



Writing, Learning, and EAL Services ANNUAL REPORT April 2018 – March 2019

Writing, Learning, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services are delivered in the SFU Library through the Student Learning Commons (SLC) and the Research Commons (RC). The SLC offers services primarily for undergraduate students; the RC offers services tailored for graduate students.

OUR TEAM

The Writing, Learning, and EAL Team for 2018-19:

- Head, Student Learning Commons: **Donna McGee Thompson**
- Student Learning Commons Assistant: **Chantal Houle** (May – July 2018); **Peggy Fung** (July 2019 onward)
- Surrey Coordinator: **Cynthia Wright**
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services Coordinator: **Tim Mossman**
- Learning Services Coordinator: **Dal Sohal**
- Learning Services Coordinator: **Ruth Silverman**
- Writing Services Coordinator (undergraduate writing services): **Amanda Goldrick-Jones**
- Writing Services Associate (undergraduate writing services): **Julia Lane**
- Writing Services Coordinator (graduate writing services): **Renee McCallum** (November 2018 - February 2019); **Robyn Long** (September – December 2018); **Julia Lane** (February – May 2019)
- Writing Services Associate (graduate writing services): **Robyn Long** (May – September 2018)
- The Graduate Facilitator team (approximately 20 members)
- Learning and Writing Peer Educators (approximately 20 members)
- EAL Peer Educators (approximately 20 members)

OUR SERVICES

Writing, Learning, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) services offered through the **Student Learning Commons**:

- One-on-one support
 - Writing (English and French) and learning strategies consultations
 - Online writing tutoring through WriteAway
 - Conversation Partner Program
 - Academic English Coaching
 - Back on Track Learning Plans

- Workshops
 - Open-enrollment and customized Writing, Learning, and English Language workshops
 - Let's Talk Program
 - Academic English courses (non-credit)
 - Training sessions for Teaching Assistants and Learning Coaches

Writing, Learning, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) services offered through the **Research Commons**:

- One-on-one support
 - Read-ahead consultations
 - Writing and presentation consultations
 - Open Writing Lab
- Open-enrollment and customized workshops

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR 2018/2019

The following tables provide statistics for the Writing, Learning, and EAL Services delivered from April 2018 to March 2019. The overall demand for one-on-one visits consultations held steady compared to 2017-18, except for online writing consultations through WriteAway, and Conversation Partners, which both increased significantly. The overall number of workshops delivered through both the SLC and RC, and the corresponding number of attendees, increased significantly over 2017-18.

ONE-ON-ONE VISITS

Student Learning Commons (SLC) Consultations	1938 (7% decrease ¹)
WriteAway Online Writing Tutoring Submissions	860 (31% increase)
Conversation Partner Program Visits	828 (25% increase)
Back On Track Learning Plan Appointments	623 (17% decrease)
Research Commons (RC) Consultations	447 (3% decrease)
Total One-On-One Visits	4696 (2% increase)

¹ Increases and decreases in comparison to 2017/18

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

	# Workshops	# Attendees
SLC Open-Enrollment Workshops & Courses	210 (50% increase)	1889 (59% increase)
SLC Course/Program-Integrated Workshops	199 (8% increase)	5460 (4% increase)
English Conversation Group Activities	48 (37% increase)	231 (204% increase)
Back On Track Getting Started Sessions	32 (16% decrease)	655 (14% decrease)
RC Open-Enrollment Workshops	90 (53% increase)	936 (56% increase)
RC Course/Program-Integrated Workshops	4 (43% decrease)	73 (37% decrease)
RC Open Writing Labs (Vancouver only)	32 (6% decrease)	84 (79% increase)
TOTAL WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE	615 (24% increase)	9328 (16% increase)

"Really thanks for your help. This is the best English coaching I've ever had. I believe that my English would improve a lot as long as I could make the best use of the resources you sent me~"

Students receiving help from EAL Graduate Facilitator

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2018/2019

Awards

Several members of the Student Learning Commons staff were recognized for outstanding achievement:

Amanda Goldrick-Jones received the **Staff Achievement Innovation Award** for her "dedication to continually improving and innovating the writing services".

Dal Sohal, Ruth Silverman, Donna McGee Thompson, Darcy Wolfspirit, Cynthia Wright, and Tim Mossman, together with other colleagues working in the Back on Track Program, received

the **Student Achievement Team Award**, for their “collaborative effort that, over the past ten years, has helped many students in academic difficulty develop strategies for improving their academic and personal success.” (<https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/human-resources/forms-documents/StaffAchievementAwards/2017%20Staff%20Achieve%20Bios.pdf>).

Melanie Hiepler received the 2017 **SFU Library Undergraduate Student Award** for her service as a Learning and Writing Peer Educator.

Activities Related to Strategic Goals

Each year the Writing, Learning, and EAL team identifies strategic goals for the year based on priorities identified in the Library Strategic Plan. Our strategic goals for 2017-18 were to:

- Develop additional innovative context-specific student programming in collaboration with campus partners (e.g., faculty, advisors).
- Consolidate and expand our first-year experience suite of academic success programs targeting in particular EAL and low-GPA students.

To inform our decisions related to these goals, the 7th annual **SLC Reading Break Retreat**, held in February 2018, included a panel presentation and discussion with several campus colleagues on the topic, *Understanding and addressing student barriers to accessing academic support at the university*. This discussion inspired a number of initiatives aimed at working more closely with targeted student populations, including:

- **Kick Start Your Academic Success**, a multi-topic workshop offered during the Spring 2018 Week of Welcome, targeting at-risk students, including students admitted to the university with high school grades lower than the average, mature students entering post-secondary for the first time or after a prolonged absence, and students entering the university under the diverse qualification status.
- A "Getting Ready for Academic Success" workshop series for students registered with the **Centre for Students with Disabilities**.
- A workshop series for the **Aboriginal Prep Program**.
- Workshops for students participating in the inaugural **Undergraduate Research Symposium**.
- A training program for Teaching Assistants in the **FASS Forward Program** in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Undergraduate Writing Contest

The Student Learning Commons hosted the inaugural ***Undergraduate Writing Contest***, first conceived of by former Peer Educator, Ken Ip. The judging panel included faculty members, a peer educator, and a graduate facilitator. A reception recognized winners and judges, and featured student authors reading from their winning papers. Winning contest submissions were compiled into an open journal, which now serves as a database of sample papers. Based on inspiration coming from the contest, we began laying the groundwork for creating an SLC blog.

New Writing Position

We added a new 3-year ***Writing Services Associate*** position to our team, made possible through a successful proposal to the VP-Academic's office, and welcomed Julia Lane into this role.

New Workshop Request Process

We improved the process for instructors requesting customized workshops by implementing an ***online integrated workshops request form***.

Emotional Intelligence Pilot Program

Learning Services Coordinator Dal Sohal ran a new pilot project, ***EQ Advantage***, an emotional intelligence program, offered exclusively to Back on Track students for the pilot phase. Dal's work in the project involved designing and presenting an EQ introductory workshop, facilitating the assessments, meeting with each student one-to-one to debrief their results and design a development plan, and meeting with each student again to discuss their progress mid-semester.

Staff Training

Several enhancements were made to the training programs for Learning and Writing (L & W) Peer Educators, and Graduate Writing Facilitators including:

- A new "Nuts & Bolts of Writing" course for SLC consultants.
- A revised L&W Peer Procedures manual.
- A new SLC Consultants Procedures site tailored for Graduate Writing Facilitators.

WriteAway

SFU continued to have the highest number of paper submissions across the WriteAway consortium and to offer the highest number of tutoring hours.

"Feedback was clear and easily applicable. In-text feedback was especially helpful when I went back to revise my essay. Made me feel more confident in my piece after I applied feedback. Plan to continue using this service!"

"Fast responding, and helpful tips. A very good tool that I will recommend it [sic] to my friends."

~Students receiving help from WriteAway

Professional Engagement

Student Learning Commons team members participated in a number of professional-development, research, and community-engagement activities:

Amanda Goldrick-Jones

- Continued to serve as the **WriteAway Institutional Coordinator** for SFU and on the **WriteAway Steering Committee**.
- Submitted a successful proposal for a reference librarian project - **a literature review on collaborations between libraries and writing centres**. The review – completed by librarian Mystery Beck - will help to establish the groundwork for a new SLC applied-research project.
- With Cheryl Geisler, Amanda co-organized the third annual **Career Retreat for Assistant Professors** and contributed a workshop on “Good Writing Habits.”

Cynthia Wright

- Continued her work related to receiving an **Integrated Learning Technology Development Program (ILTDP) grant** for the development, implementation, and assessment of a series of discipline-specific Canvas-based Academic Success Kits, to provide undergraduate students new means of accessing academic support and study strategies.
- Served on the “**Task Force on SLC/Library/Surrey campus community outreach**”.

Dal Sohal

- Completed coursework toward completion of the **Advanced Facilitation and Consultation Certificate** at the Justice Institute of BC.
- Completed a 3-day **EQ-i 2.0 certification course** at the Emotional Intelligence Training Company and subsequently designed an Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success pilot program.

Daniel Chang (SLC Graduate Writing Facilitator)

- Launched a study entitled, “**The Role of Peer Tutoring in Supporting EAL Students’ Academic Literacy**” in the Spring 2017 term. The results of this research will have possible implications for training our Learning & Writing Peer Educators.
- With Amanda, submitted a successful proposal for a roundtable at the 2018 Canadian Writing Centre Associations’ Conference in Saskatoon in May: “**EAL Writers and Peer Tutors: pedagogies that resist the “broken writer” myth.**”

Donna McGee Thompson

- Served as **conference proposal reviewer** for the 2017 College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) conference - Learning & Study Strategies strand.
- Was the **nominations officer** for the Learning Specialists Association of Canada's (LSAC) Board of Directors elections – 2017.
- Completed the **Library Management Skills Institute**, held at UBC, May 3 – 5, 2017.
- Completed coursework toward completion of the **Certificate in Applied Leadership** at the Justice Institute of BC.
- Continued to serve on the **SFU Academic Integrity Committee**.
- Was interviewed on **107.7 Pulse FM** by host Dave Sheldon on tips for students transitioning to university.
- With Ruth Silverman, attended and presented at Learning Specialists Association of Canada's National Conference, Montreal, May, 2017, **Tracking a Large-Scale Retention Program: 2007-Present**, about the Back on Track Program.

Julia Lane

- Was elected to **Library Council**.
- Served on the **Library Wellness Committee**.
- Was appointed co-chair of the **Library's Working Group on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion** (newly created).
- Received a **Ted Dobb Professional Development Grant** to attend the 2018 Canadian Writing Centre Associations' Conference in Saskatoon in May. Submitted a successful proposal for a roundtable "Writing Centre Barriers: A Critical Introspection into Writing Centres and Structural Violence" at this conference.
- With Amanda, attended the **BC Writing Centre Directors' "Day Out"** at University of Victoria, February.

Ruth Silverman

- With Donna McGee Thompson attended and presented at Learning Specialists Association of Canada's National Conference, Montreal, May, 2017, **Tracking a Large-Scale Retention Program: 2007-Present**, about the Back on Track Program.
- Was re-elected **Learning Specialists Association of Canada's (LSAC) - Pacific Region Director**.

- Helped to organize the ***LSAC (Pacific Region) conference***, on December 11 at UBC. Donna and Cynthia also attended this conference.
- Served as chair of the 2017 ***SFU Library Campaign***.

Tim Mossman

- Presented a paper at the ***Faces of English 2: Teaching and Research Academic and Professional English conference***, Hong Kong.
- Delivered a presentation on SLC Supports and Services (with a special emphasis on EAL Support) at the ***Hong Kong Association for Self-Access and Development***, CityU University, Hong Kong.

Across the Team

Continued to participate in the ***Performance Development Program*** – SFU’s staff performance review program. SLC staff members developed goals and tracked progress following the PDP framework.

Continued to offer training in compliance with the ***New and Young Workers Program*** (WorkSafeBC) for our Peer Educators, Graduate Facilitators, and any new staff members.

Several team members participated in:

- ***Liberating Structures*** workshops offered to Library staff by Hope Power and BC Campus and subsequently integrated LS activities into their teaching.
- The ***Intercultural Communications*** workshop offered to Library staff.
- The ***Teaching Exchange*** coordinated by the Library’s Instructional Interest Group (IIG).