Earlier this semester, the English Writing Center had the opportunity to host the Fall Meeting of the North Texas Writing Center Association on Friday, October 17. This was the first time for UTA to host the event, and we were happy to have attendees from various institutions in the region, including Texas Women’s University (Denton), Tarleton State University (Stephenville), and numerous DFW schools. Along with the general business meeting of the NTWCA, two local members from Collin College and UT Dallas gave presentations on unique aspects of writing center work, and the keynote speaker (via Skype) was Dr. Jackie Grutsch McKinney from Ball State University. Dr. McKinney is the Director of Ball State’s Writing Center, and her presentation was based on her recent book, *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*. After the formal meeting, we hosted a tour of our own Center, which led to fruitful conversations about perennial issues in our field: best practices for tutors and administrators; utilizing the physical spaces of writing centers; and logistical elements of working with students on writing. The NTWCA Meeting gave us the opportunity to build connections with colleagues from around the area, and we look forward to being an active member of the organization for years to come.
National Day on Writing

Monday, October 20th was the National Day on Writing, and the UTA Writing Center, UTA Library, and Department of English co-hosted a day-long event to celebrate writing! Going along with the national theme of "Write My Community," we asked UTA students to create an eight-word story in response to the prompt "I am UTA because..." This event was held at the library mall, where students, faculty, and other community members could visit the tent and write their story. Additionally, a week long online campaign was held that allowed UTA community members to post their eight-word story on Facebook at UT Arlington Write On or Twitter. Many members of the UTA community participated in our event and helped us to celebrate both writing and our university! Some of our favorite responses were:

"I am UTA because I appreciate all of the squirrels on campus!"
"I am UTA because I love the incredible diversity on campus!"
"I am UTA because I will finally write a novel this November!"
"I am UTA because Winter is Coming!"

Thank you to all the people who worked to make this event happen and to those who participated!

Professor Spotlight

Dr. Jodie Tommerdahl is an Associate Professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Department, and is a supporter of the Writing Center in a variety of ways.

How does writing ability play a part in professional success?
Dr. Tommerdahl: Writing is a wonderful way to hone your thinking skills. Many of my students are already teachers, and the skills that good writing gives them allow them to be better thinkers and better communicators in the classroom.

What types of writing issues do you find to be most prevalent in your students?
T: The number one thing is that students think that if they can talk, then they can write. Because they can write a sentence, they don’t seem to understand that writing is far more than putting your speaking down in a written form.

Do you encourage your students to visit the Writing Center?
T: Yes, it’s even part of my syllabus. I tell them who to contact and where to go.

What would you say to fellow faculty members who are unaware of the services offered by the Writing Center?
T: Go! I would also remind them when students have been to the Writing Center, it makes your life a lot easier when it’s time to mark. Clear writing is a lot easier to mark than unclear writing.
Where Are They Now?

Our former tutor Katelyn Jaynes has been very busy since graduating in May 2014. Following two years at the Writing Center, she has continued to work with students and their writing as a teacher of Freshman English at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where she is a PhD student in late medieval literature. She tells us that her time as a consultant at the Writing Center “really helped me in regards to commenting on student drafts. I find it easier to focus on the ideas and how my students write rather than specific grammatical mistakes. I also find that I’m still at ease when I conduct one-on-one conferences with my students.” She also continues to improve as a writer herself. Of her favorite memories from the Writing Center, Katelyn says, “It’s hard to choose a particular one! But it was always really rewarding to leave a session feeling like I’d helped the student with something they were having trouble with.” We’re sure Katelyn still gets to experience that feeling with her current students!

Featured Tutor

Evelyn Singleton has worked at the Writing Center for more than two years and has become a role model for her coworkers. She applied for the consultant position after a suggestion from her English 1302 instructor, and although she was initially concerned about her tutoring abilities, she has become our most experienced consultant.

As a tutor, Evelyn faces certain challenges during her shifts, including sessions that don’t always go according to plan. She consistently works to overcome these challenges and has noticed an improvement in her tutoring capabilities. Ultimately, she uses each session to make sure that her clients’ concerns are addressed.

Not only does Evelyn help students better understand the writing process, but she has even noticed an improvement in her own writing as well by following her own advice. She says, “If I notice that one of my paragraphs doesn’t support my argument, I’ll think ‘this is definitely something that I would have a client revise, so I should do it too.’” Evelyn also says that working with other great writers and absorbing their advice has helped her writing skills. She is a “talent-vampire,” as she puts it.

Evelyn says that some of her favorite moments at the Writing Center include posting a “Quote of the Week” under the alias of “Matt Underwood.”

Workshops = Success

While many of our 1301/1302 workshops have featured expansive attendance with some requiring additional seating, our general writing and grammar workshops have had consistent participation from many students over the course of the semester. In the multiple workshops I have led this fall, I’ve gotten to know several students that have visited our workshops, and this familiarity has created engaging dialogue between the participants and me as well as among the regularly attending students. Many of the consistent attendees of our non-course specific and grammar workshops have also subsequently made individual appointments to further build on the foundation they developed in our workshops.
Spring 2015 Workshops

Writer's Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 19: Subject/Verb Agreement
Feb. 23: Fragments/Run-On Sentences
Mar. 3: Passive Voice
Mar. 18: Verb Tense
Apr. 2: Articles
Apr. 13: Colons/Semicolons
Apr. 23: Conjunctions
May 6: Possessives

Writer's Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, 12:00 p.m.

Feb. 25: Finding and Evaluating Sources
Mar. 4: Annotated Bibliography
Mar. 25: Mapping the Issue
Apr. 22: Researched Position Paper

Writer's Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, 6:45 p.m.

Feb. 18: – Abstracts
Feb. 24: Personal Statements
Mar. 16: Be Your Own Editor
Mar. 26: Lab Reports
Apr. 8: Effective Charts and Graphs
Apr. 21: Editing and Revising

The Writing Center Is Coming to You!

Beginning this semester, Writing Center consultants will be available at multiple locations on campus. Our consultants are ready to help you!

Academic Plaza: We are offering extended hours Monday-Thursday, 8 PM-10 PM, on the 2nd floor of the Central Library.

Science & Engineering Library: Starting in March, we will have a consultant available on Wednesdays, noon-5:00 PM.

Contact Us

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Or drop by. Walk-Ins are always welcomed!