

# University Writing Center

Annual Report: 2014-2015

**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 Director of the Center, Dr. Teagan Decker, is an associate 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:

**Dr. Teagan Decker**

**Director of the University Writing Center**

**Office: D.F. Lowry 313**

**Phone: (910) 521-6437**

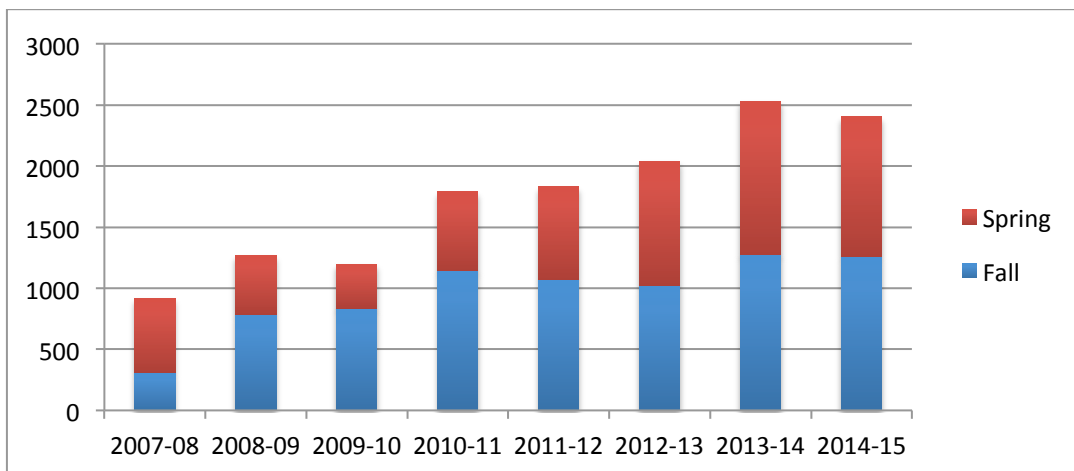
**Email: [teagan.decker@uncp.edu](mailto:teagan.decker@uncp.edu)**

# Writing Center Usage

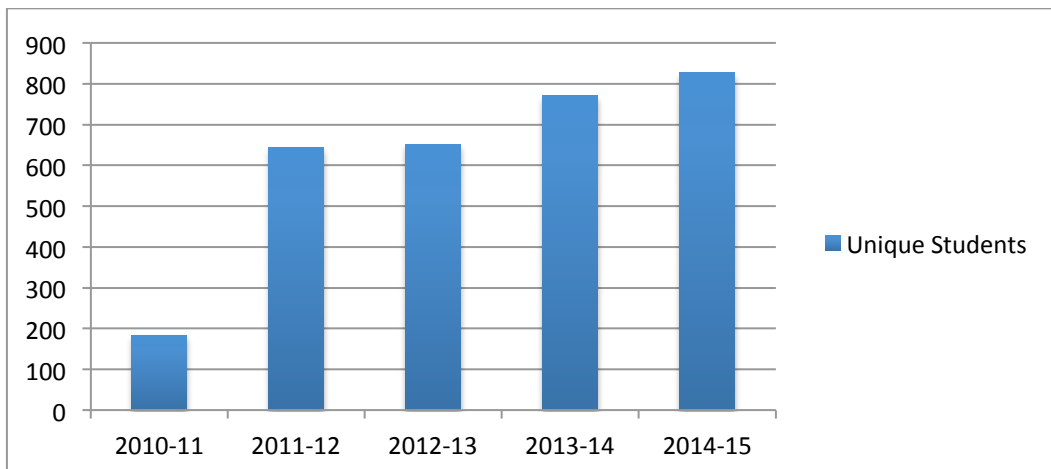
## YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **2,403 writing tutorials**
- **827 total unique student users**
- **478 online writing tutorials**

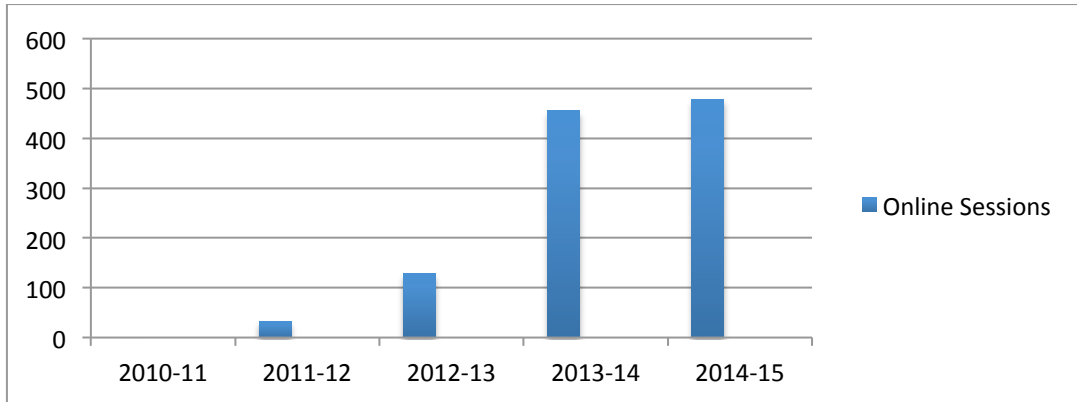
*After last year's large increase, this year saw a small decrease of 126 tutorial sessions, with a total of 2,403:*



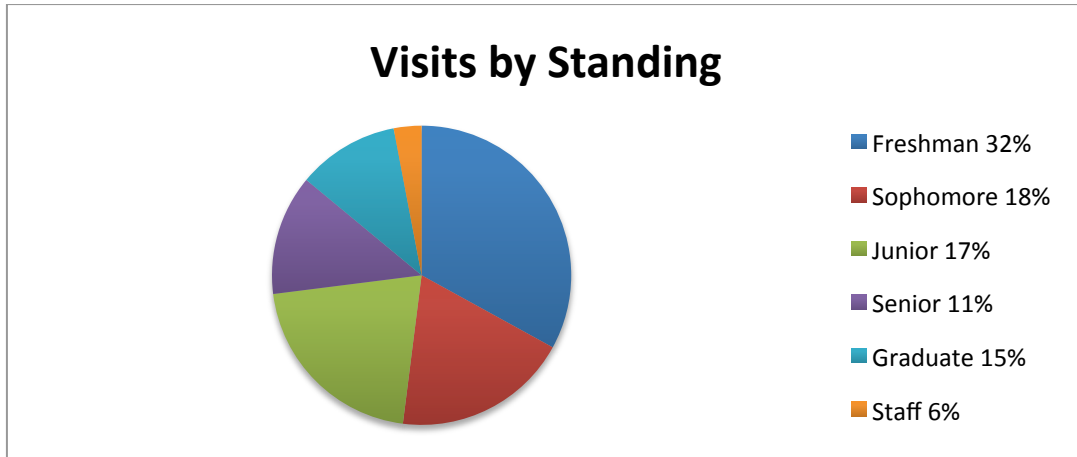
*The total number of unique users increased by 56 students, to total at 827. The Writing Center tutored 13% of the UNCP student body this year:*



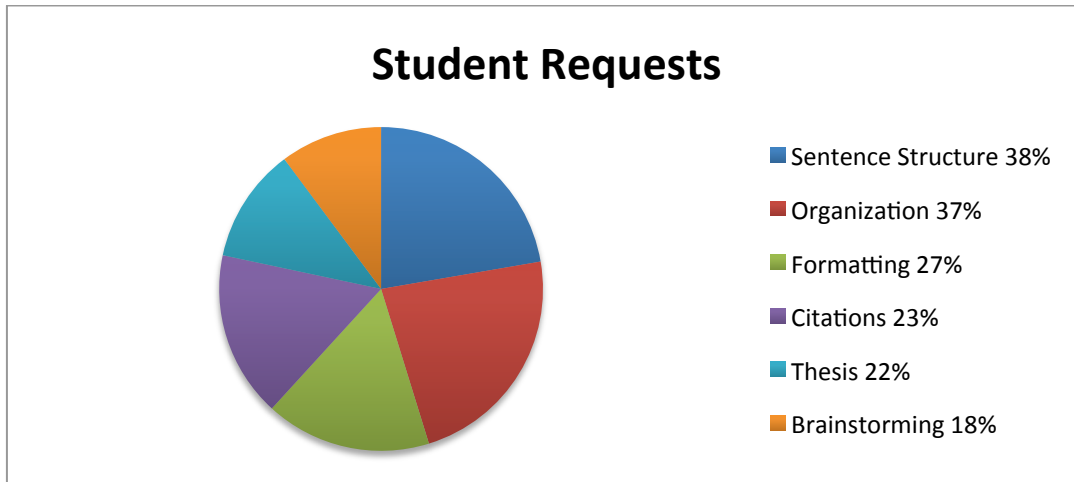
Online appointments increased by 23 compared to last year, with a total of 478:



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. Two years ago, however, the Writing Center received a permanent funding increase. This in part accounts for the higher usage over the past two academic years. 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.

# **Technology**

## **WCONLINE**

For the past five years the University Writing Center has subscribed to WConline, 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.

## **RESEARCH PROJECT**

Writing Center staff has researched group-paper writing and tutoring over the past two years. This involved keeping session logs on all group paper tutorials, surveying five sections of Business Communication students (IRB approved), conducting web-based and scholarly research, and coding survey information. Also, many staff training sessions have been partially devoted to analyzing the data and determining best practices for group paper tutoring. Staff have developed and tested new approaches to tutoring group papers. Three tutors and Dr. Decker traveled to Florida to present on this project at the International Writing Center Association Conference. The presentation was titled “Facilitating Collaboration Strategies for Group Writing Projects.”

# **Staffing & Recruitment**

## **WRITING CENTER STAFF:**

- Janae Aiken, Undergraduate Tutor (English Education)
- Haley Bean, Undergraduate Tutor (Social Work)
- Teagan Decker, Director (English)
- Mari DeRuntz, Undergraduate Tutor (English Education)
- Nestor Guerra, Graduate Assistant (English)
- Kelli Jacobs, Undergraduate Tutor (English Education)
- Zachary Lunn, Undergraduate Tutor (Biology)
- Cheron McMullen, Undergraduate Tutor (Criminal Justice)
- Kenley Patanella, Undergraduate Tutor (Biology)
- Megan Taylor, Undergraduate Tutor (English Education)
- Heather Wade, Undergraduate Tutor (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

## **CITATION WORKSHOPS**

This year, the writing center staff developed and conducted citation workshops for both MLA and APA citation styles. We conducted four MLA workshops and four APA workshops throughout the year. 44 students attended the workshops.

## **LIBRARY SATELLITE**

The University Writing Center holds tutoring hours in the Mary Livermore Library Sunday-Tuesday 7:00pm – 10:00pm. Two 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, and Teagan Decker 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:



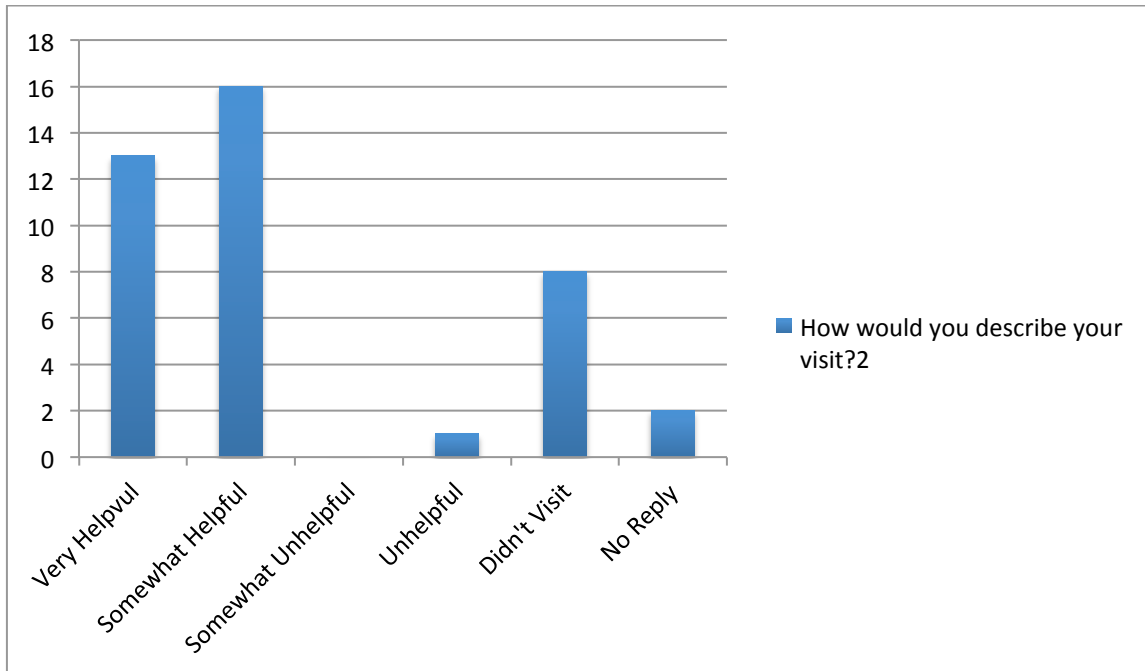
- English Composition
- Intro to Theatre
- History

- Religion
- Mass Communication
- Business Communication

# Surveys

## BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS (WE) COURSE SURVEY FALL 2014

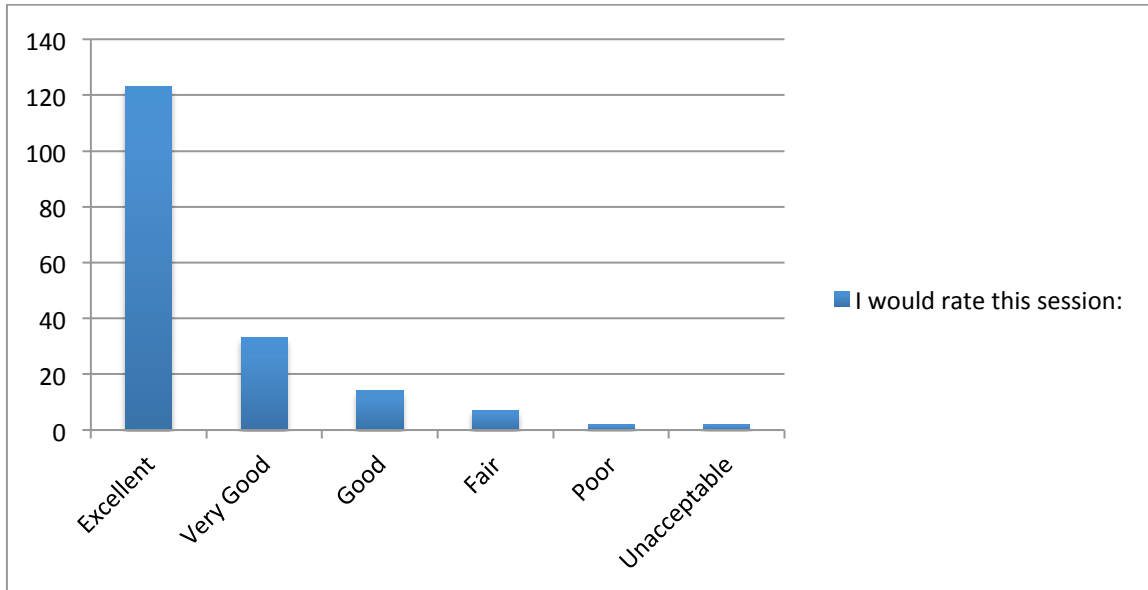
*Students in two sections of Business Communication were required to visit the Writing Center for their group paper assignment. 42 students participated in this survey, which was administered in the classroom.*



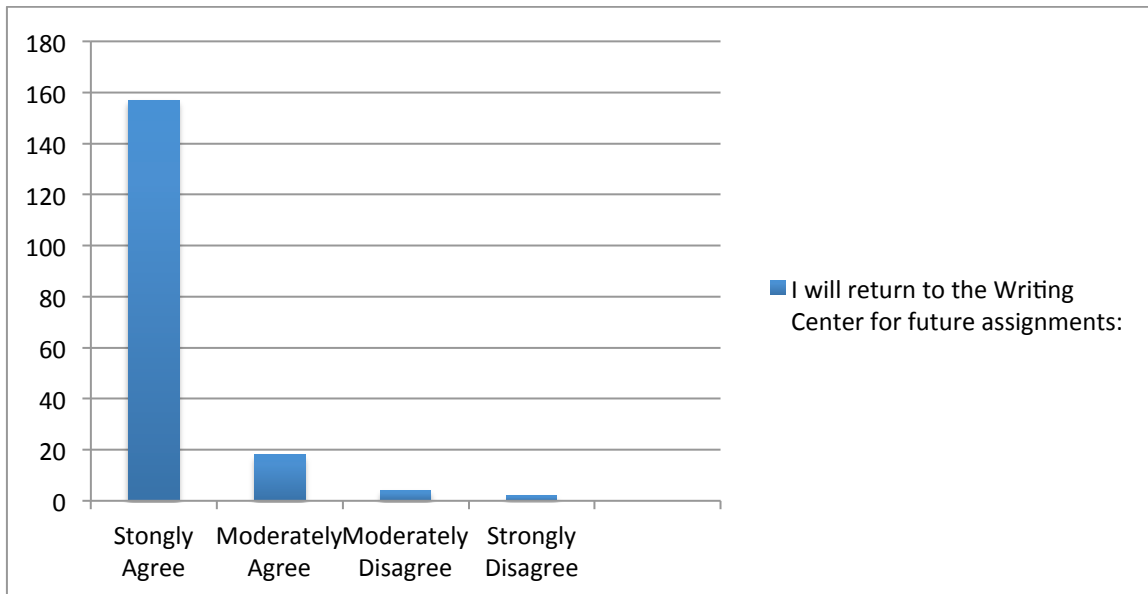
## STUDENT SURVEY

The student survey was conducted throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. All students who visited the University Writing Center were sent an email with a link to the survey. 181 students responded.

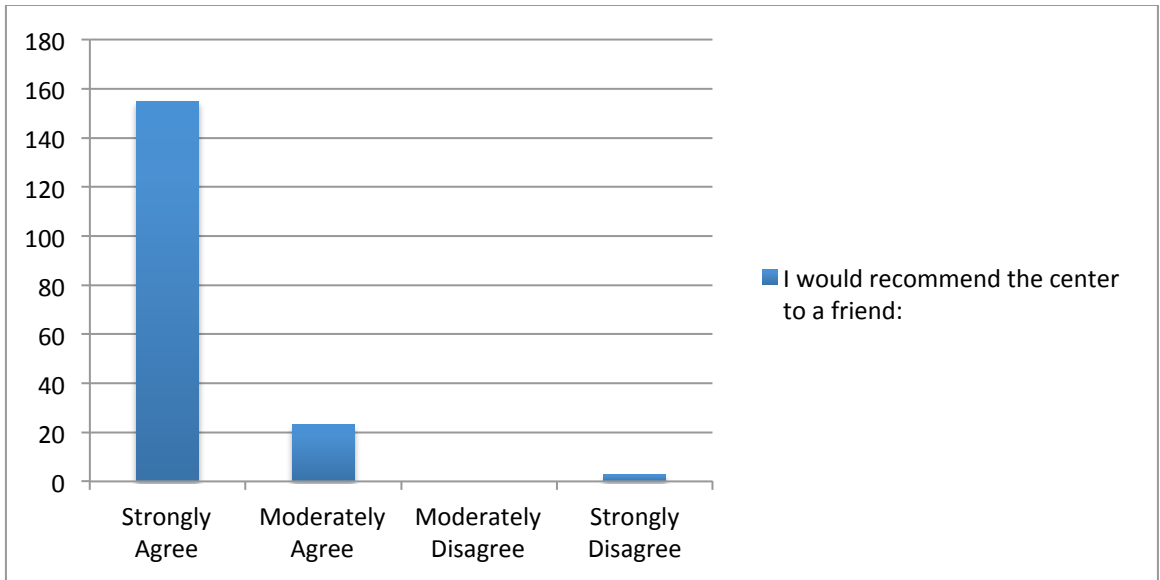
*I would rate this session:*



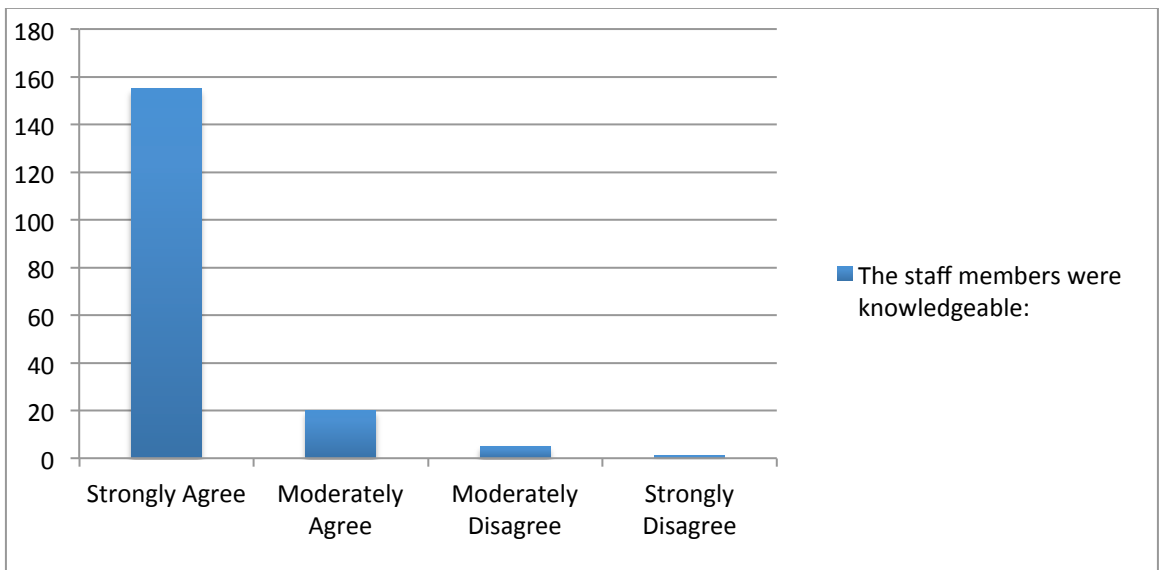
*I will return to the Writing Center for future assignments:*



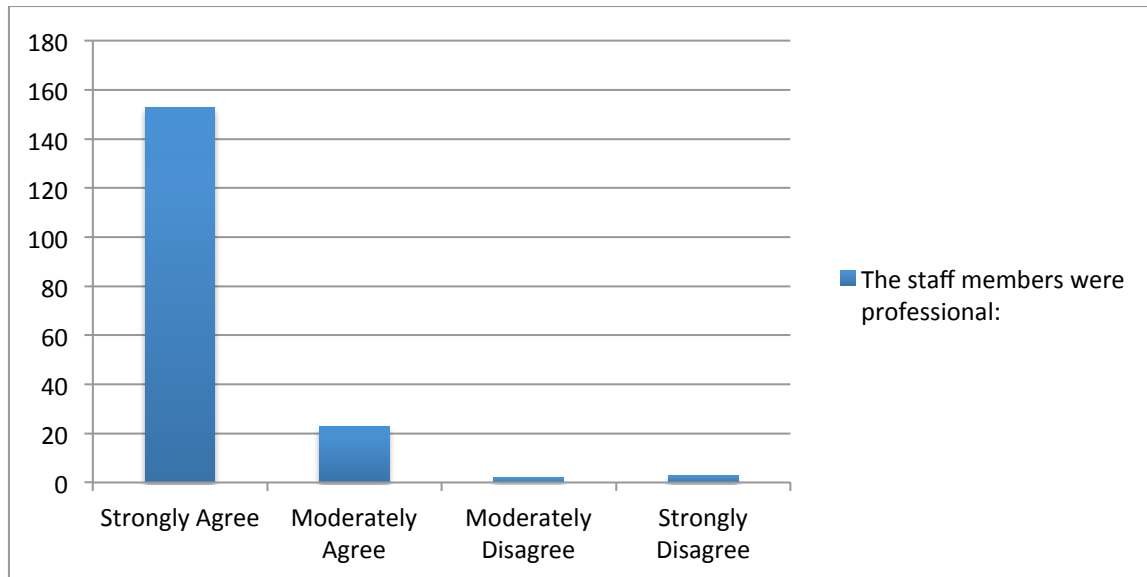
*I would recommend the center to a friend:*



*The staff members were knowledgeable:*



*The staff members were professional:*



#### **STUDENT SURVEY: WRITTEN RESPONSES**

- All of my questions were answered and I received feedback that was most helpful and I look forward to coming back in from time to time.
- Although the connection was delayed, I was completely satisfied with [the tutor's] assistance. Her skill level far exceeded my expectations. Thank you—I have already referred the program to other students in my class.
- Another positive experience with [the tutor]. Very grateful to have such a resource.
- [The tutor] is great at helping people understand the assignment and helping with sentence structure. It would be nice to have [the tutor] on Sunday online sessions.
- [The tutor] is the best tutor in the world. I always enjoy working with him/her.
- [The tutor] is a great help to the Writing Center. He/she knows what he/she's talking about and can help in anything from final grammar/spell-checking to the beginning stages of brainstorming. He/she is very kind and professional. I had a very productive session and will definitely return for more sessions in the future.
- Did a great job!
- Did not help at all.
- [The tutor] is amazing and deserves a raise!
- [The tutor] was not as helpful as I would have hoped she would be. If I were to return all my sessions would be with [another tutor].

- [The tutor] is the bomb dot com! :)
- I also seen [the tutor] on Monday and I would rate him/her the same way. The center is very helpful to me because writing is not my strong point.
- I am grateful to have that extra support to make sure that I am on the right track. Thank you for these services.
- I came in to set an appointment but [the tutor] said he/she was available to help me right away! Thank you so much!
- I had to make sure my paper was typed in a sufficient way before I submitted it, and I am so thankful for the Writing Center.
- [The tutor] was very professional at all time and I felt comfortable with him/her, and very patient...
- thanks for all the help
- I was not given the right person to work with. I signed up for [a tutor] but wound up with some girl.
- I was very pleased with the services I was provided.
- I'm recommending people to the [tutor]. Great help!
- Very helpful and convenient being able to utilize online!
- thanks for your help!:)
- Thanks so much :)
- They were really helpful and I do not mind coming if I need anymore help. Thank you.
- Very friendly and knowledgeable.