Writing, Learning, and EAL Services
ANNUAL REPORT April 2021 – March 2022

The Student Learning Commons delivers a variety of academic co-curricular student programs and services in three subject areas:

- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Learning
- Writing
    - Undergraduate Writing
    - Graduate Writing (delivered through the Research Commons)

This report provides highlights and statistics for each of these areas, as well as staff highlights, for the 2021-22 fiscal year. As the report will show, many of the activities for this period continued to be shaped significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic and the gradual return to on-campus work and learning.   The SLC team also continued our work reflecting our commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion; decolonization, reconciliation, and indigenization; and anti-racism.

The Writing, Learning, and EAL Team for 2021-22 included these members:

- Head, Student Learning Commons: **Donna McGee Thompson**
- Student Learning Commons Assistant: **Peggy Fung**
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services Coordinator: **Tim Mossman**
- Learning Services Coordinators: **Ruth Silverman, Dal Sohal** (on leave starting June 2021), and **Jessica Pilfold** (temporary starting September 2022)
- Surrey SLC Coordinator: **Cynthia Wright**
- Writing Services Coordinators (undergraduate writing services): **Hermine Chan** and **Julia Lane**
- Writing Services Coordinator (graduate writing services): **Robyn Long**
- Graduate Facilitators (10 – 15)
- EAL Peer Educators (15 – 20)
- Writing and Learning Peer Educators (15 – 20)

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS for 2021-22

The SLC continued to deliver all of its services and programs remotely for the first the first half of 2021-22, building upon the remote services and resources we had developed over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21, including virtual consultations, live webinars, and workshop recordings. We also worked to increase the accessibility of recorded workshops by preparing transcripts and making captioned recordings. In September 2021, with the increase of on-campus learning, we began re-introducing in-person options for most of our services, paying close attention to demand and adjusting the balance between in-person and online accordingly.   Fall 2021 saw the arrival on campus of the "Double-Cohort" group, which included both traditional newly admitted students who were new to the university, and students who had already been studying at SFU for one or more terms but had so far not studied on campus.   We also entered into a comprehensive evaluation of SLC programs and services with SFU's Institutional Research and Planning office (summary of details to appear in 2022-23 report).

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Programs

Core EAL Services:

- Conversation Partner Program
- *Let's Talk* conversation groups
- EAL Peer Educator Program
- Academic English Coaching
- Open-enrollment workshops

EAL Program Highlights - 2021/22:

EAL Workshop Series: EAL Services Coordinator, Tim Mossman, introduced a new workshop with a focus on English pronunciation called ***The Prosody Pyramid: Tips for Speaking Effectively***. Tim also offered this workshop as a **four-part mini-series to the SFU Women in Chemistry (WIC) group**.

Tim facilitated two online workshops for the incoming cohort of international graduate students enrolled in the in MSc Finance Program, Beedie School of Business: ***Improve Your Writing: Structuring Ideas Through Grammar*** and ***Speaking Effectively: 5 Steps to Clearer Communication.***

Academic English Coaching saw a sharp increase in the number of visits for the second year in a row. Whereas last year's increase was largely due to students returning for multiple repeat visits, this year saw many more students joining the program, as well as coming for repeat visits.

SLC EAL and Coordinators and the SLC Head participated in a half-day retreat with the EAL team from the Centre of Educational Excellence, focused on supporting multilingualism and multilingual teaching and learning at SFU. As an outcome of the retreat, Hermine Chan and Tim Mossman facilitated the workshop ***Linguicism: Language, Power, and Inequality*** for the inaugural **Multilingual SFU Week,** coordinated by the EAL CEE team. Julia Lane participated in planning for Multilingual Week and delivered ***Claiming Your Voice as a Multilingual Writer*** workshop with Graduate facilitator Mohsen, as part of the program.

Tim Mossman and EAL Graduate Facilitator, Koichi Haseyama, completed an assessment project through the SFU Library Assessment Fund: ***The Conversation Partners Program in Pandemic Times: Challenges, Shared Experiences, and Possibilities.***

Undergraduate Learning and Writing Combined Programs

Learning and Writing (undergraduate) combined Core Programs

- Writing & Learning Consultations
- Transition Workshop Bundles (*Getting Ready for Academic Success; Kick Start*)
- Writing and Learning Peer Educator Program

Learning and Writing (undergraduate) Combined Program Highlights - 2021/22

Procrastination Awareness Week (PAW): In March 2021 Julia Lane and Ruth Silverman, together with colleague Sandra Smith from the University of the Fraser Valley, coordinated *Procrastination Avoidance Week* (PAW), an online national collaborative student event with participation from writing centres, libraries, and learning commons from across Canada (BC, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec). Ruth, Julia, and Sandra received the Learning

Specialists' Association of Canada (LSAC) Group/ Team Award for creating and running PAW. Julia and Ruth were honoured for receiving the award at the SFU Awards Dinner (March, 2022). In April 2021, plans began for a second offering, which was delivered in March 2022, under the new name, Procrastination Awareness Week, with a new platform and a larger planning committee, more offerings, and higher attendance than last year.

Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) – Library Drop-in: SLC Coordinators and Indigenous Initiatives and Instruction Librarian, Ashley Edwards, are available to answer questions and offer consultations upon request at this drop-in study hall in the ISC. Drop-ins were virtual until February 2022, and were held in-person starting March 2022.

Study Hall @ Home – After a pilot in Spring 2021, the SLC continued to collaborate with SFU Peer Programs to deliver this online peer-supported study hall. SLC Writing & Learning Peer Educators, together with Science & Math Peer Tutors, and Computing Science Peer Tutors were on hand to provide academic support at students' request and point students toward other campus resources. Writing Services Coordinator, Hermine Chan, co-coordinated the program and provided orientation and support for the SLC Peers staffing the space. In the Fall 2021 term, Hermine prepared and sent out surveys to peers and students who had participated in the program to request their feedback.

I would like to thank the whole team of individuals who played a role in running this program. What a scary and strange time to be in, but I looked forward to these meetings everyday and I am full of information and tools to help me succeed in my new journey. thank you!

~Participant, Getting Ready for Academic Success

Learning Programs

Learning programs and services focus on a range of academic strategies topics including Time Management, Academic Reading, Critical Thinking, Exam Preparation, and Presentation Skills.

Learning Core Services

- Open-enrollment workshops
- Course- and program-integrated workshops
- Back on Track Learning Plans
- Back on Track workshop and course delivery

Learning Program Highlights - 2021/22

Back on Track (BOT) – Back on Track is a re-entry program for students who have been required to withdraw from the university due to academic difficulty. It is a multi-departmental collaborative program administered by Student Engagement and Retention. The SLC delivers several components of the three-semester program, including Learning Plans, Getting Started sessions, and BOT 120 and BOT 140 courses.

In 2021-22, BOT instructors responded to several shifts in the mode of instruction, from completely online, to a mix of in-person and remote sections (both synchronous and asynchronous), to a hybrid model.   Also this year, after a program change, Counselling Services' involvement in teaching BOT 120 and 140 was discontinued, after being in this role since the Back on Track program started. Teaching responsibility for the components of BOT 120 and 140 previously taught by Counsellors was assumed by Student Development Educators. In December 2021, the SLC Learning team attended a farewell celebration to mark the end of a very successful long-time collaboration with Counselling, and over the Spring term, welcomed and helped to onboard SDEs as BOT 120 /140 co-instructors.

Blended Course Format - SLC Supports for Students Project: The Centre for Educational Excellence reached out to discuss how the SLC could be involved in supporting students taking blended courses. Ruth and Jessica took on the project of developing resources.

Transition to On-Campus Learning: This new in-person workshop was offered in August 2021, mainly targeting students who were returning to campus from a long period of remote learning.

Academic Integrity Tutorial Graduate student Sabrina Ngo, under the supervision of Arlette Stewart (Academic Integrity Coordinator), Hope Power, and Donna McGee Thompson, finished building an early version of this tutorial on Canvas. The tutorial was released for use in several courses. Student feedback, collected and themed by a library co-op student, informed subsequent revisions.

Undergraduate Writing

Core Undergraduate Writing Services

- Writing consultations
- Open-enrollment workshops
- Course- and program-integrated workshops
- Online, asynchronous writing tutoring through WriteAway
- Online Writing Groups, including VOWeL (Virtual Online Writing Lab for Everyone)

Undergraduate Writing Highlights - 2021/22

Undergraduate Writing Contest This was the 5th annual and second fully virtual version of the writing contest. This year the program was re-structured to include a middle-years category, which allowed for prize category dedicated to first-year writers.   A plurilingual prize category was also introduced to recognize excellence in plurilingual writing.

I have just read the SFU news and saw the amazing initiative you have coordinated/led in the SLC writing contest. I especially loved the part where you mentioned that you wanted to challenge the narrative around multilingual writers in academic context. This really is inspiring and empowering! [....] This is a refreshing idea, and I just had to acknowledge your efforts and thank you for making this deliberate change.

~One of several emails from colleagues commending the team on creating the Plurilingual Prize.

Inclusive and Antiracist Writing guides: Last year Julia Lane developed a 50-page suite of connected inclusive and antiracist writing guides, including resources and exercises (downloadable PDF is <u>available from the library</u>). An Instagram campaign in April 2021 brought a lot of attention to the guides. In May 2021, Julia and W&L Peer, Emily Lam, presented the guides as part of the Maskwacis Cultural College Microlearning series.

Julia Lane served on the planning committee for the **Undergraduate Research Symposium** for the second year in a row, (in April 2021), and helped to design and deliver the first fully virtual "flipped" model of the symposium, with students recording their presentations so that the gathering could focus on discussion and Q & A.

Hermine Chan was extended in the temporary position of Writing Services Coordinator (for undergraduate writing), for an additional year to March 2023.

Graduate Writing (delivered through the Research Commons)

Graduate Writing Core Services

- Read-Aheads
- Open-enrollment workshops
- Course- and program-integrated workshops
- Online Writing Groups

Graduate Writing Highlights - 2021/22

Thesis Writing Group (TWG) The TWG ran for a second year. Conceptualized as an "online version" of Thesis Boot Camp, the TWG offers a weekly three-hour supported online space for graduate students to work on their theses. In Spring 2022, the TWG was increased from eight weeks to ten, by popular demand. Sessions are facilitated by the graduate writing team in collaboration with the Research Commons Librarian and visits from Theses Assistants. Guest speakers/experts in various library areas offered drop in consultations and Q & A in the chat. In October, TWG introduced **"Slashfest!"** ("Slashing word counts left and right! No sentence is safe!..."), an optional mini-workshop in a breakout room, themed for Halloween.

> *This space has been really helpful for me. It is an exciting stage but also a bit overwhelming, so having a supportive space has been much appreciated.*
>
> *~Attendee, Thesis Writing Group*

Open-enrollment Workshops:
- *Sketching Your Writing Road Map for 2022* (as part of New Year's Resolution Writing and Reading Spectacular)
- *Start Here: All about Graduate Writing & Research*
- *Paraphrasing with Purpose and Integrity (for Academic Integrity Week)*
- *Writing and Researching Your Literature Review*
- *Thesis Thruways: Hitting the Road Again* (for Procrastination Awareness Week)

Program-Integrated Workshops (upon request):
- *Honing your Gradate Writing Process: Writing Groups for Building Individual Skills, and Using Free Writing to Make Progress* (a two-part series)
- *Resuming & Navigating University Studies in a Professional Program* (departmental graduate student orientation, included writing content for new graduate students)
- *Writing and Researching Your Literature Review*
- *Top Grad Writing Concerns/Issues*
- *A Guide to Scientific Writing*
- *Writing and Revising at the Sentence Level*
- *Make Progress on Your Academic Writing*
- *Using Sources Skillfully and Ethically in Your Own Work*

Highlights of Staff Activity (projects, committees, service, professional development)

- The SLC team had a mini-retreat in December 2021, and a retreat in February 2022. Both of these meetings, as well as a series of "clearness committee" meetings, focused on our continued work towards developing a statement of commitments to anti-racism.   Hermine Chan collected feedback form SLC Peer Educators on their experiences with linguicism and their ideas for how the SLC can commit to antiracism and anti-linguicism.

- Over the Summer 2021 term, SLC staff began gradually returning to on-campus work, until most were working full-time on-site starting September 2021, supporting the university's efforts to restore on-

campus learning. In January 2022, with the increase in COVID-19 transmission, SLC staff returned to a hybrid work arrangement, dividing their time between on-site and remote work.

- Coordinators who serve as supervisors for Graduate Facilitators, and the SLC Head, worked to articulate and operationalize Graduate Facilitator employee processes reflecting the first TSSU Article for Graduate Facilitators, including posting requirements, an evaluation process, employee file system, sick leave provisions, and job specific safety orientation.

- SLC staff were active members of several Library groups and committees, including the EDI Working Group; Decolonizing the Library Working Group and Interest Group (DIG); Instructional Interest Group (IIG); and the Wellness Committee.

- All SLC team members completed training and professional development activities, particularly in these areas:
    - Remote instruction
    - Practices and tools for improving learner accessibility (e.g., closed captioning)
    - Antiracism and antiracist practice
    - Decolonizing & Indigenizing curriculum and research
    - Mental health (particularly for students, related to COVID-19)

Individual Staff Activities

- Cynthia Wright
    - Completed an analysis of Back on Track students' scores on the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 terms. A Library Co-op student worked with Cynthia on this project.
    - Produced a video capturing testimonials from successful BOT alumni students.
- Donna McGee Thompson
    - Participated in regular Roadmap for Onsite Library Services meetings (informed protocols and procedures for the SLC return to onsite work and in-person service delivery).
    - Co-chair with the Dean of Libraries for the Library Strategic Advisory Leadership Team (SALT). This was the first time the co-chair model was applied; previously SALT was chaired by the Dean of Libraries alone.
- Hermine Chan
    - Member, Canadian Writing Centre Association (CWCA) BIPOC Caucus,
    - SLC Team Captain, Get Active Challenge, October 2021 and February 2022.
    - Library's 2021 Festival of Employee Learning and Engagement planning committee. Also hosted a creative writing workshop with writer Emil Sher.
    - Library Safety Committee; also completed several safety training sessions.
    - SLC team representative, comprehensive SLC program review with Institutional Research and Planning.
- Jessica Pilfold
    - Library EDI Working Group and its Policy Analysis Subcommittee.
    - Emcee, Library staff holiday party.
    - SLC team representative, comprehensive SLC program review with Institutional Research and Planning.
- Julia Lane
    - With colleagues from the BC Writing Centre Association (BCWCA), co-presented on the work they had done to draft a series of commitments to antiracism, at both the Canadian Writing Centre Association (CWCA) and Learning Specialists Association of Canada (LSAC) conferences.
    - Served on a CWCA subcommittee to draft a statement of commitment to antiracism.

- o With Dal Sohal, Ashley Edwards, and Alix Shield, co-authored a chapter for *Land in Libraries*.
        - o With Graduate Facilitators Mohsen and Kate had an article proposal accepted for an upcoming issue of WLN: A Journal of Writing Centre Scholarship, focused on "the post-pandemic writing centre".
        - o With Ashley Edwards (Indigenous Librarian), created an asynchronous Canvas version of the "Grappling with our Colonial Roots in Libraries" so it can be available to all library staff.
        - o Co-facilitated workshop 'Inclusive and Antiracist Writing in the Classroom' with Bee Brigidi (CEE), for Inclusion in the Classroom Week, hosted by Centre for Educational Excellence.
        - o Delivered a participatory workshop at CWCA entitled "The Writing Centre is not an Island" in focused on how inclusion and relationship building can be transformative for writing centres.
- Peggy Fung
    - o Was a recipient of the Ted Dobb Professional Development Grant.
    - o Was the successful candidate for the temporary Assistant for Theses position in the Research Commons; went on leave from the SLC to take the RC position starting April 2022.
- Robyn Long
    - o Served on the dissertation committee for a PhD student whose research focused on post-secondary student peer writing feedback experience.
    - o Was a Mentor with the Certificate Program in University Teaching and Learning, for a Writing and Learning Peer.
- Ruth Silverman
    - o With graduate student Vanja Zdjelar, completed a report on a Library Assessment Grant project started last year, comparing an asynchronous version of a Back on Track course, BOT 120, with the synchronous version.
    - o Was interviewed by a UBC researcher about experience participating in a UBC/Capilano/SFU group of instructors incorporating kindness into their course design and its impact on the course.
- Tim Mossman
    - o Member, Equity and Inclusion in Library Teaching Group (EILTG)
    - o Completed the inaugural Linguistically Responsive Classrooms Seminar Series (Centre for Educational Excellence, Spring 2021).

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR 2021/2022

The following tables provide statistics for Writing, Learning, and EAL services delivered April 2021 - March 2022, with comparisons to April 2020 – March 2021. The SLC continued to deliver all of its services and programs remotely for the first the first half of 2021-22. In September 2021, with the increase of on-campus learning, we began re-introducing in-person options for most of our services. Fluctuations in demand were apparent over the course of the pandemic and with the shifts in remote and in-person instruction at the university. Whereas in the first year of the pandemic (2020/21), demand had increased sharply for some services and programs (SLC open-enrolment workshops, WriteAway, online writing groups), these areas dropped off in 2021/22. Other areas (consultations, integrated workshop requests, RC open-enrolment workshops) saw a decline from the start of the pandemic and throughout. Areas of programming within the Back on Track program saw a large drop in 2020/21, owing to changes in university grading policies introduced early in the pandemic, but BOT programming increased significantly in 2021/22. Academic English Coaching saw a significant increase in demand in both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT	2021/22	2020/21	% CHANGE
Writing & Learning Consultations - Virtual (SLC; mostly undergraduate)	972	1271	
Writing & Learning Consultations -In-person (SLC; mostly undergraduate)	<u>280</u> 1252	<u>n/a</u> 1271	↓ 1.5 %

WriteAway Submissions (SFU students only; undergraduate)	819	1085	↓ 32.4 %
Conversation Partner Visits (grad/undergrad)	909	831	↑ 8.6 %
Academic English Coaching (grad/undergrad)	310	195	↑ 37.1 %
Back on Track Learning Plans	385	193	↑ 49.9 %
Graduate Consultations (through Research Commons)	396	416	↓ 5 %
TOTAL VISITS	**4071**	**3991**	**↓ %**

WORKSHOPS & GROUPS	# Workshops			# Attendees		
	2021/22	2020/21	% Change	2021/22	2020/21	% Change
SLC Open-Enrolment Workshops	139	188	↓ 21.8%	942	2052	↓ 53.5%
SLC Integrated Workshops	90	112	↓ 19.6%	2955	4000	↓26.13 %
English Conversation Groups	32	49	↓ 35%	97	100	↓ 3%
SLC Online Writing & Study Groups	160	133	↑17%	267	359	↓ 26%
BOT Getting Started Sessions	7	n/a	n/a	263	182	↑44.5 %
Graduate Open Workshops	19	65	↓ 71%	282	498	↓ 43.4%
Graduate Integrated Workshops	8	7	↑14 %	106	93	↑14 %
Graduate Writing Groups	41	45	↓8.9%	463	559	↓ 17.2%
TOTALS	**496**	**601**	**↓ 18.4%**	**5453**	**7878**	**↓31.45 %**