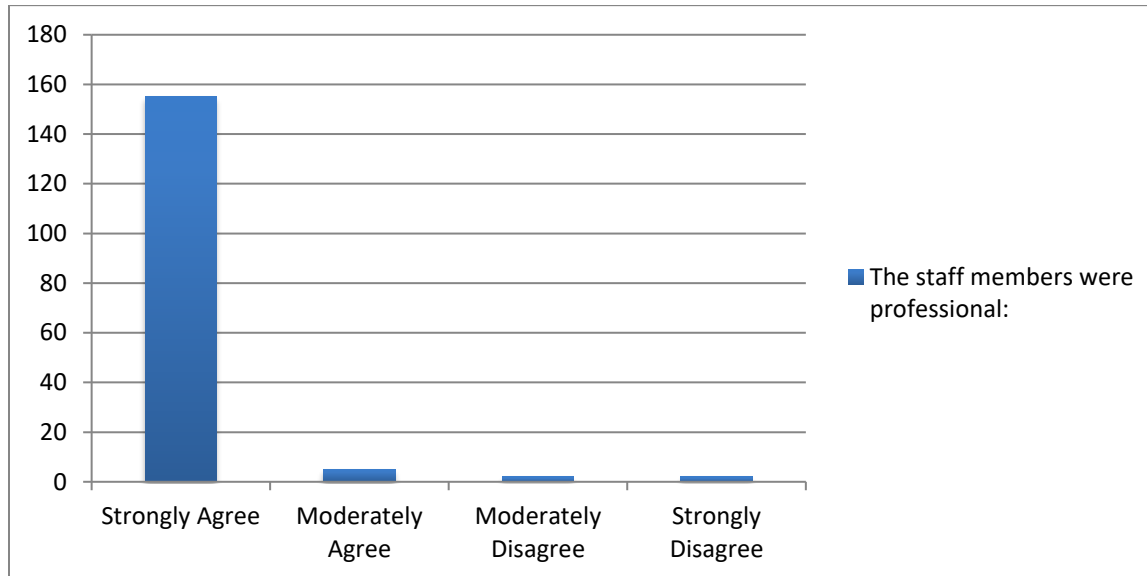
I would recommend the center to a friend:



The staff members were knowledgeable:



The staff members were professional:



STUDENT SURVEY: WRITTEN RESPONSES

Dr. Berntsen went above and beyond to ensure that my paper adhered to APA guidelines, he gave me suggestions and explanation of the needed corrections. Thank you for the great work!

Both tutors were great and awesome. Despite a scheduling conflict, she was able to help reschedule my appointment with another staff member. Everyone was very nice and helpful, and incredibly knowledgeable. I really appreciate the assistance, this was great

I have never used the online writing center before today. My teacher had it as a requirement for our assignment to be submitted to the writing center first for feedback. I walked away knowing small revisions to make to my outline and clarification that my paper made sense. I was very impressed with the experience.

This tutor really knows what he is doing. One of the best I have ever tutored with. He challenges me to understand and apply knowledge to whatever I am doing.

The one hour session was not quite enough time to satisfy all my inquiries. The Very Good as opposed to Excellent is not a lesser Counselor's reflection in the negative. There just was not enough time to go over several papers that had to be rewritten. Another appointment recommended & accepted hopefully will help some more. The Counselor seemed knowledgeable with a good attitude to assist. Thanks.

The topic of my paper was history, which is a subject I am not very fond of but after coming to the writing center to gain a little help and guidance with my paper, I feel better for it to now be put into the professor's hands more than I did in the beginning

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