



CLEMSON[®] UNIVERSITY

WRITING LAB

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

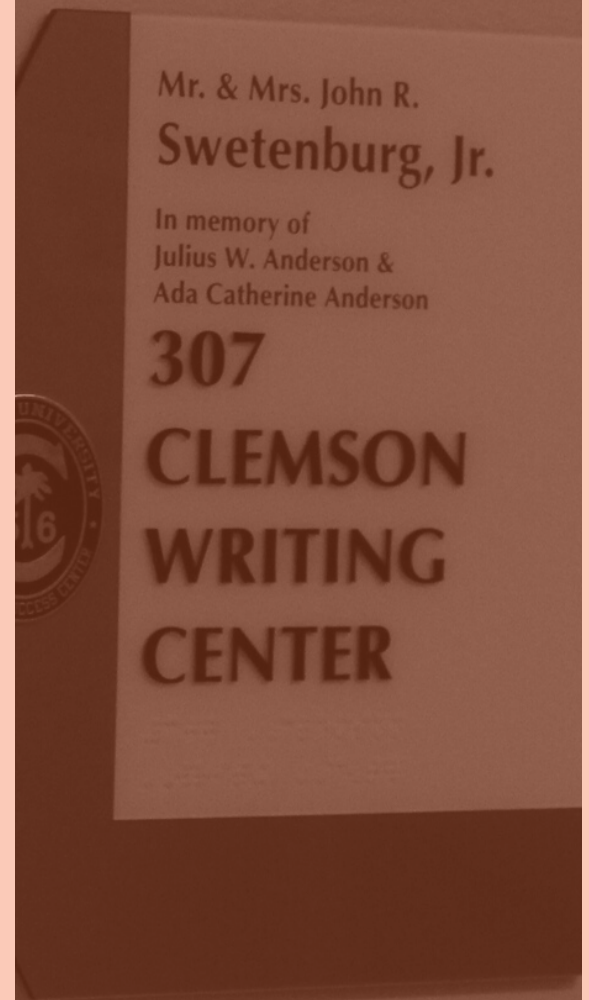
2020/2021

SUPPORT

THE CLEMSON WRITING LAB
IS SUPPORTED BY THE CLEMSON
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT.

Since August 2012, we have hosted over 16,176 individual appointments with writers and many thousand more students during class visits, workshops, writing support efforts, and events.

As a unit supported by the English Department, the Writing Lab shares its goals in enabling students to build foundational skills and access academic services that support their growth as writers and communicators. In particular, the Writing Lab is supported by "lab fees" for ENGL 1030, a course primarily taken by freshmen.



A banner hanging from a ceiling with the text "welcome to the Writing Center". The banner has a hexagonal pattern and is set against a background of a ceiling with recessed lights.

welcome to the
Writing Center

Finding Our History

The history of the Clemson Writing Lab was largely lost over time with current staff unaware of its legacy of writing support at Clemson University. Searching for this history became a mission of the current administration as they sought to strengthen links between the Writing Lab and the Clemson Family.

After research in the Clemson archives and discussions with longstanding members of the Clemson community, it was discovered that the Writing Lab at Clemson began in **1983**. This places Clemson's Writing Lab as part of an older generation of writing labs in the United States. Two of the field's primary journals began in 1977 and 1980. The Writing Lab was cutting-edge at the time of its creation.

The Clemson Writing Lab is **38 years old as of 2021**.

Knowing our history allows us to better know ourselves. Knowing our history also allows us to see ourselves in relation to the community we serve. The Clemson Family has a long and complex history. The Writing Lab lives within that history.

Likewise, knowledge of our past can better inform our future. In Spring 2021, the "Clemson Writing Center" returned to its original name: the "Clemson Writing Lab." This shift connected the Writing Lab better with the past and future.

From 1983 to 2021, the Clemson Writing Lab has supported Clemson writers. This support will continue long into the future as Clemson continues to move forward.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Clemson Writing Lab's purpose is to help students gain confidence in their writing, improve as communicators, and achieve their academic goals by providing high-quality, effective services in a supportive, inclusive environment.

CORE VALUES

The Clemson Writing Lab's staff share a commitment to:

- Supporting student growth as they become more skillful, flexible writers.
- Cultivating and promoting a thriving culture of writing on campus.
- Continually innovating our programs and services in a data-informed manner in order to meet the diverse needs of all Clemson writers.

The Clemson Writing Lab's professional staff share a commitment to:

- Providing high-quality training and mentoring in order to foster the student staff's personal, professional, and intellectual development as active global citizens.
- Staying connected to the greater writing center community in order to stay current on research, trends, and innovations in the field.
- Continually innovating our programs and services in a data-informed manner in order to meet the diverse needs of all Clemson writers.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

As a part of the global community, the Clemson Writing Lab fosters diversity in all of its dimensions and supports all writers in reaching their personal and professional goals. Writers, with their individual life stories, knowledges, identities, worldviews, languages, voices, and proficiencies are respected and welcomed. We provide an environment that is conducive to diverse learning styles and forms of expression, and we respect writers' use of their home languages and World Englishes. We also seek to engage others in pursuing justice and remedying current and historical inequities in higher education. Our Lab embraces the humanity of all people, celebrating the contributions each individual makes to the Writing Center, the Clemson Family, and the global community.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Adopted as a guiding principle in Fall 2020.

We acknowledge that the main campus of Clemson University occupies the traditional and ancestral land of the Cherokee People. Clemson's main campus is built on land seized through US military and diplomatic incursions culminating in the Treaty of Dewitt's Corner in 1777. This is also land on which people enslaved by the Pickens, Clemson, and Calhoun families lived and worked, and that was transformed into the campus of Clemson University through convict labor.

We make this acknowledgement to remember the histories of violence that anticipate our gathering here, to recognize Indigenous and Black claims to life and land, and to recenter those claims as we commit to better ways of caring for each other and for this land.

Along with this acknowledgement, we ask: what responsibilities and commitments can we make to foster more honest and generative relations with this land and with each other? Can we, wherever we go, acknowledge Indigenous claims to the land we occupy? Can learning about the lifeways and lifeworlds of the original and rightful caretakers of the land we occupy guide our own changing relation with the places we are and the communities that belong to those places? How can we share our learning with others?



SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

UNDERGRADUATE SUPPORT

The Clemson Writing Lab prioritizes support of undergraduate students, particularly freshmen who are beginning their college careers. As the Writing Lab is supported by ENGL 1030 lab fees, special effort is made to provide stable feedback for students enrolled in ENGL 1030 classes. During the 2020-2021 Academic Year, we conducted a majority of our appointments online through synchronous Zoom and text-based sessions as well as through asynchronous emailed feedback. Feedback addresses both higher order and lower order concerns while also providing educational resources for students to utilize in their writing process.

While instruction was primarily online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Writing Lab continued its support of writers at any stage of the writing process.

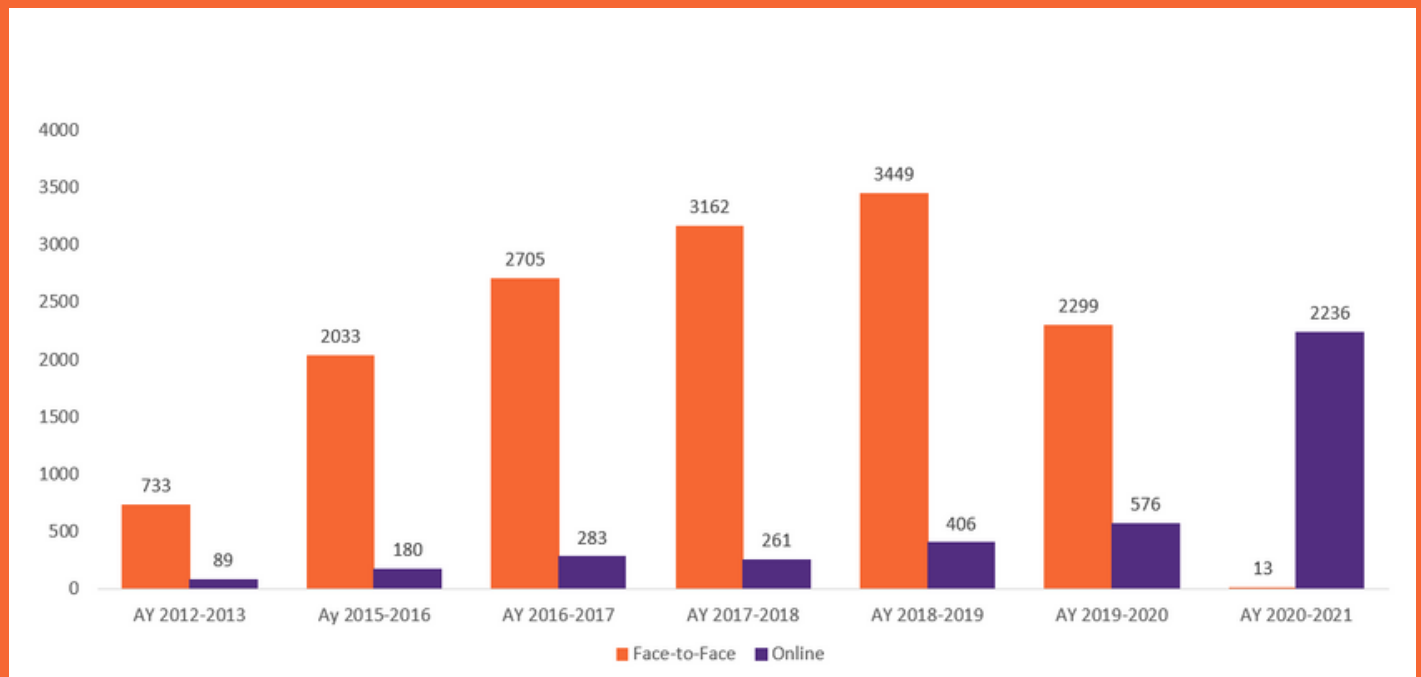
GRADUATE SUPPORT

Graduate writing support is a secondary emphasis of the Clemson Writing Lab. Support for graduate writing takes the form of both synchronous and asynchronous appointments with availability of hour-long appointment lengths. Graduate appointments accounted for **25% of total appointments** in the Writing Lab in AY 2020-2021. This is an increase from the 17% of AY 2019-2020.

Graduate students often noted in Writing Lab appointments and feedback that the Writing Lab was essential in the completion of their work, ranging from professional documents for job searches to dissertation drafts. Likewise, graduate students noted that the Writing Lab acted as accountability support for their productivity.



APPOINTMENTS PER ACADEMIC YEAR



CLEMSON WRITING LAB 2020 - 2021

The Clemson Writing Center saw a 22% decrease in usage between the 2019-2020 Academic Year and the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Notes regarding data:

- **COVID-19:** The Writing Lab moved online in March 2020. The Writing Lab remained online through Summer 2020. During the 2020-2021 Academic Year, appointments were primarily online through synchronous and asynchronous appointments. In-person appointments were limited.
- **Lack of Embedded Tutoring:** The Embedded Writing Fellow Program was placed on hold for revision in the 2019-2020 Academic Year. That hold continued into the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

Colloquially, many students who booked appointments noted that burnout was a common cause of avoiding additional online engagement. One student noted that it was "reassuring" that the Writing Lab was there if needed. Other students noted that they would prefer different forms of appointments for "quick answers" rather than booking a 30-minute appointment. Potential ways to address this need are being explored.

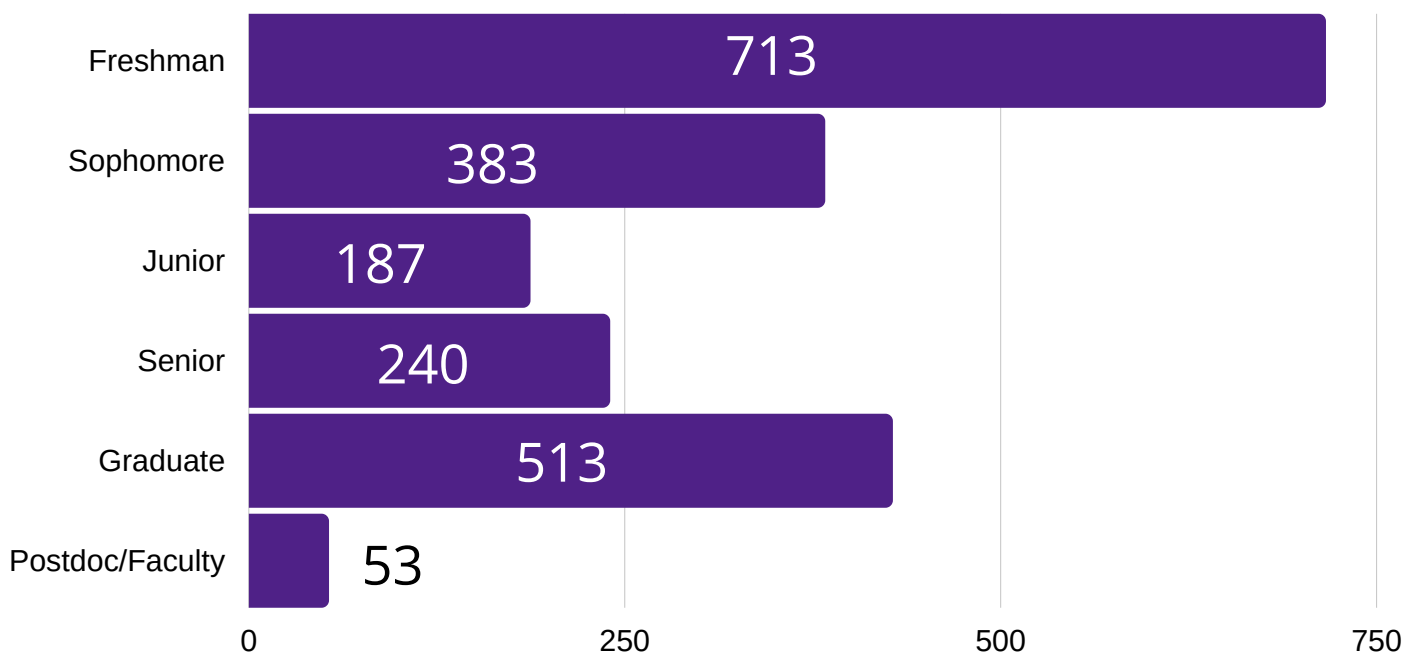
STATS

AUG 2020 - MAY 2021

The Clemson Writing Lab hosted 2007 appointments during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms. Over 50% of appointments were self-indicated freshmen, a majority of which were in ENGL 1030. Below, there is a breakdown of appointments by academic standing. At 25%, graduate students (Masters and PhD) account

for the second most common usage of the Writing Lab. Juniors accounted for the fewest appointments this year in comparison to last year's seniors. The Writing Lab is largely marketed to ENGL 1030 courses. Many seniors use the Writing Lab for feedback on their graduate school and job application materials.

2007 appointments in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021



STATS

AUG 2020 - MAY 2021

At the Clemson Writing Lab, **47% of clients returned for at least a second visit during the 2020-2021 Academic Year.**

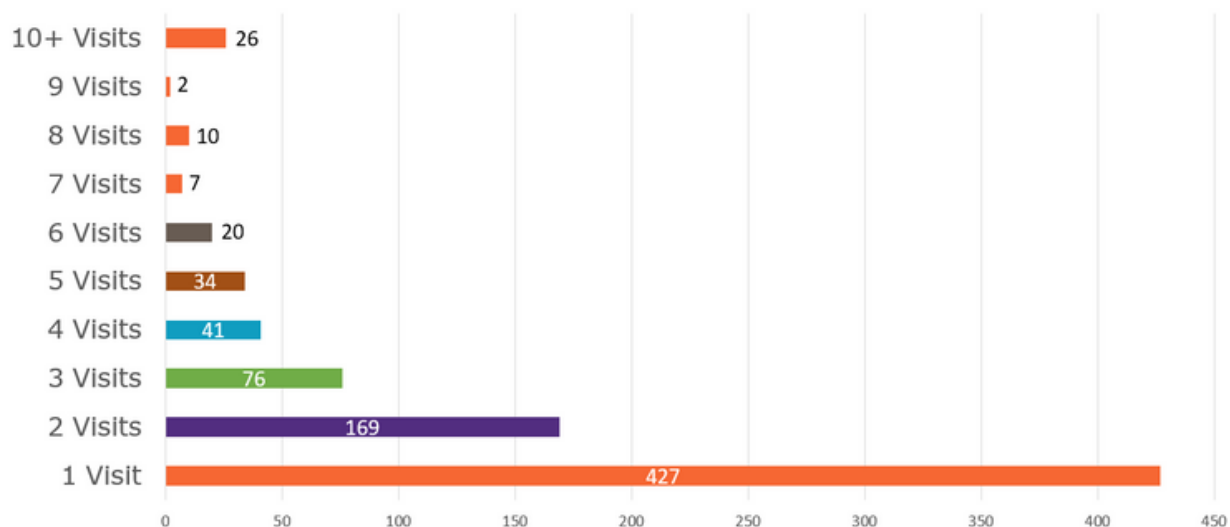
Returning clients is often perceived as an indicator of success in forming relationships with clientele. Students with multiple or long-running assignments often return if

they feel their needs are met. Students are given the ability to schedule appointments ahead. Several utilized these pre-scheduled appointments as benchmarks or check-ins for their writing progress. Of the 427 single-visit clients, their reasons for a single appointment are unknown.

812

clients served
in the 2020-2021
Academic Year

Number of Visits (per client)

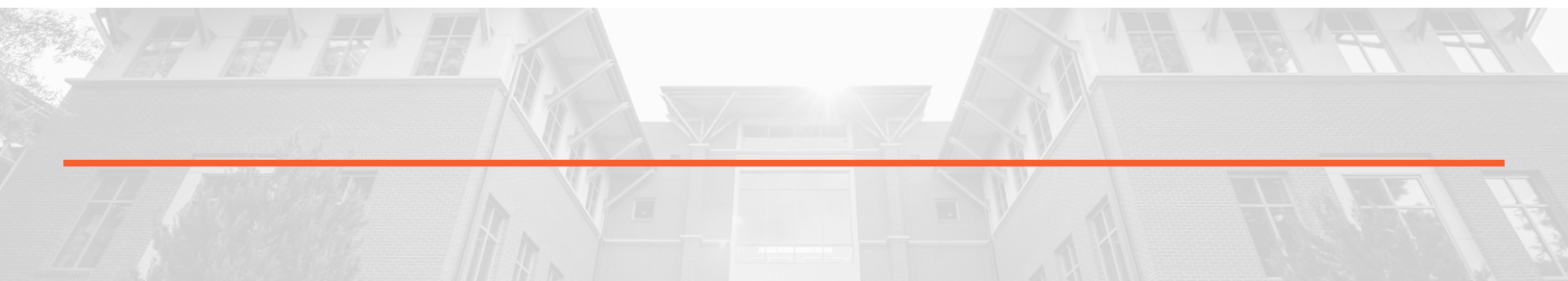


WRITING CENTER USERS BY MAJOR

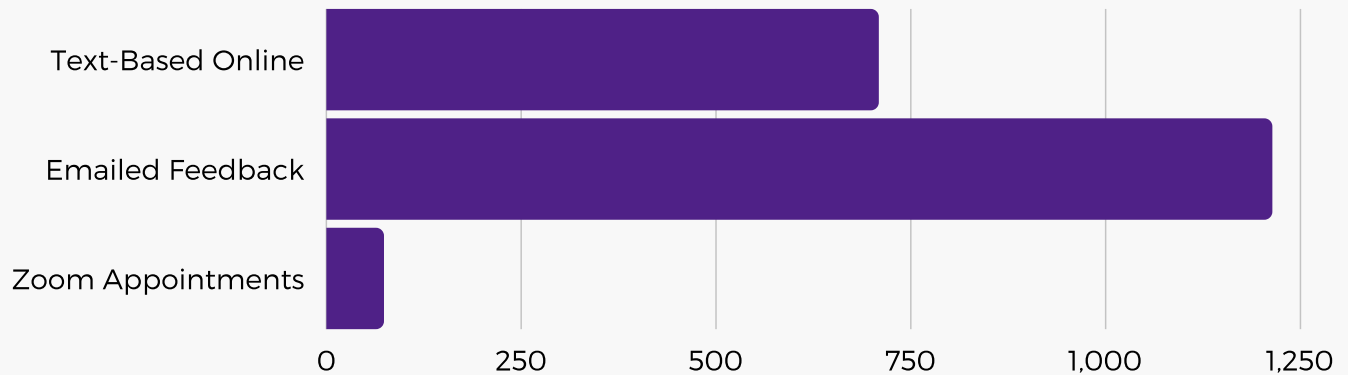


Students from each college used the Writing Lab.

The Writing Lab supports the entire Clemson Family, providing writing feedback to students from across the disciplines. In the graphic above, the most common majors to use the Writing Lab are proportionally larger compared to less common majors. The Top 50 majors are included in the image.



ONLINE SUPPORT



The Writing Lab was almost exclusively online for the 2020-2021 Academic Year. In Fall 2019, we launched emailed feedback appointments, which allows students to submit their papers prior to an appointment time. Students then receive feedback at the end of the registered time. This support option saw a significant increase in usage this academic year.

Writing Fellows are trained in effective emailed feedback practice.

ZOOM APPOINTMENTS

LAUNCHED SPRING 2021

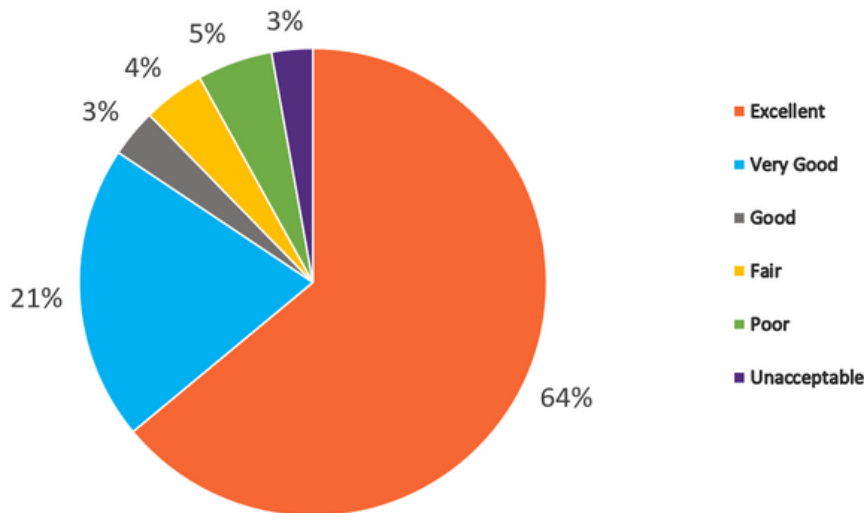
In Fall 2020, a team of Writing Fellows tested and ran trials for the use of Zoom appointments. This included the development of a manual and standard practices. Zoom appointments opened for

availability in a limited capacity in Spring 2021. This will be expanded in the future and, eventually, replace the synchronous text-based appointments currently offered.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

SURVEY RESULTS:

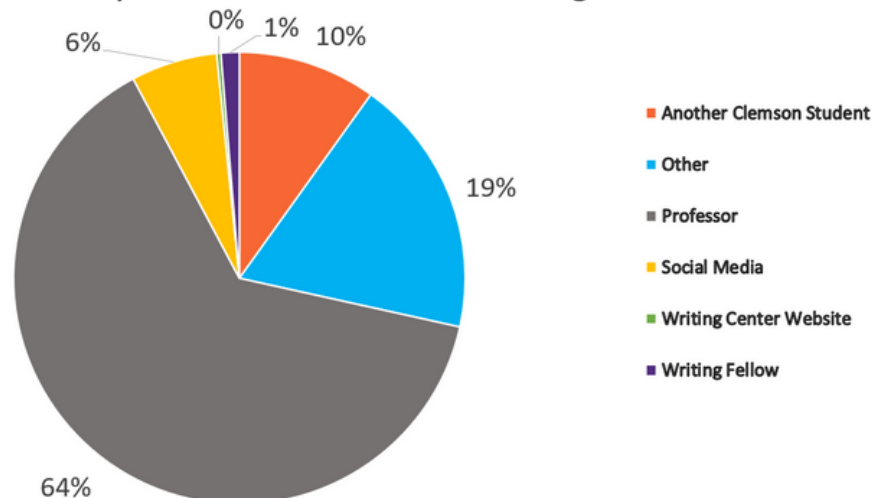
I would rate this Writing Lab session:



In the 2020-2021 Academic Year, we received 211 survey responses. Surveys are completely anonymous. There was a slight decrease in response between last academic year and this academic year, from 352 to 211. This echoes the decrease in usage due to COVID-19. "Unacceptable" and "poor" ratings were often associated with technical issues.

To understand how students come to know of the Writing Lab, we ask clients to indicate this providence in their survey. Referrals from professors has increased (from 55% to 64%), which demonstrates that our outreach to instructors is heavily influencing Writing Lab usage. Efforts will be made to increase the usage of social media and clarifying "other" means of providence.

How did you learn about the Writing Lab?



FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

TESTIMONIALS:

Short responses and testimonials are collected along with survey results.

- **Ayesha** provided very helpful advice on the grammar and sentence structures of my VMCAS essays! I really appreciate everyone I have worked with in the Writing Lab because they have helped me with applications, papers, and lab reports. It gives me that extra confidence that I am getting the ideas across to the application reviewers/graders!
- **Gracie's** feedback was exceptional. My experience with the Writing Lab has always been positive, but this was the best session yet. Her comments led to creating a stronger paper and provided tips to improve my writing skills. Thank you!
- **Ronnie** is amazing! She helped me so much and even made me feel like I am great writer even though I know it is not my strong suit! I will be making an appointment with her every week until my paper is perfect!
- **Evan** was fantastic! He was straightforward and concrete with his advice, so the session was very efficient.
- **Margo** was great. The feedback was very professional and helped me improving my documents beyond the surface level. There was additional information included in the document which can help me avoid similar mistakes in the future.

"The comments provided were very useful and helped me to revise my work further. I appreciate all the help!"

"I wish I had this when I first went to college 25 years ago."

"I feel not only more confident in my paper but I learned a lot of helpful tips for my papers in the future. I will definitely be using the writing lab again!"

"This was far more helpful than I expected."

PRESENTATIONS AND RESEARCH

The Clemson University Writing Lab is increasing its presence in regional and national conversations regarding writing center theory and practice. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clemson Writing Lab was represented at regional and national conferences.

- Director Chelsea Murdock and Assistant Director Eric Hamilton presented at the **Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference**. Their presentation, "Reflections and (Re)Visions: Our Past and Our Future in Names and Narratives," discussed ways that the Clemson Writing Lab has reflected on its name change and the influences that affect that name change.
- Director Chelsea Murdock presented as part of the the **International Writing Center Collaborative 2021**. The presentation, "4R's at the Center: Relations in Writing Center Praxis," discussed the way Murdock centers the 4R's (respect, reciprocity, relationality, and relevance/reliability) of Indigenous research methodologies in administrative and writing support praxis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Clemson University Writing Lab adopted a biweekly model for ongoing professional development of staff. Professional development meetings this year were hosted entirely online.

- Training sessions included a workshop hosted by Healthy Campus regarding stress management and a session on speech-writing support provided by the Communication Center.
- Writing Lab staff underwent the first of what is now annual formal review with individual observations and evaluation sessions with Writing Lab leadership.
- Professional development will be further expanded in AY 21-22 with more robust workshop elements.

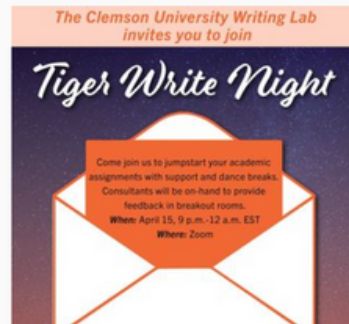
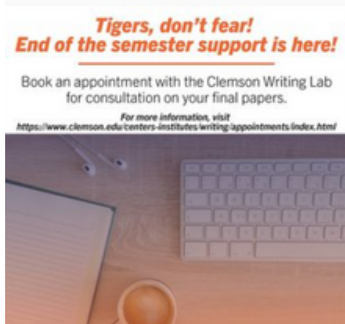


OUTREACH

This academic year, the Clemson Writing Lab invested time and resources into updating our visual identity, developing strategic marketing practices, and event creation/participation.

- **Logo Design and Adoption:** Writing Lab staff worked with university creative services to create a standardized, university-sponsored logo. The logo incorporates the Writing Lab's name change and a symbol conveying the importance of connection in campus writing support.
- **Social Media Maintenance:** All social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) were maintained with Writing Fellows implementing a strategic plan for more effective social media usage.
- **Collaboration with Pearce Center for Professional Communication and Communication Center:** In order to make clearer the support provided by all three communication support centers on campus, we collaborated with the Pearce Center and Communication Center in a joint marketing push.

These outreach and marketing efforts are essential as the Writing Lab increases its presence on campus.



EVENTS

This academic year, the Clemson Writing Lab planned and participated in several events. These events were meant to act as thoroughfares for engagement with the broader campus community outside of single one-on-one sessions.

- **Tiger Write Night:** Tiger Write Nights are late-night writing events intended to support students during midterms and near finals. Our Tiger Write Nights were exclusively online in AY 2020-2021. While attendance was low, we hope to make this event one of our standards
- **Tips and Strategies for Writing Resistance:** The Writing Lab Director was invited to present at a Grad 360 workshop. This particular workshop provided graduate students with tips in overcoming writer's block and writing anxiety.
- **Online Writing Workshop Series:** The Writing Lab launched a completely online series of workshops on a range of topics. While some workshops had extremely low attendance, others had 30+ attendees from across the university.
- **International Writing Centers Week:** The Writing Lab participated in International Writing Centers Week for the second year in a row. This event preceded the official launch of the Writing Lab rename, allowing us to rename as part of an international event.

TIGER WRITE NIGHT

March 4 9p

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER
WWW.CLEMSON.EDU/CENTERS-INSTITUTES/

ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

OVERCOMING WRITING DIFFICULTIES
OCTOBER 26 AT 1PM EST VIA ZOOM

PITCHING YOUR WORK TO THE PUBLIC
OCTOBER 28 AT 1PM EST VIA ZOOM

LITERATURE REVIEW
NOVEMBER 16 AT 1PM EST VIA ZOOM

A banner hanging from a ceiling with the text "welcome to the Writing Center". The banner has a hexagonal pattern and is set against a background of a modern building interior with a grid ceiling and recessed lights.

welcome to the
Writing Center

CLEMSON WRITING LAB **FORWARD**

2021 – 2022

The Writing Lab aims to deepen the culture of writing at Clemson University and to provide a central hub for that culture. To do this, we plan to move towards more sustained and sustainable relationships with students, staff, and faculty. This emphasis on sustainability reaches to the core of the Writing Lab's mission and core values.

We will develop multiple contacts and ongoing collaboration through...

- Repeat individual consultations with the same consultant
- Undergraduate and graduate writing groups
- Updated Embedded Writing Fellows programming
- Impactful writing events and series of events

These initiatives recognize that faculty are key to facilitating an environment for writing in their classes and in their disciplines. Faculty who receive support for their own academic writing are likely to better understand their students' writing support needs. They request in-class workshops for their undergraduates, recommend writing groups to their graduate students and advisees, and encourage students to attend Clemson Writing Lab events.

In sum, by devoting personnel and funding to consulting, writing groups, Writing Fellows, writing events, and enhanced collaboration with campus allies, we will support and sustain a culture of writing at Clemson and contribute mightily to the retention and graduation of undergraduate and graduate students across the disciplines.