

# University Writing Center

Annual Report: 2013-2014

**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**

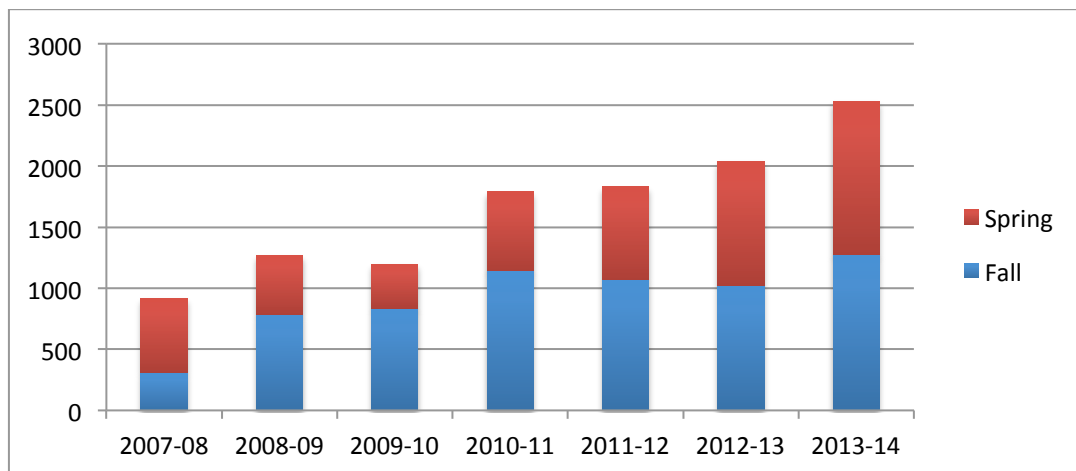
**Email: [teagan.decker@uncp.edu](mailto:teagan.decker@uncp.edu)**

# Writing Center Usage

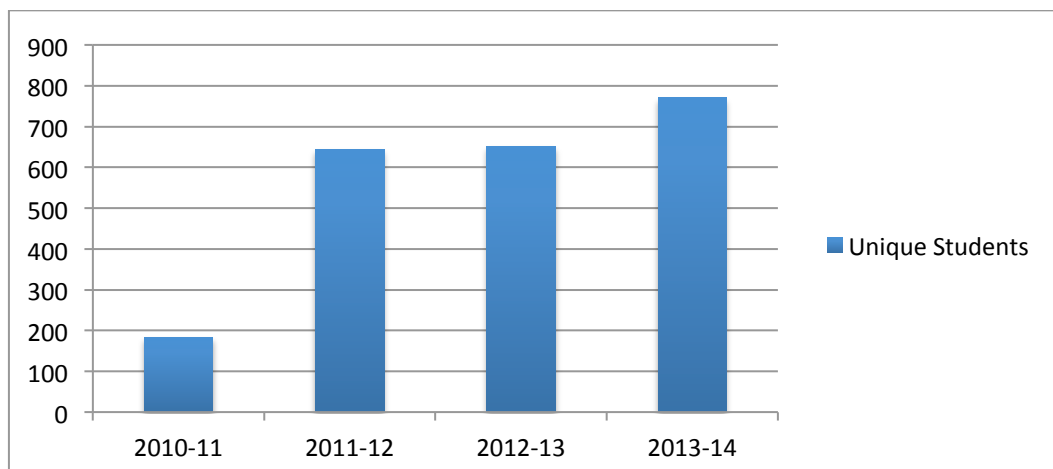
## YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **2,529** writing tutorials
- **771** total unique student users
- **455** online writing tutorials

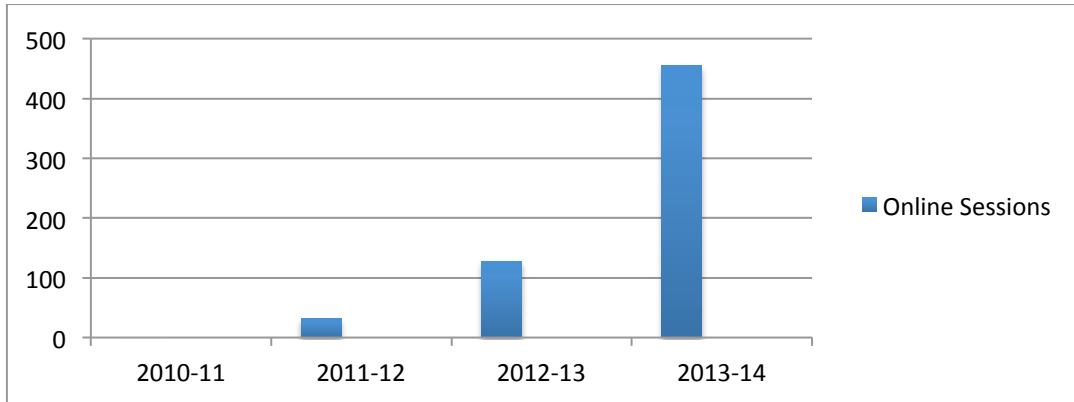
*This year saw an increase of 488 tutorial sessions over last year, with a total of 2,529:*



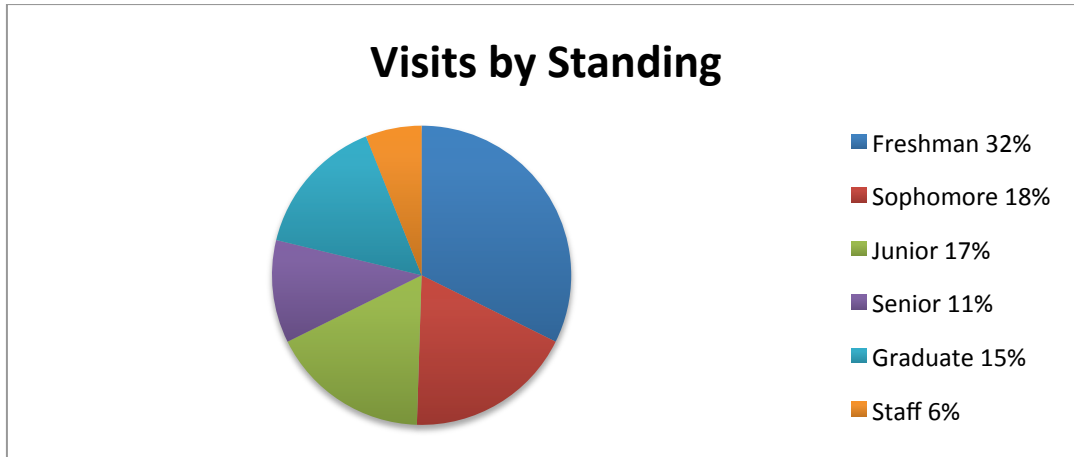
*The total number of unique users increased by 120 students, to total at 771. The Writing Center tutored 12% of the UNCP student body this year:*



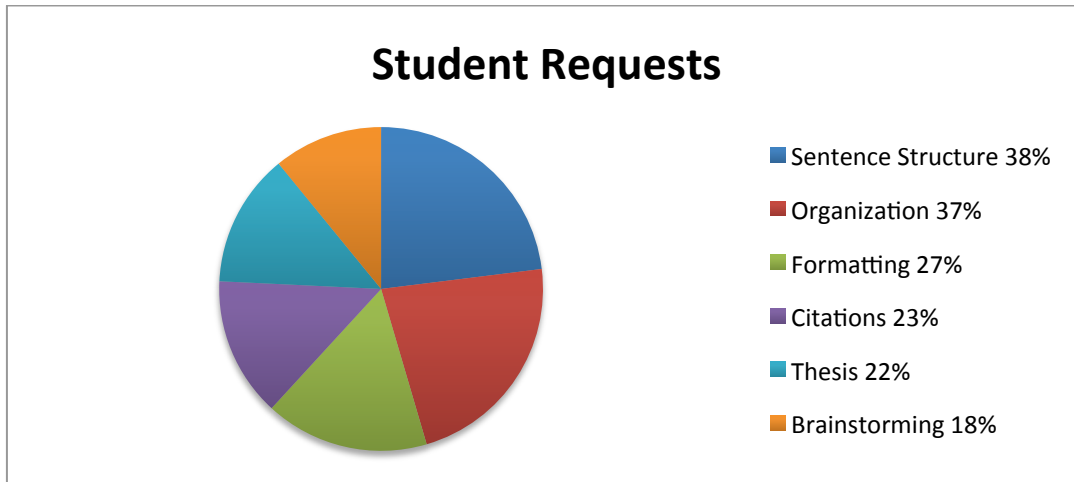
*Online appointments increased by 317 compared to last year, with a total of 455:*



*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 seven years. This growth has been facilitated by additional funds granted each year upon request. This past year, however, the Writing Center received a permanent funding increase. This in part accounts for the accelerated growth in usage over the past academic year. The Writing Center, as a student academic support unit, is a piece of the retention picture, and this additional funding has supported an additional 120 students and an additional 488 tutoring sessions. Since this funding came late in fall 2013, we can only project more growth over the coming academic year since there will be more time to plan and promote.

## Technology

### WCONLINE

For the past four 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 TUTOING 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 year, students have begun to utilize the online tutoring more frequently and we have held staff training sessions on how to maximize the effectiveness of online tutoring sessions.

## **WEBSITE**

The University Writing Center's website has been updated this year to include an 'about us' page which includes a mission statement and an explanation of our approach. New photos have been added to each page of the website. 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 one year 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. This year most of the sessions have focused on tutoring group papers. It has become more common for student writing groups to make appointments in the Writing Center, and staff wanted to improve our techniques for working with groups. This gave rise to our research project, which is discussed in more detail below. Staff also participated in SAFE ZONE EDUCATION, a seminar conducted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. All tutors are now Safe Zone certified.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

Writing Center staff has researched group-paper writing and tutoring over the past year. 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. Some highlights of this project include:

- PURC Symposium presentation: “Group Papers in the Writing Center: Where Theory and Practice Collide.” *Earned Honorable Mention in the oral presentation category.*
- Southeastern Writing Centers Conference presentation: “Group Papers in the Writing Center: Where Theory and Practice Collide.”
- PURC Undergraduate Research Assistant Grant: Tutors Mari DeRuntz and Zach Lunn worked as research assistants on the project during Spring 2014.
- International Writing Center Association Conference proposal submitted: “Facilitating Collaboration Strategies for Group Writing Projects.”

# Staffing & Recruitment

## WRITING CENTER STAFF:

- Haley Bean, Undergraduate Tutor (Social Work)
- Mike Berntsen, Faculty Volunteer (English)
- Teagan Decker, Director (English)
- Mari DeRuntz, Undergraduate Tutor (English Education)
- Michael Houck, 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)
- Julie Sem, Undergraduate Tutor (Accounting)
- Heather Wade, Undergraduate Tutor (English)

## **RECRUITMENT**

Since no tutors graduated during 2013-2014, no recruitment was undertaken. The normal recruitment procedure is as follows: Recruitment is undertaken in the spring and 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**

## **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 three 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:

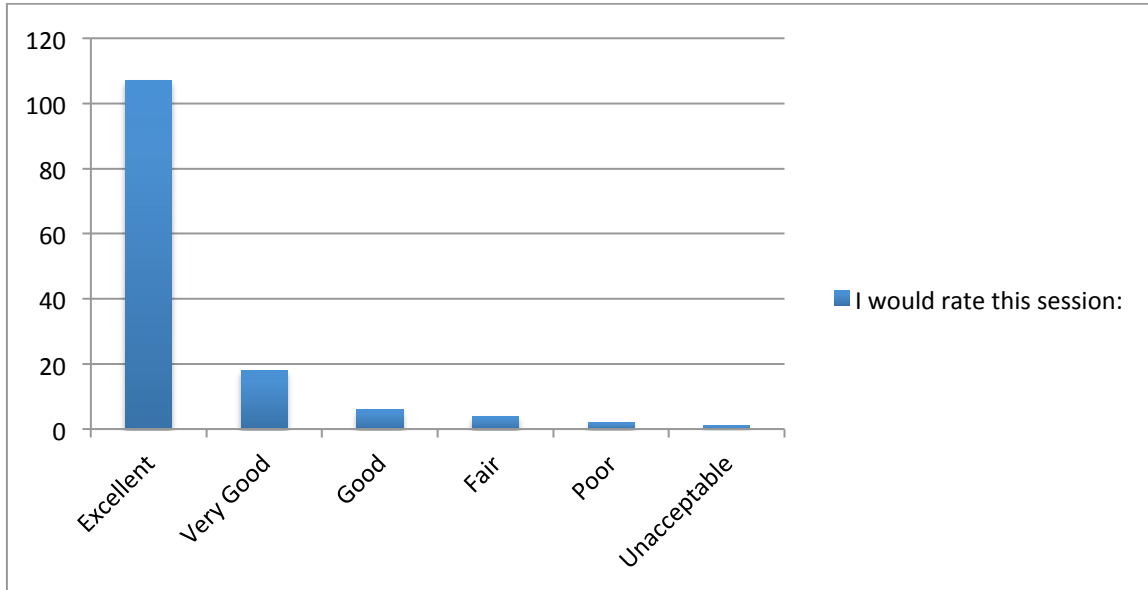
- English Composition
- Intro to Theatre
- History
- Religion
- Mass Communication
- Business Communication

# Surveys

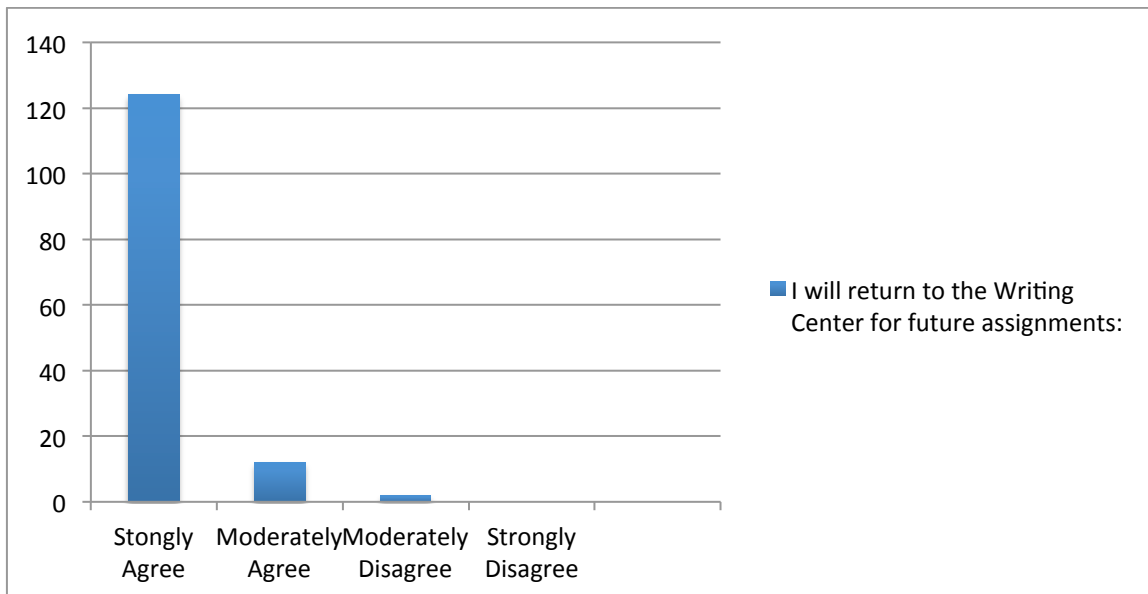
## STUDENT SURVEY

The student survey was conducted throughout the 2013-2014 academic year. All students who visited the University Writing Center were sent an email with a link to the survey. 185 students responded.

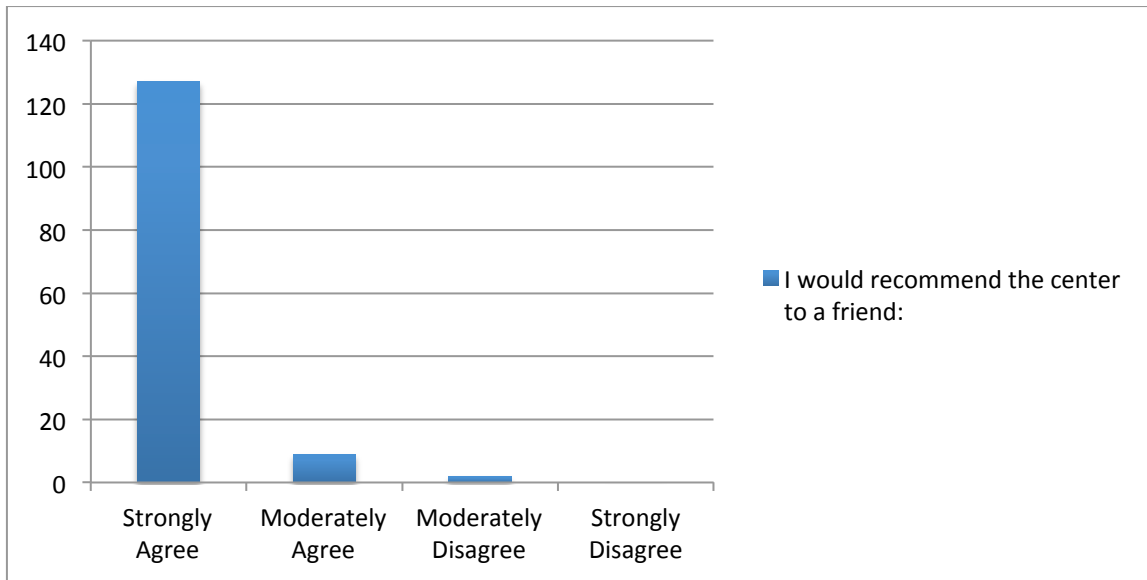
*I would rate this session:*



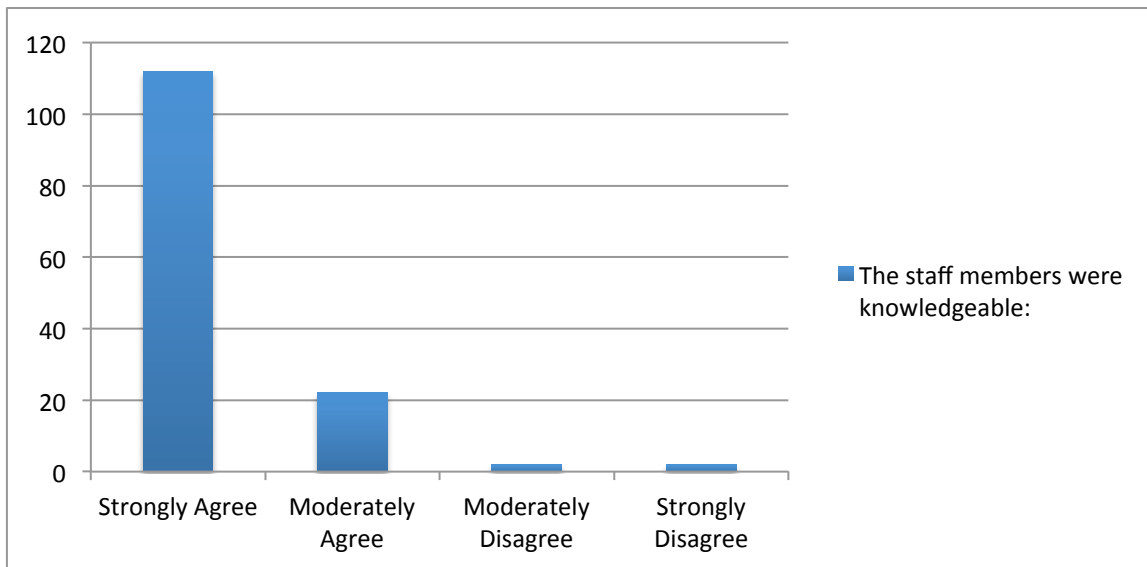
*I will return to the Writing Center for future assignments:*



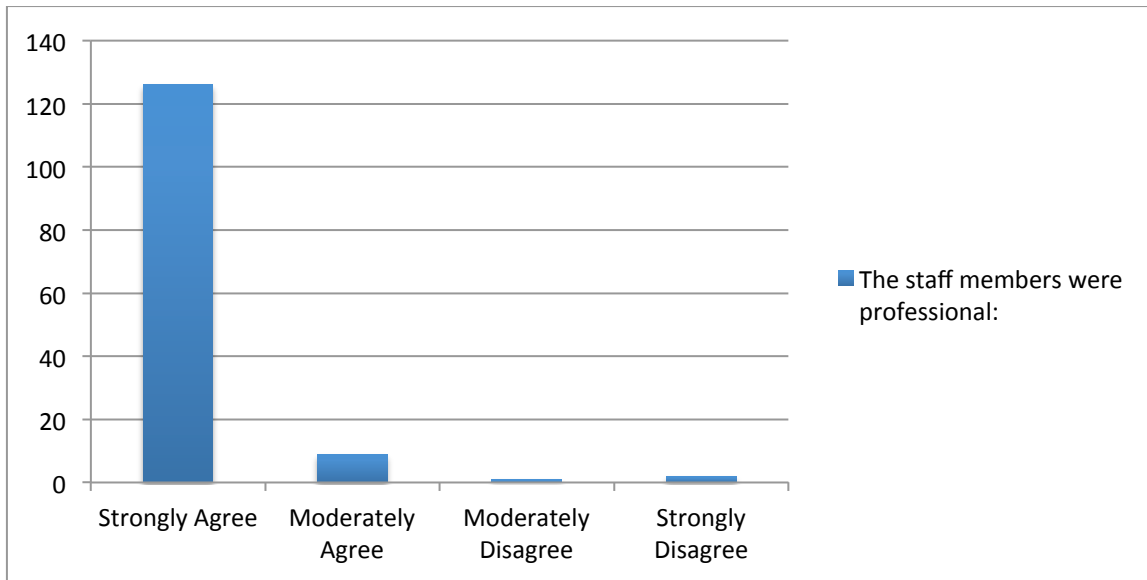
*I would recommend the center to a friend:*



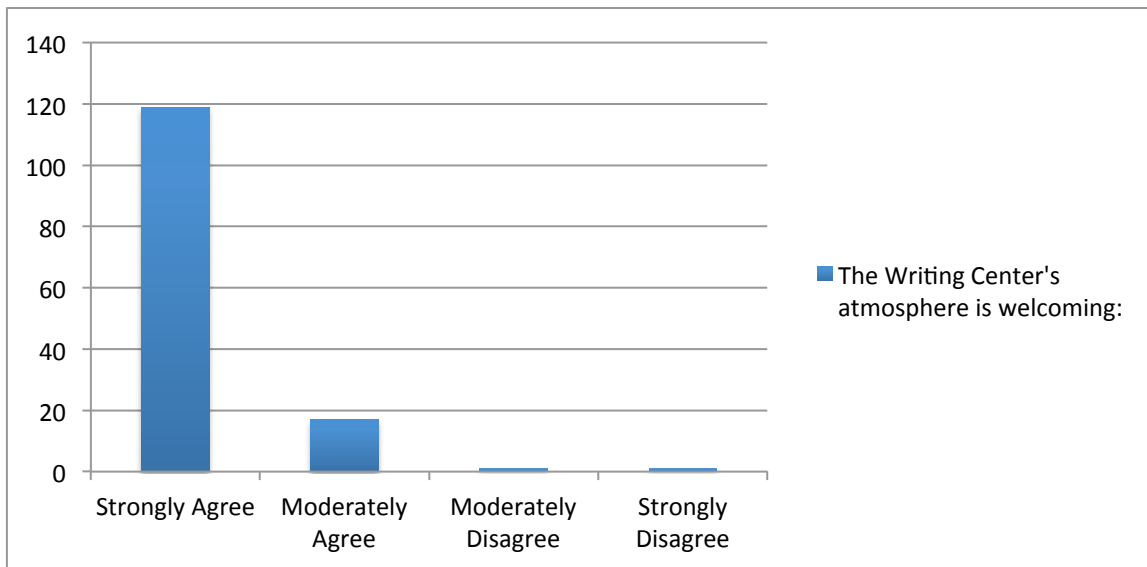
*The staff members were knowledgeable:*



*The staff members were professional:*



*The Writing Center's atmosphere is welcoming:*



**STUDENT SURVEY: WRITTEN RESPONSES**

- A good experience really enjoyed it.
- [The tutor] is the best tutor for the UNCP writing center. He/she took his/her time to make sure that I understood the material. Also, he/she gave me great suggestions on my paper. Thanks.
- [The tutor] is the best tutor I have known. He/she really cares about the students. I wish more tutors would be like him/her. He/she makes you understand your material and takes his/her

time. He/she also gives great feedback.






- [The tutor] is the best tutor that I know. He/she encourages me to work on my grammar and gives me resources such as websites to help me learn outside of the writing appointment. I just want to say thank you to the writing center for having him/her as part of your team.
- [The tutor] was a great help in assisting me on my assignment. Overall, he/she did an awesome job and gave me really good advice for my essay. Thanks.
- [The tutor] was very helpful and professional. I feel a lot more confident about my paper and I believe I will get an even better grade on my revised paper.
- Feedback quick and effective
- Great job as usual!
- [The tutor] is awesome! He/she deserves a raise, but honestly is awesome worker at the writing center.
- I appreciate the help [the tutor] gave me on Friday.
- I did not get much accomplished in the session because I was late. The staff member only had twenty minutes to review my essay. I'm sure it would have been different if there was more time.
- I don't know how to describe my experience with [the tutor] because he/she is the best tutor I know. No one can replace his/her knowledge and care for the students. Thanks.
- I got all the help I needed!
- I had an online writing center appointment. During the session, the online session stopped working. Then, I tried to restart the window, but it did not work for 10 minutes. Once I got back to the online session, the person I was working with already had left. It would be nice to know that the person you have an online session with stays online regardless if the other person leaves unless the student says goodbye or if the session is over. Thanks.
- I have used the writing center on many occasions and I have always benefited from the assistance I receive there. Unfortunately, this particular assistant was not very helpful in my last session. He/she was very nice and very professional but he/she did not know any of the correct citations and said that I had some grammatical errors but did not tell me which ones or offer any suggestions or tips toward my paper. In the end I left and edited my own paper. I will still use the writing center because they have always been an excellent source of peer and/or professional review, this instance was just unfortunate.
- I just had to go back over all the places where I had used the wrong tense and change them so that it was correct. I also had to work on a few sentences that just didn't make much sense. Overall extremely helpful.
- I really enjoyed [the tutor] he/she was very helpful and I would like to visit with him/her again.
- I was well accepted and the information was very helpful.
- I will correct my citations using proper APA rather than MLA and a block quotation error. Also [the tutor] showed me how to eliminate the additional space between my paragraphs so I will do that as well. He/she was a huge help!
- I'll go again I will go in person. The on line experience was underwhelming. I was hoping to be able to talk and share a screen. Chat box is a clunky method of communication. The lackluster results did inspire to talk to my professor. A 30-minute appointment is not enough time to accomplish anything meaningful on line.
- It was ok.
- [The tutor] was extremely nice and so helpful with my papers! I will definitely be returning to work with him/her!
- [The tutor] was so much help!

- [The tutor] was very kind and prompt. I was very impressed on how helpful and welcoming he/she was. I was afraid at first, because I thought there was going to be some rude judgment on my paper. I don't know why! But overall I was happy. Thanks Writing Center
- [The tutor] was fantastic this past semester the several times I worked with him/her.
- [The tutor] was great, helping me identify several concerns regarding the initial critique of my research proposal. He/she helped me by making a list of the concerns I had and we made a list of grammar and structural Thesis Organizational concerns that I needed help with on my paper.
- [The tutor] was very helpful and encouraging.
- [The tutor] was very helpful and I really appreciated his/her help. I will be seeking more help from [the tutor] and the Writing Center when necessary.
- [The tutor] was awesome! Very knowledgeable and easy to talk to.
- [The tutor] was knowledgeable, very helpful, and extremely kind. Thanks for all your help.
- [The tutor] was great and amazingly helpful. Thanks so much.
- Next time I definitely will not go to [the tutor] for help I feel as though he/she was very rude and unprofessional and I will be reporting him/her soon.
- He/she has been very helpful through this entire process.
- He/she was a great help and very nice!!!
- He/she was very good and had patience.
- He/she were very helpful. He/she seem to have good patience with me even when i didnt understand.
- Thank you for having the Writing Center available to students. It was very helpful to have someone review my work.
- Thank you so much for helping me
- Thanks again for a professional, good working experience!
- Thanks for taking me back!
- Thanks so much, I appreciate your help.
- The center is a great benefit to the students.
- The tutor was very helpful and insightful
- This appointment at the writing center was better. I received great feedback in regards to adding a thesis and making one sentence sound clearer.
- This was my first time using the Writing Center and I was very impressed and left feeling a whole lot better about how my paper would turn out. [The tutor] gave me some good pointers and helped me to organize my paper. I will definitely be coming back and referring other UNCP students that I know.
- Very helpful
- Was very helpful
- We worked on restructuring the work I had completed since my earlier meeting with [the tutor] and [the other tutor] was very helpful. He/she also assisted me with formatting page numbers and footnotes. [The director] also contributes to making students feel welcome at the UNCP Writing Center.
- When I need help with my paper, I always go to [the tutor] first! He/she is such a good helper.
- Writing center helps me a lot. Thanks!

## FACULTY SURVEY






- The Academic Support Services Subcommittee administered the faculty survey in Spring 2014 via Qualtrics.

### 14. The University Writing Center is effective in assisting student writers.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		10	10%
2	Disagree		10	10%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		40	41%
4	Agree		30	31%
5	Strongly Agree		8	8%
	Total		98	100%


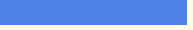
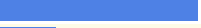

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### 15. Information about the University Writing Center's services is accessible.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		3	3%
2	Disagree		9	9%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		28	29%
4	Agree		45	46%
5	Strongly Agree		13	13%
	Total		98	100%



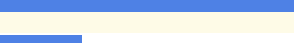


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### 16. The University Writing Center's location is convenient.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
2	Disagree		6	6%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		39	40%
4	Agree		41	42%
5	Strongly Agree		12	12%
	Total		98	100%



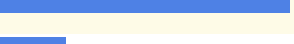


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- **17. University Writing Center tutors are professional.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		7	7%
2	Disagree		5	5%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		61	63%
4	Agree		17	18%
5	Strongly Agree		7	7%
	Total		97	100%






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- **18. University Writing Center tutors are competent and well trained.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		10	10%
2	Disagree		5	5%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		60	61%
4	Agree		14	14%
5	Strongly Agree		9	9%
	Total		98	100%

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
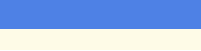
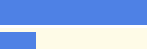

- **19. The University Writing Center is responsive to faculty needs.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		5	5%
2	Disagree		5	5%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		59	61%
4	Agree		19	20%
5	Strongly Agree		9	9%
	Total		97	100%

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- **20. The University Writing Center contributes to UNCP students' writing success.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		8	8%
2	Disagree		9	9%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		42	43%
4	Agree		31	32%
5	Strongly Agree		8	8%
	Total		98	100%

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