STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
LEARNING COMMONS – WRITING CENTER
SUMMER 2015 - SPRING 2016 REPORT

Date: May 27, 2016

To: Katrina Coakley, Assistant Provost for Student Success

Cc: Dr. Lois Becker, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Excellence and Student

           Success

From: Paulina Romero, Learning Commons Coordinator

RE: End-of-Year Report for Writing Center, Summer 2015 - Spring 2016

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the UNT Dallas **Writing Center** is to support, promote, and enhance the writing and public speaking of graduate and undergraduate students across the university. To accomplish this mission, the **Writing Center** seeks to provide students with one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions, to develop resources such as handouts, workshops, and online information, to work with faculty, staff, and administration to create a supportive university-wide partnership to enhance the overall collegiate and academic experience of our students. Moreover, our goal is to encourage faculty and students to see writing and communication as an integral part of every discipline, and to promote Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) on campus.

The **Writing Center** encourages students to immerse themselves in language, explore ideas, discover meaning, and communicate with varied audiences. We hope that students will accomplish four things as they frequent our center: (1) become comfortable with the process of writing through immersion; (2) experience a positive attitude shift towards writing and communication; (3) improve their overall writing and communications skills; and (4) enhance their communication skills through conferencing and collaborative learning.

REPORT DETAILS

The information provided in this summary comes from the Learning Commons reports spanning the period from Summer 2015 through Spring 2016. The data for Summer 2015 is based on our online appointment scheduling system, Gradesfirst. Because Gradesfirst provided limited information and we had not developed our digital data system, the Summer 2015 report will not provide as much detail as the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 reports. The Fall 2015 data was compiled using both paper and digital sign-in sheets that students filled out before entering the Writing Center. However, we faced some technical difficulties with the computers for sign-in sheets, so students would log in on paper and the Learning Commons staff would then input that data into the digital sheets for better and more diverse analysis. The digital surveys used for Fall 2015 collected both academic and personal information such as course name, professor, gender, ethnicity, major, and classification. We also had information from our online appointment scheduling system, Gradesfirst. The Spring 2016 data was compiled using both paper and digital sign-in sheets that students filled out before entering the Writing Center and from WCOnline data. The digital surveys used for Spring 2016 also collected both academic and personal information such as course name, professor, gender, ethnicity, major, and classification.

A. Summer 2015 Information

The Writing Center appointments totaled **108 appointments** in **20 courses** and across **16 majors**. During the first 5-week summer session, we served 39 students; during the second 5-week term, we served 69 students. We saw primarily graduate students and seniors who were completing upper-level course work.

The Writing Center was open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00p-7:00p and Wednesdays from 10:00a-7:00p. For Summer 2014, the center was open Tuesday through Thursday from 12:00p-6:00p. We extended our hours of operation for Summer 2015 based on student requests, and the hours were selected based on summer enrollment data (i.e. times and days of courses, etc.). We experienced the highest volume of students on **Wednesdays and Thursdays** between the hours of **2:00p and 4:00p**.

B. Fall 2015 Information

A total of **237 [unique] students scheduled 660 appointments** at the Writing Center during the fall semester. Comparing Fall 2015 data to Fall 2014 data, we saw a dramatic **increase of 61%** in student usage of the Writing Center; overall, we booked 660 total appointments in Fall 2015 versus 411 overall appointments in Fall 2014. We experienced the highest volume of students on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays** between the hours of **2:00p and 4:00p**.
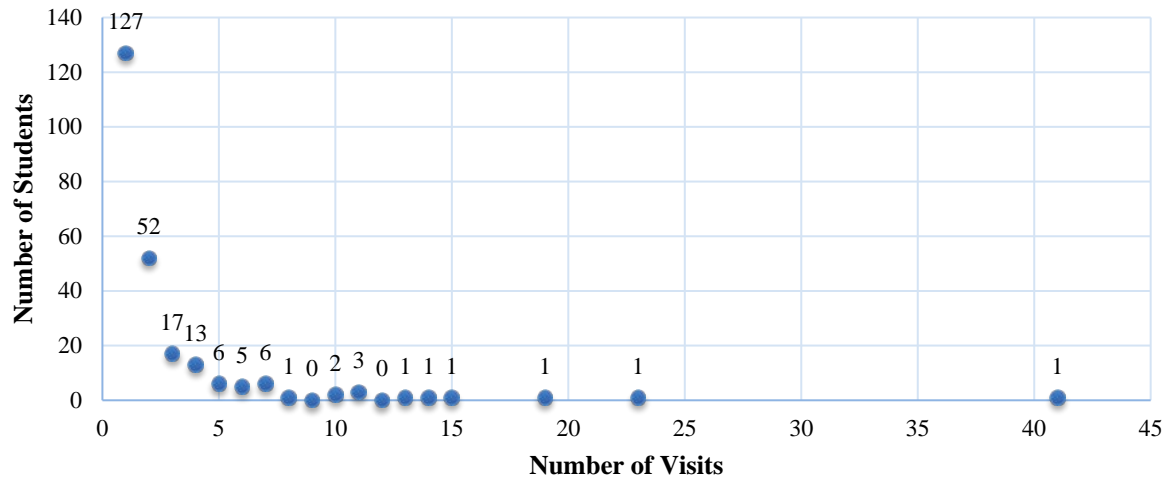
Of the 237 students who visited the Writing Center this semester, **127 students (54%)** visited the center once, **52 students (22%)** returned for 2 tutoring sessions, and **36 students (15 %)** returned for 3-5 sessions. **Seven students (3%)** scheduled 10-14 tutoring appointments, and only **3 students (1%)** scheduled 15 or more appointments this semester.

Student Attendance
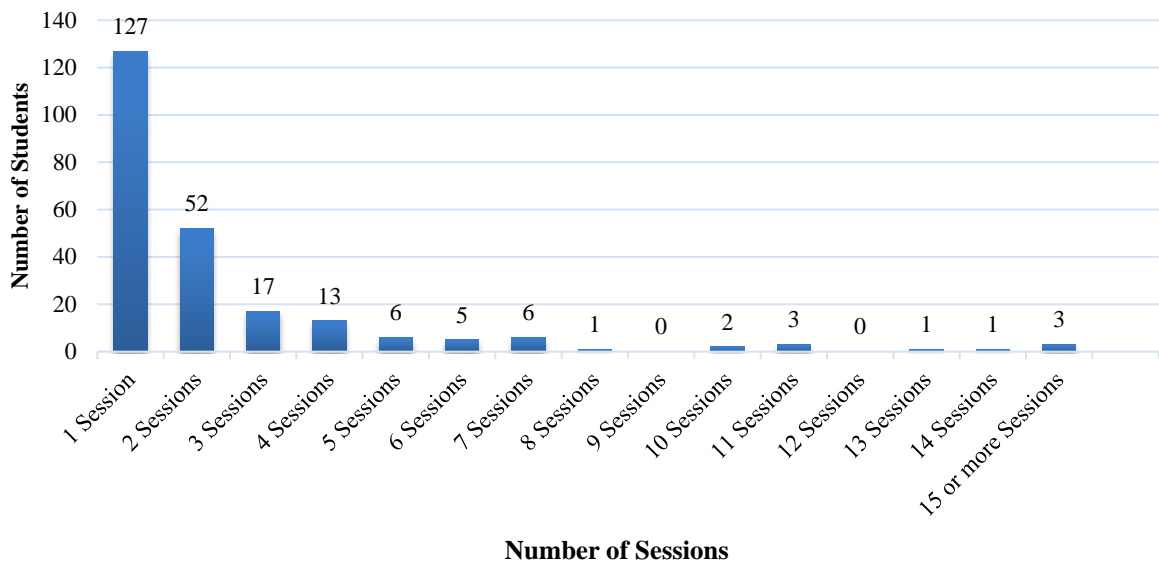
The mean number of tutoring sessions attended by students was **2.7**, indicating that the majority of students visited the Writing Center 1-2 times this semester. The graph below shows how frequently each of the 237 students visited the Writing Center this semester.

Number of Visits per Student

We served students from **68 courses**. Fifty-seven of these courses were undergraduate, and 11 were graduate. The majority of students who came to the Writing Center received help with **ENGL 1313** (81 student visits or 12% of scheduled appointments), but we also served many students from **SOCI 4930** (22 student visits or 3.2% of scheduled appointments) and **ENGL 1323** (21 student visits or 3.1% of scheduled appointments)**.** Our assumption is that students completing their core English courses and senior capstone courses were more likely to visit the Writing Center than any other students. The chart below features the six courses for which students most often visited the Writing Center.

Subject	Course Title	# of Student Visits/Course
ENGL 1313	College Writing I (core)	81
SOCI 4990	Sociology Capstone	22
ENGL 1323	College Writing II (core)	21
COUN 5710	Counseling Theories	15
TECM 1200	Developmental Writing	14
UGRW 1200	Developmental Reading/Writing Tutorial	14

 Students who majored in **Psychology** (115 student visits or 15% of scheduled appointments) and **Interdisciplinary Studies** (82 student visits or 12% of scheduled appointments) made more appointments with Writing Center tutors than students who majored in other areas. Similarly, students who majored in **Curriculum and Instruction, Accountancy,** and **Organizational Behavior and Human Resource**

Management made the least number of appointments; our data shows that we had 1-2 appointments for students in these majors. Our assumption is that students from the **School of Liberal Arts and Sciences** and students taking courses in these departments visited the Writing Center than students from any other school at UNT Dallas. The chart below depicts the 5 majors for which students most visited the Writing Center.

Major	# of Student Visits/Course
Psychology	115
Interdisciplinary Studies	82
Criminal Justice	55
Applied Arts and Sciences	49
Information Technology	41

On average, we had **41 students** (unique and repeat appointments) visit the Writing Center per week; the **fewest number of students** we saw in a week was **11** and the **greatest number of students** we saw in a week was **60**. Our tutors also assisted an average of **132 students** per month. Our least busy month was **August** (the center was only open for the last week of the month which corresponded with our first day of classes), and our busiest month was **September.** Our assumption is that students may be more receptive to receiving academic assistance during the first half of the semester (weeks 1-6; right before midterms).

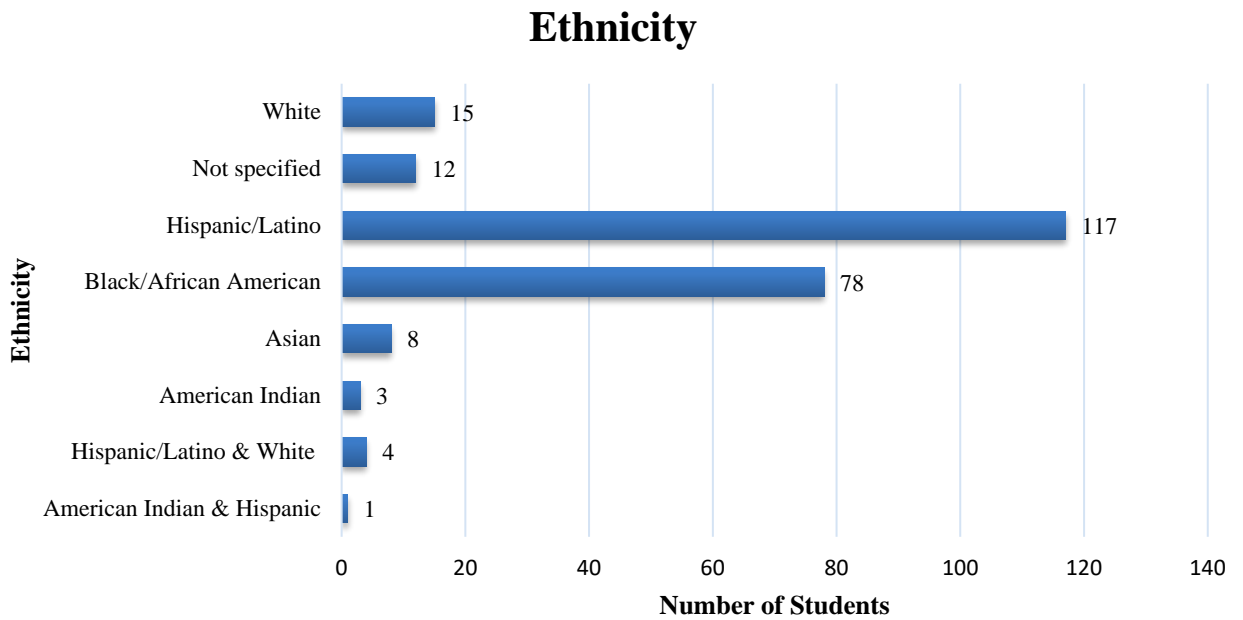| Month	Academic Weeks	# Of Students/Month
August	Week 1	14
September	Weeks 2-6	235
October	Weeks 7-10	175
November	Weeks 11-14	170
December	Weeks 15-16	66

Overall, students visited the Writing Center more frequently during weeks **4, 6, 12, and 15** than the remainder of the semester. These numbers correspond with peak exam periods, especially midterms (weeks 6-8) and finals (weeks 13-15).

## Frequency of Student Attendance Per Week

Pa

1   18

2   37

Of the 237 students who utilized the Writing Center, **117 students (49%)** identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, and **78 students (33%)** identified as Black or African American. Pending institutional analysis, our assumption is that Hispanic or Latino/a and Black or African American students were more likely to seek academic assistance from the Writing Center than any other ethnic group on campus.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Students
White	15
Not specified	12
Hispanic/Latino	117
Black/African American	78
Asian	8
American Indian	3
Hispanic/Latino & White	4
American Indian & Hispanic	1

Of the 237 students who visited the Writing Center, **162 students (68%)** were female and **75 students (32%)** were male. identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, and **78 students (33%)** identified as Black or African American. Pending institutional analysis, our assumption is that more female students visit the Writing Center and seek academic assistance in the Learning Commons than male students.

Gender

■ Female   ■ Male
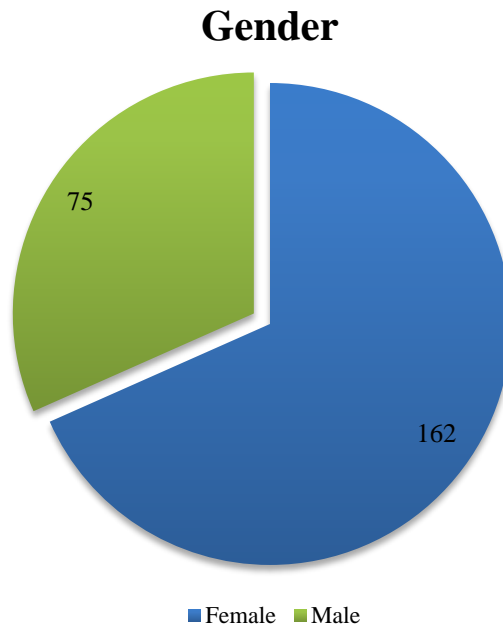
C. **Spring 2016 Information**

A total of **153 [unique] students scheduled 450 appointments** at the Writing Center during the spring semester. Comparing Spring 2016 data to Spring 2015 data, we saw a **slight increase of 0.2%** in student usage of the Writing Center; overall, students booked 450 total appointments in Spring 2016 versus 449 appointments in Spring 2015. We experienced the highest volume of students on **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays** between the hours of **12:00p and 1:00p** and between the hours of **2:00p and 4:00p**.
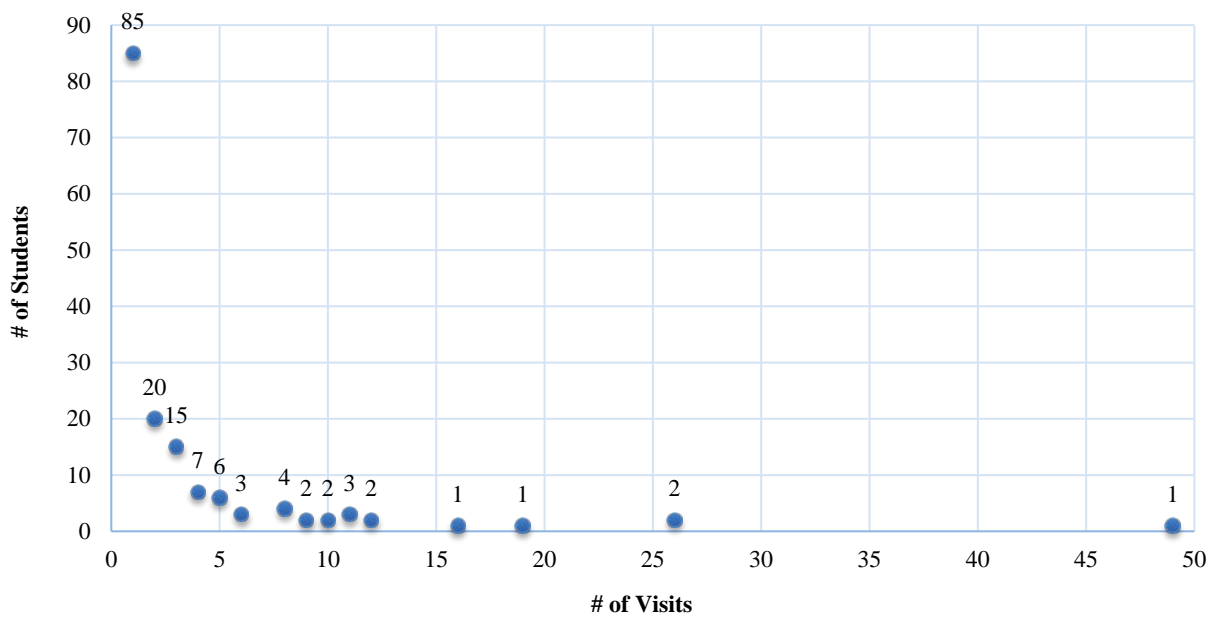
Of the 153 students who visited the Writing Center this semester, **85 students (56%)** visited the center once, **20 students (13%)** returned for 2 tutoring sessions, and **28 students (18%)** returned for 3-5 sessions. **Seven students (5%)** scheduled 10-14 tutoring appointments, **2 students (1%)** scheduled between 15-19 appointments, **2 students (1%)** scheduled 26 appointments, and only **1 student (0.7%)** scheduled 49 appointments this semester.

Student Attendance

The mean number of tutoring sessions attended by students was **3.3**, which was higher than the mean from Fall 2015. This indicates that the majority of students visited the Writing Center 1-3 times this semester. The graph below shows how frequently each of the 153 students visited the Writing Center this semester.

Number of Visits per Student

Scatter plot titled "Number of Visits per Student" with y-axis labeled "# of Students" (0 to 90) and x-axis labeled "# of Visits" (0 to 50). Data points with labels: 85, 20, 15, 7, 6, 3, 4, 2, 2, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1.

We served students from **70 courses**: 58 courses were undergraduate, and 12 were graduate courses. The majority of students who came to the Writing Center received help with **EDUC 3320** (96 student visits or 25% of scheduled appointments), but we also served many students from **ENGL 1323** (31 student visits or 8% of scheduled appointments) and **PSCI 1040 (**27 student visits or 7% of scheduled appointments**)**. ENGL 1323 and PSCI are both required courses for the core curriculum. PSYC 3200 is a required major core curriculum course for all students who have declared a Psychology major. PSYC 3200 can also be substituted for SOCI 3220, which is the equivalent course requirement for students who have declared a Sociology major. Our assumption is that students taking the required core courses and required major core courses visited the Writing Center more frequently than any other students. The chart below features the six courses for which students most often visited the Writing Center.

Subject	Course Title	# of Student Visits/Course
EDUC 3320	Foundations of Education	96
ENGL 1323	College Writing II (core)	31
PSCI 1040	American Government	27
PSYC 3200	Research Methods	18
PLDR 5320	Public Service and Society	16

Students who majored in **Education: Interdisciplinary Studies** (116 student visits or 29% of scheduled appointments) and **Psychology** (56 student visits or 14% of scheduled appointments) made more appointments with Writing Center tutors than students who majored in other areas. Fall 2015 data showed a similar pattern: Psychology and Education: Interdisciplinary Studies majors frequented the Writing Center more often that students with other majors. According to Fall 2015 data, however, more Psychology majors visited the Writing Center than Education: Interdisciplinary Studies majors. Similarly, students who majored in **Information Technology, Human Services Management and Leadership, Hospitality, and Communications and Technology** made the least number of appointments; our data shows that we had 1 appointment for students in these majors. Our assumption is that students from the **School of Education and the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences** and students taking courses in these departments visited the Writing Center more frequently than students from any other school at UNT Dallas. In addition, the data indicates that students who are completing master's level courses also visit the Writing Center more frequently than other students. The chart below depicts the 5 programs for which students most visited the Writing Center.

| Major	# of Student Visits/Course
Education: Interdisciplinary Studies	116
Psychology	56

M.Ed. Educational Leadership	48	
Criminal Justice	27	
Accounting	26	

On average, we had **26 students** (unique and repeat appointments) visit the Writing Center per week; the **fewest number of students** we saw in a week was **1 student** (during Spring Break, week 9) and the **greatest number of students** we saw in a week was **46**. Our tutors also had an average of **90** appointments per month. Our least busy month was **January** (the center was only open for the last two weeks of the month, which corresponded with our first day of classes), and our busiest month was **April.** Our assumption is that students may be more receptive to receiving academic assistance around peak exam times, such as midterms and finals (weeks 8-16). During the Fall 2015 semester, more students visited the Writing Center in the first eight weeks of the term; student attendance seemed to decrease after midterms. During the Spring 2016 semester, it appears that more students visited the Writing Center between midterms and finals.
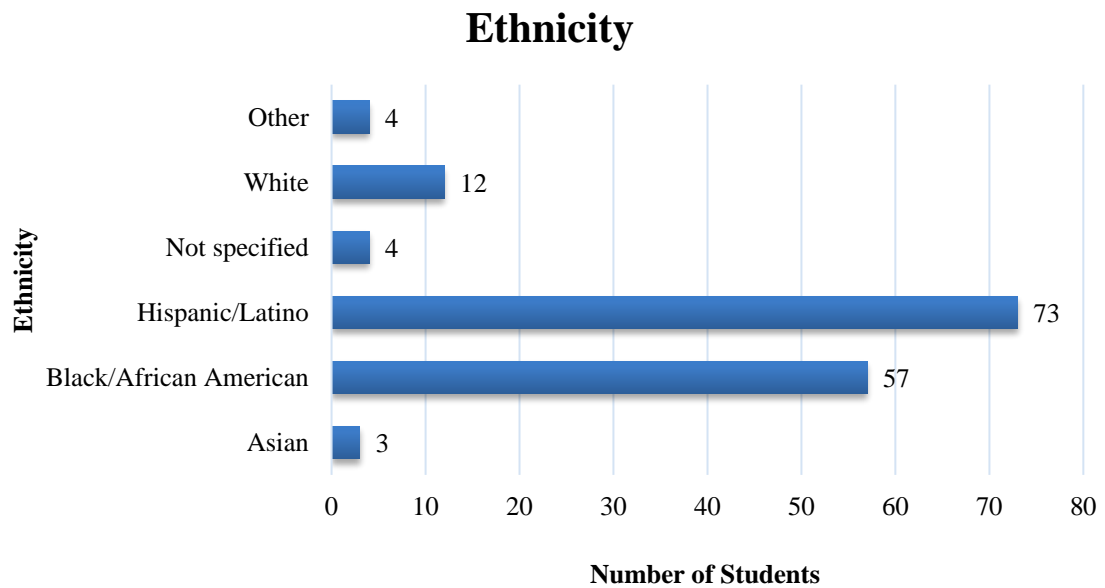
Month	Academic Weeks	# Of Students/Month
January	Week 1-2	15
February	Weeks 3-7	94
March	Weeks 7-11	122
April	Weeks 12-15	159
May	Weeks 16-17	60

Overall, students visited the Writing Center more frequently during weeks **11, 14, 15, and 16** than the remainder of the semester. These numbers correspond with peak exam periods, especially finals (weeks 13-15).

## Frequency of Student Attendance Per Week
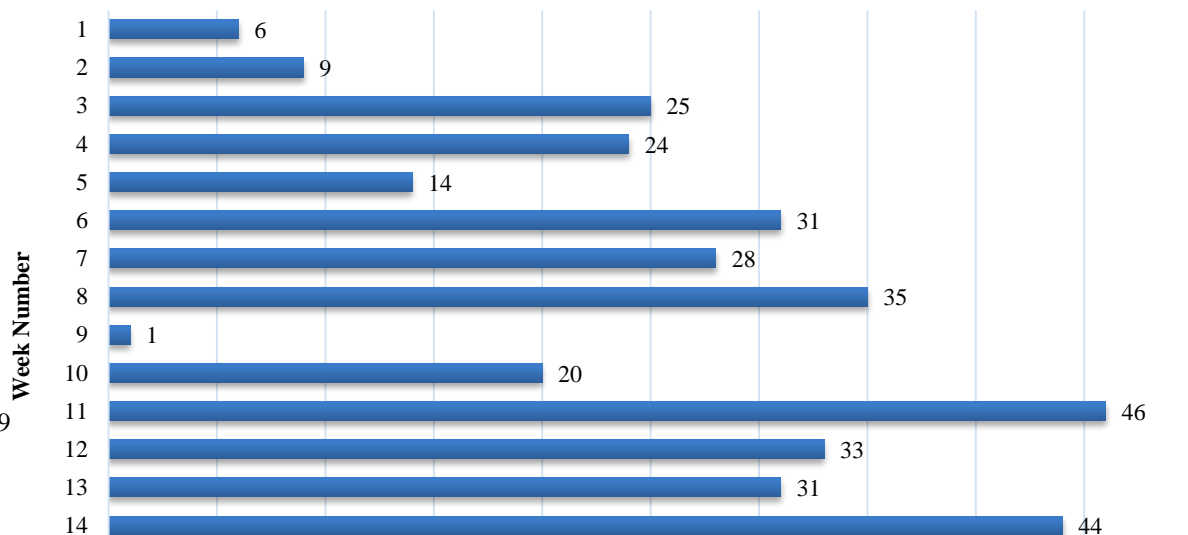
Of the 153 students who utilized the Writing Center, **73 (48%)** identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, and **57 (37%)** identified as Black or African American. Pending institutional analysis, our assumption is that Hispanic or Latino/a and Black or African American students were more likely to seek academic assistance from the Writing Center than any other ethnic group on campus.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Students
Other	4
White	12
Not specified	4
Hispanic/Latino	73
Black/African American	57
Asian	3

Number of Students

Of the 153 students who visited the Writing Center, **116 students (76%)** were female and **37 students (24%)** were male. Pending institutional analysis, our assumption is that more female students visit the Writing Center and seek academic assistance in the Learning Commons than male students.

Gender
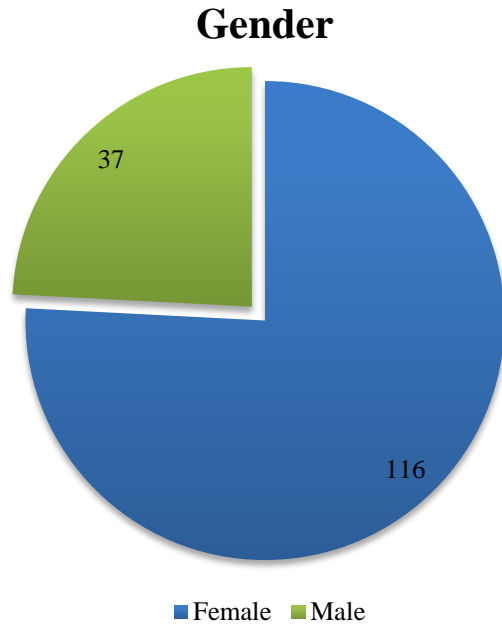
The graph below is a new addition to the data we collected this semester. It shows the number of students who visited the Writing Center based on their classification. Of the 153 students who visited the Writing Center, **45 students (29%)** were seniors and **43 students (28%)** were juniors. This indicates that students completing their upper-level coursework frequented the Writing Center more often than freshmen and sophomores.

Classification
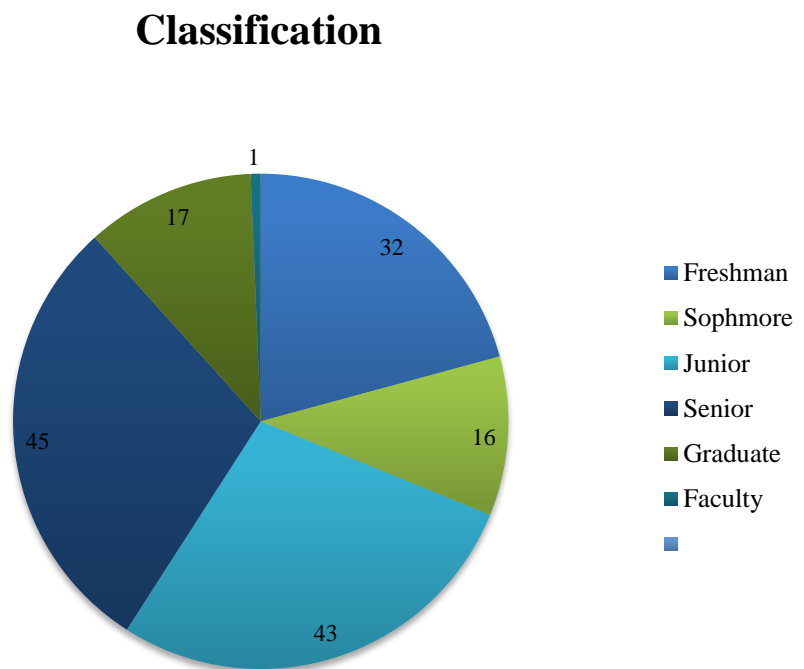
FINAL WRITING CENTER COMMENTS

A. Additional Semester Information
    1. <u>Fall 2015 Information</u>
        i. **Hours of Operation**
            a. The Writing Center was open Monday through Thursday from 9:00a – 7:00p, Friday from 3:00p – 7:00p, and Saturday from 10:00a – 3:00p.
        ii. **Staffing**
            a. The Writing Center staffed 6 tutors this semester. We had two full-time professional tutors, one part-time graduate tutor, and four part-time undergraduate tutors.
        iii. **Changes made from FY2014-2015 to Fall 2015**
            a. Writing Center staff participated in all of the student and faculty orientations leading up to the start of the Fall 2015 semester.
                1) These mini-presentations at the New Student and Transfer Orientations definitely increased our visibility. We do not have exact data, but we believe that our increase in student usage was thanks to our exposure at orientations. Based on student feedback, we also believe that more faculty encouraged their students to visit the Writing Center this semester, which also contributed to our success.
            b. SI Leaders attended monthly tutor trainings with other Learning Commons tutors.
                1) In an effort to get all Learning Commons tutors CRLA certified, our graduate tutor, professional tutors, and I designed a four-part training for all tutors. Each month, tutors met for one hour to cover topics such as excellent customer service, dealing with difficult students, multi-cultural awareness, and working with non-traditional students. All the undergraduate tutors stated that this additional training was helpful and insightful, and it allowed all the tutors to get to know one another.
            c. Professional Tutors and Learning Commons Coordinator attended more on-campus training.
                1) Debbie, Angela, and Paulina completed the Customer Service Excellence training series. This helped us better serve our student clientele, and helped us better train our student tutors on how to exhibit exemplary customer service. This also resulted in fewer complaints about our services, and most importantly, fewer complaints about our tutors.

    2. <u>Spring 2016 Information</u>
        i. **Hours of Operation**
            a. The Writing Center was open Monday through Thursday from 9:00a – 7:00p, Friday from 3:00p – 7:00p, and Saturday from 10:00a – 3:00p.
        ii. **Staffing**
            a. The Writing Center staffed 8 tutors this semester. We had two full-time professional tutors, two part-time graduate tutors, and four part-time undergraduate tutors.

b. We also welcomed Dolly Meyer, our new administrative assistant for the Learning Commons in early spring. Dolly has been very helpful in maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Learning Commons and, on occasion, provides tutoring support in the Writing Center when we are low on personnel.

iii. **Changes made from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016**

a. A new form of data collection was rolled out for Fall 2015 and perfected before the Spring 2016 semester. This new form of data collection helped us break down student information, thus allowing us to provide more detailed semester and end-of-semester reports as seen above.

b. With the help of the I.T. department, we were able to roll out and implement our new scheduling appointment system, WCOnline. WCOnline replaced Gradesfirst before the Spring 2016 semester began, and both our students using WCOnline and our tutoring staff has been very happy with the change. The new system is a cloud-based scheduling system that is user-friendly and provides features like detailed pre-appointment and post-appointment reports, a waiting list, text and email reminders, block scheduling, and more detailed final reports. Our Spring 2016 reports (shown above) reflect the change from Gradesfirst to WCOnline.

iv. **Considerations for Fall 2016**

a. We plan to reorganize our scheduling for workshops; we noticed that students need help with writing and show more interest in writing topics as we approach midterms and finals. Therefore, instead of having workshops at the beginning of the semester, we will focus all our efforts on hosting workshops and events towards the middle and the end of the semester.

GOALS FOR THE 2015-2016 YEAR

Next year, the Writing Center will aim to:

1. Host more academic and writing workshops for students. Based on student and faculty feedback, we need to more workshops for students related to acclimating to academic culture. The professional tutors will strive to develop 2-3 new workshops for the fall semester that include avoiding plagiarism and how to write in using academic language.
2. Pilot the WCOnline virtual/online tutoring program. Although UNT Dallas students can utilize Smarthinking for online writing help, the Writing Center staff would like to provide in-house online tutoring for students. The team will begin piloting the online tutoring features on WCOnline and will hopefully implement online tutoring by Spring 2017.
3. Create 10-20 short videos about writing and grammar topics that we can feature on our website and on faculty's Blackboard sites. We have had several requests for more online resources, so creating these videos based on presentations and workshops we have already created will help students who cannot attend on-campus events access the information they need.