



WOFFORD
WRITING CENTER

SEMESTER
REPORT

FALL 2022

PREPARED BY
ALLISON DOUGLASS

WHO WE ARE

The Writing Center is a service for writers provided by their peers. The consultants who work in the center are involved in everything the center does, big and small.

THE TEAM: Dr. Allison Douglass (Director); Sam Carter, Emily Arnold, Elz Young, Yasmin Lee, Alexis Walker, Alex Malvern, Katie Stewart, Mary Jackson Kirk, Abby Landfried, and Lindsey Vane (4 returning consultants, 6 new consultants)

HOURS OF OPERATION: M 12-5 & 7-10; T 10-5 & 8-10; W 10-5 & 7-10; R 10-5 & 7-10; F 11-5

MISSION STATEMENT

The Wofford College Writing Center provides individual peer writing consultations to the Wofford community, working with any writer on any kind of writing at any stage of the process. Our staff collaborates with writers, prioritizing writing as a learning process above the success of any single piece of writing. Consultants and writers work together to develop their ideas, better understand the needs of their audiences, and build on their communicative strategies. In order to facilitate this collaborative process, the Writing Center seeks to create a safe, inclusive space inside the center where writers are supported through the vulnerable process of sharing their work. Outside our physical space, the Writing Center works to foster a sense of community and shared culture among writers on campus.

CORE VALUES

- 1. WRITER OWNERSHIP.** In the Writing Center, writers retain ownership of their work and make all decisions about both the direction of the session and the outcome in their writing. As a result, we believe in a listening-first, student-led model of support.
- 2. EQUITY-INFORMED CONSULTING.** We are committed to inclusive support and respect for all writers, and we actively encourage writers to make choices they believe in and to draw on their diverse experiential, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds in their writing.
- 3. INSTILLING CONFIDENCE.** We believe that one of the most important things writers need to improve their work is confidence in their ideas. One of our values is providing feedback in a manner that encourages writers and emphasizes their successes alongside areas for improvement.
- 4. NON-EVALUATIVE FEEDBACK.** Consultants are not faculty members, and it is not the Writing Center's role to assess the quality of writers' work. We do not venture to guess how a writer is likely to be evaluated by professors. Rather, we inherently value the educational benefit of sharing one's ideas and receiving non-judgmental feedback from an engaged reader.
- 5. SERVING WRITERS, NOT WRITING.** Our responsibility is, above all, to the writers who come to us, not to their papers. We are here to support the writer's process and help them improve, with a long view of what improving as a writer means.

TRAINING PROGRAM

Consultants become trained professionals in their work supporting writers. The primary work of the center is constantly improving our core service.

CONSULTANT ONBOARDING STEPS (for the newbies)

1. ATTEND ORIENTATION.

Before we open for business, we hold a full-day orientation where key concepts are introduced and new consultants practice key skills.

2. **READ THE HANDBOOK.** The Writing Center provides a [handbook](#) with guidance for most situations that commonly occur in sessions.

3. **BE A WRITER.** During the first week or so of work, new consultants bring a piece of their own writing and have a session with another consultant as the writer. This is a real session, not role-play.

4. SHADOW A VETERAN CONSULTANT.

In the first two weeks, new consultants sit in on a consultation led by a returning consultant. Afterward, they debrief.

5. **BE SHADOWED.** After new consultants shadow a session, they have a veteran consultant shadow them as they lead a session. Afterward, they debrief.



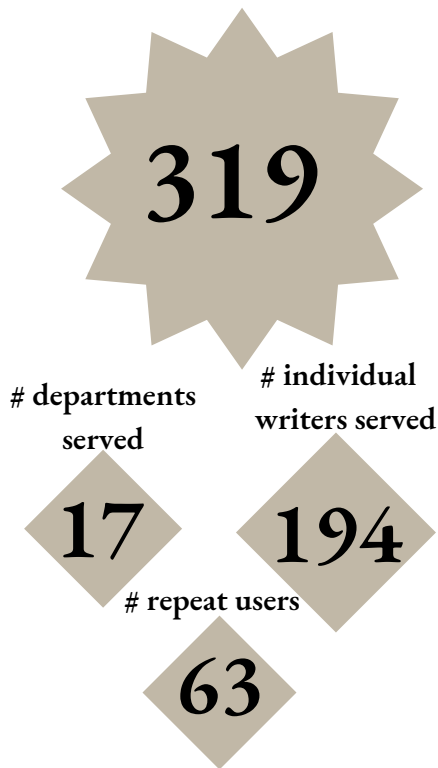
ONGOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT (for the whole team)

Every week the whole staff comes together for a [staff meeting](#). These meetings are sometimes called “practicums.” The word “practicum” implies that we are learning about our practice and practically applying what we learn. The primary goal of these meetings is to develop a set of strategies for consulting and to foster a critical awareness of our approaches. This is an essential hour of the week that allows us to form a shared philosophy of consulting, and where we develop new projects for the Writing Center.

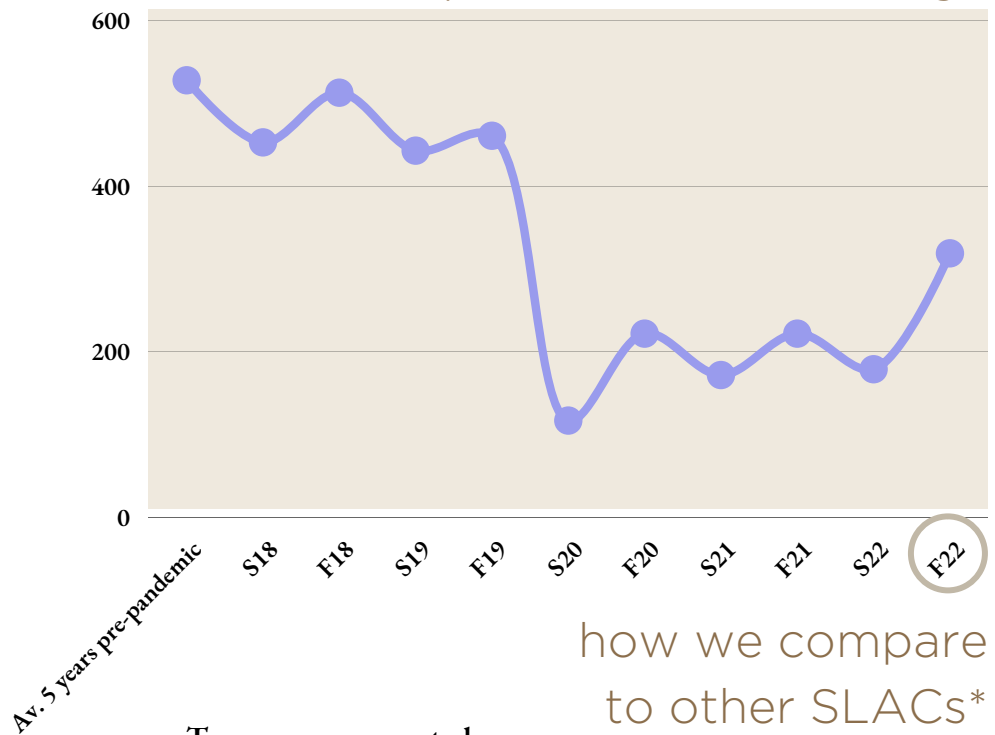
SESSION STATS

During a transition in leadership, we are happy to report that our numbers have not been negatively impacted, and usage has increased from recent semesters. We serve a wide range of disciplines at Wofford, and many of our clients come back for multiple sessions.

of sessions Fall 22



compared to historic usage



how we compare to other SLACs*

Our visits vs. average # of visits per semester at SLAC writing centers:

319 vs. 450

% of student body that had an appointment, us vs. others:

11% vs. 20%

Though the pandemic’s direct impacts may be fading, this center still needs to rebuild its presence on campus and rebuild student awareness, which has dropped over the last several years in part due to the lapse of in-person usage during COVID. We had a slight increase in usage this semester, but are not yet close to either our pre-COVID numbers or those of other SLACs. Our goal will be to at least double our usage over time.

Top course supported:

LIBA 101

What we worked on most:

1. Introductions
2. Paper organization
3. Grammar

* Data gathered from the [WLN](#) and the [National Census of Writing](#) - however, all available data was gathered pre-2020, so this is really a comparison of where we are now vs. SLAC WCs unaffected by the pandemic.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

This semester the Writing Center focused on clarifying our sense of purpose and philosophy, improving our visibility on Wofford's campus, and generally cultivating our shared identity.

PROJECTS

- This semester the whole Writing Center staff collaboratively conceived and wrote the [Mission Statement and Core Values documents](#) included on p. 2 of this report.
- The Director developed and distributed the Writing Center's [2022-2023 Handbook](#) document as a central guide for consultants.
- The Director developed and implemented the [new training model](#) for consultants, described on p. 3.
- The team worked on crafting the [atmosphere of the center's physical space](#) to be more inviting and relaxing, and to communicate that the center is a student-run space.



CHANGES

- The Writing Center now sends [session report forms](#) directly to students rather than professors, in keeping with current writing center scholarship and the student-serving mission of the center.
- [New hires](#) were solicited and recruited from the whole student body rather than just from English Department faculty recommendations, in keeping with the WC's mission to support writing across the curriculum, not just in English or the Humanities.
- For the time being, we [no longer offer asynchronous online feedback](#). Writing center pedagogy does not map easily into asynchronous spaces, so we will revisit best practices for online tutoring in another semester.

OUTREACH

- We hosted a [last-week-of-class write-in event](#) for Wofford's writing community, offering free coffee and consultant support
- We [visited multiple sections of FYI](#) courses to promote the Writing Center
- We developed a new [Writing Center marketing plan](#) and [launched our Instagram presence](#) to increase our general visibility to the student body as well as solidify a clearer visual identity
- We partnered with Film & Digital Media Studies to create a [new promotional video](#) for the center
- We have been [updating our web presence](#) to reflect the changes we've been making
- We have been discussing [partnerships with various courses](#) across the college that are interested in writing support, including Western Civ, Studio Art, and LIBA courses

THE FUTURE

Over the next several years, our center aims to expand the ways we serve Wofford's writers outside our physical space, to further professionalize our staff's work, and to provide more opportunities for student-led research.

SPRING 2023

- Develop a model for self-assessment
- Develop “canon” of key texts for training
- Expand the number of outreach events and workshops we offer
- Do extensive planning and development for the regular schedule of events we will offer, which will be expanded to full capacity starting Fall '23, considering budget
- Publish and promote our new mission statement
- Create & roll out the introductory video we have developed to instructors

AY 2023-2024

- Implement a self-assessment research model
- Seek certification of our tutor training program from the College Reading and Learning Association
- Be able to provide demographic data on center usage & start collecting student feedback systematically
- Roll out full slate of WC hosted events and workshops
- Create marketing guidelines for WC
- Develop partnerships with constituencies across college who can help improve training & development of our staff

IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

- Offer writing pedagogy support for faculty in collaboration with the CIL
- Develop student-led research in the Writing Center
- Take consultants to regional writing center conferences
- Submit student research for publication in writing center journals
- Develop and improve digital resources provided in the WC's web presence
- Develop staff training in multimodal composition support
- Develop & implement writing across the curriculum support model
- Determine what changes in staffing, budget, or physical resources would lead to improved service in the coming years. Some potential areas
 - Adding a small quiet space for sessions that need privacy or fewer distractions
 - Possible staffing expansion depending on the kind of WAC support model we adopt
 - Determine budget structure for supporting ongoing student research in the Writing Center (as it would not be something we do in the summer – WC research must happen during regular operating hours of the center)