

# University Writing Center

Annual Report: 2016-2017

**The mission of the University Writing Center is to foster effective writing strategies that will not only help writers with their current assignments, but also build foundations for success in future academic and professional writing situations.**



## **ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

The University Writing Center, located in the D.F. Lowry Building, is an academic support program that provides individual peer tutoring in writing to all UNCP students. The Center is supported jointly by Academic Affairs and the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages and is housed in Student Academic Support and Retention. The Interim Director of the Center, Dr. Michael J. Berntsen, is an assistant professor in the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages. The University Writing Center employs student tutors from all disciplines, paying them an hourly wage for their tutoring services. A Graduate Student Assistant is also assigned to the University Writing Center. The University Writing Center provides one-to-one tutoring in writing to UNCP students who are working on writing related to UNCP coursework, scholarships, or other applications.

This annual report provides usage information gleaned from our database of student records. It also provides updated information regarding improvements, new programs, and other developments that have taken place in the University Writing Center over the past academic year.

If you have questions about this report or would like more information, please contact:

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**Interim Director of the University Writing Center**

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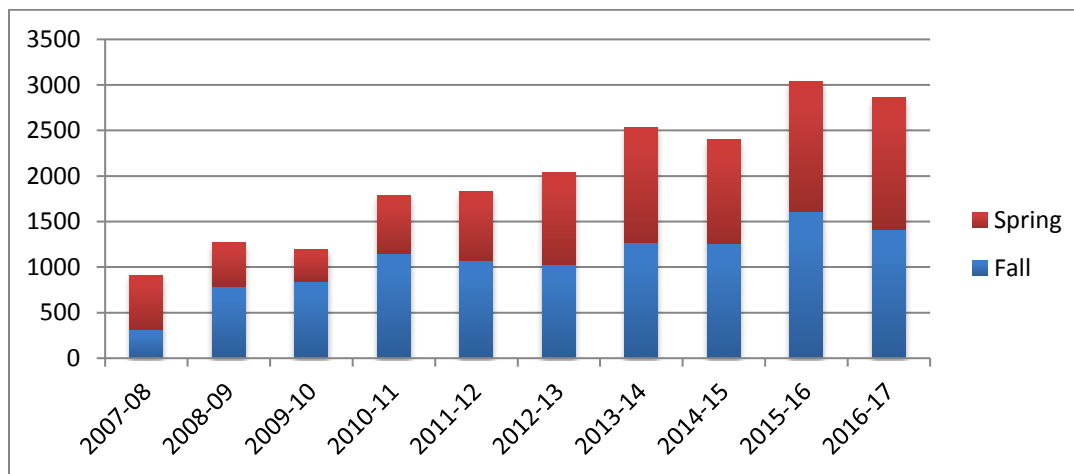
**Email: [michael.berntsen@uncp.edu](mailto:michael.berntsen@uncp.edu)**

# Writing Center Usage

## YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **2,859 writing tutorials**
- **760 total unique student users**
- **449 online writing tutorials**

*This year saw a slight decrease of 182 tutorial sessions\*, with a total of 2,859:*

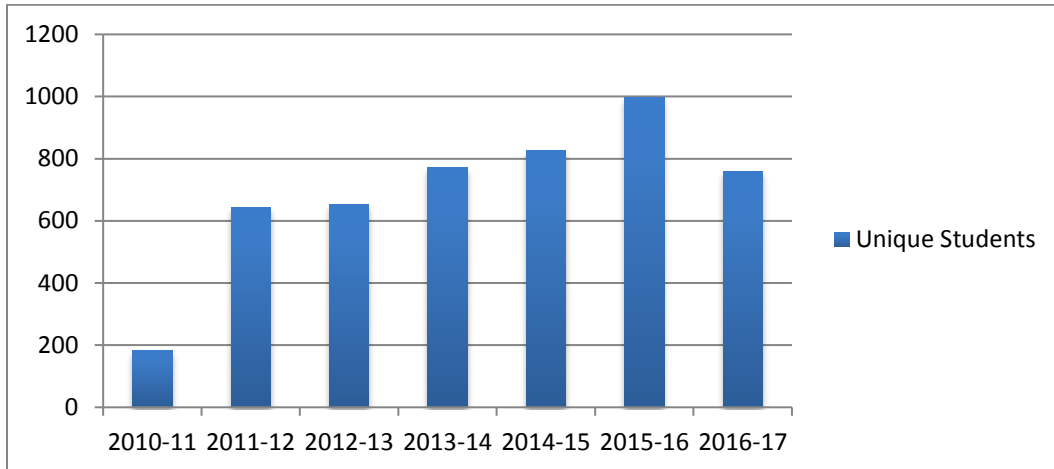


\*The decrease in numbers can be attributed to several factors:

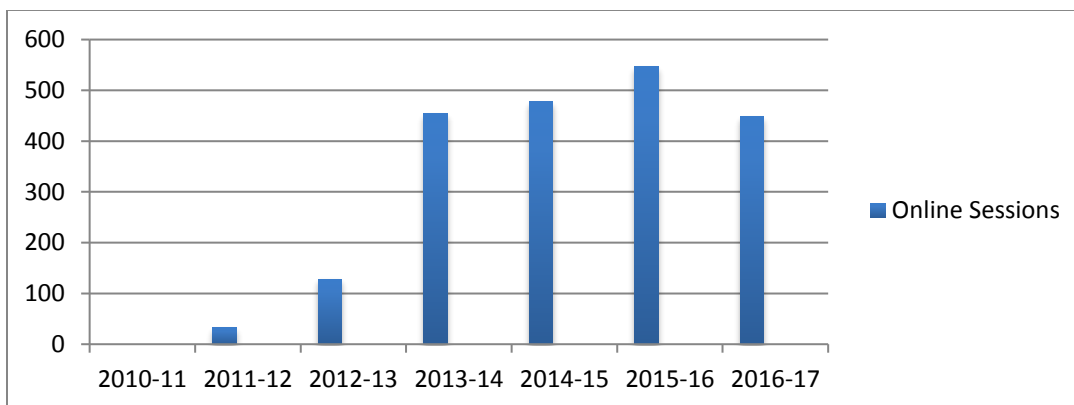
- **Hurricane Matthew:** The center was closed for 7 business days during Hurricane Matthew and the cleanup efforts, which took away an estimated 100 appointments.
- **5 New Hires in the Fall:** During the first two weeks of the semester, the 5 newly hired tutors were observing and shadowing for the first two weeks rather than tutoring.
- **WC Director Search:** During the last five weeks of Fall semester, the Interim-Director had reduced hours given WC Director Search Committee obligations.
- **Hosting WC Director Candidates:** During Spring semester the Writing Center was closed while hosting Writing Center Director candidates' "Mission for UNCP's Writing Center" presentations.

- **WC Director Candidate Hosting Duties:** Dr. Berntsen also had to reduce hours for candidate hosting duties, as well, in the early weeks of the Spring semester.

*The total number of unique users decreased by 236 students, to total at 760, but **the number of returning users increased by 15%**. The Writing Center tutored 13% of the UNCP student body this academic year:*

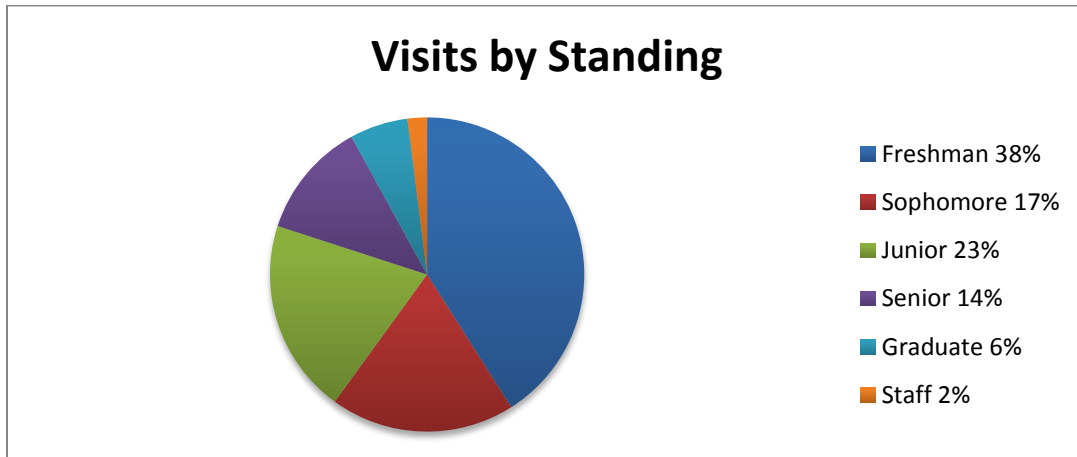


*Online appointments decreased by 97 compared with last year\*, with a total of 449:*

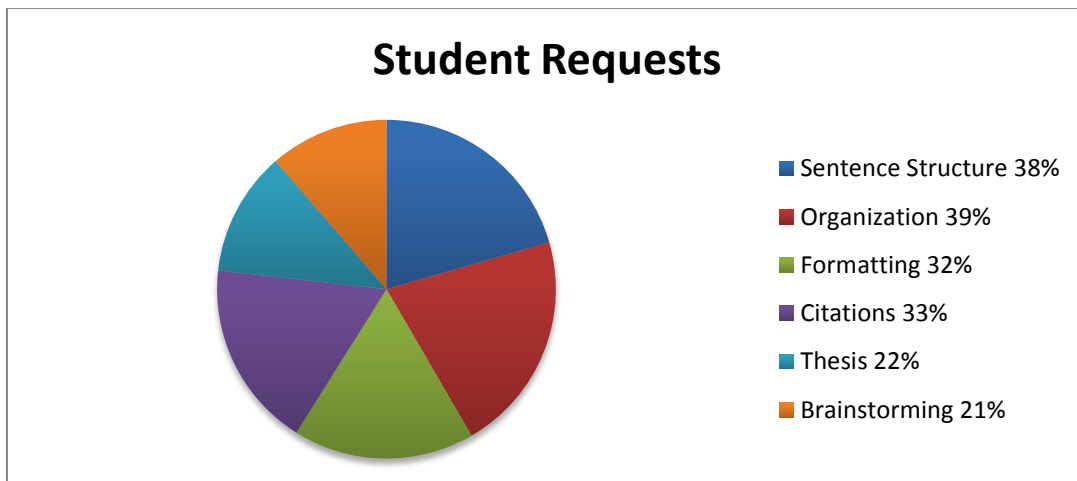


\*The decreases can be attributed to the factors listed above.

*Student visits were made predominantly by freshman, but with a strong mix of upper-level and graduate visits as well:*



*Students requested assistance on various aspects of writing, with many requests focusing on sentence structure and organization:*



## WRITING CENTER USAGE & FUNDING

As is evident in the usage data above, the Writing Center's student usage has grown significantly over the past eight years. This growth has been facilitated by additional funds granted each year upon request. Four years ago, however, the Writing Center received a permanent funding increase. These funds, in part, account for the higher usage since the 2012-2013 academic year. The Writing Center, as a student academic support unit, plays a role in student success and retention. This additional funding has helped the Writing Center play this role effectively.

This year saw a slight decrease in usage, but this aspect can be explained by the external forces listed above, especially given the Hurricane Matthew closures and Writing Center Director Search Committee responsibilities.

Overall, the numbers remain higher since Michael J. Berntsen has guided the center as the Interim Director. Some of the new initiatives and workshops he and his staff created include:

- Volunteering for Freshman Move-In
- Collaborating with Residence Life to create Write Right Workshops that introduce first-year writing students to approaches for college writing
- ASA and AP Workshops
- Lesson Plan Workshops
- Meet the Tutor Days that are open to faculty, staff, and students so they can meet the tutors and see how useful the center is for all levels of writing
- Revamping the Writing Center portion of the Graduate Writing Academy to make it more engaging
- Participated in the Mid-Year Academy Resource Fair

These efforts, along with our continued MLA and APA workshops, presentations to classes, and class visits to the center, have help introduce new students to our services. Michael J. Berntsen also created a New Tutors Handbook for future hires, which has helped transition beginning tutors.

The Writing Center saw a 15 percent increase of returning students, which shows that the UNCP Writing Center is a vital component for student success. Our schedule is booked well in advance and often is full prior to three days. With the new, permanent director, Brandy Brown, taking on the responsibilities, the UNCP Writing Center will continue to shape students' understanding of college writing.

# Technology

## WCONLINE

For the past five years the University Writing Center has subscribed to WOnline, a web-based system that includes the following features:

- A web-based appointment system.
- A database that tracks students and student visits by various attributes.
- A survey tool.
- Usage reporting capabilities.
- Online tutoring capabilities.

## ONLINE TUTORING SESSIONS

The online tutoring capabilities feature a web-based platform where students paste or upload documents to a shared space. Tutors and clients can both highlight and modify the document. Communication is carried out through a chat feature. This is a popular feature for online and distance students.

## WEBSITE

The University Writing Center's website includes an 'about us' page which includes a mission statement and an explanation of our approach. The website also features a page for faculty, a page with pictures and biographies of the tutoring staff, a page of helpful links, a page that explains how to apply for a tutoring position, and a page explaining our online tutoring platform. Students can make appointments via our website.

## HARDWARE

The University Writing Center has six computers that are available for student use, one of which has DSS software installed. One printer is also available. The computers are less than two years old and in good condition. The Writing Center also has a StarBoard projector for presentations and for group writing projects.

# Tutor Training & Professional Development

## TUTOR TRAINING COURSE

University Writing Center tutors are trained in a full-credit course, ENG 2990: Writing Center Theory and Practice. In the course, students read theoretical and practical texts in the writing center field. They also write three papers, one of which requires research on a writing-center related topic. Each of the three papers is written in a different format: MLA, APA, and Chicago. The class creates a knowledgeable and skilled cohort of tutors in the University Writing Center. This experience and training greatly enhances the students' qualifications for teaching and related careers.

## MONTHLY TRAINING SESSIONS

All University Writing Center tutors participate in monthly staff-training sessions. Many sessions this year focused on developing MLA and APA workshops.

## CONFERENCES

The entire staff attended and participated in North Carolina Tutor Collaboration Day at East Carolina University, Friday, Sept. 23.

## UNCP Writing Center Website Projects

The entire staff has created writing worksheets for UNCP students to access when the center is closed.

# Staffing & Recruitment

## WRITING CENTER STAFF:

### Fall 2016 to Spring 2017 Staff

Michael J. Berntsen, Interim Director

#### Graduate Student Assistant Directors:

- Ashley Allen (Biology)
- Brittani Allen (Education)
- Amber Hester (English)



### **Undergraduate Tutors:**

- Erin Duprey (English)
- Krista Langley (English)
- Yuri Moore (English Education)
- Andrew Strickland (Secondary English Education)
- Citori Swink (Secondary Education)
- Carli Thompson (English)
- Jordan Williams (English)

### **RECRUITMENT**

To replace graduating staff, recruitment was undertaken in the spring. This consists of emails to all students and faculty announcing tutoring positions available and a job announcement on Brave Opportunities. For consideration, students submit a cover letter, an application form, and a writing sample. They also list at least one UNCP faculty reference. Potential tutors are interviewed and those selected are invited to enroll in English 2990.

## **University Outreach**

### **FRESHMAN MOVE-IN**

The Writing Center staff and interim-director participated in the Freshman Move-In as an effort to solidify the community spirit of UNCP and to introduce students to the tutoring services on campus.

### **CITATION WORKSHOPS**

This year, the Writing Center staff developed and conducted several different citation workshops for MLA, APA, ASA, and AP citation styles. We conducted four MLA, four APA, two ASA, and two AP workshops throughout the year. 78 students attended the workshops.

### **LESSON PLAN WORKSHOP**

Brittani Allen, one of the graduate assistants, created a Lesson Plan Workshop for education majors for which 11 students attended.

### **WRITE RIGHT WORKSHOPS**

Teaming up with Residence Life, we created a Write Right Workshop to introduce first-year students to college writing. Both sessions were well attended with a total of 46 students.

## **LIBRARY SATELLITE**

The University Writing Center holds tutoring hours in the Mary Livermore Library Sunday-Tuesday 7:00pm – 10:00pm. Four tutors are on staff at these times. This service has proven to be popular with students. Since the service is targeted at the “point of need,” in the place and at the time that students are working on writing assignments, the utilization is stronger than that at the Writing Center’s main location. We will make an effort to continue this service since it is so convenient and beneficial to students.

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH & WRITING ACADEMY**

For the past four years, the Writing Center has participated in a weekend writing and research workshop for graduate students. Michael Alewine, Robert Arndt, Anita Guynn, Amber Hester, and Michael J. Berntsen conducted one Graduate Research and Writing Academy sessions per semester on Saturday mornings. These sessions were popular with students and student surveys of the academy were overwhelmingly positive.

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SUMMER INSTITUTE**

A Writing Center staff member conducts a workshop on cover letter writing for the DOT Summer Institute, a summer program for high school students located at the Regional Center.

## **FRESHMAN SEMINAR**

Many Freshman Seminar instructors include the University Writing Center in their course. Some include the Center in their scavenger hunt, some bring their class by the Center, and some invite a representative of the Center to visit their class. We encourage all of the above and hope to strengthen our connection to Freshman Seminar in the coming year.

## **SPECIFIC COURSES**

Many instructors teaching writing intensive courses have included the Writing Center in their syllabus. The instructors recommend, or in some cases require, all of their students to visit the Writing Center. Instructors forward copies of assignments and give us feedback on our work with their students. The Writing Center has relationships with instructors teaching courses in the following areas:

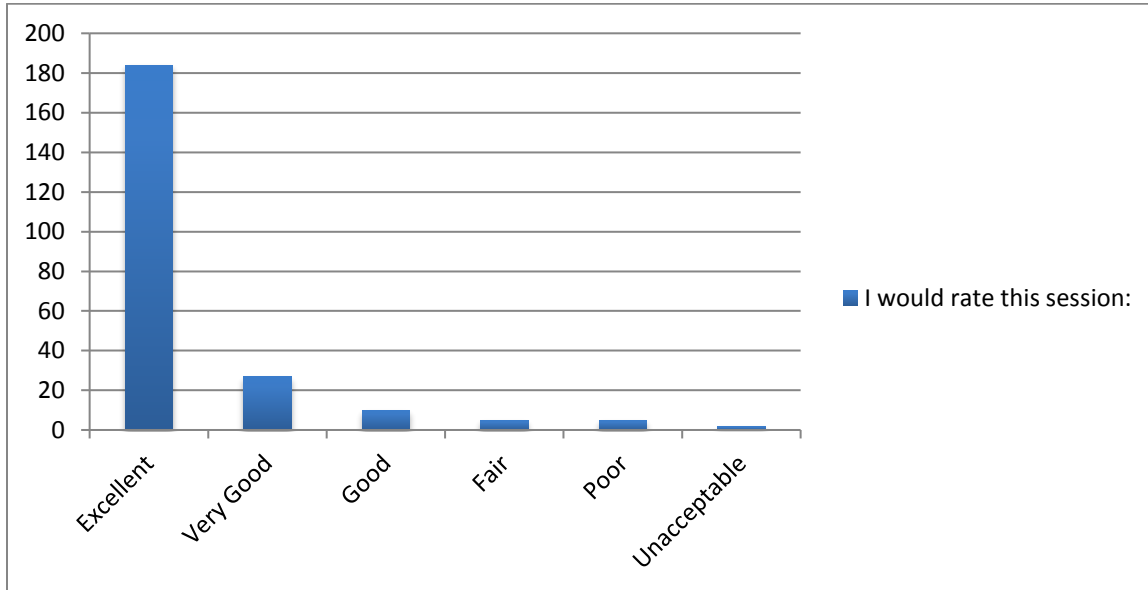
- English Composition
- Intro to Theatre
- History
- Religion
- Mass Communication
- Business Communication

# Surveys

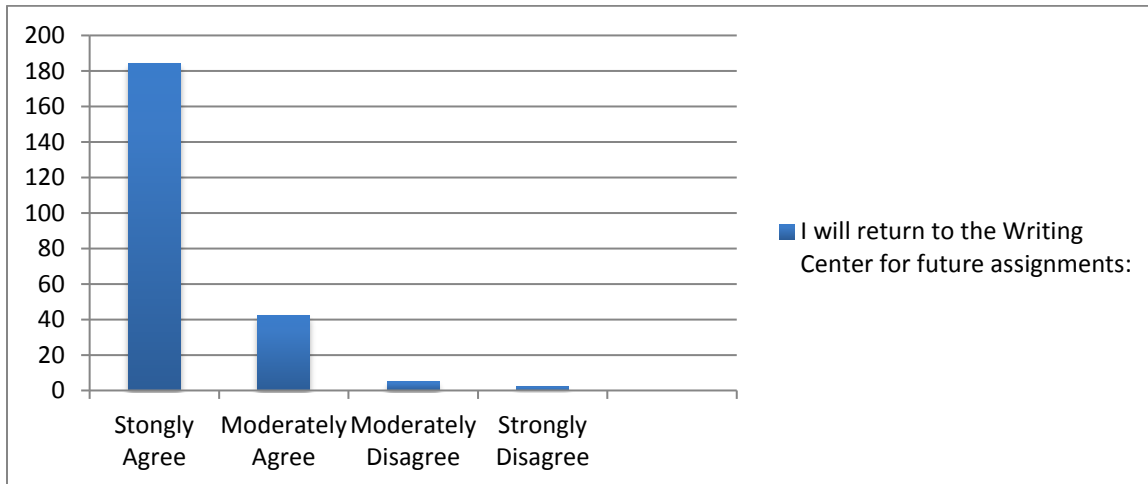
## STUDENT SURVEYS

The student surveys were conducted throughout the 2016-2017 academic year. All students who visited the University Writing Center were sent an email with a link to the survey. 276 students responded.

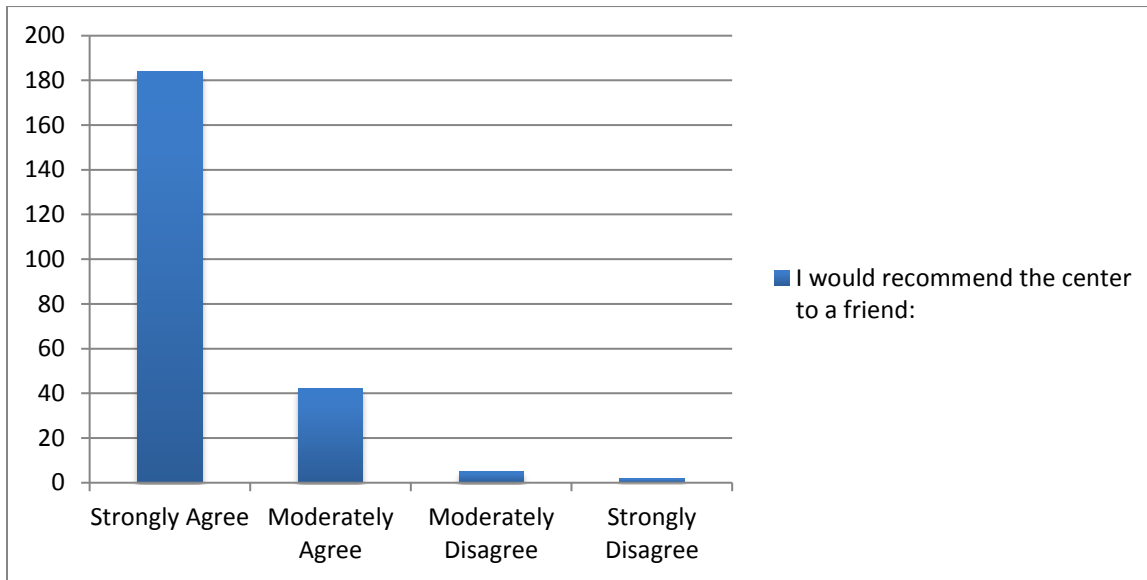
*I would rate this session:*



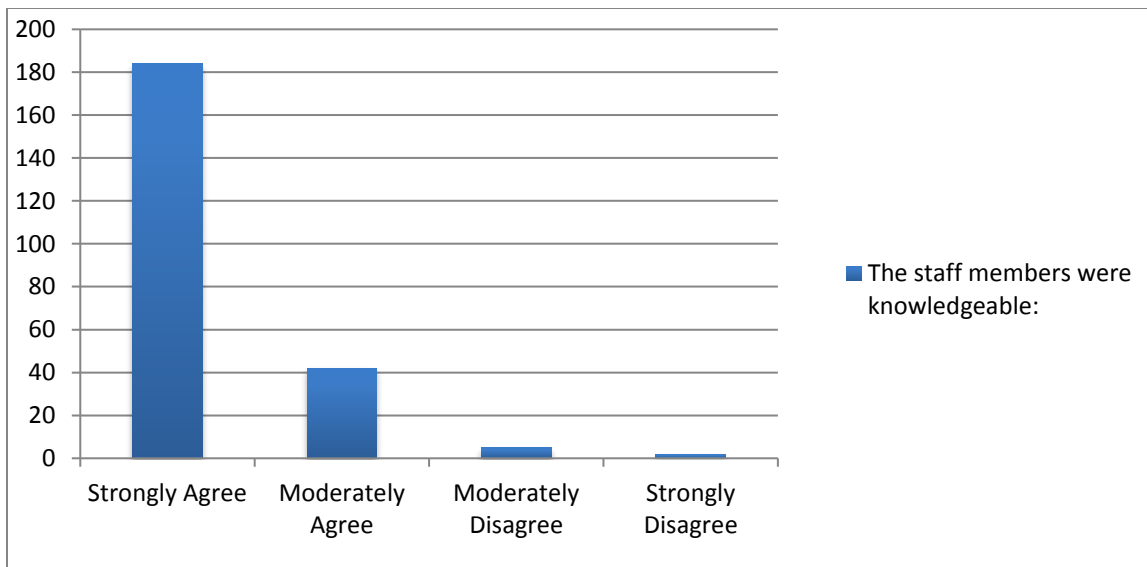
*I will return to the Writing Center for future assignments:*



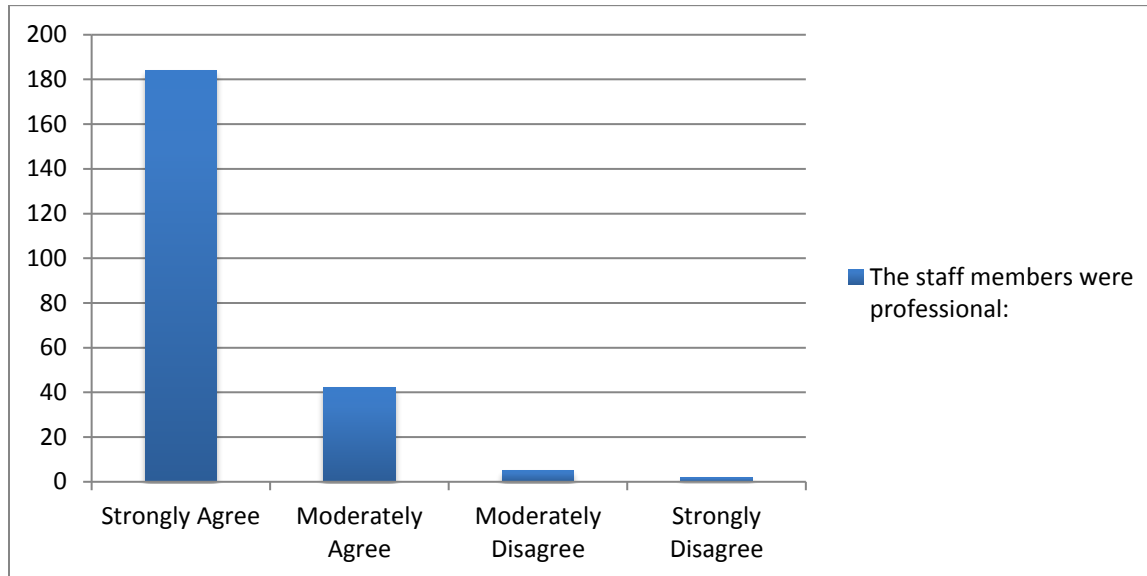
*I would recommend the center to a friend:*



*The staff members were knowledgeable:*



*The staff members were professional:*



## **STUDENT SURVEY: WRITTEN RESPONSES**

[Tutor] helped me choose the most effective words for my thesis/introductory paragraph based on the information I provided. She solidified my ideas about the inclusion of articles that supported my counterargument within my annotated bibliography.

[Tutor] is an amazing tutor. She is very knowledgeable and will help in any subject in any way she can! I would recommend her to any and every one!!

[Tutor] is great! She made every effort to help me as much as she could and I am so glad that I got the chance to work with her.

[Tutor] is very helpful and I love working with her on my research paper!

[Tutor] really helped me develop a clear idea about my research paper topic.

[Tutor] was awesome she helped me get through the rough draft of my research paper & I feel very confident that when I submit it that I will receive an A. I look forward to working with amber again!

[Tutor] was professional and provided solid feedback about a transition for my presentation.

I felt very unwelcome by [Tutor]. Although [tutor] was knowledgeable, [tutor's] words and action made me feel as if I was an uneducated individual. [Tutor] often laughed at sentences I had written, as if he was trying to put me down. Based on this experience, I am uncertain if I will reattend the WC, instead I

would rather seek help through graduate students within the social work department. This experience was horrible.

[Tutor] was great to work with, I applaud [tutor] as [tutor] was still able to keep my appointment even though she was sick.

[Tutor] was so nice and welcoming, [tutor] didn't leave me confused. [Tutor] made sure i completely understood everything before leaving the session. I loved [tutor].

I think that there should be some graduate assistants that are there to handle graduate student assignments or the center should not advertise its services to graduate students.

The staff knows what they are doing and can help answer any questions or concerns for a paper. The tutor was excellent!

[The tutor] was very professional and at the same time [The tutor] understood the assignment like we were in the class together. That was 30 minutes well spent.

[The tutor] did an excellent job helping me to refine my writing! [Tutor] was polite and professional and critiqued my papers in a constructive manner and avoided being condescending. Thank you!

I was welcomed even though they were busy and I didn't have an appointment. This was my second visit and I will definitely return in the future!

[Tutor] really helped me understand my material and the resources that I used. [Tutor] gave good tips on how to use the research.

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