

The Richard Wright Center

Writing | Rhetoric | Research

Annual Report July 1, 2015–May 19, 2016

MISSION

Our mission is to provide an environment for intellectual engagement outside the classroom. At any stage of the creative and research processes, students and faculty have the opportunity to interact with trained tutors using technology as they develop written, oral, and visual representations of their ideas for an academic audience.

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff

Director: Kathi R. Griffin, Ph.D., full-time administrative position with affiliation to the English Department, that includes teaching (1 course/semester)

Coordinator: Tatiana A. Glushko, Ph.D., administrative position

Two graduate assistants (**funded by the College of Liberal Arts**)

- Each completed 12 hours of training
- work 20 hours a week

Three undergraduate peer tutors (**Volunteers**)

- recruited from the Honors College
- completed the minimum 12-hour training program
- receive community service hours for training and tutoring

Two faculty volunteers

English and Psychology professors, 1 hour per week each

One undergraduate support staff (**funded by Federal Work-study Program**)

We hired three student workers under the federal work-study program; however we had to let two of them go because of inconsistent attendance.

MAJOR GOALS for AY2015-2016

1. Offer 1-credit Tutor Training course to increase the number of trained peer tutors beginning Fall 2016 - subject to approval by University Curriculum Committee
2. Complete a research project on writing center effectiveness and present it at local and international conferences and submit an article for publication
3. Establish an advisory board that would include stakeholders, i.e., faculty, students, members of the community, and JSU and RWC alumni
4. Request a letter of intent; complete and submit application to the National Writing Project (NWP) to extend RWC services to pre-service teachers, faculty, and to extend our influence to local teachers (Spring 2016)
5. Obtain a grant to sustain RWC current operations and development

6. Submit a proposal for funds for Administrative Assistant, additional graduate tutors, and peer tutors who complete the training course
7. Continue to explore options for effective communication with students, staff and faculty about the RWC

I. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Teaching

A. We provided support to student writers through the following activities:

One-to-one conversations	1196
By appointment	736
Walk-in	460

One-to-one, face-to-face conversations with students is the method supported by the theory of rhetoric and composition and used by all effective writers and communicators and by 101 top writing centers in the nation (Isaacs & Knight, 2014).

Workshops	
Offered by RWC	53
Attended by students	19
Thesis and Dissertation Roundtables	7
Class Workshops/Presentations by faculty request	28
Workshop hosted by RWC (What It Takes to Get a Book Published, Dr. Daniel Wentland, Educational Leadership)	1

(Please see Appendix A for a list of workshop topics, Appendix B for number of attendees, and Appendix C for student feedback.)

B. Increased the number of tutor training sessions from 10 last year to 18 and trained 4 more tutors

We continue our collaboration with the Honors College, which started in August 2013, to recruit and train peer tutors.

Fall 2015	9 training sessions	1 student completed
Spring 2016	9 training sessions	3 students completed

- C. Submitted proposals for two 1-credit tutor training courses to the English Department for approval and recommendation to the undergraduate curriculum committee. These two courses will address the problems of recruitment and retention of tutors in the RWC by
- a) providing a continuous tutor training program
 - b) providing the opportunity for more students to become peer tutors
 - c) improving tutor training
 - d) increasing professional development opportunities for peer tutors
 - e) creating a community of trained peer tutors.

Research/Scholarly Creativity

A. Kathi Griffin and Tatiana Glushko presented at the following conferences:

Mississippi Writing Center Association 2016. Meshing methods in the writing center: New frontiers of RAD research.

Conference on College Composition and Communication 2016. Negotiating “those moments” with faculty.” Panel discussion on civil discourse in writing classes and writing centers. Houston, TX. In collaboration with Molly Parsons, University of Michigan, and Douglas S. Kern, University of Maryland in College Park

International Writing Center Association 2016 Conference. Developing a RAD Methodology: A Discourse Analysis of Post-tutorial Writers’ Language. Pittsburg, PA.

Two-Year Colleges Association Conference 2015. Writing Real in the Classroom. Jackson, MS.

Additionally, Kathi Griffin presented at Transitioning to College Writing 2015 at Oxford, MS.

B. Works in progress include

1. Article on RAD Research in the Writing Center on our effectiveness
2. IRB-approved research on first-year composition in US and China

Service/Engagement

In our service to students on campus, we provided a community service site for 6 undergraduate peer tutors. We also participated in the following information fairs and orientations:

New Student Orientation, Fall 2015

Graduate Student Orientation (Urban and Regional Planning) Fall 2015

UNIV 100 Faculty Orientation, Fall 2015

Honors College Orientation, Fall 2015 & Spring 2016

Adjunct Faculty Orientation, Spring 2016

JSU Transfer, Spring 2016

Blue & White Information Fair, Spring 2016

We provided tutoring to students in summer programs: ICN (Chemistry Dept.) Summer Program 2015 and Summer Bridge 2015 (Undergraduate Studies).

We also developed and added a thesis and dissertation template and handouts for graduate students to our website.

Our service to faculty included two blog posts on academic writing and writing center pedagogy/ We also developed a push card with the help Brandon Thompson to inform faculty about the RWC and our activities. We also conducted interviews with 7 faculty members to understand their perception of the RWC and indentify ways to improve our communication with faculty. We also offered a writing support group to CLA faculty beginning May 23, 2016.

In addition, Kathi Griffin participated in the following:

- ACT-SO Judging

- Institutional Assessment Group
- COLA Conference co-chair
- Writing Retreat for Faculty, Fall 2015
- FFSS 2015 Steering Committee member

II. SUSTAINABILITY

Proposals

Developed and presented to the Dean a **proposal for strategic development** of the RWC, including a proposal for funds for Administrative Assistant, additional graduate tutors, and peer tutors who complete the training course.

Grants

We submitted but did not receive the following grants:

Agency	Title of Grant	Proposed Project	Amount	Date of Submission	PI
U.S. Mission to Russia/U.S. Department of State	FY 2016 English Language Programs (Public Diplomacy Programs)	Negotiating Difference in Academic Writing: A Translingual Approach to Training Writing Consultants	\$200,000/year up to 3 years	January 11, 2016	Tatiana Glushko
Jackson State University	President's Creative Award	From One Discourse Community to Another: A RAD Study of Students in Transition	\$ 5,000	December 12, 2015	Kathi Griffin
The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition	Paul P. Fidler Research Grant 2015-2016	From One Discourse Community to Another: A RAD Study of How Students Transition From Novice to Experienced Writers	\$ 5,000	July 1, 2015	Kathi Griffin

IV. NEW AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

One of our goals for this academic year was to begin working on reestablishing a site of the National Writing Project (NWP) at Jackson State University. This project would allow us to extend RWC services to pre-service teachers and faculty, and to extend our influence to local teachers. We sent a letter of intent to the NWP. Our next step will be to submit an application.

V. AWARDS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS/DISTINCTIONS

None

VI. ENROLLMENT DATA—NA**VII. STUDENT SUCCESS--NA**

Internships--NA

Awards--NA

Recognitions--NA

Other--NA

VIII. PROGRAM QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS

We developed two 1-credit tutor training courses to enhance preparation of peer tutors in writing.

Accreditations: None

Self-Studies: We have been developing a new method for assessing the effectiveness of writing center work. The project is to be completed in July 2015.

Peer-Reviews: None

Graduate Program Reviews: NA

Other

IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

X. SUMMARY

In 2015-2016, our focus was on improving communication with the university constituencies, enhancing our research, and improving sustainability of the center. Retention of students in a tutor training program and retention of trained tutors remains a problem, which can be partially solved by offering a for-credit tutor training course. We expected our proposals for two tutor training courses to be approved for Fall 2016. However, both proposals were lost, and we have to resubmit them. We are still seeking ways to increase attendance of our workshops. We'll continue to lobby *JSU Today* and use social media to inform students and faculty about this opportunity.

XI. MAJOR GOALS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2016-2017

1. Our major goal remains to enhance tutor preparation and retention by offering two 1-credit Tutor Training courses. We will continue to seek approval of the courses in AY 2016-2017.
2. Increase the number of intellectual conversations with students and faculty by 3%—subject to number of tutors available.
3. Establish an additional RWC site on one of the satellite campuses—subject to number of tutors available.
4. Survey students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community to understand the perception of the RWC (Fall 2016).
4. Seek opportunities for additional funding through grants.

5. Submit application to the National Writing Project for establishing a site at JSU.
6. Continue working on establishing an advisory board that would include stakeholders, i.e., faculty, students, members of the community, and JSU and RWC alumni.
7. Submit for publication articles on writing center effectiveness and on civil discourse in the writing center.

Appendix A

Workshops on Academic Writing

UEPE Preparation
GECE Preparation
Thesis Statements That Work
Supporting an Argument
Citation and Documentation
What Makes Effective Presentations
Editing and Proofreading Strategies
Writing Under Pressure
Refining Research Questions
Narrowing Your Topic
Parts of a Research Paper
Visual Aids
Personal Statements

Thesis and Dissertation Roundtables

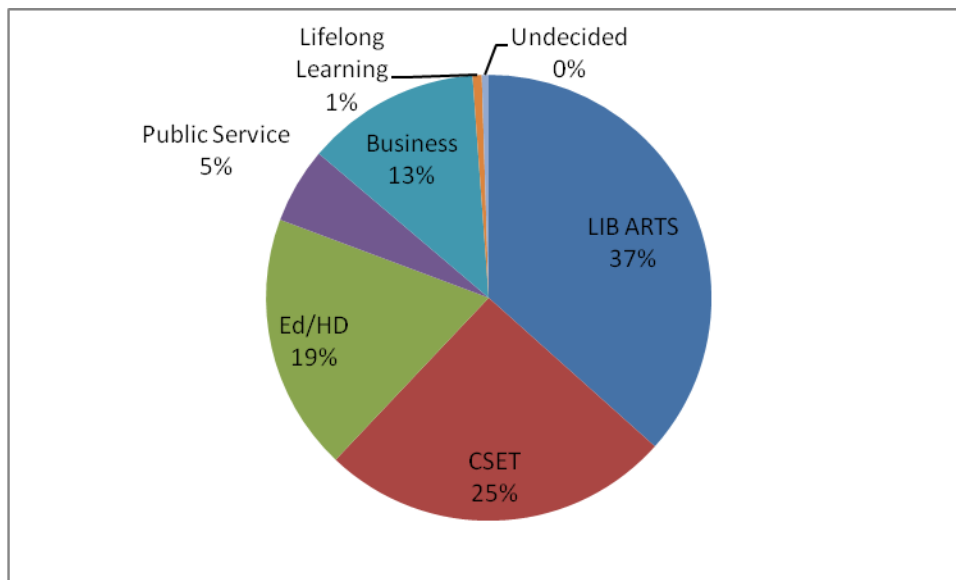
Master's Thesis & Dissertation Overview
Writing up your Proposal
The Literature Review
Writing up the Results of Your Research
What Is a Discussion Chapter?
Presenting Research Orally and Visually

Appendix B

Number of Conversations about Writing by Activity

Activity	Number of Conversations/Participants
Appointments	736
Walk-ins	460
Tutor Training Sessions	62
Workshop	66
Class Presentations	536
Roundtable	18
Faculty Conversations	7
Total	1885

Appointment Users by College (as of Fall 2016)



Appendix C

Student Testimonials* (from Student Reflection Forms)

What stood out most for you during the session?

How nice my tutor was and how much it helps to talk to someone to get idea out.

Everything, my tutor was amazing. She helped me find a way to make my paper more clear.

My tutor, Songwei, was very patient with helping me sort my ideas.

It was easier to come up with new ideas and revise my essay with help rather than alone.

I like the fact how [the tutor] understood me. I was able to express myself.

The fact that the tutor did not down my paper but rather advise me to take some changes to create a better focus

That she listen and didn't make me feel bad for making mistakes.

Anthony did a great job at allowing [me] to see my thought by him writing out what he heard me say.

How quickly my ideas came together from one on one conversation.

How innovative the employees here are.

The RWC does more than just edit papers.

Just the interaction with the tutor helped me understand my project more.

How much you can actually find on JSU web.

Additional Comments

We need to make you into an app! [A student told Dr. Griffin after a tutoring session.]

The tutors should be getting paid.

I love coming to the writing center. Tutors are always so helpful.

Songwei was helpful and nice. I am excited to write paper because she asked a lot of questions that will help

Thank you for helping me get a step closer to my goals!

I left my session feeling more confident about becoming able to complete my assignment.

I feel totally relieved about writing this paper because I feel like I know what I'm doing now.

*The original grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been retained.