

From the Center

The Newsletter of the William L. Adams Center for Writing

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About the Center

The Center for Writing is a place where students can talk openly about writing with someone who is non-judgmental but informed. It is staffed by writing specialists who offer one-on-one conferences about writing in all disciplines. A specific piece of writing or an assignment usually serves as the focus of the conference; however, staff members will also review a specific aspect of writing such as essay exams, documentation, punctuation, or usage. Writing center staff members will also provide reviews for students planning to take the Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Exam administered by the Department of Journalism. The main writing center, located in suite 244 of the URC, is open from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students can make appointments on-line, by calling 257-7221, or they may simply come to the center, where they will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. Students can also obtain help at the library writing center adjacent to the Information Commons in the Mary Couts Burnett Library. The library center is open Monday through Friday from 2 to 5 p.m. and Sunday through Thursday from 6 p.m. till 9 p.m. Students can make appointments at the library center either on-line or by calling 257-6520. The on-line writing lab, or OWL, is yet another way that students can get assistance from the writing center. Established in the fall of 1998, the OWL continues to grow in popularity. The OWL allows students to submit papers electronically for review by a consultant. Students can access the OWL by visiting <<http://www.wrt.tcu.edu>>, where they will find specific instructions for using the OWL under the link titled "On-line Writing Help."

Tutor Publishes Article

Janna Pate, a graduate student in English and a tutor at the center, recently published an article titled "Writing Center Ethics: The Process" in *Writing Lab Newsletter*.

New On-line Appointment Process

In an effort to make appointment scheduling easier for students, the center has initiated an on-line appointment procedure. Students may make their own appointments by visiting the center's website: <<http://www.wrt.tcu.edu/>>.

The site will prompt first-time users to register and then ask students for their email addresses and passwords. The center's secure server will allow students to view the available tutorial times. The schedule describes the special interests and skills of the consultants and indicates which tutors are available at specific times, and students may then make an appointment for help with a writing project. Students are asked to describe the nature of the assignment, the length of the paper, and the type of help that they need, developing a thesis or constructing an introduction or conclusion, for example. Students may sign up for tutorials as short as thirty minutes and as long as one hour. The on-line appointment scheduler has been available to students, faculty, and staff since March of 2007, and it has become a very popular way for students to find times to visit the center. Of course, students, faculty, and staff may continue to call the center at 7221 to make an appointment or simply come to the center and meet with an available tutor.

Center Can Assist with Many Writing Projects

- Essays and research papers
- Summaries and abstracts
- Proposals
- Recommendation reports
- Case studies / lab reports
- Presentations and speeches
- Letters of application and résumés
- Professional and business letters
- Theses and dissertations
- Creative and personal writing projects
- Public documents

Center Sets New Record for Tutorials

A record number of students, faculty, and staff sought assistance from the center during the 2006-2007 academic year, which includes the summer sessions as well as the fall and spring semesters. During this time, the center's staff assisted with 5,275 writing projects of various types and lengths. The greatest number of consultations, 2,948, consisted of one-on-one tutorials conducted at the center's main facility in the academic wing of the Rickel building. An additional 731 tutorials took place in the center's library annex, and some 1,169 writing projects came to the center via the OWL, the on-line writing lab, a service that allows students, faculty, and staff to submit papers electronically. The remaining tutorials were conducted in class workshops and group reviews for the grammar, spelling, and punctuation test required of journalism majors.

The data indicate that the consultations were spread across all departments and all course levels of the university. Some 24% of the tutorials were with first year students, 16% were with sophomores, 19% were with juniors, and 23% were with seniors. The graduate writing center was also very busy in the 2006-2007 year: 15% of the year's tutorials were with graduate students and 2% of the consultations were with faculty members seeking assistance with articles and books for publication. Students in English classes accounted for 1,167 tutorial sessions, nursing students sought help on writing projects 443 times, and students in business and MBA programs received advice from the center 437 times. Other departments that made use of the center on numerous occasions include religion (127 tutorials), Brite divinity (115 tutorials), and history (249 tutorials). Indeed, during the past year the center worked with students from nearly every college and discipline at TCU.

Class Presentations

Staff members are always happy to address classes and inform students about the services of the writing center. The presentations are about ten minutes in length. To arrange a presentation, call 257-7221. Staff members will also conduct in-class workshops concerning student writing assignments, suggest methods of approaching assignments, and discuss documentation of research with students.

Center Plans Workshops

The Center for Writing will conduct a series of workshops during the coming year. These workshops will address specific issues related to writing and the evaluation of writing. Unless otherwise noted, all workshops will last about an hour and will be conducted in the Center for Writing (URC Room 245). Specific topics and workshop dates will be announced on the center's website: <<http://www.wrt.tcu.edu>>.

Creative Writing Contests for TCU Students

Since the early 1990s, the Department of English and the Center for Writing have jointly coordinated and conducted TCU's annual creative writing contests. This year, Center for Writing staff members will assist Professor Charlotte Hogg of the Department of English with the administration of the writing contests and program. More than twenty contests are open to TCU students, including contests for prose, poetry, fiction, and drama. A complete list of contests and details about submissions will be available in the Department of English and in the Center for Writing in late September. The winners of these contests receive nearly \$4,000 in prizes, and selections from the winning entries will be published in the 2008 Creative Writing Publication. Please remind your students of these opportunities to publish and to be recognized for their writing.

Professional Organizations

Staff members continue to be active in a number of international, national, state, and regional organizations. Steve Sherwood, director of the Center, will continue to serve as At-Large Representative to the Executive Board of the International Writing Centers Association through 2009. Dave Kuhne continues his duties as

president of the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers and is coordinating the group's conference in Houston this fall. Cheryl Carithers is president of The North Texas Writing Centers Association (NTWCA) through 2008. Cynthia Shearer is currently Archivist for the NTWCA. Billie Hara is an Executive Board member of Clayton YES (Youth Enrichment Services).

Graduate Writing Center

The Graduate Writing Center celebrates its second anniversary this fall. In the past year, the graduate center has worked closely with students and faculty in a number of disciplines, especially business, history, nursing, and divinity. The Graduate Writing Center is a place where graduate students and faculty from all academic disciplines can receive feedback on writing projects. By appointment only, consultants will work with writers on such projects as articles, essays, theses, dissertations, books, and grant proposals. The Graduate Writing Center will also offer various workshops on topics of interest to advanced academic and creative writers. Appointments will last from 30-90 minutes, and writers can schedule several sessions for lengthy pieces.

Writers may also submit portions of their work through the Center for Writing's OWL (online writing lab). In addition to serving as a friendly audience, consultants will gladly address any issue a writer would like to discuss; consultations often focus on such issues as topic generation, organization of ideas, style, clarity, and documentation. The Graduate Writing Center is not a proofreading or editing service; however, consultants will alert writers to punctuation and grammar concerns.

Staff to present Papers at Numerous Conferences

Staff members plan to present their scholarship and creative work at a number of important conferences this year, including the South Central Writing Centers Association Conference, the Texas Conference of Creative Writing Teachers, the Associated Writing Programs Conference, and the Conference of College Teachers of English, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication, among others.

Peer Writing Consultants

The Center for Writing is especially proud of its staff of peer writing consultants. These are outstanding student writers who are recommended for their jobs by faculty members familiar with their writing. Those chosen to work as peer writing consultants attend a series of training sessions designed to help them assist other students with writing projects. If you have outstanding student writers in your classes who may like to work at the Center for Writing, please have them call 257-7221. The center is pleased to introduce the peer tutors for 2007-2008:

- Arian Augustus, a senior psychology and English major
- Matt Bridges, a graduate student at Brite Divinity
- John Burkett, a graduate student in English
- Shelley Christie, a graduate student in English
- Andrea Losa, a senior English major
- Emma Murphy, a senior psychology major
- Janna Pate, a graduate student in English
- Kelly Scott, a junior English major
- Rubertha Taylor, a graduate student at Brite Divinity
- Dylan Taylor-Smith, a senior advertising, public relations major
- Kate Wiant, a graduate student in English
- Lillian Knezek, a graduate student in English
- Sarah Yoder, a graduate student in English

Statement of Ethics

In order to assist students in a fair manner, the writing center has adopted the following statement of ethics:

A text should reflect the student's own work and efforts; thus, consultants do not write any portion of a student's paper.

Consultants do not proofread what a student has written.

Consultants do not guarantee a particular grade or even suggest what grade a student is likely to receive on an assignment.

Consultants do not criticize an instructor's assignment.

Consultants do not assist students with exams or final portfolios.