



**Writing Studio
Annual Report
AY2014-2015**

Submitted by
Brian Fallon, Director of the Writing Studio
Adam Gray, Associate Director of the Writing Studio

June 1, 2015

Program Overview and Changes

With 77 more tutoring sessions than last year, the Writing Studio continues to grow at a steady pace. The Writing Studio had a total of 4,339 tutoring sessions with 1,160 unique visitors during the 2014-2015 academic year. The staff had 31 members this academic year (1 administrative assistant, 3 professional writing consultants, 25 peer writing consultants, and 3 student aides). Although the overall number of tutoring sessions increased, the Studio saw a decrease in online sessions. This decrease was likely due to the fact that fewer tutors were eligible to tutor online; we will continue to train tutors for effective online pedagogy to have more appointments available in 2015-2016.

All tutors met twice a month for Saturday meetings and occasionally broke into smaller groups or one-to-one meetings outside of those meetings to ensure staff were being supported and educated. The Writing Studio Directors prepared tutors to work with students with diverse literacy and language backgrounds and with students needing assistance in a wide range of disciplines and genres.

Austin Bowie joined the staff in November 2014 and was reclassified as the Writing Studio's Administrative Assistant during the spring 2015 semester.

The Writing Studio Director co-chaired the International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing. The Associate Director was appointed Associate Chair of the Conference in charge of Special Interest Groups. Both Peer and Professional Consultants assisted in conference operations and presented scholarly work at the conference.

The Writing Studio provided a research site for two dissertation students in addition to an on-going study on tutor development conducted by the Director and Associate Director.

With the input of a committee formed as part of the College's Strategic Plan Goal 1 initiatives, the Director and Associate Director drafted a Strategic Plan for expanding the Writing Studio. The plan detailed four goals:

1. Integrate Technology and 21st-Century Communication into Services
2. Provide Speaking Tutoring Services
3. Formalize Writing/Communication Across the Curriculum Program
4. Support Graduate Student and Research Writing

The Writing Studio is poised to begin work on any or all of these areas and many activities this academic year were planned with these goals in mind.

Staff and Faculty Development and Honors

Director (D), Associate Director (AD), Professional Writing Consultant (WC), and Peer Writing Consultant (PWC) Conferences and Presentations

Sahar Ali (PWC), "Peer Tutoring Special Interest Group." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Claudia Arriso (PWC), "Let's Chat: Navigating the Online Session." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Nkem Chukwumerije (PWC), "Continual Learning Beyond the Final Grade." European Writing Centers Association Conference, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. July 19-22, 2014.

Brian Fallon (D), "The National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing: A History." European Writing Centers Association Conference, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. July 19-22, 2014.

Brian Fallon (D), "30 Years in the Making: NCPTW History." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Brian Fallon (D), Adam Gray (AD), and Nkem Chukwumerijie (PWC) "Peer Tutor Education Models: Beyond Classroom Borders." European Writing Centers Association Conference, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. July 19-22, 2014.

Adam Gray (AD), "Peering Across Language Differences in the Writing Center." European Writing Centers Association Conference, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. July 19-22, 2014.

Adam Gray (AD), "New Paths Toward Tutor Investment." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Adam Gray (AD), attended National Association of Communication Centers Conference, Fredericksburg, VA. April 17-19, 2015.

Sasha Graybosch (WC) and Courtney Ward (WC), "() LOL: Strategies for Building Rapport Online." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Marlena McLemore (PWC) and Isabella Johnson (PWC), "'Verbs are a Disaster': Mediating Professor Comments that Have Been Lost in Translation." International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, Orlando, FL. October 30 - November 1, 2014.

Other Accomplishments, Publications, Awards, and Honors

Devon Desanna (PWC) was featured in the Cultural Spheres Exhibition at FIT for a film she produced about Street Harassment in February, 2015

Brian Fallon (D), Treasurer, National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, September 2013 - present.

Brian Fallon (D), was co-Chair and Adam Gray (AD) was Associate Chair of the International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing 2014 Joint Conference, October 30 - November 1 in Orlando, FL

Brian Fallon (D), Publication, "Why My Best Teachers Are Peer Tutors" in L. Fitzgerald and M. Ianetta's *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors*, 2015.

Sarah Gold (PWC) was chosen as one of twelve participants in the Art and Design Interdisciplinary Grant called "Modeling in a 3D World." It is a study of CAD/CAM and will determine how 3D modeling will be incorporated into the future jewelry and accessories curriculums. February, 2015.

Gabriella Manduca (PWC) was awarded the Jerome L. Greene Foundation International Scholarship. She was awarded \$10,000 to study abroad in Florence in Spring 2016.

Bruno Nadalin (WC) participated in several exhibitions of his illustration work this year including: “The Big Draw,” “313 Studio Residents Show,” “In Tension,” “Cartoonism: Volume 2,” and “Not for Sale.”

Erika Renstrom (PWC) was flown to Seattle by the National Retail Federation for the Shop.org Conference in September, 2014. As a result she was also invited to "Retail's Big Show" in January 2015.

Deepti Sunder (PWC) won the Society of Children's' Book Writers and Illustrators “Crystal Kite Award” for the Middle East/India/Asia division, for a book named *Bonkers!* that she did the illustrations for in India.

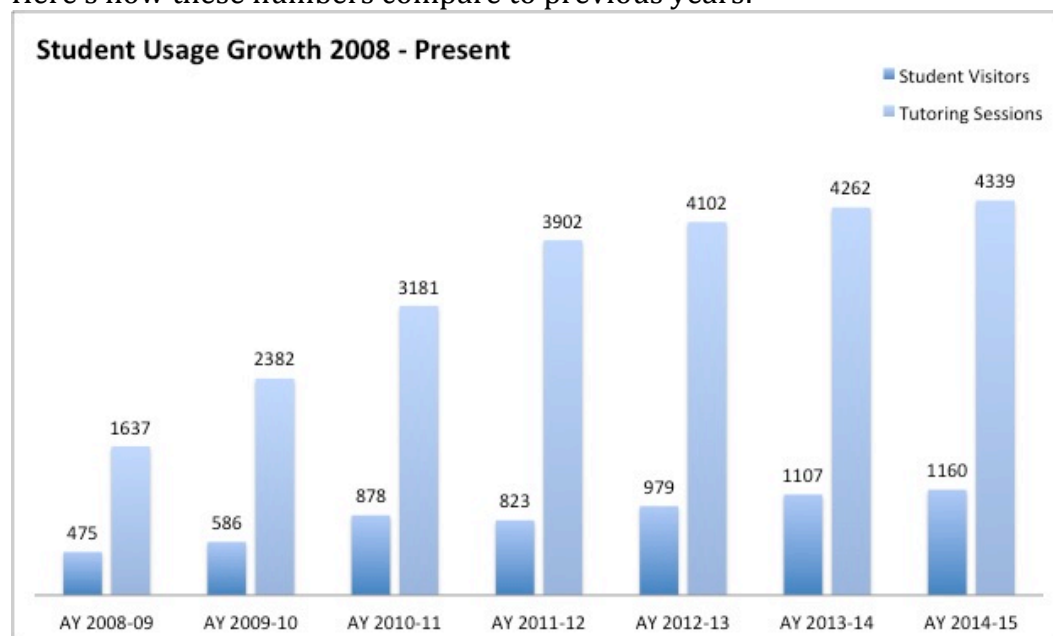
Major Activities and New Initiatives

The Writing Studio’s primary function is to provide tutoring in writing in all subjects and professional areas. As mentioned earlier, the Writing Studio continued to see growth in the number of sessions throughout AY2014-15 (see tables below).

Writing Studio Sessions and Visitors

Total Tutoring Sessions	4339
Unique Visitors	1160
Online Sessions	301

Here’s how these numbers compare to previous years:



Visitor Breakdown

First-year Students	1776 sessions	41%
Sophomores	786 sessions	18%
Juniors	592 sessions	14%
Seniors	500 sessions	12%
Graduate Students	234 sessions	6%
Alum	13 sessions	1%
Faculty/Staff	150 sessions	4%
Not Disclosed	288 sessions	3%

Top Courses/Writing Needs

EN121: College Composition	301 sessions
HA112: History of Western Art and Civilization	165 sessions
EN321: Strategies of Business Communication	163 sessions
FM117: Introduction to Fashion Marketing	91 sessions
Personal and Professional Writing	802 sessions

Two interesting points to note with this data are that students visited for first-year writing help, namely EN121, and for personal and professional writing help in large numbers. There still continues to be a sharp decline in the percentage of students using the Writing Studio from first-year to senior year; however, there was an increase of 184 seniors who visited the Writing Studio this year. As noted in past years, this decline may also speak to fewer writing expectations as students progress through their course of study, but it is encouraging to see the number of seniors increasing.

The second point of interest is the number of students visiting for personal and professional writing help. The Writing Studio uses this category when students are working on non-course related writing. This indicates that the Writing Studio is being used frequently for writing enrichment outside of course curriculum.

Workshops and Presentations

In addition to tutoring writing from a variety of disciplines, the Writing Studio continued to assist the Fashion Design Department in preparing students for the 2014 Council of Fashion Designers student competition. Writing Studio Directors and Writing Consultants conducted workshops in a number of sixth semester Fashion Design classes and a menswear class during which each student received one-to-one feedback on their collection/design philosophy statements. The Associate Director worked with Shannon Maher, Home Products Development, to facilitate workshops that helped students write and publish wiki articles. Four classes were involved in these workshops. Additionally, the Associate Director worked with Karen Pearson, Science and Math, to help chemistry students understand the conventions of technical writing. Also, over the 2015 winter session, the Directors along with the Studio's professional consultants worked with the Exhibition Design students on developing ideas, planning, and writing.

Along with providing workshops for students, the Director and Associate Director frequently worked with the Center for Excellence in Teaching to lead workshops for faculty. The 2014-15 year's collaborations began with a discussion of "Writing to Learn" as part of the "It's Your First Day of Class" series in August, 2014. In March, 2015 the Directors hosted a workshop entitled "Writing Strategies for Everyday Assignments and Activities" and in April, offered a workshop for faculty with over 25 participants entitled "Writing Strategies for Everyday Assignments and Activities."

Also in April, the Directors piloted some smaller, writing across the curriculum workshops. They presented a faculty workshop on "Peer Review Workshops: Co-learning and Collaborating" and one on "Responding to and Assessing Student Writing," developed with the assistance of Professional Writing Consultant Courtney Ward. Admittedly, the final two workshops failed to attract attendees, but they did provide an opportunity to think through advertising and developing such workshops moving forward. The Directors also worked one-to-one with a number of faculty members to discuss writing, teaching and curriculum development throughout the year. Both the workshops and these one-to-one meetings are initial steps in preparing for and organizing a focused writing across the curriculum program.

Writing Studio Research

The Directors continued a successfully approved Internal Review Board research project in the Studio. The project involves interviewing peer tutors at the beginning of their time in the Studio and also interviewing graduating tutors. The Directors are seeking to understand how perceptions of the tutoring experience may or may not change over time and also what tutors gain from their experience here. We also anticipate using this data to share at conferences and in publications with those within the wider writing center community.

In addition to in-house research, the Writing Studio hosted two external researchers conducting studies at FIT for their dissertations. One researcher studied the Writing Studio's staff education program. She observed staff meetings and training activities in addition to interviewing the Director, Associate Director, and a number of tutors. The second researcher, along with the Director as her Co-Investigator, conducted a study on writing in and for fashion merchandising courses. Both research projects concluded successfully and results from the studies are forthcoming.

IWCA/NCPTW 2014

During the fall semester, the Director served as a co-Chair for the International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (IWCA/NCPTW) 2014 Joint Conference (held at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando, FL, October 30 – November 1, 2014). The Associate Director served as an Associate Chair for the conference and coordinated special interest groups. A great deal of time and energy went into this effort, and Writing Studio staff were involved in everything from reading conference proposals to working registration desks and assisting conference attendees. FIT offered considerable assistance in making the overall success of this international writing center conference possible.

As a result of all these efforts, the conference was the most attended and highly grossing conference in writing center history, which ensured close to \$46,000 in revenue that will be used to offer tutors scholarships and research grants to both students and professionals in writing center studies. The Writing Studio's involvement in the conference brought international attention to the College and its growing writing center program.

Expanding the Writing Studio

The spring semester's major activity involved developing a Strategic Plan for Expanding the Writing Studio. The plan shifts the focus of the Writing Studio toward a "Communication Arts Studio" or multiliteracies approach that involves technology, speaking, writing across the curriculum, and advanced writing for academic purposes. The goals, more specifically, were developed to:

- strengthen writing tutoring with attention to how technology and culture are shaping communication;
- build a speaking tutoring program that assists students with individual, group, and online presentations;
- formalize a bona fide writing across the curriculum program housed in what will become the Communication Arts Studio (This program will also involve a writing fellows program that places advanced tutors in courses that are writing intensive.);
- provide assistance for graduate students and faculty members taking on advanced writing activities like research and preparing manuscripts for publication.

The proposed strategic plan is ambitious, but each component is based on needs determined by the FIT community through the College's Strategic Plan and the FIT 2012 Middle States Self-Study.

Staff Education and Development

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, writing consultants have been studying key scholarship in the field of writing center studies that provide a theoretical timeline of writing center work as the Writing Studio prepares to take on new challenges with global, 21st century communication.

Staff education meetings during fall 2014 were dedicated to challenging the idea of "Standard" American English in order to educate tutors about diversity in language learning. In spring 2015, staff education meetings focused on the idea of tutoring various disciplines and genres.

The goal of ongoing tutor education this year was to ensure that tutors have the necessary background knowledge to be able to work with the diversity of students and assignments that come to the Writing Studio. The intended outcome was for tutors to be able to explain to students how and why conventions for writing vary to meet the demands of different fields and communities. Tutors read and discussed theoretical and practical articles that broadened their perspectives on communicating in an increasingly connected and culturally diverse world.

Writing Consultants are expected to take their practicum learning not only to their tutoring sessions, but also to scholarly forums. Six tutors presented at the IWCA/NCPTW conference in November, covering topics that stem from past and current practicum curricula. In addition, five tutors submitted conference proposals for next year's NCPTW conference.

Conditions and Changes to Academic Spaces, Labs, Classrooms

Feldman C612 continues to be a good location for the Writing Studio. In the future, especially as the Studio prepares to roll out speaking tutoring and other programs listed in the Writing Studio Strategic Plan, there may be a need to seek more space to work with students on visual and speaking presentations, to provide workshops, and to offer writing and technology assistance.

Outstanding Technology Advances

Online tutoring has continued this academic year at the Writing Studio with 301 sessions. Students continue to meet with tutors online in a live chat session using a program called WOnline, which also schedules appointments. The student's paper appears on a whiteboard that allows tutors to see changes instantaneously, also enabling students to receive tutor feedback in real time. The program additionally allows for video chat. One of

the best features is that once students have concluded their online session, they can return to WCOOnline and replay their tutoring session.

Further, as FIT is now a “Google university,” the directors and tutors began using the four Samsung Google Chromebooks that were purchased last year for tutoring sessions. We continued exploring ways to use Google Drive to share information both among the staff and between tutors and students. The Studio also began using digital video cameras, and microphones that were purchased in anticipation of a move toward more speaking tutoring. These investments all speak to technological improvements outlined in the College’s Strategic Plan and also further the Writing Studio’s goal of moving toward becoming a space that focuses on multiple literacies including writing, speaking and digital means of communication.

The Director and Administrative Assistant also continued to establish a blog to be used for writing across the curriculum purposes. Ultimately, the blog will allow for both students and faculty to access and contribute to writing samples, visuals, and videos. The blog will also be a “living” resource that future tutors will be able to both maintain and grow.

Funding/Grants

The Perkins Grant helped support tutoring for AAS students at the Writing Studio throughout FY2014-2015. It also supported the travel of tutors to the International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing in October 2014.

The Director, along with Prof. Elaine Maldonado, Director of Faculty Development, submitted a National Education Association grant application in May 2015 to develop faculty workshops on communicating across cultures. NEA will notify successful candidates in August 2015.

Both the Director and Associate Director were awarded grants from the Faculty Development Grants and Awards Committee to attend and present at the European Writing Centers Association in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany in July 2014.