



Writing, Learning, and EAL Services ANNUAL REPORT April 2016 – March 2017

Writing, Learning, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Services are delivered in the SFU Library through both the Student Learning Commons (SLC) and the Research Commons (RC). The SLC offers services primarily for undergraduate students, and the RC offers services tailored for graduate students. Consultations and workshops are the two main categories of service provided by both the SLC and the RC. The SLC offers three types of consultations: 1) General consultations on writing, learning, and English-language topics; 2) Conversations Partners; and 3) Back on Track Learning Plans. Both the SLC and RC offer three types of workshops: those that are open to the general student population; program/course-integrated workshops, tailored to a specific university course or program; and facilitated groups, which involve more group discussion than presentation of material. This report provides statistical information and a summary of highlights for each of these areas of service.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2016/2017

The Student Learning Commons celebrated its **ten year anniversary** in the Fall of 2016! Festivities included a reception for library and university colleagues and several student activities. SLC Head, Donna McGee Thompson, and Peer Educators, Marton Jalkoczi, and Ken Ip, were interviewed by Rachel Wong, **PEAK** columnist, for an article about SLC services as we turned 10. Marton and Ken and gave excellent insights into our peer helping model. Our celebration was also highlighted in the **Library Staff Blog** and the **Council of Post-Secondary Library Directors Newsletter**.

We began offering **workshops tailored to faculty members**, including: “**The Challenges of Working with Student Writing: Strategies and Supports for Graduate Supervisors**” (developed by Writing Services Coordinator, Renee McCallum, with then Graduate Writing Facilitator, Julia Lane). Writing Services Coordinator Amanda Goldrick-Jones also helped to deliver the 2nd annual **Career Retreat for Assistant Professors** (with embedded workshops on writing habits and writing groups), in collaboration with Cheryl Geisler (Office of the VP Academic).

We submitted a successful proposal to the VP-Academic's office for a new 3-year **Writing Services Associate** position. Donna and Amanda began preparing to hire for this new position.

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR 2016/2017

The following tables provide statistics for the Writing, Learning, and EAL (English as an Additional Language) Services delivered this year. The demand for consultations remained steady compared to 2015-16 (except for WriteAway and Conversation Partners, which were down slightly.) Overall, workshop attendance was much higher this year compared to last (up 33%).

ONE-ON-ONE VISITS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Student Learning Commons (SLC) Consultations | 2053 |
| Writeaway Online Writing Tutoring Submissions | 502 |
| Conversation Partner Visits | 1103 |
| Back On Track Learning Plan Appointments | 702 |
| Research Commons (RC) Consultations | 511 |
| Total One-On-One Visits | 4871 |

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

| | # Workshops | # Attendees |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| SLC Open-Enrollment Workshops | 136 | 941 |
| SLC Course/Program-Integrated Workshops | 146 | 4486 |
| English Conversation Group Activities | 45 | 208 |
| Back On Track Getting Started Sessions | 35 | 692 |
| Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) (Pilot) | 136 | 337 |
| RC Open-Enrollment Workshops | 101 | 918 |
| RC Course/Program-Integrated Workshops | 4 | 91 |
| Total Workshop Attendance | 603 | 7673 |

Undergraduate Writing & Learning Services

Student Learning Commons Peer Educators, Graduate Facilitators, and Coordinators continued to offer consultations and a variety of workshops in the areas of Writing and Learning. However, there were also several new initiatives for 2016-17 in these areas:

SLC Head, Donna McGee Thompson, and Learning Services Coordinator, Ruth Silverman ran a two-term pilot of the **PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) model** from May to December 2016, in *CMPT 120: Introduction to Computing Science and Programming*. The pilot allowed us to work through the steps required to run PASS in a course, including PASS Leader selection, training, and ongoing supervision; session planning and promotion; and program assessment. We worked with SFU's Institutional Research and Planning office and the course instructor (Dr. Diana Cukierman) to assess the pilot following standard PASS assessment practices.

SLC Surrey Coordinator, Cynthia Wright, oversaw, with input from SLC colleagues, the development of **two instructional video series**: **'Study Strategies and Academic Success'**, and **'How to Build a Thesis Statement'**. Co-op students with a background in motion graphics were hired to produce the videos. Staffers Ruth, Tim, and Amanda provided voiceovers.

We increased the availability of our **consultations** by starting to offer them on Saturdays at Burnaby. We also offered **French writing consultations and workshops** for the second year and prepared to begin offering them in the Summer semester for the first time in 2017.

Daniel Chang, SLC Graduate Writing Facilitator, launched a **study** titled, **"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.

We saw a large increase in the demand for **course- and program-integrated workshops**, delivering 27% more integrated workshops, and having 39% more participants, than in 2015-16. New workshop offerings included:

- For the first time the SLC provided writing **workshops in multiple tutorials**: in this case, all 9 tutorials for ENG 111W. Visiting multiple tutorials poses a staffing challenge but is more engaging for students than delivering the material in a large lecture.
- We delivered a workshop on learning and organization strategies for the **Autism Mentorship Initiative**, Centre for Students with Disabilities.
- We gave various writing and learning presentations as part of the **School of Communication First-Year** initiative.

"[The Leader] was very good at coming up with exercises to do both as a group or individually. Also he was good at stepping back and letting you solve things on your own instead of just telling you what to do. Thanks for all your help...!"

-PASS Program Participant

- We began collaborating more closely with **the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)** Student Engagement team. Activities included SLC-delivered workshops for the FASS Connections Mentorship Program and several new course-integrated supports.

“It was a great presentation: clear, informative, to the point, and contained lots of great tips.”

“...thank you both so much for the excellent presentations. Our students benefited a lot from them, and so did we!”

“Thanks again for two wonderful sessions on writing. The students learnt so much from it (as they later told me).”

~Course instructors

English-Language Services

In addition to continuing to offer *Let’s Talk* English conversation groups and the very popular Conversation Partners Program (both by EAL Peer Educators) there were two new initiatives in our English as an Additional Language program area:

1. EAL Coordinator, Tim Mossman, offered new **multi-day non-credit short courses**, including
 - ***Pronunciation for Academic and Professional Settings***
 - ***Core Academic Writing: Grammar, Style, and Voice***
 - ***Core Academic Writing: Stance, Structure, and Synthesis.***
2. The EAL team began offering ***Academic English Coaching*** (AEC) – a series of one-on-one meetings with students focusing on areas of English language learning tailored to the needs of the student, as identified in an intake assessment.

We also began discussions with the Back on Track Program about delivering AECs to a select group of BOT students to commence in the Summer 2017 term.

To help support this increased EAL programming, we created a new **EAL Graduate Facilitator position**, with Noortje de Weers being the first graduate student to come into this role. Noortje provided Academic English Coaching and assisted Tim in delivering the non-credit short courses.

Many of our EAL services continued to be delivered in collaboration with the Centre for English Language Learning, Teaching and Research (CELLTR).

Graduate Services (offered through the Research Commons)

The Graduate Services team (Writing Services Coordinator, Renee McCallum, and several Graduate Facilitators) continued to deliver a full suite of support services for graduate students, including Read-Ahead consultations, the Thesis Boot Camp (in collaboration with Research Commons colleagues), the Open Writing Lab, and a suite of workshops, including several new workshop offerings, developed this year:

- Preparing academic posters and writing research proposals, as part of *Researching the City* at SFU Vancouver;
- *Start Write*, a writing workshop for incoming graduate students;
- The *Extended Write Right Series* offering proactive and comprehensive support to graduate students to improve their relationship with the writing process; and
- *Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Grad Student Publication*, a workshop delivered as part of Open Access Week with librarians from the Research Commons and Copyright office.

Professional Engagement

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

Cynthia was awarded 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.

Ruth became this year's *Chair, Library Campaign Committee*.

Amanda 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.

Learning Services Coordinator, Dal Sohal, participated as a committee member of the *Staff Development Team*. Dal also led a four-week strength and stretch session series (*Essentrics*) in the Spring term for Library staff as part of a Wellness Committee initiative.

In the area of human resources, we began participating in the *Performance Development Program* – SFU's recently adopted staff performance review program. SLC staff members developed goals and tracked progress following the PDP framework. We also began coordinating activities in compliance with the *New and Young Workers Program* (WorkSafeBC) for our Peer Educators, Graduate Facilitators, and any new staff members.

Ruth and Donna presented at the *College Reading and Learning Association Conference* (CRLA) in Louisville, KY, November 2016: *Tracking a Large-Scale Retention Program: 2007-Present*, about the Back on Track Program.

Amanda attended the annual *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Portland, OR, March 2017.

Renee and Amanda hosted the *BC Writing Centres Coordinators' Day Out*, April 2016.

Tim attended the *American Association of Applied Linguists* conference in Orlando, Florida, April 2016.

Learning Services Coordinator, Ruth Silverman, was interviewed by *CJSF 90.1 FM Radio* about SLC services, and Donna was interviewed by *Roundhouse Radio* and *Global Television* about students transitioning to university.