

**Executive Summary****Department: The Writing Center****Date: Spring 2009**

Since The Writing Center's establishment as a department in 2002, it has provided individualized, collaborative, and self-paced learning opportunities for all students in a comfortable, peer friendly, stimulating learning environment and has functioned as a resource for faculty and staff interested in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). The Writing Center supports any student in any class that has a writing, reading, or critical thinking component and provides in-site training for T. A. interns and for tutors interested in WAC. Despite ongoing budget challenges, The Writing Center has continued to expand its services. As the needs of the community and the student body has shifted, so has focus of The Writing Center not only in terms of the types of services provided but especially in terms of the sheer number of students served. As reported in the 1994-195 Writing Center Annual Report, the number of hours recorded for tutoring and the computer lab totaled approximately three thousand, whereas in 2007/2008 the number of hours recorded totaled approximately fourteen thousand. The yearly growth of Writing Center has in turn impacted the success of the students at Valley College. According to the office of Research and Planning, students who use the services of The Writing Center succeed at a rate between 11%-18% higher than those who do not and they are retained at a rate of 10%-20% higher. The Writing Center has expanded its services in all areas including one-to-one tutoring, roundtable workshops, online tutoring and self-guided tutorials. By collaborating with other disciplines and departments, The Writing Center has boosted enrollment in English 67, 68, and 69 through developing tailored sections to the meet the needs of students and faculty.

In the short term, The Writing Center looks forward to obtaining CRLA accreditation for tutor training, piloting electronic portfolios, and expanding and

formalizing relationships with content subjects to enhance Writing Across the Curriculum by developing a comprehensive website that details discipline specific guidelines for WAC. Medium and long-term goals (3-5 years) include developing additional half unit courses and 4-6 week modularized courses to provide students with extra assistance in content level classes. Additionally, instituting synchronous (real time) online tutoring and putting through curriculum to bring English 67, 68, and 69 online will provide greater access to students. Having a greater presence in the community continues to be a goal of The Writing Center and implementing Service Learning opportunities for students enrolled in Writing Center courses will provide a bridge between the Center and the community at large.

Despite the documented growth and success of the department, The Writing Center has continued to face ongoing budget cuts. During the last five years, district wide hourly rates for student workers increased by 63%, whereas the budget allocation for The Writing Center—instead of remaining proportionally intact with the hourly rate—actually decreased by 6.25%. The disparity in funding has led to reduced hours of operation, severe understaffing, and drastically reduced access to students. In order to meet the growing demand for the service, The Writing Center will be working towards hiring an assistant director and increasing the yearly budget for tutoring to meet the requests identified in the student needs assessment survey: longer hours of operation including evening and weekend hours and more tutors on the staff to see more students.

The Writing Center believes that literacy and the ability to clearly communicate are the cornerstones of education. With more than one in three students in California Community Colleges enrolling in basic skills courses, the demand and need for ancillary academic support services to assist students with writing will only continue to grow. Student success is the foremost goal of The Writing Center, and through sustained

support from the Los Angeles Valley College community, The Writing Center will continue its commitment to providing the highest quality of service to meet the needs of Valley college students.

### C. Program Review

#### **1. Introduction and Purpose for the Program Review**

Since The Writing Center's establishment as a department in 2002, The Writing Center has evolved and has continued to grow each year by serving more students and by expanding its services. The purpose of the program review will be to document and analyze the effectiveness of program, to gain a better understanding—informed by research and data—of student and faculty needs, and through strategic planning, identify and implement the best practices that will continue to increase student success and retention. The review includes assessment and evaluation of curriculum, student and faculty needs, facilities, equipment and technology, staffing, and department goals and objectives.

#### **2. History, Mission, and Philosophy of the Department and Programs**

The earliest incarnation of a tutoring lab for writing began as a shared space with the Math and English department in the Math building, where the first computer assisted English course was offered at Valley. During this time, the co-chair of the English-Math Committee, recruited computer lab monitors from English classes and provided some tutor training. When classes were not being held in the space, the lab monitors provided tutoring for English students. At this point, there was no director and the lab operated on an informal basis.

This informal lab changed in 1992 and was organized into The Writing Center by the English department with a grant from The Alliance for the Advancement of Education (which provided financial support during the center's formation and first five years of operation). The English department's Writing Center Task Force during its formative years consisted of nine faculty members from the English department and the president of the Alliance. In 1993 and 1994, the first manager and the first operational assistant were hired respectively. On April 28, 1994, The Writing Center opened its facilities in the Humanities Building.

Once the Alliance for the Advancement of Education grant ended in 1996-1997, The Writing Center continued its operation funded through outside sources such as the Partnership for Education grant. However, because of the uncertainty of grant funding and complications with staffing, The Writing Center was faced with having to possibly close. In the summer of 2001, English faculty held a planning retreat to strategize on institutionalizing the program and redeveloping it with a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) focus. An official job description for a fulltime director was created and brought forward to IPC, and Deborah Harrington was hired as the Director, and begun in January of 2002. To further establish The Writing Center as a tutoring lab designated for writing across the curriculum, the director began reporting to the Dean of Academic Affairs—Marvin Zuckerman, and the program was recognized as an independent department and part of program one hundred general funds. Subsequently, through general tutoring, group writing workshops, and courses English 67, 68, and 69, The Writing Center formalized procedures for recording visits and collecting positive attendance hours to generate revenue for the college.

### **Mission Statement and Philosophy**

The Writing Center provides individualized, collaborative, and self-paced learning opportunities for students in a comfortable, peer friendly and stimulating learning environment and functions as a resource for faculty and staff interested in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). The Writing Center provides in-site training for T. A. interns and for tutors interested in WAC. The Writing Center and Writing Center Computer lab support any student in any class that has a writing, reading, or critical thinking component. The Writing Center believes that writing is a process with definite stages including prewriting, evidence gathering, outlining, developing thesis statements, draft writing, revising, and polishing of final copies. Students are encouraged to seek help from peer tutors from the beginning to the end of their writing process.

The four overarching goals of The Writing Center are driven by the Education Master Plan: Increase retention, persistence, and success; increase student access; enhance academic offerings to meet student and regional needs; enhance institutional effectiveness

Goal 1: Increase student retention, persistence and success by providing ancillary academic support for writing across the curriculum.

*(EMP Strategies 19-21)*

- A. Continue providing one-to-one and group tutoring sessions for any class that has a writing component.
  1. Continue ongoing collaboration with departments and subjects, which have a high demand for tutoring: English, Sociology, Speech, Personal Development, Child Development, Psychology, Nursing and History.
  2. Expand and formalize relationships with other content subjects to enhance Writing Across the Curriculum for Valley College.

- a. Continue working with faculty to develop writing assignments for “content” classes.
  - b. Establish an online hub for instructors to contribute discipline specific guidelines for writing, and make this accessible to students.
- B. Continue conducting roundtable workshops for writing related topics requested by students and faculty through needs assessment surveys. Utilize the referral forms to target instructors for specific workshops designed to complement class assignments.
- C. Continue in-site training for Teaching Associate interns and tutors across the curriculum and formalize tutor training through the College Reading and Learning Association Accreditation.
1. Submit self-study and proposal to obtain CRLA accreditation.
  2. Add additional (optional) sections of English 75 to align with advanced levels of CRLA tutor training.
- D. To continue coordinating Writing Center services with other Academic Support and Student Services through referral systems.

## Goal 2: Increase Student Access

*(EMP Strategy 17-18)*

- A. Hire an assistant director with minimum qualifications to increase hours of operation to support students during evenings and weekends.
- B. Continue providing asynchronous online tutoring through the ETUDES delivery system.
- C. Develop and implement synchronous (real time) tutoring for high demand subjects.

- D. Continue developing self-guided tutorials that are accessible through The Writing Center website.

Goal 3: Enhance academic offerings to meet student and regional needs

*(EMP Objectives 1-4)*

- A. Continue offering laboratory courses English 67, 68, and 69.
- B. Continue to refine tailored sections of English 67 to complement content course work for Sociology and the Nursing TEAS exam.
- C. Develop additional half unit courses and 4-6 week modularized courses to provide students with extra assistance in content classes.
- D. Develop online sections of English 67, 68, and 69.
- E. Implement eFolio modules for both online and in-person sections of English 67, 68, and 69.
- F. Increase outreach to community by developing Service Learning Components for students enrolled in English 67, 68, and 69.

Goal 4: Enhance Institutional Effectiveness

*(EMP Objective # 1,5, and 7)*

- A. To continue maintenance and upgrades of The Writing Center's technological infrastructure.
- B. Hire part time Instructional Assistant, Info Tech to support computer lab.
- C. Improve electronic student tracking and recordkeeping by replacing RedCanyon software.
- D. Evaluate the currency of the existing software in The Writing Center computer lab and upgrade where necessary.
1. Train staff on using PLATO software.
  2. Add additional licenses for Inspiration software for DPSP students.

E. Align The Writing Center Budget allocation to reflect the mandatory raises for student workers.

**Philosophy of the Program:**

Literacy and the ability to effectively communicate are the cornerstones of education. With more than one in three students in California Community Colleges enrolling in basic skills courses (The RP Group), the demand and need for ancillary academic support services to assist students with writing will only continue to grow. To address the influx of underprepared students, to enhance student success and retention and to establish a commitment to lifelong learning, The Writing Center's practice is based on the following philosophies: composition theory/process based pedagogy, elements of social constructionist theory, critical pedagogy, and cognitive psychology.

Regarding composition theory, The Writing Center believes that process must be emphasized over product. If students can develop and refine their own writing process, while understanding the various nuances of academic discourses communities and genre specific writing, they will be capable of effectively writing to a given audience with a specific purpose. In the words of Peter Elbow, the focus should be on helping to develop better writers, not better papers. To achieve this end, the concept of writing process is interwoven into general tutoring sessions, workshops, and laboratory classes.

Furthermore, tutors are trained to first address the "global" areas of a paper in terms of organization and content and then move on to error analysis to address the "local" sentence level areas in terms of grammar and mechanics. By addressing correctness and propriety last, students begin to understand that developing a strong writing process will eventually lead to a strong product.

Social constructionist theory in composition primarily focuses on the way in which audience (community) shapes the discourse of community. The concept of

collaboration is also privileged in believing that knowledge and reality are mediated by or constructed through language in social use. These concepts provide the foundation for peer tutoring where students are working with other students. Although Writing Center tutors go through extensive training and often times have advanced degrees, they are also currently students and can effectively play the role of an audience in helping students to understand which areas of their writing may need more clarification or development. The peer tutor can help the student to understand the often times “hidden” or privileged rules of a community, and thereby help the student to become a member of that community.

Critical Pedagogy plays a role in The Writing Center through the equalizing relationship between the tutors and students as well as through the director. That is, although tutors and the director have different levels of expertise apart from the student, learning is explicitly seen as a two way street where all participants learn from one another. Moreover, the tutors and the students are given opportunities to actively create knowledge whether it is through the verbal interaction in a tutoring session or through designing workshops, handouts, and self-guided tutorials. These are all exercises in critical consciousness, which enables the participants to see themselves as active agents rather than passive, static consumers of information.

Cognitive Psychology factors into The Writing Center philosophy primarily through the concept of self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning encompasses metacognition, planning, monitoring and evaluating one’s progress (Zimmerman). These concepts have been embedded into the day-to-day operations of The Writing Center. For example, at the beginning of every tutoring session, students are required to begin with an exercise in metacognition by filling out a form that asks them to reflect on what they need help with for a particular assignment. In turn, this allows them to think about their strengths as well as their goals. This concept is further reinforced on the tutoring

conference form, which is filled out by the tutor and again highlights the student's strengths and goals for the next tutoring session. For the laboratory classes English 67, 68, and 69, these concepts are embedded into the writing prompts that take place at the beginning, middle, and at the end of the course. Ultimately, it is through self-regulated learning that students not only become independent learners as they begin to understand the process of learning itself but life long learners as well.

### **Program Description:**

The Writing Center's central focus is to provide ancillary support for Writing Across the Curriculum at Valley College through one-to-one and group tutoring sessions, roundtable workshops, self-instructional resources, and laboratory classes English 67, 68, and 69. The service is dedicated to increasing student success, retention, and persistence and providing resources and support for faculty interested in Writing Across the Curriculum. Evolving from an informal tutoring service that shared space with a math computer lab to a comprehensive Writing Center dedicated towards supporting Writing Across the Curriculum, The Writing Center's evolution has paralleled the changes in the demographics of the students at Valley College. That is, when Valley College first opened its doors in 1949, the student body was primarily white and middle class with English as the primary language. As Valley comes to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary, the college is now primarily a Hispanic serving institution with nearly 40% of the student body speaking English as a second language. As the needs of the community and the student body began to shift so did the focus of The Writing Center not only in terms of the types of services provided but especially in terms of the sheer number of students served. As reported in the 1994-1995 Writing Center Annual Report, the number of hours recorded for tutoring (and the computer lab) totaled approximately 3,000 whereas in 2007/2008 the number of hours recorded totaled approximately 14,000, with over 3,500

individual student visits. Accordingly, as the number of hours recorded has more than quadrupled in the last fourteen years, the overwhelming response from students in the needs assessment survey was to increase the number of tutors on the staff and expand the hours of operation.

The increase in demand for the service is not only related to a shift in student demographics and student preparedness but also a result of increased collaboration with other departments on campus; in turn, this has created greater awareness of the Center's existing services as well as led to the development of new services. For example, The Writing Center has formalized a relationship with The Career/Transfer Center, where both departments work together every fall semester to host a series of workshops dedicated to assisting students with writing the Personal Statement essay. Since beginning the collaboration in the fall of 2003, student acceptance rates at UC's has increased by 10% for an overall acceptance rate of 55%, whereas other schools are only averaging only 20-30% (Saltoun, Career/Transfer Center). Collaboration with other academic and student support services has happened by sharing tutoring training materials and Writing Center resources with the Trio and EOPS programs. The DSPS office has attended Writing Center staff meetings for training purposes and their specialized software has been placed on Writing Center computers. In terms of collaborating with other departments, The Writing Center has developed tailored sections of English 67 and workshops for Sociology, Statistics, Psychology, Nursing, Child Development, and History.

### **3a. Curriculum:**

The curriculum for The Writing Center includes course outlines for English 67, 68, 69, and the tutor-training course English 75. During the last five years, the curriculum for English 67 has evolved to include "tracks" of the course specifically designed to

support students in Sociology 1 and students in need of remediation to pass the TEAS exam for the Nursing Department. The primary track of English 67 has been revised to reflect a more process based approach to writing academic essays, where each step of the processes is scaffolded, and reflective meta-cognitive writing exercises are interspersed throughout the course. English 68 has been changed to provide a more systematic approach to critical reading. A preview worksheet is now used at the beginning of each reading assignment and more emphasis has been placed on active reading through practice with annotating texts and keeping a dialectic journal entry. English 69 has changed to include additional assignments that bring more focus to critical thinking and information competency through evaluating websites and researching colleges and careers using databases. English75, the tutoring training course for tutors working in The Writing Center, is currently being revised to more accurately align with the four levels of tutor training set forth by the College Reading and Learning Association—the National Accrediting body—for tutoring centers.

According to the Student Survey data results, 79% of the students indicated that they would like The Writing Center to developing specialized ½ unit courses to complement existing content courses, and 81% indicated that they want short-term (4-6) modularized courses to help with improving writing. This data will drive planning as The Writing Center begins to develop courses to meet these needs.

Over the course of the program review process, The Writing Center Director has conferred with the Success Center director from Chaffey College, The Writing Center Director from Santa Barbara City College, and the Chair of the Composition department at California State University. Each of these institutions recommended that when modifying a program each college and campus has a unique culture, and merely adopting the successful principles from another institution will not work. Instead, it is best to

judiciously choose which components of a successful program would work best with the particular culture of an existing campus. For example, Chaffey college has embedded tutoring for writing in the course outline of record, and instead of collecting positive attendance through a zero unit Supervised Learning Assistance Section, they are collect WHSCH by being part of an existing course. While this is a successful model, there are implications in terms of budget and space. To support a program modeled in this manner, the annual budget for The Writing Center would need to be practically doubled and the size of the space tripled as Chaffey is seeing over 10,000 students a semester with over 30,000 contact hours. Across the board, all of the consulting institutions emphasized formalized tutoring training and creating a culture of evidence. Although The Writing Center has been at the forefront of both these practices at Valley College, as it moves ahead, the Center will complete the CRLA tutor training accreditation process, and continue working with the IT department and tutor program committee to implement an updated tutor tracking system that will replace the outdated RedCanyon software currently being used in some of the labs.

#### **b. SLOS: Course and Program and piloting assessment**

The Writing Center's program and course level SLOs were submitted and accepted by the SLO committee. During the summer session 2008, The Writing Center participated in a pilot project to assess course level SLOs for English 67. The pilot project proved to be a meaningful experience that provided real insight into ways to improve the course. Because of the assessment, the syllabus and some of the assignments for English 67 were modified to help students more clearly sequence from one stage of the writing process to the next. The Writing Center's experience with this pilot project as well as incorporating the SLOs into tutor training has been discussed at length through contributions to the SLO newsletter, which are included in the appendix. In addition to

serving on the SLO committee, The Writing Center director has also participated in training sessions helping other departments draft their SLOs.

Because The Writing Center is a non-degree applicable service, the program SLOs are framed in terms of service outcomes, which focus on increasing student success and retention. However, because of the nature of its service—providing support for Writing Across the Curriculum—increasing student success and retention explicitly connect to the College Wide SLO of Communication, which states that, “students will be able to clearly express, transmit, and interpret knowledge and ideas through writing, speaking, listening and reading.” Reasoning Skills and Social Responsibility/Personal Development are also implicitly tied to the Writing Center’s program level SLOs in that being more successful in a course necessarily encompasses reasoning skills, and by using available academic resources such as The Writing Center, students are developing help seeking skills, which again are tied to Reasoning Skills, Communication Skills and Personal Development.

### **Student Data Profile**

The demographics of The Writing Center Program Review Data (2003-2007) represent a diverse student population with a variety of goals. The data profile was inclusive of Writing Center tutoring, which includes one-to-one tutoring, group tutoring, and roundtable workshops as well as the Writing Center computer lab and English 67, 68, and 69. The students who use The Writing Center were 59% female and 41% male. The majority of The Writing Center students are (79%) are under the age of 35. Additionally, 41% are Hispanic, 34% are White, 7% are African American, 12% are Asian, and 6% are other Non White. According to the research and planning data, these statics have not altered much between 2003 and 2007 (less than 5% standard deviation). Based on the review data, 64% of the students identified English as their primary language, 15%

identified Spanish, 11% identified Armenian, 3% identified Russian, 1% identified Farsi, 1% identified Filipino, 1% Korean, and 4% identified other languages. In terms of Citizenship, 76% of the students were identified as US citizens, 16% as permanent residents, 1% as Temporary Resident, 2% as Refugee, 1% as Student Visa and 4% as other. Regarding Prior Education, 9% of the students had a Bachelor's degree or higher, 5% an associates degree, 62% a high school diploma, 11% were foreign secondary high school graduates, 6% were high school equivalency proficiency, 4% were high school concurrent, and 4% were non-high school graduates. The last component of the data profile looked at Educational Goals and showed the following results: 38% of the students indicated transfer, 28% indicated Vocational/Job related, 16% were undecided, 11% indicated personal development, and 7% indicated an Associate's degree.

Aside from the data gathered through the student profile report, the student needs assessment survey provided very informative and relevant information. In terms of access to The Writing Center, 29% indicated that would like early morning hours between 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., 23% liked the current hours, which were 10:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., 23% wanted later evening hours, 15% wanted tutoring on Saturday, 2% on Sunday, and 8% during other hours. Also related to access, 80% of the students surveyed said that they wanted more walk-in times whereas 20% indicated that they wanted more appointment times. Students also indicated a desire to use online tutoring with 59% stating that they would take advantage of this service if they were unable to make it into the Center for a face-to-face session. In terms of satisfaction with the service as a whole, 76% rated the service of excellent, 21% as good, and 3% as fair. Additionally, 62% of the students strongly agreed that tutors were knowledgeable and well trained, 33% agreed, 1% disagreed, and 4% didn't know.

## Student feedback on the services of The Writing Center including roundtable

workshops, the computer lab, and the laboratory courses English 67, 68, and 69 was noteworthy. 33% of the students surveyed had attended a roundtable workshop, with the majority of the students hearing about the workshops from their instructors. In terms of scheduling, 38% of the students indicated that they would be able to attend workshops in the morning, 13% at lunch, 14% in the early afternoon, 9 % in the late afternoon, 10% in the early evening, and 16% in the late evening. Regarding The Writing Center computer lab, 53% of the students strongly agreed that the materials and computer stations were up to date, 29% agreed, 3% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed, and 12% didn't know.

Overall, students had an overwhelmingly positive experience with the laboratory classes: 92% indicated that English 67 was excellent or good, 94% indicated that English 68 was excellent or good, and 95% indicated that English 69 was excellent or good. Surprisingly, only 35% of the student indicated that would like to take one of the laboratory classes online. As mentioned earlier in this report, 79% indicated that would be interested in a ½-unit course that provided extra assistance for content level courses such as Psychology or History. Similarly, 81% indicated that they would like The Writing Center to offer short-term 4-6 week courses to help improve with writing.

As part of the needs assessment survey, a few open-ended questions were included with the most informative being “Please share your comments or suggestions about how we can improve our services for you.” This section of the survey substantiated two ideas that were existing areas of concern. 20% of the responses for this section indicated that students wanted The Writing Center to open for longer hours and to have more tutors staffed during any given hour. The challenge behind this request is directly related to budgeting, which will be addressed in the forthcoming sections. 12% of the responses indicated that students wanted a longer period of time during their tutoring

sessions. Currently, tutoring sessions are limited to thirty minutes of one-to-one time with a tutor, and then students can stay afterwards as long they would like and continue working. The thirty-minute rule exists for two reasons: pedagogically, The Writing Center believes in only covering one or two concepts during a tutoring session, having the students practice those concepts for mastery, and then returning on a subsequent session for new concepts. Research shows that the average attention span of an individual is in the realm of 10-20 minutes depending on which studied has been referenced. Therefore, it would be counter productive to spend an hour covering every rule for the comma, semicolon, and apostrophe because there is little chance that the student would retain the information. Logistically, the thirty-minute time period allows for seeing more students on a given day, which ultimately helps to provide a greater level of access. One compromise for the situation may be to schedule workshops that are an hour and a half long rather than just an hour; this would provide students with an opportunity for longer periods of dedicated attention within a small group setting.

According to the office of Research and Planning, over the course of a five-year period, students who use the services of The Writing Center succeed at a rate between 11%-18% higher than those who do not use the service, and the students are retained at a rate of 10%-20% higher. These statistics are indicative of the strong impact that The Writing Center's tutoring service has on student success and retention of the students at Valley College.

#### **d. Faculty who work in the Writing Center**

Scott Weigand

Scott Weigand was hired as the fulltime director of The Writing (Instructor Special Assignment) in July 2007. He holds an M.A. in English with a concentration in Composition and Rhetoric, and his graduate work focused on Writing Center Studies. He

also has a B.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. He is a member of the Academic Senate, Education Master Plan committee, Student Learning Outcomes committee, Tutor Program committee, Co-Chairs of the STARS committee, and Chair of the Foundational Skills committee. He was co-director of the STARS/FIPSE grant during its final year, contributed to the earmark grant for Solving the Achievement Gap in Math, and is currently serving as the coordinator for the Basic Skills Initiative. At the district level, he represents Valley College on the Student Success Initiative committee and was co-instructor for the district's first Faculty Teaching Learning Academy (FTLA). At other campuses and at Valley he has taught English 101, English 102, English 67, 68, 69, and 75.

### **Staffing Patterns**

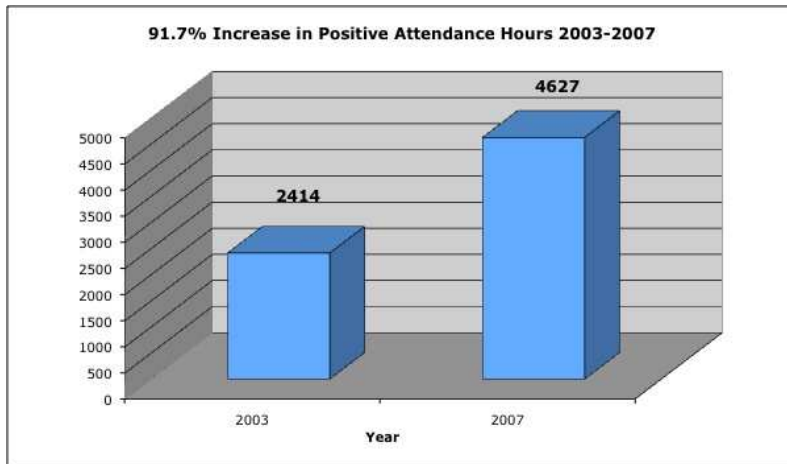
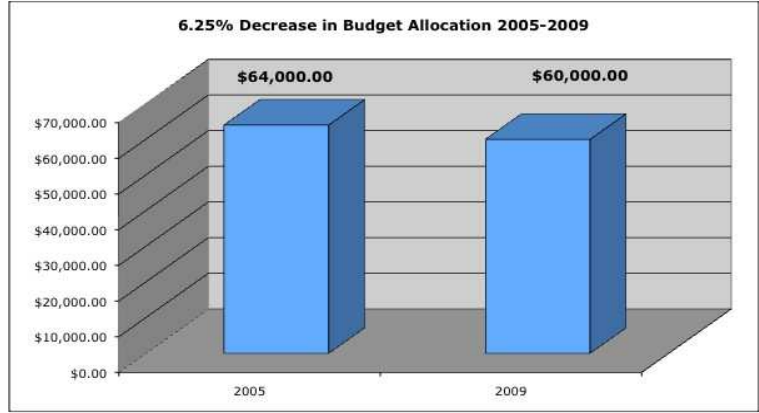
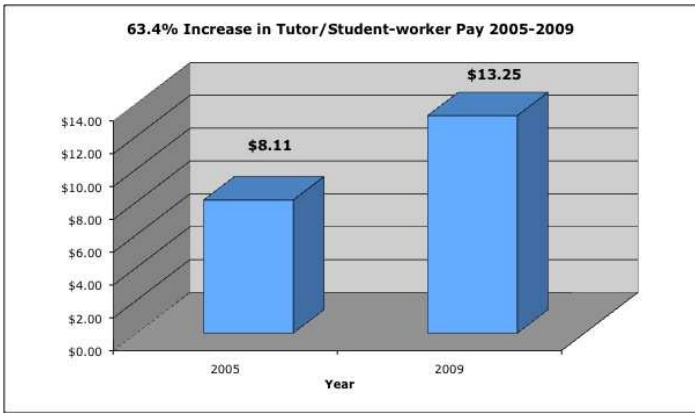
In 2002, The Writing Center was staffed with a fulltime director, one classified employee and fifteen tutors classified as student workers. In 2003, the classified employee position was frozen, and The Writing Center continued to rely on tutors (student workers) whose numbers have ranged from 12-20 depending on scheduling and hours available. In 2003-2004, through the STARS/FIPSE grant funding, The Writing Center was able to hire a tutor coordinator to help oversee the day-to-day operations of the service. However, the coordinator position has been in flux depending on the status of outside funding.

Although The Writing Center has been able to increase student success through its services as demonstrated by the high success and retention numbers, the Center's biggest challenge is the budget allocation for tutoring.

From 2005-2008, tutors received a 63% increase in their pay rate. For example, in 2005, a student classified as a tutor III, earned \$8.11 per hour whereas in 2009, a student classified as tutor III, earns \$ 13.25 per hour. Meanwhile, fall/spring budget allocation for The Writing Centers Tutors has decreased from 2005-2008 by 6.25%

(\$64,000 to \$60,000). Nevertheless, the number of positive attendance hours, based on students visits and hours, increased 91% from Fall 2003 to Fall 2007 (2,414 vs. 4,626).

These numbers are significant As previously mentioned, 1 in 3 students in California Community Colleges test into basic skills courses; therefore, it is no surprise that over the course of five years, the number of student hours in The Writing Center has practically doubled. Please see the graphs below. The students and faculty of Valley College not only need the existing services of The Writing Center, but as all the data shows, the services need to be expanded to accommodate the increase in demand. To meet the existing growth and anticipated future growth, The Writing Center needs for the student worker/tutoring budget allocation to at least match the increase in pay for the student workers and to hire another fulltime faculty member to serve as an assistant director. This would allow the service to provide evening and weekend hours, and increase the students' access to the Center.



To summarize, the mandatory hourly rate for student workers increased by 63%, whereas the budget allocation, instead of remaining proportionally intact with the hourly rate, actually decreased 6.25%. Meanwhile, The Writing Center has been able to increase the number of positive attendance hours by 91% while the success and retention rates for students have consistently shown at least a 10% increase compared to students who do not use the service. The Writing Center has been able to accomplish this through constantly refining procedures and running the service more efficiently with a smaller staff. However, it has reached the limit. The disparity in funding has ultimately lead to a reduction in hours that the service is open, tutor burn-out, and as indicated in the student needs assessment survey, a lack of access for the students.

### **Five-Year Staffing Plan**

In light of the ongoing budget shortfalls, the hiring of faculty and staff will be difficult. However, The Writing Center has identified the need for hiring one new faculty member to serve as the assistant director, and for increasing the student worker budget to allow for hiring more tutors. This will provide The Writing Center with the ability to meet the increasing demand for the service and to increase student access. Additionally, in order to ensure proper maintenance and functionality of The Writing Center computer lab, one part time-classified Instructional Assistant/Info Tech should be hired to troubleshoot hardware and software problems. These needs have been identified in The Writing Center's yearly budget requests; however, in moving ahead, the faculty position will be requested through IPC.

### **Full-Time/Part-Time Faculty Ratios**

1. Your department's typical FTE Fall semester allocation:	1.33
2. The number of full time faculty members in your department:	1
3. The FTE for reassigned time for your Chair assignment	1.33

4. The FTE for any other faculty reassignments in your department	0
5. Add together #3 & #4	1.33
6. Subtract #5 from #2 (this is the amount of FTE taught by full time faculty)	N/A
7. Divide #6 by #1 and then multiply by 100 (this is the percent of FTE taught by full time faculty)	100%
8. Subtract #7 from 100 (this is the percent of FTE taught by hourly rate faculty)	0

#### **F. Facilities, Equipment, and Technology:**

The Writing Center currently occupies Humanities 100 and 102. H100 is dedicated space for tutoring, and the director's office is located within a cubicle in this room. H102 is a space used for a dedicated computer lab. Currently, there is a wall that divides the tutoring side from the computer side. With the increase in students using the Center, the space has become too small, especially when holding roundtable workshops; however, this is a temporary space as The Writing Center is scheduled to move into the second floor of the new library building in 2011.

The Writing Center relies heavily on the use of computers for generating reports, record keeping, positive attendance, scheduling, payroll, online tutoring, and email correspondence. Through the Basic Skills Initiative, The Writing Center was able to purchase additional computers, which will be utilized by English 67, 68, and 69 students. Currently, The Writing Center tutoring space has two staff computers and three computers for students. The Writing Center computer lab has two staff computers and thirty-five student computers. There are two printers in H100 and two printers in H102. At this time, The Writing Center computer lab does not have pay-for-printing setup; however, this is expected to be installed during summer 2009.

All of the computers in The Writing Center have MS Office 2003, which recently has become a problem since many of the students are now using MS Office 2007. IT has been informed of this and will be updating the software. The Writing Center computer lab also has the screenwriting software Final Draft installed on two of the computers and the demo version installed on the rest. One of the computers has a software program called *Inspiration* from DSPS, which helps visual learners with the invention strategies for writing. According to the student surveys, 85% felt that the materials and the computer stations were up to date, 6% felt they were not, and 12% were undecided. The Writing Center has one laptop and one projector which was purchased through the STARS/FIPSE grant and is used for workshops and conferences. With the renovation of the Humanities Building, which took place in the summer of 2008, both H100 and H102 received VCR and DVD players, as well as in-ceiling projectors. Although this equipment has been useful in bringing the building's classrooms into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unfortunately, there have been problems getting the equipment to work on a consistent basis.

One area of concern in terms of space and technology is The Writing Center computer lab. Whereas this lab was previously used primarily by Writing Center students and especially students enrolled in English 69 (which allowed for collecting positive attendance), beginning in spring 2009, the lab became a general, open computer lab. This decision was made because of the influx of students using the lab in the last few semesters, which has been complicated by the reduction in the tutoring budget and the inability to hire program assistants to staff the lab. Currently on campus, students have access to the following open computer labs: The LAIR, the CCATT, the Lion's Den, and The Writing Center. The library also houses some computers. However, the LAIR will be closing due to construction and the Lion's Den is also scheduled to close. This leaves the

entire student body of LAVC with access to two labs and the library, totaling approximately ninety computers. These are not adequate resources for students when so much of the work required in today's classes requires the use of a computer.

Another problem related to technology is the existing student tracking system RedCanyon. The Writing Center was the first lab to use the software when it was purchased over five years ago; it was The Writing Center who helped to train other labs on how to use it. However, because of the difficulty to adjust reports within the software, the tutor program committee has collectively agreed that it is time replace the software with a program that is specifically designed to support academic resource centers. Accurate recording of student hours and visits to the tutoring labs is instrumental in being able to record positive attendance hours, so the tutor program committee is currently working with the IT department to preview new and improved software programs.

Over the course of the next five years, The Writing Center will be moving into the new library space, and at that time, will have the opportunity to purchase new equipment through the bond measures. In the next year, The Writing Center is looking to pilot the use of electronic portfolios through the eFolio software and integrate this into English 67, 68, and 69. As previously noted, The Writing Center would benefit from the assistance of part time-classified Instructional Assistant/Info Tech to maintain and troubleshoot hardware and software problems within the lab.

#### **f.) Campus Partners and Resource Utilization**

The Writing Center has numerous partnerships with both on and off campus resources including the following: the library, the Career/Transfer Center, DSPS, Trio, EOPS, Counseling, the Learning Center, the Math lab, the Earth Science/Anthropology tutoring lab, the Biology Tutoring Lab, STARS, the CSUN composition program, and the Southern California Writing Center's Association.

The library and DSPS office have attended biweekly tutor training/staff meetings and provided overviews of their services as well as some specific training to help the staff work more effectively with students. The Writing Center has also worked with Trio and EOPS to provide workshops for welcoming day as well as to share resources related to tutoring and tutor training. Because both the Counseling Office and the Calworks/Gain program direct students to enroll in English 67, 68, and 69, The Writing Center has attended department meetings and worked with the counselors to provide information on the classes and how they can best serve the students. On a yearly basis, The Writing Center works with the Career/Transfer Center to host a series of workshops designed to help students writing their Personal Statement Transfer Essays.

The Tutor Program Committee, which includes the Learning Center, the Math lab, the Earth Science/Anthropology tutoring lab, and the Biology Tutoring Lab, meets throughout the semester to ensure that all labs are aware of compliance issues related to Title 5 and to share best practices for protocol and procedures. During 2008, through the Basic Skills Initiative, the tutor program committee designed and published a comprehensive brochure that lists all of the academic student support services on campus to raise awareness of the multitude of services for students, faculty, and staff.

The Writing Center and the STARS program have a rich history together as STARS was run through The Writing Center throughout the duration of the STARS/FIPSE grant. As a result, The Writing Center's staff was instrumental in the development and evolution of the STARS program through assisting with workshops and promotion and by conducting tutor facilitated workshops. Currently, The Writing Center director is co-Director of the STARS program.

The Writing Center has created an informal pipeline with the Composition department and the Teaching Associate program at CSUN. Students who start out as

tutors in The Writing Center—who gain experience with designing lesson plans for workshops, who begin to develop an understanding of composition pedagogy, and who put theory into practice through conducting workshops and one-to-one/group tutoring sessions—have a one hundred percent acceptance rate into the competitive Teaching Associate Program. Students can then continue their work tutoring in The Writing Center while finishing their graduate schoolwork and student teaching at CSUN. Upon finishing their degree at CSUN, some graduates have come back to Valley and began teaching adjunct in the English department. In turn, this has enhanced the collaboration between The Writing Center, CSUN, and Valley’s English department and helped to establish a sense of community.

The Writing Center has also joined the list serve for the Southern California Writing Center’s Association and is a member of the International Writing Centers Association. Although the LACCD district does not currently have a dedicated Writing Center Committee, contact has been made with other Writing Center directors in the district, and establishing a district wide committee will be the next step in bringing together resources and best practices.

### 3. Needs Analysis and Action Time Line

Goal/Needs/Objectives	Tasks/Actions	Time Frame	Participants
Adjust tutoring budget allocation to match the 63% increase in district wide raises for students	Request additional funding for student workers/tutors	Begin in Fall 2009	Writing Center Director
Hire a full time ISA assistant director	Submit request to IPC	Begin in Fall 2009	Writing Center Director
Obtain College Reading Learning Association Accreditation (CRLA)	Submit self study and proposal to obtain CRLA accreditation	Begin in Summer 2009	Writing Center Director and staff

Develop and implement synchronous (real time) online tutoring for high demand subjects	Collaborate with Distance Education Coordinators	Begin in Fall 2010	Writing Center Director and staff
Expand and formalize relationships with content subjects to enhance Writing Across the Curriculum. Develop a comprehensive website that details discipline specific guidelines for WAC.	Meet with department chairs and faculty and develop an online space to solicit feedback and create samples of writing	Ongoing	Writing Center Director and staff
Develop additional half unit courses and 4-6 week modularized courses to provide students with extra assistance in content level classes	Develop new curriculum for Writing Center specific courses	Begin in Fall 2010	Writing Center Director and staff
Develop online sections of English 67, 68, and 69	Develop online content and complete Distance Education forms and Curriculum approval process	Begin in Fall 2010	Writing Center Director and staff
Implement eFolio modules for both online and in-person sections of English 67, 68, and 69.	Collaborate with Title 5 grant coordinators for training and pilot	Begin in Fall 2009	Writing Center Director and staff and Title 5 grant coordinators
Improve electronic student tracking and recordkeeping	Replace RedCanyon software	Begin in Spring 2009	Tutor Program Committee
Hire part time Instructional Assistant, Info Tech	Submit request to classified Administration/Hiring Committee	Begin in Spring 2009`	Writing Center Director
Increase student success and retention	Increase workshop attendance and target specific student needs	Ongoing	Writing Center Director and staff
Increase outreach to community	Develop Service Learning Components for students enrolled in English 67, 68, and 69	Begin in Fall 2010	Writing Center Director and staff

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