



CLEMSON® UNIVERSITY

WRITING LAB

ANNUAL 23

REPORT 24



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OVERVIEW



WHO WE ARE

The Writing Lab, once called the "writing center," is an instructional service and lab "space" that provides writing support to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff. We offer both face-to-face and online consultations, as well as workshops for Clemson writers.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Writing Lab was established in 1983 as an initiative to support students in ENGL 1030 courses. This first iteration of the Writing Lab was housed in Daniel Hall. As the Writing Lab grew, it began to provide writing feedback to students and staff across campus.

Around 1995, the Writing Lab changed its name to the "Writing Center," reflecting new conventions in writing center studies. The Writing Center moved into the newly-constructed Academic Success Center in 2012, where it remained until August 2022.

Now, the Writing Lab has returned to its original name, and we continue the Writing Lab's legacy of supporting writers in the Clemson Family in our new location in Cooper Library.

VISION STATEMENT

The Clemson Writing Lab seeks to create a supportive and critical space for the confident expression of individual voice through writing by providing an adaptable, inclusive, and trusted environment for all writers to grow and learn.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Clemson Writing Lab aims to help students gain confidence in their writing, improve as communicators, and achieve their academic goals by providing high-quality, effective services in a supportive, inclusive environment.

CORE VALUES

- The Clemson Writing Lab's staff share a commitment to:
- Support student growth as they become more skillful, flexible writers.
 - Cultivate and promote a thriving culture of writing on campus.
 - Continually innovate our programs and services in a data-informed manner to meet the diverse needs of all Clemson writers.

The Clemson Writing Lab's professional staff share a commitment to:

- Provide high-quality training and mentoring to foster the student staff's personal, professional, and intellectual development as active global citizens.
- Maintain connection and relation to the greater writing lab community to stay current on research, trends, and innovations in the field.
- Continuous innovation in our programs and services through data-informed decision-making to meet the diverse needs of all Clemson writers.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

One of my mentors in graduate school was Dr. Terese Thonus. Dr. Thonus was director of the Writing Center at the University of Kansas. She hired me, saw potential in me, and never missed an opportunity to mentor me throughout the four years I worked on her staff. She gave me many opportunities to grow. Even after I graduated and she moved to another institution, Dr. Thonus remained a mentor, providing support as I worked to establish myself as a director in my own right. Much of how I lead the Writing Lab is influenced by the way I experienced her leadership. Dr. Thonus passed away in December 2022.

In June 2023, the Writing Lab lost a wonderful member of our community. Abena Ofori was someone I believe Dr. Thonus would have adored. Abena was passionate about helping others. She wanted to make a difference, and she was determined to do just that in the field of writing center theory and practice. The school year began somber, heavy with mourning. The task before us seemed monumental: remember Abena for all that she did, for all the impact she had, and for the legacy she left behind. A memorial was planned. A poster with her words was posted in the Writing Lab. Consultants, some of whom had never faced such a loss before, carried the weight of grief and the pressures of a new semester. One consultant, in a quiet conversation in my office, told me through tears: "We'll do it for her. We'll do our best for her." So, we did.

Colleagues from other institutions offered their condolences. Abena was memorialized at the Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference, a conference she planned to attend. We received flowers and occasional gifts from our friends at the Academic Success Center. We came together to remember. I think, really, that this year was a year of remembering where we have been, what we have lost, and envisioning where we can be and what we can gain.

In September 2023, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Writing Lab. That event was a practice in looking back to move forward. We learned more about the history of the Writing Lab. We celebrated where we've been. Likewise, we celebrated where we are going. Launching our Constellate strategic plan just before our anniversary was intentional, but I did not realize exactly how meaningful such timing would become.

This year has been one of transitions. The Writing Lab fully settled into its space within Cooper Library. A new cohort of ten Writing Fellows began their tenure. A student leadership position, Lead Writing Fellow, was launched. For the first time since 2020, student consultants presented at a conference. In a very successful partnership with the Graduate School, the Writing Lab hosted Writing Wednesdays for graduate students across the curriculum and more than doubled the number of graduate writing appointments. In April 2024, I received approval to begin slowly opening writing support appointments to alumni, a move toward the goals of the Constellate Strategic Plan.

Over the summer, I will be participating in the writing component of STEM Start. We will have two major graduate writing events and several undergraduate events focusing on major concerns we have seen in appointments. Likewise, we intend to host the 2025 South Carolina Writing Center Directors Day, inviting writing center directors from across the state to Clemson.

There are many exciting things ahead for the Writing Lab. As we pursue these things, we will always remember where we have been, who we have lost, and the legacy that we carry with us.

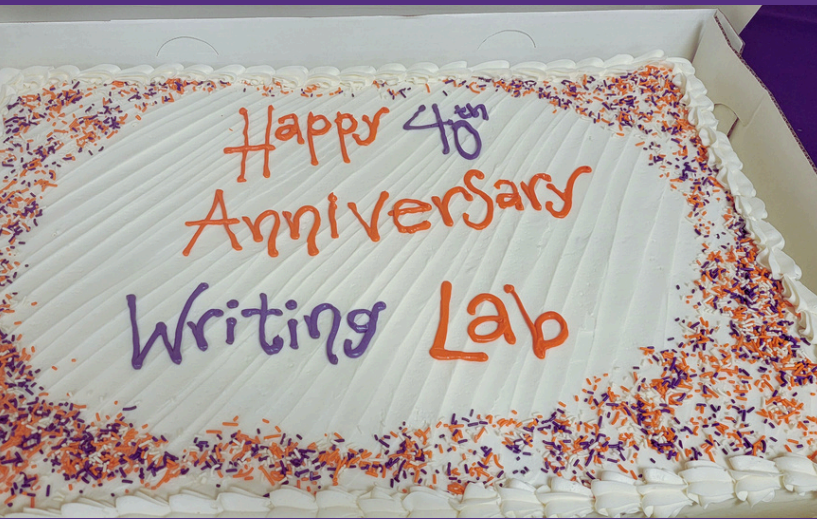


CHELSEA J. MURDOCK, PHD
DIRECTOR

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Celebrating 40 years.

From Daniel 212 in 1983 to a large dedicated space in Cooper Library, the Writing Lab has grown significantly over the past four decades.



1983

The Writing Lab began its mission in 1983. That mission was to support students enrolled in ENGL 1030 classes. The Writing Lab was located in Daniel Hall.

1995

Around 1995, the Writing Lab changed its name to the "Writing Center." It also was staffed entirely by English MA students, who utilized a classroom in Daniel Hall.

2005

With the formation of the Center for Professional Communication, the newly established Writing Fellows Program began providing writing support to students.

2012

Space was secured in the Academic Success Center for the Writing Center. The Writing Fellows became part of the Writing Center and relocated to the ASC.

2022

Outgrowing its space in the ASC, the Writing Lab moved to a 2x larger space in Cooper Library, allowing for further growth of Writing Lab services.

OVER 26,000 APPOINTMENTS!

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING SUPPORT

1449 **APPOINTMENTS**

OVER 50% OF ALL GRADUATE WRITING APPOINTMENTS WERE FACE-TO-FACE

233 EMAILED FEEDBACK APPOINTMENTS, 334 ZOOM APPOINTMENTS

777 **UNDERGRADUATE WRITERS**

1200 NEW WRITER REGISTRATIONS

47% OF APPOINTMENTS WERE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS, 11% WERE SENIOR STUDENTS



Group Sessions

This year, there were 30 group appointments. Many of these were student project groups from nursing and engineering.



Personal Statements

Medical, dental, and law school personal statements accounted for at least 14% of all appointments.



STEM

Lab reports accounted for about 12% of all appointments. Most of these were biology or chemistry reports.



All Majors

All majors were represented about those 755 writers who utilized the Writing Lab this year.

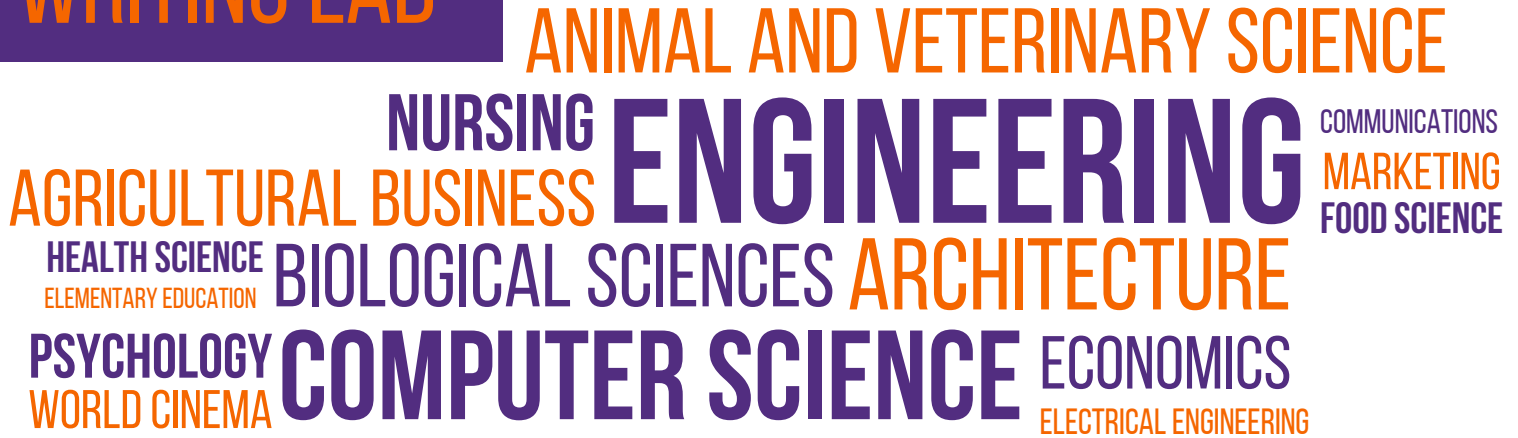


Writing Fellows

Our staff of 11 Writing Fellows representing four different colleges worked with writers across the disciplines to support writers at various stages of the writing process.

Writing Fellows actively participated in the recruitment of five new Writing Fellows for the next academic year. This is in anticipation of growing usage in STEM fields and the graduation of three senior Writing Fellows.

MOST COMMON MAJORS USING THE WRITING LAB



HOW MANY TIMES DID CLIENTS VISIT THE WRITING LAB?



Data Points

- 116 Missed Appointments
- 540 Canceled Appointments
- Wednesday appointments accounted for 24% of all appointments.
- 60 minute appointments accounted for 7% of all appointments.
- Two alumni and four faculty/staff members utilized the Writing Lab.
- 8% of clients indicated a home language other than English.
- 5% of clients were affiliated with an athletic team.
- 30 appointments were groups.
- 13% of appointments were for application materials.
- 4% of appointments were for creative work.
- 296 appointments were same day appointments.

96% INDICATED THEY WOULD RECOMMEND THE WRITING LAB TO A FRIEND
4% SAID THEY WOULD "MAYBE" RECOMMEND THE WRITING LAB TO A FRIEND

GRADUATE WRITING SUPPORT

GRADUATE WRITING SUPPORT
MAINTAINED BY LEARNING FROM OTHER FELLOWS AND STUDENTS
BY SHOWING THAT ALL WRITERS ARE WELCOME TO COME AND GAIN DEEPER UNDERSTANDING



DISSERTATION & THESIS SUPPORT



Out of the 162 graduate student appointments, 83 listed the genre as “dissertation/thesis.”

ARTICLE PUBLICATION



46 appointments focused on revising an article for publication.

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS



Several graduate students utilized Graduate Writing Consultants as structures to increase personal accountability. They often used appointments as benchmarks in their progress.

ALL STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS



Graduate students brought their work to the Writing Lab at various parts of the writing process.

162 APPOINTMENTS

OVER 50% OF ALL GRADUATE WRITING APPOINTMENTS WERE EMAILED FEEDBACK

15% OF ALL APPOINTMENTS WERE FACE-TO-FACE, INCREASING IN SPRING 2023

73 GRADUATE WRITERS

OVER 50% OF ALL GRADUATE WRITERS SCHEDULED TWO OR MORE APPOINTMENTS

THREE WRITERS VISITED US SIX OR MORE TIMES.

21 GRADUATE PROGRAMS

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR'S 8 REPRESENTED GRADUATE PROGRAMS, GRADUATE WRITING CONSULTANT SUPPORT WAS MORE INTERDISCIPLINARY THAN EVER BEFORE!

GRADUATE WRITING CONSULTANTS



There were three Graduate Writing Consultants for the 2023-2024 AY. MacKenzie Croley (M.A. in English), Sage Short (M.A. in English) and Ruchika Muddinagiri (M.S. in Computer Science) received specialized training to support graduate students across the disciplines. Funding for the Graduate Writing Consultants was provided by the Graduate School. This funding has not yet been extended to the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

852% INCREASE IN USAGE SINCE LAST YEAR!

GRADUATE WRITING EVENTS

In Fall 2023, the Writing Lab began hosting "Writing Wednesdays." These weekly events provided dedicated time for graduate students across disciplines and levels to focus on their writing production. From 9am-11am, a Graduate Writing Consultant was available for questions and consultations.

Participants commented that these events were essential to their project completion, offering a sense of community in an otherwise isolating process.

In March 2024, Grad 360 provided catering for these events. This likewise led to an uptick in attendance.



77

TOTAL
ATTENDEES

7

GRADUATE
PROGRAMS

2

WORKSHOPS
GIVEN

UPCOMING GRADUATE WRITING EVENTS:

After Writing Lab leadership met with Graduate Student Government in Spring 2023, the following events have been slated for the next academic year based on requests and needs. Students requested more community writing events, help with formatting, and orientation to graduate-level writing expectations.

WRITING GROUPS

WRITING SALON

CONVENTIONS
ORIENTATION

FORMATTING HELP



TESTIMONIALS



Wysheka Austin

ESED PhD

I'm thankful for Sage who was able to support me with critical edits needed to complete my dissertation! Thank you, Sage!

Dr. Austin finished her dissertation in April 2024.



Jason Wilt

Organic Chemistry PhD

Sessions here helped me truly understand the finer details of scientific writing. My default writing style is more akin to that of the sci-fi novels I like to read, which is often too long & drawn-out for scientific literature. I've always heard how scientific writing needs to be as concise as possible, but only after these sessions do I understand how to get there.



Lisa Stewart

Healthcare Genetics/Genomics PhD

I hate writing, and I think it hates me back. Thankfully I discovered the Writing Lab. For context, I am older student that works full time and lives in another state, so everything is virtual. The nonjudgmental help I received was invaluable. I suspect my dissertation chair was blissfully unaware of the time and aggravation that it saved her as well. Two surprises about the center-its free and doesn't appear to be bursting at the seams. IMO, this was the best kept secret I found at Clemson. My advice for my successors: make appointments often and early. When you get a page or two written, get an appointment. They will help with organization too. I do wish that there were more night and weekend appointments for weekday workers, that would be nice. I also wish I had utilized the center sooner in my journey, it would have made my life easier. I could have dreaded less and slept more. And I still can't believe it's free.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: ENGLISH MASTERS

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Graduate Assistants join the Writing Lab from the English Department during their first year of the MAE Program. These graduate students often use the Writing Lab to prepare for their second-year teaching assignments.

PROFESSIONALIZATION

"I believe that one of the best decisions I made regarding my assistantship was selecting to work at the Writing Lab. This experience has helped me improve my ability to communicate and explain complex ideas in simple terms. I am confident that this skill will benefit me in my future role as a composition teacher. Also, I have learned how to provide constructive feedback to students, which will enable me to give useful feedback to my own students in the fall."

BENJAMIN AKINLABI

Graduate Assistant

"I enjoyed it, and I think this job is the best fit for me. Right now, I am confident, and I am prepared to teach English 1030 classes. I have learned so many things by working on different assignments, such as MMC or landmark analysis."

ZAHRA EBRAHAMI

Graduate Assistant

TRAINING & PREPARATION



Graduate Assistants train for two to three weeks, learning writing center theory and observing trained consultants.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING



Graduate Assistants attend events with fellow GAs to foster community and establish connections.

WORKING WITH STUDENT WRITERS



The Writing Lab is considered pre-service training for those preparing to teach ENGL 1030 the following year.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Each Graduate Assistant works with the Writing Lab Director, Dr. Murdock, to create professional development opportunities that fit their professional goals.

This year, Benjamin, Zahra, and Ashton created informational pages for the Writing Lab website on subjects related to writing.





CLEMSON® UNIVERSITY
WRITING LAB

FINAL-YEAR WRITING FELLOWS

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATING SENIORS



During my time as a Writing Fellow, I grew as a person both academically and professionally. This experience has helped me to develop stronger skills when it comes to being in a leadership position as well as a position of a tutor/advisor. Personally, I created so many incredible relationships with my peer fellows and my clients!

CHARLIE SPRAWLS
History



My time as a Writing Fellow has been one of my highlights at Clemson. I am so grateful for this position and the opportunities it afforded me -- not only did I gain a supportive, kind community, but I had the privilege to help fellow writers in our community and connect with them. It is fulfilling work to be a Writing Fellow, and I would not trade my experiences for anything!

HANNAH KORSON
Psychology

LEAD WRITING FELLOW

Fall 2023 saw the launch of a new position within the Writing Fellows Program: Lead Writing Fellow. This position is intended to provide the possibility of advancement and professionalization while acting as a leader within the program.

Charleigh Sprawls was the inaugural Lead Writing Fellow this year. She shaped the position into one that has been and will become integral to the ecology of the Writing Lab.



EMMALINE ZEILER
Packaging Science



MAKING CONNECTIONS: CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS



COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS ACROSS CAMPUS HELPS US TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT STAGES AND LEVELS OF STUDY.



WE CONNECT WITH CAMPUS PARTNERS TO FIND COMMONALITIES AMONG OUR SERVICES AND MEET THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS WHO UTILIZE US AS RESOURCES.



CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS ARE ONE OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE WRITING LAB'S CAMPUS MISSION.



CU-ICAR

In partnership with the CU-ICAR Library, the Writing Lab hosted a workshop on articulating a professional brand, providing insight on creating resumes/CVs, cover letters, LinkedIn profiles, and research posters. Future workshops at the CU-ICAR campus are in the works for Fall 2024.



CBSHS

By invitation of the CBSHS Advisory Board, the Writing Lab and Career Center participated in a mocktails and mingling event to orient students to student resources on campus. Though attendance for the event was low, such collaborations are essential to our work in the Lab!

1K+ STUDENTS REACHED THROUGH WORKSHOPS AND CAMPUS PARTNER EVENTS

5 NEW CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS IN THE 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR



OUTREACH

One of the most significant challenges faced by the Writing Lab is getting the word about regarding the support we provide. Significant strides have been made in recent years to tell all Tiger Writers about our services.



HALF OF WRITERS USING THE WRITING LAB LEARNED OF OUR SERVICES FROM THEIR INSTRUCTORS

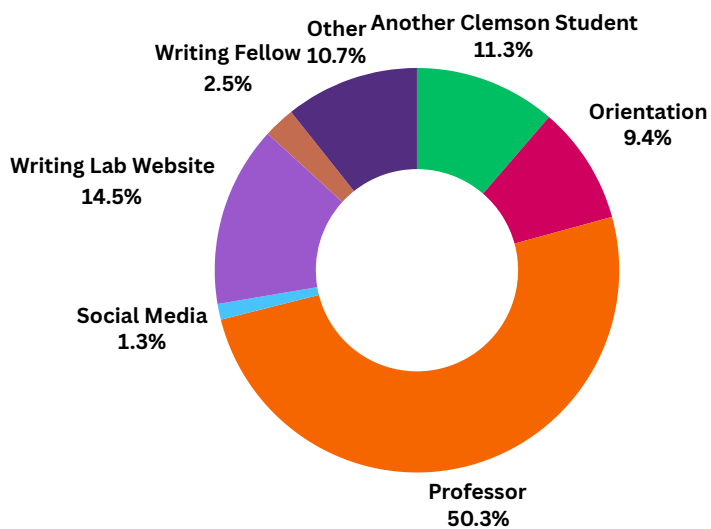
253

STUDENTS REACHED THROUGH CLASS VISITS AND CLASS TOURS

1K+

NEW CLIENT REGISTRATIONS IN THE WCONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT THE WRITING LAB?



ARCADE AT THE LIBRARY

Each year, Cooper Library hosts "Arcade at the Library." The Writing Lab's 80s Music Bingo is a highly attended element of this event, with the Writing Lab packed at each event.



AI & TEACHING CONFERENCE

Dr. Murdock participated in the AI conference hosted by the Office of Teaching Innovation and Effectiveness. At this conference, instructors were familiarized with the Writing Lab's perception of AI use.



ALUMNI VISITS & TOURS

The Writing Lab has hosted two alumni tours, with plans to host more over the summer months. Alumni often comment on how they wish such support existed when they attended Clemson.

FEEDBACK FROM WRITERS



159
TOTAL
RESPONDENTS

Survey responses are anonymous.

Respondents can choose to answer any survey questions with none being required.

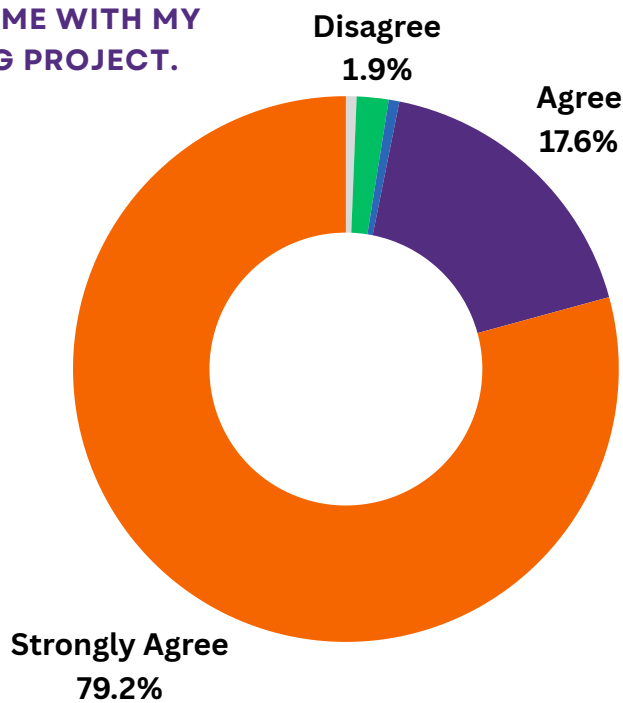
There is no incentive for survey response.

In future semesters, we hope to begin offering incentives for survey response.

Survey response data impacts programmatic decision-making and consultant evaluations.



**THE WRITING LAB
HELPED ME WITH MY
WRITING PROJECT.**



96%

96% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATED THEY WOULD RETURN TO THE WRITING LAB

TESTIMONIALS



As I expected, this session gave me a good viewpoint on how readable is my writing. I also learned couple of techniques to review my paper. Thank you for the help!!



Bella did a great job explaining writing concepts and helped me reformat my essay for clarity. She helped explain grammatical concepts that I have struggled with.



Benjamin gave helpful insights on how to organize and structure my work. He advised me to do an annotated bibliography, and this helped to put my thoughts together. I am grateful for the help.



I received great, clear feedback that helped me with areas that I wanted to improve with my writing project. I am really happy with the outcome of my appointment and will be using the Writing Lab for future assignments.



Emmaline was very helpful and gave me valuable feedback on my biology lab report.



I'm always impressed after having an appointment with Makenzie. I go into the appointment with maybe a couple ideas of what I need, and by the end have either exactly what I need or am directly on the path to exactly what I need. Very very helpful, thank you very much!



Meeting with Ashton in the writing helped to fine tuned my research proposal. She gives clear feedback that I can apply right away to improve my writing!



My writing session with Sage was extremely helpful. She offered specific strategies to address my writing challenges as well as other tips to improve the overall quality of my writing skills.

WORKSHOPS

The Writing Lab presented several workshops throughout the semester, requested by instructors and campus partners. These workshops were created upon request and subsequently added to the Writing Lab workshop collection.

WORKSHOPS OF 24-25

- > **Editing and Providing Feedback**
- > **Using Generative AI**
- > **Dental School Personal Statements**
- > **Medical School Personal Statements**
- > **MLA, APA, and IEEE Style Guides**



The workshop was very well organized and useful for students. Everything was clear and I think the students all learned something through the workshop.

DR. KRISTIN LLOYD

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice



Dr. Murdock thank you so much for speaking to the class. I used all your tips on my personal statement last year and I believe it definitely contributed to the interviews I received. I'm by no means a strong writer and I believe you coming to this class each year gives Clemson students an advantage when it comes to writing their personal statements. We are thankful for your time.

MATTHEW LECROY

Dental Clinical Applications TA



This was super helpful for our students starting personal statements and learning about the resources they have here at Clemson!

ELLESON RAINSFORD

Clinical Applications & Medical Practice TA



Lab Reports

Collaborating with Dr. Chelsea McKelvey, the Writing Lab presented workshops on writing lab reports in biology and chemistry. The workshops were the most attended, resulting in 30+ students in attendance, most of whom scheduled subsequent appointments in the Writing Lab.

Dr. McKelvey approached the Writing Lab about hosting lab report workshops after hearing stories from students regarding their science writing anxieties.

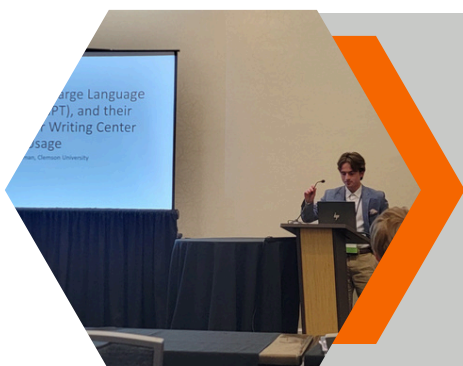


RAISING THE RESEARCH BAR

The Writing Lab was well-represented at conferences and professional talks this year. Dr. Murdock presented at the Clemson AI Conference, while Owen Eastman presented as part of a student panel at the same conference. Plans are in the works for more presentations at the International Writing Center Association Conference in October 2024.



SOUTHEASTERN WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATION 2024 (ATLANTA, GA)



“INTERNAL BIASES IN LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR WRITING CENTER USAGE”

Owen Eastman, Writing Fellow



“INCREASING ONLINE WRITING LAB ACCESSIBILITY: DEVELOPING ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING TIP SHEETS”

MacKenzie Croley, Graduate Writing Consultant



“STORYING BURNOUT: USING STORY TO NAVIGATE BURNOUT IN WRITING CENTERS”

Dr. Chelsea Murdock, Director

SWCARE

Center Acknowledgement & Recognition of Excellence



RESEARCH AND PLANNING

In 2019, the Clemson Writing Lab began preparing for its certification bid. Center Acknowledgement & Recognition of Excellence through the Southeastern Writing Center Association demanded mission and vision statements, well-cultivated on-campus partnerships, a strategic plan, and robust training materials. All of these things did not exist prior to 2019.



BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Over the course of four years, from 2019 to 2022, administration worked to create the required elements of a certifiable writing center, using this as an opportunity to revise old or disappeared practices within the Clemson Writing Lab. Students participated with the development of the statements and strategic plan.



DEVELOPMENT OF APPLICATION PACKET

The CARE application packet took one year to complete and revise. Letters were solicited from campus partners in support of the application, including Dr. Will Stockton and the Dean of the Libraries. Training materials and syllabi, letters providing institutional context, and a philosophy of consulting were all provided.



CERTIFICATION NOTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION

Although notified in August 2023, certification was officially conferred in February 2024 at the annual Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference.

1 OF 4 CARE CERTIFIED WRITING CENTERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

THE CLEMSON WRITING LAB RECEIVED PARTICULAR PRAISE FOR

- AMBITIOUS TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
- COMMITMENT TO CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS
- USE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN TRAINING MATERIALS



ENGL 4980

TRAINING THE NEXT

ENGL 4980 is the training course for students accepted into the Writing Fellows Program. The course includes theory and experiential learning. The course earned praise from the SWCA CARE evaluation committee.



Course Overview



History & Concepts

- ✓ History & Origin of Writing Centers
- ✓ Language Acquisition
- ✓ Writing in the Disciplines vs. Writing Across the Curriculum
- ✓ Writing Anxiety, Writer's Block
- ✓ Directive vs. Non-Directive Tutoring
- ✓ Supporting Various Voices and Skill Levels
- ✓ Emotions in the Writing Center



Unique Skill Acquisition

- ✓ Used cornhusk dolls to illustrate collaborative skills and clear instruction
- ✓ Invited Mock Turtle Soup Improv to learn improvisational skills



Practical Applications & Experiential Learning

- ✓ **Observation:** Course participants observe sessions for 1 hour per week in the Writing Lab
- ✓ **Co-Consulting:** Course participants co-consult with a seasoned Writing Fellow in the Writing Lab
- ✓ **Consulting:** Course participants take a primary role in consultations while being observed by a seasoned Writing Fellow in the Writing Lab

5

NEW WRITING FELLOWS IN
AY 2024-2025

MAJORS OF THE INCOMING WRITING FELLOWS COHORT:

PSYCHOLOGY
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

POLITICAL SCIENCE & HISTORY
COMPUTER SCIENCE
WORLD CINEMA

IN MEMORY OF



ABENA GYAMFUA OFORI

1992-2023

Abena was an integral part of the Writing Lab at Clemson. She was set to begin as Assistant Director of the Writing Lab in August 2023. Her goal was to pursue a PhD with a focus on writing center work. Unfortunately, Abena passed away in a car accident in June 2023, along with her friend Alberta Oduraa Quartey.

Abena was incredibly caring and enthusiastic. She mentored several of the Writing Fellows, helping them to learn best practices in writing feedback. A memorial for Abena is now in the Writing Lab space.

Her legacy will endure at Clemson. She inspired and continues to inspire us to do our best to support others and help them learn to the best of our abilities.



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