Student Services Program Review Report
Sierra College, Fall 2012

Department/Program Name: Writing Center, Rocklin Campus

Date Submitted: February 7, 2014

Submitted By: Janet Riswold

Ideally, the writing of Program Review Report should be a collaborative process incorporating full-time and part time faculty as well as the appropriate educational administrator, instructional assistants, classified staff members and students who have an interest in the present and future vision of the program at all sites throughout the district. The Program Review Committee needs as much information as possible concerning the present and future of the program to assess and recommend the resources needed to keep the program viable and robust.

1) Relevancy: This section assesses the program's significance to the students, the college, and the community.

1a) To provide context for the information that follows, describe the basic functions of your area and/or program.

If applicable, also explain how the program aligns with state mandates, priorities set by external agencies, or any other relevant organizations.

> The Writing Center provides one-to-one instruction on writing skills and assistance with writing assignments in all college subjects on a drop-in basis. In addition, the recently re-opened online Writing Center offers assistance, by appointment, to any Sierra College student, regardless of location

1b) How does your program fit within the district mission statement as quoted below?

> *"Sierra College provides a challenging and supportive learning environment for students having diverse goals, abilities, and needs interested in transfer, career and technical training, and life long learning. The College's programs and services encourage students to identify and to expand their potential. Sierra College students will develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community."*

> The Sierra College Writing Center provides learning support for students with diverse goals, abilities, and needs, in transfer, career and technical training and life-long learning. Support for the development of writing skills is provided at all levels across the curriculum.

1c) With which specific Strategic Goals does the program align (include only the most relevant)?

I. **Educational Effectiveness** – Programs and services of the District will effectively promote and support student opportunity, success and achievement
II. **Organizational Effectiveness** – The District will manage its resources to best meet its multiple missions within the constraints of its resources
III. **Resource Development** – The District will focus on securing new resources to align with strategic goals
IV. *Focused Access* – The District will target outreach and access efforts to best serve its community

> The Writing Center aligns most closely with Strategic Goal I: Educational Effectiveness. Most certainly, developing the ability to effectively express oneself in writing is fundamental to academic success, achievement and opportunity.

1d) How does the program align with student needs? Please refer to any relevant assessments or other data in your reply.

> The Writing Center provides one-to-one instruction on writing skills and assistance with writing assignments in all college subjects on a drop-in basis.
> - Clarifying assignments
> - Developing and organizing ideas
> - Grammar and punctuation questions
> - Proofreading and editing skills
> - Interpreting literature
> - Essay exam strategies
> - Research skills, including Internet and databases
> - Citing sources in MLA, APA, Chicago, CSE, and other formats
> - Outlining oral presentations
> - Transfer application and scholarship essays
> - Resume and cover letter writing
> - Word processing skills
> - Personal computer access
> - Printing (pay to print)
>
> Based on a fall 13 student survey, the Writing Center is effectively helping students improve their writing skills.
>
> | Writing Center Student Survey Fall 13 | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
> |---|---|---|---|---|---|
> | I will be able to apply writing skills I learned today in the Writing Center to my college classes. (129 Responses) | 72% | 26% | 2% | 0 | 0 |
> | Using the Writing Center's services has helped me improve my writing skills. (129 Responses) | 64% | 26% | 8% | 0 | 0 |

With the current staffing level, it is a challenge to meet the needs of students regarding open hours and availability. 89% of students said that they got help when needed, while a smaller majority (59%) indicated that they would use the Writing Center more often if it were open in the evening. 75% percent said that they would use appointments if they were available.

Writing Center Student Survey Fall 13	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I get help from the Writing Center staff promptly when I need it. (128 Responses)	55%	34%	9%	1.5%	0
If the Writing Center offered half-hour appointments with a staff member, I would schedule an appointment. (128 Responses)	45%	30%	24%	2%	2%
I would use the Writing Center more if it were open after 6 p.m. (115 Responses)	42%	17%	31%	8%	3%

1e) Optional Additional Data: Comment on any other relevance to the district goals, mission, values, etc., that your program provides that is not incorporated in the prompts above. Consider, for example, contributions to diversity, campus climate, cultural enrichment, community ties, partnerships and service, etc. Include specific data and examples rather than merely anecdotal narrative.

The Writing Center staff strives to create a welcoming environment for every student. The IAs have served on the New Legacy committee and have taken an active interest in attended the *At Ease* training. They have also been active in *Love Your Body* week and *Safe Space* training.

2) **Currency**

2a) Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Considering the information provided, comment on the program's progress in assessment of SLOs, analysis of the results, and improvements/changes
made to the program. Please provide data and analysis in your explanation.

Several outcomes have been in place since 2009:
- Students will develop writing strategies to meet the academic expectations of their instructors at greater rates than their non-Writing Center-assisted peers.
  - Assessed in 2009 with satisfactory result.
- Deliver Writing Center services over internet in real-time, interactive format.
  - Assessed in 2009 and 2010 with satisfactory results.
- Measure effectiveness of virtual writing center operation by gauging relative retention and success rates of students who use it.
  - Assessed in 2009 with satisfactory result.
- Provide DL and online students with Writing Center help identical to that received by students present in actual Writing Center.
  - Assessed in 2009 with satisfactory result.

In place since 2011:
- Restart SCOWC (Sierra College Online Writing Center): petition for funding.
  - This goal was suspended for a time due to budget constraints. In fall 2013, progress was made with the re-establishment of the Sierra College Online Writing Center. This was achieved through the auspices of Distance Learning, with the creation and filling of a part-time distance learning academic support faculty position.

The Writing Center program outcomes and measurements need to be reviewed and updated. The loss of a full-time Writing Center coordinator in fall 2012 led to a lapse in the Program Outcome cycle.

2b) Professional Development: Describe how purposeful departmental activities serve to improve teaching, learning and scholarship. Please be sure to specifically include flex activities, departmental meetings and activities, conferences, outreach to other colleges, research and implementation of best practices, changes in legislation, mandates from regulatory agencies, required faculty certifications, health and safety trainings or other factors. How do these activities contribute to your program's self-assessment and planning?

All current Writing Center staff members have ongoing classroom and lecture experience, and are constantly updating their perspectives and knowledge base. Collectively, they have attended dozens of flex workshops over the last two years.

- Responding to Distressed Students
- Better Listening to Typical Student Concerns
- Engaging First-Year Students
- Procrastination
- Service Learning Across the Curriculum: Writing Partners
- Reading Out of the Box
- EBSCO Discovery Service
- The IAT: What Is It? What Can It Tell Us?
- What Students "Know" and Need to Know about Their Learning
- Using Training Techniques for Teaching
- Canvas Training
- Classroom Emergency Procedures/Office Safety
- Canvas "Train the Trainer"
- Kognito Training

Writing Center staff members have presented the following flex workshops: New Online Tutoring Options for Students, January 2014; Introduction to the LRC's Student Support Services, August 2013 and January 2012. Additionally, the Online Writing Center has been presented as an example to community colleges across the state by CCC Confer.

These activities contribute to the staff's ability to relate to a wide range of students with diverse needs. They also keep the staff well-connected to their colleagues across campus. As Writing Center staff members listen to the concerns and needs of students and staff, they identify practices and strategies to better serve both.
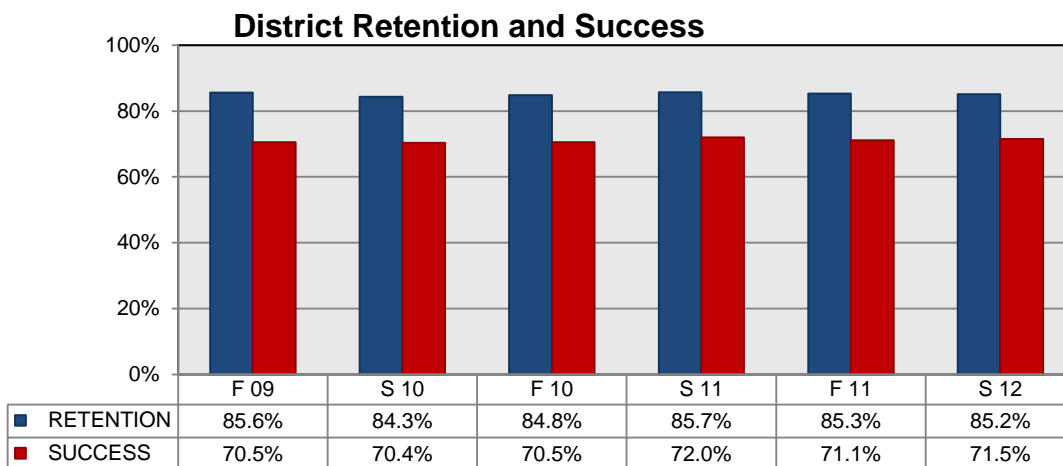
2c) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

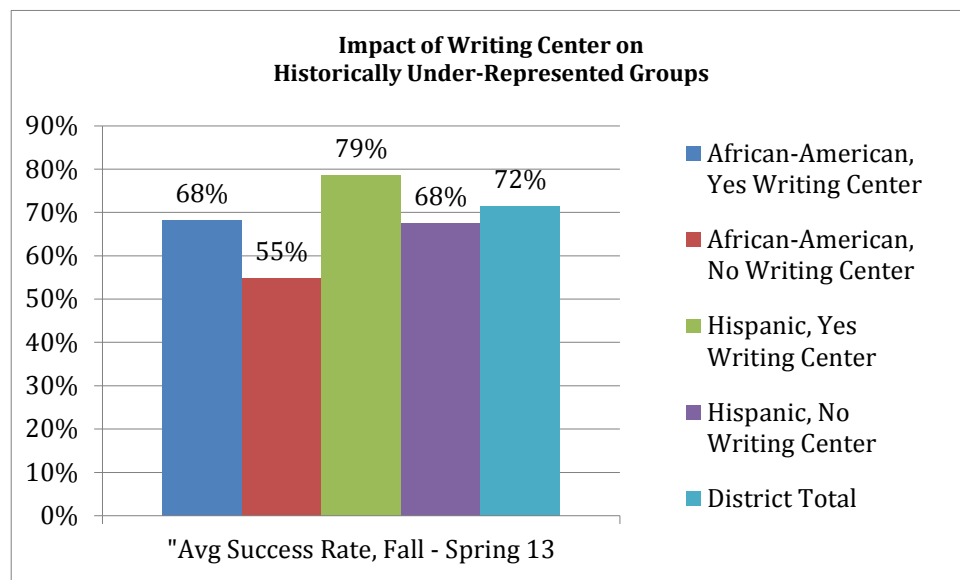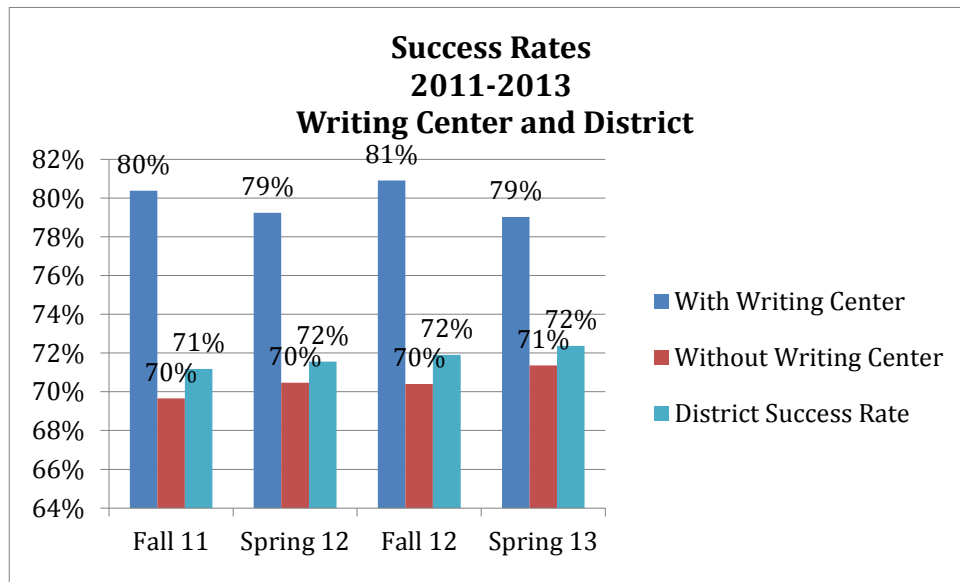> The Writing Center has established an outstanding reputation among students and faculty.
> - Regularly updated style manuals for MLA, CMS, CSE and APA – hard copies and online access: http://www/student-services/academic-support/writing-center/materials.php
> - A newly developed manual for Council of Science Editors (CSE).
> - Active interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration across disciplines: http://www/student-services/academic-support/writing-center/guidelines.php
> - Staff has kept alive the goal of re-establishing the Online Writing Center, with institutional support. The Sierra College Online Writing Center re-opened on a limited basis in fall 2013.

3) <u>Effectiveness:</u> This section assesses the effectiveness of the program in light of traditional measurements.
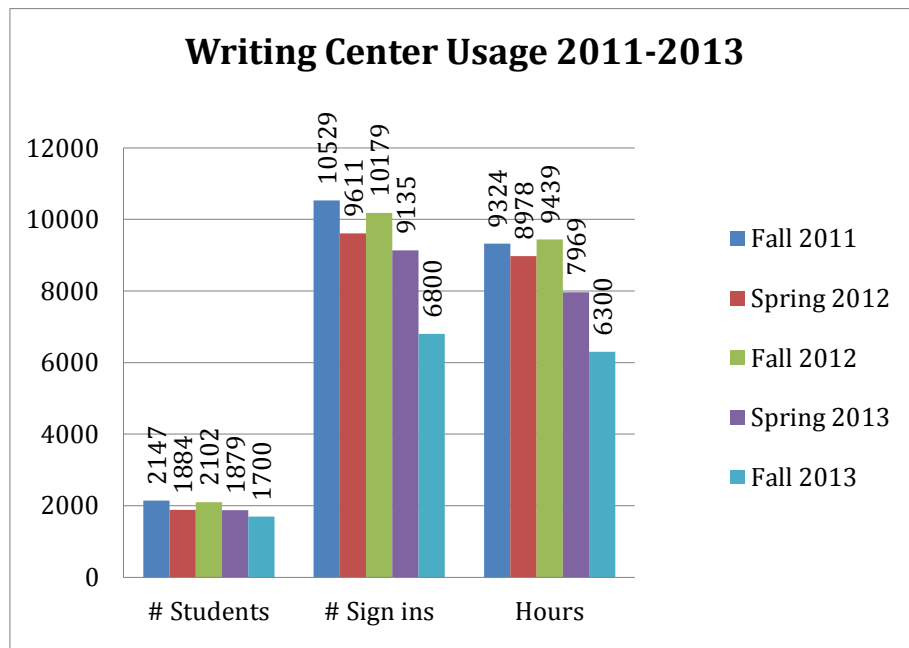
3a) Retention and Success - Describe how the program contributes to overall student retention and success. Describe any changes you have made that improved the effectiveness of the program as well as any barriers you have encountered to making changes. Include any relevant data (quantitative or qualitative) and explain its significance. How have you used the SLO data described above in assessing and improving your program? If you see a need to improve the data trends, outline a plan that will achieve the changes you are seeking.

District Retention and Success

	F 09	S 10	F 10	S 11	F 11	S 12
■ RETENTION	85.6%	84.3%	84.8%	85.7%	85.3%	85.2%
■ SUCCESS	70.5%	70.4%	70.5%	72.0%	71.1%	71.5%

Students who use the Writing Center succeed in **all their courses** at a significantly higher rate than those who do not use the center. The data shows that the Writing Center contributes significantly to the overall success rate of Sierra College Students. This pattern has been consistent over time. A breakdown of success rates by course and demographics are equally impressive. (See Program Writing Center 2014 Appendices.)

Success Rates 2011-2013 Writing Center and District

Impact of Writing Center on Historically Under-Represented Groups

3b) Usage Trends - Identify and explain the usage trends in your program's data. Address separately the data for on ground, on-line, and usage at the various centers when applicable. Comment on the significance of these trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. If you see a need to improve any trends, outline a plan that will achieve the changes you are seeking. Please explain your reason for this determination and describe how you will incorporate these assessments in your plans for improvement. If applicable, comment on both the past performance and the future direction of the program as a whole as well as on location and mode of delivery.

Writing Center Usage 2011-2013

Category	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
# Students	2147	1884	2102	1879	1700
# Sign ins	10529	9611	10179	9135	6800
Hours	9324	8978	9439	7969	6300

Notable is a recent decline in sign-ins (visits) and hours, starting in Spring 2013. The major contributing factor was the installation of *Pay to Print*, as a number of students used the Writing Center primarily to print assignments. We anticipate that the implementation of the district's *Student Success and Support Program* will lead to a substantial increase in usage, as students are referred to academic support programs, including the Writing Center.
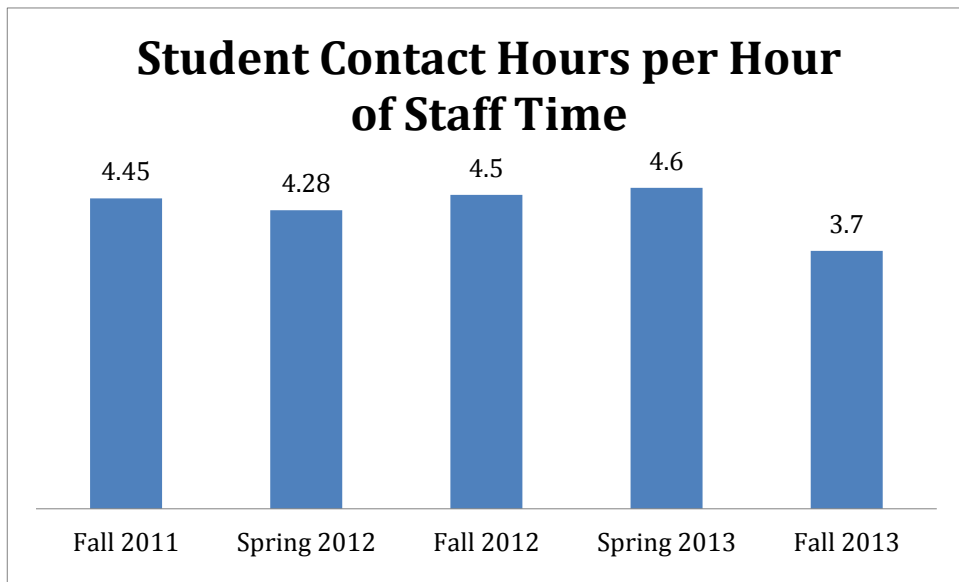
3c) Productivity – Using your own data, please track productivity changes for at least the past 3 years. Comment on the significance of the trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. If you believe any statistical trends need improvement, please explain your reason for this determination and describe how you will incorporate these assessments into
your plans for improvement.

The Writing Center currently employs 3.5 30-hour IA positions. These Instructional Assistants work 1696 hours through the course of a semester. In fall 2013, the Writing Center had 6300 student contact hours. For each hour of IA time, the Writing Center was able to provide 3.7 hours of student contact.

Prior to Spring 13, the Writing Center employed a full-time coordinator, in addition to the 3.5 IAs. The coordinator added 400 hours of direct assistance to students (floor time).

The data shows that productivity has gone down slightly, due to lower student use.

Student Contact Hours per Hour of Staff Time

Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
4.45	4.28	4.5	4.6	3.7

3d) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

Writing Center Student Survey Fall 13	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I get help from the Writing Center staff promptly when I need it. (128 Responses)	55%	34%	9%	1.5%	0

The recent student survey shows that most students (89%) get help promptly when they need it.

4) <u>Resources:</u> **This category assesses the adequacy of current resources available to the program and describes and justifies the resources required to achieve planning goals by relating program needs to the assessments above.**

4a) Please describe the future direction and goals of the program for the next three years in terms of sustaining or improving program effectiveness, relevance, and currency. Please include any analysis of relevant assessment data noted above.

- Update program outcomes and assessments
- Expand availability and use of online writing center
- Participate in the selection of an updated data management system to replace the outdated Accutrack 9
- Along with other academic support services on the 4th floor of the LRC, explore adding IA positions in conjunction with a part-time evening faculty coordinator to restore evening services to students (Tutor Center, Computer Lab, Writing Center).
- In anticipation referral from the SSSP, scale some services through development of Writing Center workshops (on-ground and online)
- Explore developing and offering ½ and/or ¼ unit writing skills modules

4b) Equipment and Technology: Comment on the adequacy of the program's equipment and technology funding for the District as well as our sites. Include a projection of equipment and technology needs for the next three years as well as a justification, including supporting data, for these requests.

- Accutrack 9 will need to be replaced within the next three years
- A new printer (current printer is the oldest on the 4th floor)
- New computers
  - Current computers are at least nine years old
- Screen recording and video editing software (like Camtasia) to create online tutorials to help students access the Online Writing Center.

4c) Staffing: Comment on the adequacy of the program's faculty, classified and student help staffing levels for the District as well as our sites. Include a projection of staffing needs for the next three years as well as a justification for needs.

The loss of at least 25 hours per week when the previous coordinator was not replaced, has resulted in a staffing level that is not adequate to serve our students well, let alone expand hours or services or to staff the new Online Writing Center. Hiring an additional 30-hour-per-week Instructional Assistant would help fill the gap left by the retirement of the full-time Writing Center Coordinator and also to staff the reopening of the Online Writing Center. This staff request has been in place for years.

4d) Facilities: Considering the data provided, comment on the program's fill rate and the adequacy of the facilities for the District as well as our sites. Include a projection of facility needs for the next three years as well as a justification for stated needs.

- Updated carpeting to match the rest of the LRC – current carpet is worn and squares are popping up
- Art prints to make the space more welcoming and stimulating

5) **Summary/Closing**

5a) Evaluate the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/future directions, challenges.

Strengths:
- Highly qualified, passionate Instructional Assistants with advanced degrees and teaching experience.
- Drop-in system that doesn't place barriers between students and services.
    - Support often available "on demand" throughout the writing process.
- Expert support for learning the complex and essential academic skill of writing.
- Documented positive impact on the success rate of students across the curriculum
- Excellent reputation among students and faculty

Weaknesses/Challenges:
- Inadequate staffing to achieve goals
- Lack of evening hours

Opportunities/Future Directions:
- Expansion of Online Writing Center
- Potential for reaching more underserved students
    - Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) referrals

5b) Please provide any other information the Program Review Committee should consider.

5c) How has the author of this report integrated the views and perspectives of those who have interests in the future of this program including full time and part time faculty, educational administrators, instructional assistants, classified staff, and students at Rocklin, Roseville Gateway, Nevada County Campus, and Tahoe Truckee?

Views and perspectives have been solicited from Writing Center staff, the LRC dean, and students who use the Writing Center. Their highly insightful comments and suggestions have been incorporated into this report.