

# City Tech Writing Center Year-End Report 2022-23

## Summary

This was a big year for the writing center. New Director, new space, new tutors, new website, new workshops, new materials, new logo, new booking site, new, new, new. We continued to offer tutoring online, we continued to work with students from across the university, we continued to collaborate with JLM/Rise on workshops, we continued to reach out to different disciplines to recruit students, and we continued to offer inclusive, supportive, one-on-one tutoring to a range of students working in a range of genres and modes. This report will offer a record of what we did for future reference.

## Data

Utilization:

**Fall:** 282 appointments out of 700 available, which is **40% utilization.**

**Spring:** 330 appointments out of 515 available, which is **64% utilization.**

**Annual:** 612 appointments out of 1215, which is **50% utilization.**

Workshops:

In collaboration with the JLM-RISE foundation, we designed and delivered **13 workshops.**

Day/month:

**Thursday** was our busiest day each week with 26% of our appointments.

**October** and **March** were our busiest months.

Student standing:

**First-year: 60%**      Sophomore: 17%      Junior: 12%      Senior: 9%

Student heritage languages spoken:

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Urdu, others.

Visitation:

**56%** were one-time visitors      **18%** were two-time visitors      **10%** visited three or more times

Academic Programs:

**66%** of our appointments were for **English courses**

**46%** were for **ENG 1101** or **ENG 1101 Co** exclusively

*Top 3 other programs:* **Health Sciences, Computer Systems Technology, Communications.**

*All 22 programs:* Architecture, Art History, Biology, Communication, Computer Systems Technology, Construction Management, Dental Hygiene, Education, English, Environmental Control Technology, Fashion, Health, Sciences, Health Services Administration, History, Hospitality Management, Human Services, Interdisciplinary LIB, Law, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Theater

### **Post-appointment student survey**

Students were automatically sent a survey to complete voluntarily. They were asked who their tutor was, how they would rate the session, and whether they would return to the Writing Center. 36 students responded. The session ratings were: **Excellent: 92%**. Very good: 3%. Good: 6%

Students could also leave comments. Here are a representative sample of what they found helpful:

- *Finally got a topic for my assignment and was given lots of tips on parts of my assignment that I didn't fully understand.*
- *The tutor's ability to provide specific techniques with examples.*
- *Reading breakdown*
- *How I was getting honest feedback and help from my tutor.*
- *She is an amazing professional and also motivated me to do my assignments by myself, and honestly at the beginning I was scared to do it or to get assistance at the written center.*
- *I loved it, I loved how the tutors welcomed you and helped you improve your writing and speaking skills giving you honest feedback and tools to improve!!*

### **Student Narrative**

The following was provided by a student taking ENG 1121 to her tutor. The student included this in the Final Reflection portion of her Final Course Portfolio:

*One of the factors that significantly contributed to my success in this class was the support and guidance that I received from the writing center. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with writing tutors who helped me overcome various writing challenges throughout the semester. The tutors provided me with valuable support and guidance throughout the semester. They helped me overcome writing challenges and improve my skills. As I mentioned, "Luckily, I was able to meet with a tutor at the writing center." I learned new strategies for organizing my ideas and expressing them clearly. By the end of the semester, I made significant progress and gained confidence in my writing abilities. The writing center was a valuable resource that I utilized frequently, and it helped me to improve my writing skills. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with them. The support and guidance that I received at the writing center played a significant role in my success in this class.*

## Data Discussion

Looking at our data (see Appendix 1) from post-appointment surveys and across our client reports (not listed here for FERPA reasons) we can see some key themes that emerge. Firstly, we work a lot on issues of “language,” by that we mean to say that we are looking at grammar, vocabulary, and other language-learner specific concerns about 50% of the time in our tutoring sessions. The other key aspects are what could be called higher-order concerns of audience, readability, genre, structure, argument, etc. Though, there also seem to be plenty of comments talking about sentence and word-level changes that they made in their sessions, which were helpful, too. Also coming through in the data are positive responses to doing tasks that fall outside of working on a specific text—like helping pay tuition. It seems like it will remain important to have a broad range of knowledge about the functioning of City Tech as well as text-focused insights to help students who are coming in with a quite wide range of needs.

## New Space

Starting in spring semester, the writing center expanded from its online presence and into our new space in G-608. This allowed us to meet with students in person, to meet as a staff in person, and to host events.

## Events

### Open House - February 14, 2023



An open house was held on Valentine’s Day to introduce the City Tech community to the new space in G-608. Members of the administration including the Provost, Associate Provost, Dean of Arts and Sciences, English Department Chair, and Director of iTEC attended, as well as members of the English Department and students from a variety of classes.

In addition to showing people the room, there were several interactive features for students to enjoy, including trying to punctuate a complicated, un-punctuated sentence. They were also able to download a QR code that would take them to the scheduling system. Approximately 100 people visited the Center during the Open House. Flyers were distributed as well as refreshments, and several students registered/made tutoring appointments.

## International Mother Language Day - February 21, 2023

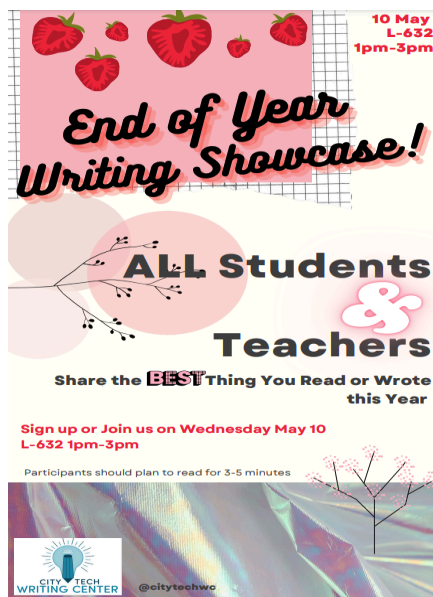


In conjunction with the United Nations International Mother Language Day, the Writing Center hosted students, staff, and faculty for a celebration of linguistic heritages. 12 participants read something in their mother language, whether they had written it themselves or whether it was part of the lore of their home traditions. The event began with a staff member reading in Arabic and discussing her doctoral work on Arabic architecture. A variety of students read a poem they had written or that was important to them. Others read short folk tales or personal essays.

One highlight was a Ukrainian student reading a personal poem she had written in her mother language. Another was a faculty member leading the room in an interactive activity about how to pronounce French like a native. Several students finished their reading with comments on how important it was to them to have

the opportunity to use their mother languages and not be forced to translate into English. They said it made them feel seen, and applauded the event as a whole, hoping for a repeat in the future. Among the attendees in addition to faculty and students were Dean of Arts & Sciences Justin Vasquez-Portiz and Assistant Provost Reginald Blake, both of whom were enthusiastic about the feeling of community the event created, and voiced their hope that it would continue in the coming year, perhaps expanding into the auditorium in the Administration Building.

## Year End Showcase - May 10, 2023



Finishing out the year, the Center hosted another showcase of writing, this time about the best thing a student or faculty member had written or read during the academic year.

The event had around 40 people attend (staff, faculty and students), 11 of whom read from something they or others had written. The main goal of the event is to create a space for student voices and student work to get celebrated while also giving it equal footing with faculty and staff work or perspectives. Students shared personal and professional texts and often gave informative introductions. The event was MC'd by Frances Greathead (tutor) and an undergraduate student. As an end of term or end of year event, this was also a chance to celebrate the progress of the center with cake and outreach.



While the event itself was a success, afterwards there was a substantial community-building presence as leftover cake was shared with students who frequently reside in the corridor on the way to the center. They were curious to learn more and the “afterparty” was also a great way to share what the mission of the center was and how students participate. The power of cake.

## Workshops

In conjunction with the JLM-RISE Foundation, the Center ran 13 workshops over the course of the academic year. We started with online zoom workshops and then moved to a 50/50 split between online and in-person offerings.

<b>FALL</b>	Nov. 1	Jacquelyn Blain and Joe Franklin	Research Writing Skills 101
	Nov. 8	Margo Goldstein	ESL Writing
	Nov. 15	Jack Freedman	Plagiarism, Citation, Paraphrasing
	Nov. 29	Shauna Chung	Writing for Multiple Modes
<b>SPRING</b>	Mar. 8	Joe Franklin	Research Writing 101
	Mar. 21	Shauna Chung	Writing in Multiple Genres
	Mar. 28	Shauna Chung	Writing in Multiple Genres
	Apr. 20	Margo Goldstein	Rhetorical Analysis
	Apr. 25	Frances Greathead	Writing in a New Genre
	May 2	Frances Greathead	Citations
	May 4	Margo Goldstein	Using Rhetoric in Unit 3
	May 1	Frances Greathead	Writing for Revision
	May 17	Margo Goldstein	Writing Course Reflections

## Logo



In collaboration with Comm-D designers Savonne Andrews and Anai Ortiz, the writing center has a new logo meant to depict the idea that writing is an intersection of the idea and the material work to get that idea to the page. Here depicted as a lightbulb, which can be both an inspiration and a physical illumination meets a pencil which is a tool we can use to materialize the ideas.



## Website

The existing website on OpenLab was redesigned incorporating the new logo. A new section was added for Handouts, and complete visual information was provided to walk students through the WCOOnline registration and scheduling process. Updates about events and other content is currently in development as we sort out what the best use of the site can be. .

## Handouts

The Center created new handouts for use by students, tutors, and faculty. These are the first in an ongoing project to provide both informational and interactive materials, and are available both in the Center and on the [Center's website](#). The goals for these handouts are multiple: first, to be used in tutoring sessions so there is something clear to discuss and for a student to take away for future use (how to make an outline, how to line edit, etc.). Secondly, these handouts can be used in classrooms for any instructors who might see their value, too. Lastly, they are part of a larger push to have tangible, applicable actions students can take to intervene in their texts through repeatable and discrete tools.

Informative handouts	Interactive worksheets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MLA Formatting</li> <li>● Academic Writing</li> <li>● Paraphrasing</li> <li>● Reverse Outlines</li> <li>● Statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Workflow Diagnostic to help students better understand their own process.</li> <li>● Writing Punctuation Practice - students have to add correct punctuation to an unpunctuated paragraph.</li> <li>● Writing Sentences Practice – students are given a badly written paragraph to revise.</li> </ul>

## Newsletter

Thanks to the hard work of the Center's student intern, we piloted a weekly newsletter that was sent to the departments and posted on the Center's OpenLab site. The newsletter gave students information about CityTech opportunities as well as off-campus internships and scholarships, and included announcements about Center activities such as workshops and special events.

## Tutor/Intern Professional Development

In the fall semester, all tutors participated in a rigorous 14 week training program that included weekly readings, responses, and discussions. Topics included tutoring fundamentals, the state of the field,

accessibility, identity, and city tech institutional history. Weekly meetings also offered a space to collaborate and shape the direction of the writing center. We produced a tutor handbook of policies and procedures, numerous advertisements, planned events, and discussed the best approaches to working with City Tech writers.

In the spring semester, a PTW intern, Maria, joined us and helped to develop new projects that the tutors also collaborated with. We sought to have new workshops, new modes of communication with writers, and more events to build community. With the fall training under our belt, we were better able to talk about the work of the center in class visits and align the work in the center with new partnerships across campus.

## **Conclusions**

The year was one of changes in an attempt to adapt the writing center to the current exigencies of the institution and student body. It was a year to re-establish a presence and identity on campus and great strides were made. There remain puzzles to be solved in terms of how to boost attendance in workshops, how to reach more students with key skills and information about City Tech that they need, and how to build a financially and philosophically sustainable center that is well-positioned to continue delivering much needed support throughout the institution.

## Appendix 1 (Survey data full)

### What was most useful about your session?

- The writer knew the issues I was facing and helped correct them. (1)
- Editing the paper (1)
- Finally got a topic for my assignment and was given lots of tips on parts of my assignment that I didn't fully understand. (1)
- Grammar (1)
- Helped me with paying for tuition (1)
- How I was getting honest feedback and help from my tutor. (1)
- How Jackie told me how to flow in an intro and conclusion (1)
- Inma's ability to provide specific techniques with examples (1)
- It helped me finish my essay (1)
- It helped me practice and realize my shortcomings (1)
- Maeve Riley helped me rephrase some of my sentences and add a little more information to some parts. The meeting was very in depth and helpful. (1)
- Reading breakdown (1)
- Revise my paper (1)
- She is caring and very helpful. (1)
- The advice that was given (1)
- The determination, and tips used for every piece of work I need help with. (1)
- The elaboration of the explanations I was given to prior to the meeting (1)
- The feedback and advice in order to accomplish a great essay! Always so enthusiastic and explains thoroughly. (1)
- The way they taught me how to write a narrative essay. (1)
- They helped me very well and they broke down everything in a clear way. It was very helpful and I got a good great on my essay (1)

### Comments or Suggestions

- Everything was good (1)
- Extremely helpful, in a short amount of time Inma made me aware of all areas that needed improvement within my paper. Thanks! (1)
- Frances is always helpful and I'm grateful for her advice. (1)
- I really appreciate all the recommendations and feedback the tutor gives us to become better writers. (1)



- Keep doing a good job. (1)
- Keep doing your thing Frances (1)
- Long time to work on the paper. (1)
- Maybe try to improve the way of how the writing center is found in the building (1)
- My first writing center experience in my first semester I believe was far from this. The tutor wasn't this helpful at all which is why I was having doubts about booking my appointment the other day but I'm definitely booking another one for another writing I have. (1)
- She is an amazing professional and also motivated me to do my assignments by myself and honestly at the beginning I was scared to do it or to assist at the written center. We need more people like her... (1)
- She is an excellent tutor! (1)

### **Anything else you would like to share**

- Getting your point across. (1)
- I enjoy going to the writing center because they help me with my writing. They have patience to hear your ideas out, even if it doesn't make sense to me. (1)
- I loved it, I loved how the tutors welcome you and help you improve your writing and speaking skills giving you honest feedback and tools to improve!! (1)
- It was great and I'm happy to know the tutor learned a lot from my work too. (1)
- It's so helpful. (1)
- Keep up the good work Jackie! (1)
- Love city tech it's a great college (1)
- They help us a lot to see and fix mistakes where we thought there weren't any. (1)
- Very helpful even though it wasn't associated with writing (1)
- With tutors like Margo, it makes one feel good and enjoy tutoring. (1)