WRITING CENTER
Texas A&M International University

RANDY KOCH
DIRECTOR
Writing Center
Functional Chart
2005-2006

Director—Randy Koch
- Coordinate Writing Center activities
- Recruit, interview, and hire staff
- Supervise, train, and evaluate tutors
- Advise students re university writing requirement
- Sponsor campus literary magazine
- Keep records and prepare reports
- Monitor progress of contract students
- Prepare & present Writing Center classroom presentations
- Tutor students & respond to students’ work via e-mail & fax
- Plan and coordinate Visiting Writers Series
- Monitor and recommend changes to web page

Associate Director—Destine Holmgreen
- Recruit, interview, and hire staff
- Supervise, train, and evaluate tutors
- Assist Director with coordinating Writing Center activities
- Advise students re THEA & university writing requirement
- Keep records and help Director prepare reports
- Monitor progress of contract students
- Prepare & present Writing Center classroom presentations
- Tutor students & respond to students’ work via e-mail & fax
- Monitor and recommend changes to web page

Office Coordinator—Jessica Villanueva
- Create tutors’ work schedules
- Answer phones & perform clerical duties
- Prepare & maintain personnel files, tutors’ folders, & attendance records
- Prepare correspondence & paperwork, such as requisition & budget action forms, consultant contracts, time cards, etc.
- Gather & analyze student data
- Update website
- Advise students re university writing requirement & waive holds
- Purchase & track supplies
- Greet students, direct WC traffic, & schedule appointments

Tutors
- Conduct tutoring sessions
- Contribute to & publish newsletter
- Keep records & gather data
- Develop & present workshops and orientation sessions
- Answer phones; greet students
- Participate in & complete on-going tutor-training activities
- Monitor & document GENU & contract students’ attendance
- Respond to online, fax, & HelpLine requests for assistance
- Perform other duties as needed, such as making copies, delivering & picking up correspondence, cleaning, etc.
The primary mission of the Writing Center at Texas A&M International University is to support the instructional goals of the faculty by providing students with free individual and small-group tutoring sessions, peer review sessions, and writing workshops. Writing tutors are specially trained students and paraprofessionals who have demonstrated excellence in helping others improve their written communication skills. In order to develop more confident and competent writers, tutors guide students in the development, revision, and editing of their papers. Tutors listen and respond to students’ works-in-progress, ask questions, and identify areas to focus on for improvement. Since the goal of tutoring is to develop increasingly independent writers, tutors do not correct errors or rewrite students’ work; instead, they suggest and demonstrate one or two strategies students may use to improve their writing.

Tutoring sessions generally last from twenty-five to fifty minutes, depending on the needs of each student. Students may drop in or make an appointment. Faculty members may arrange standing appointments for students who need regular help in developing their written English skills.

The Writing Center also supports literary and writing-oriented organizations, clubs, publications, and activities at Texas A&M International University and provides outreach services to foster the continued growth of literacy activities within the local community.
The Texas A&M International University Writing Center began serving students in Spring 2002 and completed its fourth full academic year of operation in August 2006. The primary goals during 2005-06 were to build on, improve, and add to the services established during the previous three and a half years and to make students, faculty and staff aware of those services. Writing Center accomplishments during 2005-06 include the following:

1) In Fall 2005 students made 4,865 visits to the Writing Center for writing-related services, and during 2,831 of those visits, students received tutor assistance.
2) In Spring 2006, students made 3,421 visits to the Writing Center for writing-related services, and during 2,163 of those visits, students received tutor assistance.
3) In Summer 2006, students made 663 visits to the Writing Center for writing-related services, and during 523 of those visits, students received tutor assistance.
4) In Fall 2006 students made 4,759 visits to the Writing Center for writing-related services, and during 2,677 of those visits, students received tutor assistance.
5) From Fall 2005 through Fall 2006 (59.5 weeks), a total of 13,708 students came to the Writing Center for writing-related services (an average of 230.39 students/week compared to 250.78 students/week during 2004-05). Of those, 8,194 received tutor assistance (an average of 137.71 students/week compared to 113.63 students/week during 2004-05).
6) Evaluations of tutors completed by students showed great satisfaction with the quality of the tutoring. Of 3,871 students who were asked from Fall 2005 through Fall 2006, “How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your tutor?” 87.41% said “excellent” and 10.41% said “very good” for a total of 97.82% (compared to 2004-05 evaluations on which 87.35% said “excellent” and 11.03% said “very good” for a total of 98.38%)
7) From Fall 2005 through Fall 2006, the Director, Associate Director, and tutors made 47 Writing Center orientation presentations to 1,078 students in various classes; 32 of the presentations were given to freshman seminar (GENU1300) to give students an overview of Writing Center services.
8) From Fall 2005 through Fall 2006, Writing Center directors and tutors made 38 additional presentations to 909 students in various classes regarding MLA and APA style documentation, essay structure and development, showing vs. telling, run-ons and comma splices, summarizing, and argumentation.
9) Writing Center tutors contributed to, did the lay-out for, and published five eight-page issues, one ten-page issue, and one twelve-page issue of The Writer’s Forum, a bimonthly newsletter.
10) Students used services other than tutoring. From Fall 2005 through Fall 2006, Writing Center staff received and responded to 75 other requests—44 for assistance through the website or by e-mail, 28 on the HelpLine, and 3 by fax—compared to 37 total requests during 2004-05—17 through the website or by e-mail, 16 on the HelpLine, and 4 by fax.
11) The Director served as faculty sponsor for Reflections, an annual literary journal. The fifth annual issue (for the 2005-06 academic year) will be printed and released early in 2007.
12) In August 2006, tutors Joe Molina, Andy Benavides, Mike Herrera, and Melissa Reyna along with TAMIU students Mario Martinez, Maggie Ocuña, Deena Garza, and Cynthia Garcia started two writers groups that meet weekly at Killam Library or at a local coffee shop. They plan to produce a publication that includes writing peer-reviewed by the group.
13) The Voices in the Monte Writers Series continued with two writers coming to TAMIU—San Antonio poet, screenwriter, and fiction writer Carmen Tafolla during Fall 2005 and René Saldaña Jr., author of The Jumping Tree (Random House, 2001) and Finding Our Way (Lamb, 2003) during Spring 2006. Both writers gave a talk on the craft of writing and presented a public reading of their work. Tafolla’s talk on craft was attended by approximately 180 university and public and private school students and faculty and community members and her public reading by about 30; Saldaña’s talk on craft was attended by about 28 and his public reading by about 40. During Fall 2006 preparations were underway to bring Laredo novelist Carlos Flores, author of Our House on Hueco (Texas Tech UP, 2006) and Cristina Garcia, author of Dreaming in Cuban and The Agüero Sisters (Ballantine Books).

14) Tutors expanded our list of available PowerPoint workshops from 24 to 29 by creating 5 new workshops: Thesis Statements, Introductions, Cutting Clutter, Outlining, and Using Sources. These are available at the Writing Center and on our website.

15) The Writing Center Office Coordinator maintained the website by updating and/or adding PowerPoint writing workshops, newly revised writing handouts, new tutor photos and work schedules, submission guidelines for Reflections literary magazine, the schedule of visiting writers, and resources for faculty.

16) Training for new and veteran tutors was further expanded by adding additional writing skills exercises, requiring tutors to observe and give feedback on 2 sessions conducted by other tutors each semester, participate with Directors in a think-aloud session during which tutors diagnose a student essay and discuss tutoring approaches, and to be observed while conducting a tutoring session once each semester by the Associate Director. The Associate Director continued to assemble materials for our tutor training program so that tutors can become CRLA certified.

17) Tutors began work on a training video to be filmed at the Writing Center; a rough draft is expected by the end of Spring 2007.
Based on the Writing Center’s mission and goals and on the “Specific Tasks to Be Completed” as outlined on the Title V Grant Application, these are the specific goals for 2005-06:

**Goal #1:** Train Writing Center tutors.

**Desired Outcome:** Tutors will complete training models and receive certificates. This will result in their receiving high marks on tutor evaluations completed by students.

**Completion Time:** Ongoing.

**Measurement of Effectiveness:** Evaluation forms completed by tutees and other users of Writing Center services and facilities.

**Results:** (See #6 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006 and related graph)

**Goal #2:** Promote the Writing Center.

**Desired Outcome:** Completion of initial campaign and continuation of promotion will result in an increase in student participation.

**Completion Time:** Ongoing.

**Measurement of Effectiveness:** Student sign-in logs and requests for Writing Center services via the website, fax, and HelpLine and attendance at Voices in the Monte Writers Series events.

**Results:** (See #1-5, 10, and 13 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006.)

**Goal #3:** Design and implement web page access to TAMIU tutoring center and other writing assistance links.

**Desired Outcome:** Success of web design and access will be evaluated each year.

**Completion Time:** Ongoing.

**Measurement of Effectiveness:** Hit counter to determine number of visits to website.

**Results:** 6,049 hits were recorded from September 1, 2005 through December 31, 2006. This is 150 fewer hits than the website received during 2004-2005.

**Goal #4:** Hold regular sessions on a variety of topics to prepare students for testing and academic tasks.

**Desired Outcome:** Tutors will create and present workshops on a variety of topics designed to help students improve their writing skills. These were presented two to four weeks prior to the UWA each semester.

**Completion Time:** Ongoing.

**Measurement of Effectiveness:** Session evaluations will measure and document their effectiveness.

**Results:** (See #7 and 8 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006.)
Goal #5: Establish a “Big Brother, Big Sister” writing support program.

Desired Outcome: Writing Center Director will identify under-prepared students as measured by UWA and THEA, invite them to participate and match them with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. These students will participate in individual mentoring sessions held once a week.

Completion Time: Ongoing.

Measurement of Effectiveness: With the discontinuation of the UWA after the April 2005 exam, participants’ success on the UWA could no longer be used to measure the Writing Center’s effectiveness in meeting this goal. Instead, the Director tracked the completion rate for students who signed a contract to meet their college’s undergraduate writing requirement.

Results: (See #12 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006.)

Goal #6: Establish a “Community of Writers” Workshop Program.

Desired Outcome: Writing Center Director will promote and explain the Writing Workshop model. Interested student writers will meet once a week to establish a “Community of Writers” on campus and encourage writing as an enriching and rewarding experience.

Completion Time: Ongoing.

Measurement of Effectiveness: Publication of literary magazine featuring student work at the end of the academic year.

Results: The fifth issue of Reflections will be published and released in early spring 2007. (See #10 and #11 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006.)

Goal #7: Establish a Visiting Writers Speaker Series.

Desired Outcome: English faculty and Writing Center Director will select list of professional writers for the Series; two will be invited and two events will be held per academic year.

Completion Time: Ongoing.

Measurement of Effectiveness: The general university community will attend and evaluate speaker events.

Results: (See #13 on Goals and Accomplishments 2005-2006.)

Goal #8: Recruit graduate students for South Texas Writing Project Summer Institute to increase their preparedness as peer tutors or public school teachers.

Desired Outcome: Number of graduate students enrolled in the yearly summer course will increase.

Completion Time: Ongoing.


Results: Writing Center Tutor and TAMU Dept. of Language and Literature adjunct Daniela Rodriguez completed the 2006 Summer Institute.
Writing Center Services

Drop-in tutoring:
Tutors assist students with writing assignments and preparation for tests that have a writing component (such as THEA, GRE, SAT, ACT, etc.); this service is offered Sunday through Saturday, 62.5 hours per week.

Scheduled and Referred Students:
Students may schedule appointments by phone, e-mail, or fax. In addition, students referred to the Writing Center by their professors are given assistance based on their professors’ recommendations.

UWA advising and registration:
Students with University Writing Assessment holds can come to the Writing Center to have their hold waived or to be advised about how to clear the hold.

40-Hour Contract for Developmental English Students:
Students who have not passed the writing portion of the THEA and are unable to enroll in Developmental English or enrolled in a Developmental English class that was cancelled due to low enrollment may prepare to retake the THEA by contracting and attending forty hours of writing and tutoring at the Writing Center. Specific requirements of the contract include writing and revising five essays; working one-on-one with an assigned tutor; completing a series of exercises on sentence variety, verb forms, and prepositions; and attending small group instruction sessions directed by one or two tutors.

45-Hour Contract for Fulfillment of University Undergraduate Writing Requirement
Students who attempted but did not pass the University Writing Assessment prior to its elimination after the Spring 2005 exam are required to demonstrate competency in writing in some other way. Colleges usually direct students to take or retake ENGL3301; however, students who have already taken this class and subsequently failed the UWA were given the option of completing a forty-five-hour contract at the Writing Center. Specific requirements of the contract include writing and revising six essays; working one-on-one with an assigned tutor; and completing a series of exercises on sentence variety and verb forms. This option is provided to students who are either on campus and enrolled in classes or no longer attend the University because they completed all the coursework but didn’t receive their degree because they haven’t fulfilled the university’s writing requirement.

On-line and fax tutoring:
Tutors and/or directors read and respond to requests for writing assistance that arrive at the Writing Center via e-mail and fax.
HelpLine assistance:
Tutors respond to questions called in by TAMIU students, faculty, and staff and from people in the community regarding writing issues (such as spelling, punctuation, documentation, grammar, etc.) that can be addressed over the phone and which do not require the tutor read what the writer has written.

Resource materials:
The Writing Center produces and/or has available a variety of writing resource materials: preparation guide for the THEA; 44 handouts containing information on grammar, essay writing, documentation styles, ESL problems, etc.; handbooks, reference books (such as English and Spanish dictionaries and thesauruses), and composition texts; and 29 PowerPoint presentations on a variety of writing skills.

Writing Workshops:
The Writing Center offers workshops to the University community via the website. These workshops cover topics such as developing introductions and conclusions, providing evidence, using sentence variety, etc. and include a PowerPoint presentation and a hands-on writing activity, which can also be used in the classroom.

Center for TAMIU publications:
Several different publications are written and/or sponsored by Writing Center staff, including The Writers’ Forum (the Writing Center’s bimonthly newsletter), the THEA preparation guide, and Reflections (an annual literary journal).