

**Draft of** University Writing Center Addendum to the Department of English  
2023-27 Strategic Planning Proposal

## **Introduction**

### **Mission Statement:**

Texas State University Writing Center is dedicated to helping Bobcats develop writing as an intellectual activity integral to productivity in their scholarly, civic, professional, and cultural lives. Where writing develops, composing is critical to thinking; learning advances; knowledge is shared; writers become articulate; professional skills improve; research and creative productivity increase; language connects to character and identity; people engage civically, professionally, and culturally.

### **About**

- The Texas State University Writing Center (UWC) services three locations: San Marcos, Round Rock, and virtual.
- The UWC offers individual consulting appointments; group appointments; writing support groups; and class workshops to all students, staff, and faculty.
- The UWC is maintained by one director, two assistant directors, two graduate coordinators, and two lead undergraduate tutors.
- The UWC is funded by the English Department.

### **Objective**

The UWC receives allocated funds from the English Department; thus, this document proposes how funds will be used in the 2023-27 Strategic Planning cycle. The items below *are detailed supplement* to the English Department's 2023-27 Strategic Planning Proposal. As the university pursues its "Run to R1" campaign that increases its publishing, matriculation, and retention, the English Department recognizes that supporting writing operations is crucial to achieving R1 status. The 2017-23 Strategic Planning proposal bid the UWC as a "Center for Writing Excellence" that offered top-down support, focusing on faculty and doctoral researchers. While that remains a priority, the UWC proposes offering bottom-up support, focusing on first-year writers whose backgrounds require attentive support. The summary of

requests below supports our main initiative to increase the quality of undergraduate consultant training and service.

**Summary of Requests:**

1. Software Update to TRAC Cloud
2. Full-time Administrative Assistant
3. Introduction to Writing Center Studies Course Internship
4. Consultant Exchange
5. Host the South Central Writing Centers Association regional conference
6. Faculty Writing Instruction Workshop
7. Writing for Publication Workshop
8. Partnerships with IDEA Center, CIE, and VACS
9. Media Outreach to Community

**Internal Administrative Support**

The UWC will maximize administrative efficiency when the center transitions its booking software to TRAC Cloud. The current software, Tutor Trac, requires frequent and thorough maintenance by the director, two assistant directors, two graduate instructional assistants, and lead undergraduate tutor. Trac Cloud will alleviate the breadth of maintenance required across the personnel and increase availability for other administrative tasks such as consultant training and partnership development.

The UWC seeks a full-time administrative assistant who will lead the center's administrative tasks such as payroll and scheduling; the consequent offload of administrative tasks from the lead consultants would allow them to reallocate working hours toward enriching the center's services. The addition of a full-time administrative assistant is crucial, as the UWC maintains a 90% leadership turnover between academic years. Ideally, the full-time administrative assistant will be a second senior lecturer based in the San Marcos Campus. Adding an administrative team-member in this role provides the center with connections to the English Department, and provides the lecturer with resources from the UWC.

**Internal Staff Training and Development**

The UWC requires all undergraduate consultants to be trained following the College Reading and Learning Association's (CRLA) level one curriculum and recommends participation in level two training.

The UWC is developing packages of self-sustaining and continuous enrichment for consultants throughout their employment at the UWC. Given that most consultants remain employed at the UWC for an average of three semesters, the UWC can reduce training costs and increase service quality by offering an Introduction to Writing Centers course as a pre-requisite to employment as an undergraduate consultant. This course would train undergraduates on writing center pedagogies and act as infrastructure to accrue unpaid observation hours, so undergraduates are released to co-consult at the start of each semester upon hiring. Prior training in writing center pedagogies improves the writers' experience and increases the number of writers that the UWC can assist earlier in the semester, decreasing the percentage of unused appointment slots during paid working hours.

The UWC will coordinate exchanges of trained consultants with other global writing centers to import optimal and innovative strategies practiced abroad, implementing them in our own center. This is viable due to the now widespread, virtual capabilities of many writing centers. With increased training, a consultant exchange program will not only enrich the participants' skills but also improve Texas State University's visibility, as our consultants may act as ambassadors to other institutions of higher education and promote our mission.

By modernizing training, the staff can distribute advanced components of writing center pedagogies. Leading researchers in the discipline identify linguistic justice and anti-racism as paramount concerns. The UWC will allocate the increased resources to generating solution-oriented research in regard to these topics; this research will make meaningful impact to the multicultural community that we operate in and the students we serve as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. The solutions that we produce will be reflected in a revised mission statement and day-to-day practice.

## **External Faculty Support**

The university has supported our proposal to prescribe more writing-intensive courses across all disciplines. We propose serving faculty by deviating from a consulting arrangement and moving toward an alternative infrastructure that maximizes a greater volume of instructors to take advantage of assistance. The alternative infrastructure is (1) a summer institute which pays faculty a stipend to workshop incorporating writing in their classes and (2) UWC office hours for faculty to workshop assignments, rubrics, and written feedback on student work. Additionally, since we now offer a basic and standard writing-intensive curriculum, we can use our research on anti-racism and linguistic justice to narrow our support to these extremely pertinent obstacles in writing curriculum. By training faculty in

these areas, they will be equipped to meet the needs of the university's diverse student body, resulting in, chiefly, among many other benefits, improved retention.

## **Research Opportunities**

The UWC supports research at Texas State University from the top-down. As a result of our support toward faculty with their writing research projects, faculty users of the UWC have received X times as many grants having worked with our consultants than before. Given these results of our aid, we, as in the internal cohort of researchers in the UWC, seek our own research grants to pursue motivating questions surrounding rhetoric, composition, and writing center pedagogy, theory, and praxis. This research is a prerequisite to hosting the South Central Writing Centers Association's annual regional conference. Hosting the regional conference is paramount to the visibility, credibility, and notoriety of the university, as writing centers of research institutions have national reputes.

The UWC will also strengthen research initiatives across a broad scope of levels through a Writing for Publication workshop or course. The UWC promotes writing for publishing through its weekly graduate and faculty writing support group, Write Time; a designated workshop or course offers structured guidance for graduate writers navigating the nuances of the publishing culture of higher education. This workshop or course will benefit our currently enrolled or newly accepted graduate students.

## **Partnerships**

We will also support undergraduate research interests by partnering with the undergraduate research programs and Innovation, Discovery, Exploration, Analysis (IDEA) Center to educate undergraduates on graduate education, especially when they might not have otherwise considered it.

The UWC intends to offer military-connected services but has lacked the networking required to direct military-connected bobcats toward our center. We will develop reciprocal benefits to strengthen a partnership with the Veteran Academic Success Center (VACS) in order to gain their support and take advantage of their bandwidth to effectively advertise positions.

We will also support students with remedial scores by partnering with Supplemental Instructors (SI's) of lower-division studies to offer joint support these students, in 40 sections of courses. We propose developing workshops to serve their needs, as our workshops have a proven track record of providing standard instruction across a broad scope of topics and for the wide variety of audience interest. Our

outreach will also expand to embed consultants in writing intensive classes, so our assistance is less insular and inaccessible.

Finally, the UWC has piloted a collaboration with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) by inviting their coordinators to train the UWC's consultants in entrepreneurial pitches. With increased funding that benefits both the UWC and CIE, the UWC can create a new workshop called "Pitch Camp," which allows business students on concision and efficacy of pitch messaging. This collaboration could incorporate the Communication Center's public speaking lab, which focuses on delivery, so all stages of oral rhetoric are supported: content, form, and delivery.

## **Community Outreach Through Media**

The UWC will develop a third special project role for undergraduate consultants in addition to the existing Social Media and Essay Contest coordinator roles. The UWC used to offer a third coordinator role when it piloted webcam appointments prior to the pandemic; once the webcam appointments were implemented without specialized training, that coordinator role was terminated. Offering a third coordinator role will provide consultants with a competitive opportunity for increased pay, leadership experience, and professional development. The additional special project will be to create and maintaining a periodical newsletter, blog, or podcast that includes community spotlights, tips, news, creative and expository pieces from writers within the UWC, TXST community, and greater community. While the long-term vision is to produce content as frequently as monthly, this could begin once per academic year. The purpose of this media would be to make writing research accessible and palatable to the community. The UWC will develop additional writing outreach programming to supplement this knowledge resource with hands-on practice to enhance habits and skills.