

Writing, Learning, and EAL Services
ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013

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Starting 2012-13 **Writing, Learning, and EAL Services** were delivered through both the Student Learning Commons, and the Research Commons, with the SLC serving primarily undergraduate students, and RC services tailored mainly toward graduate students. In previous years, both undergraduate and graduate services were delivered through the SLC.

Overall, **Writing, Learning, and EAL Services** delivered

- **3006 consultations** (2800 through the SLC; 206 through the RC)
- **107 open workshops attended by 729 students** (92 through the SLC with 593 attendees, and 15 through the RC workshops with 136 attendees)
- **118 course-integrated workshops attended by 3279 students** (112 through the SLC with 3177 attendees; 6 through the RC with 102 attendees)

Further details about the focus and campus location of these services are provided in the next two sections.

Student Learning Commons (undergraduate-focused services)

The SLC delivered 2800 one-on-one **consultations** in **2012/2013**. Table 1 shows the distribution by consultation focus and campus. Consistent with previous years, the most highly sought area of focus by far was for help in Writing (91%).

Table 1. SLC consultations by focus and campus. April 2012 - March 2013. N = 2800

	Writing	Learning	EAL
Burnaby	2213	82	157
Surrey	223	12	2
Vancouver	105	6	0
	2541	100	159
%	91%	4%	6%

The SLC offered 92 open **workshops, attended by 729** on such topics as Creating an Effective Study Schedule and Top 10 Things to Know about University Writing. EAL Coordinator, Tim Mossman, developed two new workshops that he piloted in Spring 2013: "*Strategies for Writing Effective Essay Introductions*," and "*Grammar Brush Up: Sentence Structure*." The SLC also answered 118 requests to deliver **course-integrated workshops** tailored to specific courses, disciplines, or programs within class time, reaching 3279 students.

Back on Track Program The Student Learning Commons continued to be one of the major partners in the SFU Back on Track program. The three-semester program offers student who have been required to withdraw from the University a second chance to achieve academic success in an environment offering a high level of support and accountability. The SLC BOT team delivered 709 **Learning Plan** consultations in 2012-13. Learning Plans are one-hour long, one-on-one meetings with students entering the Back on Track program that identify the particular challenges and relevant strategies and resources for the individual student. Five **Graduate Peer Learning Facilitators** delivered the majority of these consultations across the three campuses with Learning Services Coordinators at Surrey and Burnaby also participating as needed. Graduate Peer Learning Facilitators (and occasionally Coordinators) also delivered 32 **Getting Started** sessions, which include discussions about academic difficulty and two self-assessments given in a computer lab. Coordinators were responsible for recruiting, selecting and training new Graduate Facilitators coming joining the team this year. SLC Learning Coordinators at Burnaby and Surrey also co-instructed, with colleagues from Health and Counselling Services, a total of 26 **BOT 120** courses, and 10 **BOT 140** courses, with an average of 25 students per section. These 12-week courses guide students through a series of topics and self-management strategies associated with student success.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services: The **English Conversation Partner** program enjoyed a third highly successful year, offering students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) one to-one conversation partner meetings with a trained volunteer EAL Peer every week for one semester to improve oral fluency, build confidence, and make connections to the SFU community. Over the year 50 EAL Peer Educators were paired with 1 or 2 students each, serving approximately 100 students. At the end of the year, there were 50 students waiting on a list to be matched with a Partner in upcoming semesters. EAL Peers also delivered the **Conversation Café** twice weekly on the Burnaby campus throughout the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters and once weekly on the Vancouver campus for Spring 2013, totalling 166 participant visits. 2012-13 was the first full year the SLC offered **Speaking Consultations**, delivering 143 of these bookable appointments with an EAL Peer to improve spoken English.

The SLC's participation in **WriteAway** (online writing tutoring provincial consortium) got well underway with service extended to approximately 25 students in 7 SFU courses during the Spring 2013 pilot. Donna McGee Thompson acted as Institutional Coordinator and Renee McCallum as Tutor Trainer.

I wasn't sure what to expect as it's my first time using the service. It turned out to be absolutely amazing and totally beyond my expectation.... it catches areas where you struggling and can better help people realizing their weaknesses and tells ppl how to improve. Great service!

Student using WriteAway

As a collaborator in the **Academics First Program**, the SLC began a suite of academic success activities for **first-year student-athletes**, including a workshop series, 30 small group Success Teams, and 12 hours per week of supported Study Hall. Graduate Facilitators delivered the bulk of these activities, with

training and support from Donna and Ruth Silverman. Ruth also developed and facilitated training for 9 Varsity Athletes who began serving as Peer Learning Coaches for more junior student-athletes.

The **Academic Enhancement Program (AEP)** was expanded to the School of Engineering Science in 2012-13, with support from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and after receiving a grant from the Teaching and Learning centre. Graduate Facilitators became active in the delivery of the AEP program this year.

Peer Education: Approximately 25 **EAL (English as an Additional Language) Peers** and 20 **Learning and Writing Peers** served as Peer Educators per term. Ruth Silverman, Learning Services Coordinator, continued as the primary trainer- supervisor for the Learning & Writing Peers at Burnaby, as did Tim Mossman, EAL Coordinator, for EAL Peers, and Cynthia Wright, SLC Surrey Coordinator for Peers at SFU Surrey. Peer Education is designed to be a professional development opportunity for the students who volunteer in these roles. Not only do they receive in-depth and ongoing training on topics relevant to their responsibilities, they also receive support for self-selected Personal & Professional Development goals, such as public speaking or project management. Support for reaching these goals is offered by **Peer Coaches**, experienced Peers who advance with training into this role. 4 - 5 EAL and 4 - 5 Learning & Writing Peers assumed the coaching role each term.

Donna McGee Thompson and Elaine Fairey wrote a successful proposal to the University's **EAL Implementation Project Committee** for expanded undergraduate Writing support benefitting EAL students, which will allow the hiring of an additional Writing Services Coordinator and several more Graduate Facilitators for 2013-14.

Research Commons (graduate-focused services)

Our Writing Services team delivered 120 **Read-Ahead** consultations this year, up xx% from the 2011-12 academic year. The Read-Ahead service provides intensive and extended support for graduate students writing theses, projects or any piece of writing with a longer deadline. Graduate students using this service submit the piece of writing they wish to discuss prior to their first appointment for pre-review by our Writing Services Coordinator, Renee McCallum, or one of our carefully selected and trained Graduate Peer Writing Facilitators. One student provided this feedback on the Read-Ahead service:

Thank you so much for your answer. You can't imagine how valuable your job is especially for international students ...There is a huge need for service like this.

Starting October 2012, Graduate Facilitators were available for **booked Writing consultations** through the Research Commons in Burnaby and Surrey, and Tim Mossman joined the RC consultation schedule as "**EAL/ESL Specialist**" for both Burnaby and Vancouver. Table 2 provides an overview.

Table 2. Booked graduate/honours RC consultations. October 2012 - March 2013. Total = 86

	Writing	EAL
Burnaby	60	21
Surrey	3	n/a

Vancouver	n/a	2
	63	23

Several **workshops** tailored to graduate students were offered through the new Research Commons. Topics included *Writing and Researching Your Literature Review* (co-led with a Librarian), *Time Management for Graduate Students*, *What's Your Team Player Style*, and *3MT: Speaking Effectively* and *3MT: How to Talk about Your Thesis in Three Minutes*, to help prepare students for the 3MT presentation competition .

The Writing team also made a significant contribution to the first Research Commons' **Thesis Boot Camp**, with Writing Services Coordinator, Renee McCallum chairing the planning committee in the initial development phases.

Library and University Community Engagement

The Learning, Writing and EAL team contributed to the Library and University communities in a number of ways this year, for example:

Our team participated in 33 orientation events for prospective and current undergraduate students, new faculty members, and new TA/TMs.

Two former Learning and Writing Peers, nominated by Ruth Silverman, were selected to give **Convocation Address** at their respective graduation ceremonies.

The SLC team led a booth for **SFU's Open House** held May 2012.

At the invitation of the **Library Staff Development Committee**, Ruth and Donna presented "*Who are those SLC Peer Educators, Anyhow?*"

The Learning & Writing Peer team participated in a focus group for the **SFU Teaching and Course Evaluation Project**, facilitated by Corrine Pitre-Hayes, Project Leader .

Dal and Donna attended a **reception at Belzberg honouring Dr. Joseph Wosk** for his donation supporting the beautiful new SLC-Vancouver physical space.