

Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Program Report

Academic Year of Report: 2007-2008

Program: University Writing Center

1. What outcomes did we assess this year, and why?

All 10 Program Goals on the “Program Assessment Plan.”

2. How did we assess them?

--Database created from student profiles and Session Summary Forms, showing how many, what year and major, what location, etc. Ongoing.

--Survey of all Ellensburg faculty who have received the forms. March 2008.

--Unsolicited e-mail comments from faculty and students. Ongoing.

--Surveys of students who used our drop-in service at Brooklane and Student Village apartments.

--Student Feedback sheets and surveys of students after workshops. Ongoing.

--Staff analyses of workshops, online consulting software, literary discussions, poetry readings, grammar handouts, and other aspects of our work.

--Staff satisfaction survey of December 2007 and Letters of Intent for next year.

3. What did we learn?

- Goal 1: Demand increased, as reflected in both the number of consultations and the number of students turned away. (See Appendices 1, 7, 8, 9)
 - In Ellensburg, the number of consultations rose by 19 percent over the previous academic year, from 2,536 to 3,032. (See Appendix 1)
 - At the same time, the number of students turned away increased significantly, from 148 the previous academic year to 406.
 - These increases occurred despite our continued efforts to discourage instructors from requiring visits. Therefore, the number of students voluntarily seeking the center’s service likely rose by even more than the data suggest.
 - Goal 2: At CWU-Des Moines, the number of consultations increased dramatically after we hired a full-time Writing Consultant in December: from fall quarter’s 22 to winter’s 138, spring’s 238, and summer’s 201 for a total of 599. (See Appendix 8)
 - Goal 2: At CWU-Pierce County, the Des Moines consultant traveled to offer services for the first time, in winter and spring, totaling 37 consultations. (See Appendix 9)

- Goal 2: At CWU-Lynnwood, our half-time Writing Consultant did 47 consultations fall quarter, 71 in winter, 48 in spring, and 39 in summer for a total of 205. (See Appendix 7)
- Goal 1: We exceed the national standard that writing centers should serve 10 percent of the student population and that half of the students should return for repeat visits. In Ellensburg, we served 1,305 students, which is 16 percent of the 8,324 students here, and among those we served, 778 returned for repeat visits, which is 60 percent. (See Appendix 1)
- Goal 1: Faculty are generally pleased and appreciate the center's services, as illustrated by e-mail feedback and our faculty survey. Also, most students learn about the center through their instructors – this was checked on 2,012 of this year's forms – indicating that many faculty support the center and are encouraging students to use the service. (See Appendix 3)
- Goal 1: Students are generally pleased and appreciate the center's services. The second most-checked category for how they learned about the center was "Friend," at 412; this indicates that our reputation is spreading among students by word-of-mouth. Satisfaction also was illustrated through the anonymous Student Feedback Forms that students fill out after one-on-one consultations; of the 43 who filled out these forms, 41 checked "Yes" when asked if the session was helpful. (See Appendix 4)
- Goal 3: We investigated several synchronous programs for online consulting and selected one. We began planning for a student survey of technology usage and interest. We began writing instructions for use of online consulting, and we did several practice sessions to work out any problems. Our web site, redesigned last year, went through continual updates and additions throughout this year, dramatically increasing the links to online resources, both ones we created and ones we found and deemed useful.
- Goal 4: We increased access to students in several ways. In Ellensburg, we opened a third location, in the SURC, which was so popular we turned many students away, and also experimented with drop-in evenings at the student apartments Brooklane Village and Student Village. At CWU-Lynnwood, we moved to an open student study area. At CWU-Des Moines, we expanded our services to include Pierce County. (See Appendices 1, 7, 8, 9)
- Goal 5: We continued to offer writing workshops, designed in collaboration with professors and tailored to the needs of specific groups of students. In Ellensburg, we increased the variety of types of workshops, from seven the year before to 10 this year; new workshops included Argument & Research Writing and Media Writing. In Des Moines, we offered workshops on Analysis Writing and Peer Review; in Lynnwood, on Using APA Style and Writing Process & Compare and Contrast Writing, and in Pierce County, on Analysis Writing. In Ellensburg,

- Goal 6: Data collected from our Session Summary Forms show that in Ellensburg, less than half of the consultations were with freshman; 940, or 32 percent. Another 15 percent were with sophomores, 18 percent with juniors, 14 percent with seniors, and 8 percent with graduate and post-bac students. At the University Centers, all the students are upperclassmen or graduate students. While data show that students' majors vary considerably, they also show that most students come here with essays for English classes.
- Goal 6: A large proportion of sessions were with students who did not list English as their first language on all campuses except for Pierce County: in Ellensburg, 1,174, or 40 percent; in Des Moines, 164, or 41 percent; and in Lynnwood, 54, or 47 percent. (See Appendices 1, 7, 8)
- Goal 7: Regarding publicity, many Ellensburg students indicated they learned about the center through our posters and other print publicity; in 190 session reports, Advertising was checked for "How Heard About Program." For 334 reports, Class Visit was checked, indicating that our Orientation class visits – a form of publicity and service combined – are drawing in students who might not otherwise come. However, the faculty survey showed that some professors are not aware that we have a satellite in the SURC and that we offer workshops, indicating a need for better or at least continued publicity. (See Appendix 1)
- Goal 8: Consultants at the University Center and the Director in Ellensburg have met individually with several professors to help them incorporate writing into the curriculum. The 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement shows that few Central students write significant papers – 90 percent have never written a paper of 20 pages or more, and 13 percent have not even written a paper between 5 and 19 pages. Yet writing is a means to greater understanding, greater learning, and greater contributions to the scholarly community. (See Appendix 2)
- Goal 9: Staff members feel they belong to a community of writers. They truly enjoy working with students and with each other. They feel comfortable asking each other for help, and they feel generally respected. This was evident in their Letters of Intent for returning next year and in the Fall staff satisfaction survey. (See Appendix 5)
- Goal 10: We held leadership roles and participated in professional conferences and organizations, at both the regional and international level. (See Appendix 6)

4. What will we do as a result of this information?

We will work with technology experts on campus to try to incorporate online feedback forms for faculty and students with the online Session Summary Forms that are e-mailed after every session. We also will try to make accessing the forms more simple. We will

maintain the general nature and integrity of the forms, since faculty expressed appreciation for them.

We will be more diligent about collecting feedback after workshops.

We will reformat the paper Student Feedback Form into a smaller size, so that it can be on the tables and easily accessed after consultations.

We will develop a survey of students to determine their needs and interests in online consulting and their access to technology. We will write instructions for students and consultants to use these new technologies. We will plan ways to publicize this, particularly to students not on the Ellensburg campus.

We will continue to update and expand our web site. We will create streaming-video workshops through Adobe Presenter and link them to our web site.

We will share this assessment information with the staff and use it to help determine the content of staff trainings. For instance, the high number of international students calls for a continued emphasis on training in linguistic issues and the complexities of writing for American academic audiences.

Next year, the staff will collaboratively develop materials for evaluating and appreciating consultants.

Next spring, CWU is hosting the Pacific Northwest Writing Centers Association conference, in Ellensburg.

5. What did we do in response to last year's assessment information?

--We continued expanding our locations in Ellensburg, from Hertz 103 and the Library FishBowl satellite to include a satellite in the SURC and experimental evening hours in student apartment complexes.

--We expanded student access to drop-in services in Ellensburg. The new SURC satellite is drop-in only. And in Hertz 103, the main center, we changed the schedule so that one consultant is available each hour for drop-ins.

--We began researching and planning for synchronous online consulting.

--We expanded our services at University Centers by doubling consulting hours at CWU-Des Moines and also extending this to CWU-Pierce County.

--At CWU-Lynnwood, we moved out to the student study area.

--We made several efforts to improve publicity at all of our sites. We worked with other campus offices to get professional bookmarks created for the University Center writing consultants, who also created low-budget paper bookmarks, and also to plan for banners at the University Centers next year. In Ellensburg, we purchased sandwich board signs and other professional publicity, thanks to the support of Undergraduate Studies.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Outcomes at Central Washington University:

How can we track writing center usage and compare it with student success?

--Prepared by Teresa Joy Kramer, Director, with help from several staff members