University Writing Program Annual Report: Fall 2018 to Summer 2019

In academic year (AY) Fall 2018 through Summer 2019, Drexel’s University Writing Program (UWP) has continued its ongoing work with dozens of units and programs, hundreds of faculty, thousands of Drexel University students, and many members of the community that surrounds and interweaves with Drexel. The UWP is comprised of interrelated and complementary programs designed to support the use of writing as a powerful tool for thinking, inquiry, connection, and communication:

- **The Drexel Writing Center** helps all members of the Drexel community think through and develop their writing projects, primarily through one-on-one consultations with Peer Readers, Faculty Readers, and Graduate Writing Consultants.

- **Curricular Initiatives** supports and develops programmatic writing offerings, including Writing Intensive courses at Drexel. These offerings are designed to help students practice writing, give them opportunities to use writing as a tool for learning, and introduce them to the writing conventions and practices of particular fields or disciplines. Curricular Initiatives also works closely with faculty to help them teach writing in their courses.

- **Strategic Initiatives** connects stakeholders on transformative projects that span units across the university in an effort to reshape and re-envision the use of writing at Drexel—and beyond.

AY 2018-19 brought significant change to the UWP:

- Strategic Initiatives was structurally relocated under the College of Arts & Sciences.
- The offices of the UWP and the Drexel Writing Center moved to a new space in the Korman Center. The hidden location in the basement of MacAlister Hall was a huge challenge in the past; the move to Korman removed a major barrier for student writers and was the culmination of years of effort by the UWP administration to overcome this challenge.

This report provides highlights of the year, describing in detail the work—and the people—of our programs, and illustrates several challenges facing the growth and development of the UWP.

**Challenges**

While this report celebrates and describes many UWP accomplishments and triumphs, we are still faced with challenges. Drexel remained in a period of “austerity,” and budget cuts continued to disrupt some programming, particularly Graduate Writing Consulting for graduate student writers. UWP programs still struggled with issues of visibility. Faculty around Drexel indicate interest in finding ways to use writing in their courses, but communicating support offerings—e.g., workshops—remains an unsolved problem.

Drexel Writing Center programs support student writing through crucial individualized support found nowhere else in the university. The move to Korman places the Center in the heart of campus, making its programs accessible and reflecting their value. This move will, however, increase the need to grow these programs. This emphasizes the need for more resources, primarily a coordinator position to enable the entire UWP to meet goals. The bi-annual interviewing, hiring, and training process for the co-op position that currently meets some of these needs is a drain on resources and unsustainable in the long run.
PERSONNEL

Administration

Prof. Dan Driscoll  
Teaching Professor of English  
Associate Director, University Writing  
Program: Curricular Initiatives  
Co-Director, Minor in Writing

Dr. Scott Warnock  
Professor of English  
Director, University Writing Program

Prof. Rachel Wenrick  
Associate Teaching Professor of English  
Associate Director, University Writing  
Program: Strategic Initiatives  
Co-Director, Minor in Writing

Prof. Janel McCloskey  
Associate Director, University Writing  
Program: Drexel Writing Center

Faculty Writing Fellows

Faculty Writing Fellows work with faculty colleagues and units from across the university, providing one-on-one writing across the curriculum support to enhance the teaching of writing in their courses, program-level support for writing, and individual mentoring for faculty writers. These faculty members, who also teach in the First-Year Writing and English Programs, receive course releases to work in the UWP. Our 2018-19 Fellows were:

Dr. Valerie Fox  
Teaching Professor of English

Dr. Kirsten Kaschock  
Assistant Teaching Professor of English

Prof. Lisa DiMaio  
Teaching Professor of English  
Coordinator for the Faculty Reader ESL Specialist Program

Operations Manager

The “front person” in the Drexel Writing Center (DWC) is our Operations Manager, a position held by undergraduate co-ops. This six-month co-op position is integral to the daily operations of the DWC and the UWP. The Operations Manager position provides the co-op student with an opportunity to develop organizational, analytical, and problem-solving skills; communicate with various audiences in a professional context; and supervise others. Our Operations Managers for 2018-19 were Tajanté Wainwright and Sarah Miller.

PROGRAM-WIDE

As mentioned, the UWP underwent two significant changes in 2018-19. First, in Winter 2019, SI moved structurally to become a College of Arts & Sciences (CoAS)-level program, with Prof. Wenrick elevated to the role of Director of Writers Room. Then, in Spring 2019, the UWP and the DWC moved from the basement of MacAlister Hall to a new space in the Korman Center. This event was marked with a grand opening on May 29, during which Dean Maria Schultheis spoke about the long effort to locate the DWC in a more central and visible place and to co-locate with other support services the college offers. Prof. McCloskey spoke briefly to thank those involved in securing the beautiful new space and to reintroduce
attendees to the work of the DWC. Dean Schultheis and Prof. McCloskey joined representatives from Math, Biology, and Physics in cutting the ribbon and officially opening the space.

Regional and National Activities

Service

Members of the UWP have maintained roles in national and regional leadership positions. Prof. McCloskey is the Secretary of the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association. Prof. Wenrick is Co-Chair of the Conference on Community Writing, which will take place in Philadelphia in Fall 2019. Dr. Warnock is President of the Global Society of Online Literacy Educators and is a member of the Executive Board of the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Research and Scholarship

Prof. McCloskey presented papers or on panels at three national conferences:

- “From the Center Out: A Study of the Impact of Antiracist Pedagogy Training on Peer Tutors” at the International Writing Centers Association in Atlanta in October.
- “The Hats We Wear: Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in the Writing Center” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Pittsburgh in March.
- “The Intentional Writing Center: Using Equity Centered Community Design in the Writing Center” at the Council of Writing Program Administrators in Baltimore in July.

Dr. Warnock presented at two national conferences:

- “Supporting Online Literacy in Writing Programs,” in which he served as a roundtable moderator with several colleagues at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference in Baltimore in July.
- “Effective Strategies for Instructor Presence in Asynchronous Settings,” a workshop at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Pittsburgh in March.

Dr. Warnock was co-chair of the Global Society of Online Literacy Educators Online Literacy Instruction Principles Committee that published the organization’s Online Literacy Instruction Principles and Tenets.

University Service

Because of their work supporting writers and writing across campus, UWP members often offer their expertise in service roles at Drexel:

- Prof. Driscoll served on the Provost’s hiring committee for the inaugural director of the Teaching and Learning Center.
- Prof. Driscoll joined the advisory board for the new Teaching and Learning Center.
- Prof. McCloskey serves as a member of the Learning Alliance.
- Prof. McCloskey and Dr. Warnock are members of the advisory group for the First-Year Writing Program.
- Prof. McCloskey served as a member of the Fulbright Campus Review Committee.
- Dr. Warnock again served as a mentor for the Office of Faculty Affair’s CANOPI (Creating a Narrative of Professional Involvement) program; in Fall 2018 he worked with two faculty members and in Spring 2019 he worked with three faculty members to develop their academic portfolios.
• Prof. Driscoll was part of an April Pennoni Honors College panel (with President John Fry, Prof. Cordelia Biddle, Dr. Dimitri Papadopoulos, and Dr. Eric Zilmer) on working with students in seminar settings.

• Prof. McCloskey co-authored, with Dr. Rebecca Weidensaul, a report to the University Committee on Co-Curricular Support convened to envision the next strategic plan for the university. The report was created to represent the strengths and needs of a variety of co-curricular entities at the university.

• Dr. Warnock is the advisor for the weekly campus student newspaper, The Triangle.

Teaching

Members of the UWP team teach a variety of courses, ranging from First-Year Writing to established Writing course offerings to new courses such as Language Puzzles and Word Games: Issues in Modern Grammar.

CURRICULAR INITIATIVES

Curricular Initiatives (CI) works to support and develop writing offerings across and throughout Drexel’s curriculum. CI creates and delivers workshops for classes and student cohorts, provides consultations to faculty and programs on writing-related issues, and helps faculty across the university develop sound writing experiences for students in their courses.

As in past years, projects in AY 2018-19 put us in contact with hundreds of faculty, staff, and students from many units and parts of Drexel such as:

- Art History, Westphal
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing, CNHP
- Behavioral Health Counseling, CNHP
- Business Administration Executive Doctorate, LeBow
- Center for Scholar Development, Pennoni
- College Access Academy, Undergraduate Admissions
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Medicine
- Communication, CoAS
- Computing & Security Technology, CCI
- Corporate and Executive Education, Lebow
- Custom-Designed Major, Pennoni
- Drexel University Libraries
- Drexel University Online
- Entrepreneurship, Close School
- First-Year Writing Program, CoAS
- Graduate Nursing, CNHP
- Graduate Student Services, Lebow
- Honors Program, Pennoni
- Lindy Center for Civic Engagement
- Museum Leadership, Westphal
- Music Industry, Westphal
- Office of Faculty Affairs, Provost
- STAR Scholar Program, Pennoni
- Student Services, College of Engineering
- Supernova Undergraduate Research Fellows Program, Pennoni
- Television & Media Management MS, Westphal

This year, in addition to individual and program consultations involving curricular writing, the UWP offered workshops to student and faculty/staff cohorts. Workshops offered for students included:

• “Writing about Music” for Marketing and Promotion in the Music Industry students in October.
• “Writing as Reflection (Metacognition)” for the Supernova Undergraduate Research Fellows Program in February.
• “Citation Conventions: Rhetorical, Responsible, and ‘Logical’” for Dragon Summer students in July.
• “Abstracting: Working from a Larger Project” for Drexel’s STAR Scholars Program in July and August.
• “DBA Writing Workshops” for Lebow Doctorate of Business Administration students in August.
• “Communicating Professionally: The Rhetoric of Email” for LeBow College of Business MS and MBA students in September (2019).

Workshops offered for faculty included:

• “Creating Meaningful Learning Experiences: Frequent, Low-Stakes Grading” for new faculty at New Faculty Orientation in September (2018).
• Workshop for NURSING 121 Relationship-Based Nursing Care faculty in October.
• “(Blogs) Interest, Expertise, and Topics” for Drexel University Library staff in August.
• “Effective Strategies for Working with ESL/Multilingual Writers” for all faculty in November 2018 and for First-Year Writing faculty in February.

Writing Intensive Courses

Prof. Driscoll and Dr. Warnock co-chair the Writing Intensive Course committee, which reviews Writing Intensive (WI) course proposals and approved the following courses as WI effective Fall 2019:

- BACS 236 Psychiatric Rehabilitation Principles and Practices
- CMGT 385 Selling and Negotiation Techniques in Construction
- CT 491 Senior Project I
- CT 496 Senior Project II
- DIGM 308 Digital Cultural Heritage
- ECON 203 Survey of Economic Policy
- ENTP 225 Mindfulness and Wellbeing
- INFO 324 Team Process and Product
- MATH 222 Combinatorics
- NURS 423 Research basis for Nursing
- PHTO 276 History of Photography

The WI requirement continues to embody the challenges and pitfalls of a flagged course writing requirement, but WI Course Proposals show that the UWP’s articulation of WI Course Characteristics, as well as an improved proposal process and opportunities for consultation with faculty and programs, have led to WI courses that are better designed and offer better opportunity for students to develop as writers in disciplinary contexts.

The UWP recognizes further need and opportunity for faculty training and support, as well as for a more clearly defined vertical writing curriculum to help students develop as writers at Drexel. During AY 2019-20, the UWP plans to:

• Develop opportunities for more in-depth interactions with faculty across the curriculum, especially partnering with the new Teaching and Learning Center to increase the effectiveness of our outreach.
• Investigate models for an upper-level writing course that could augment the WI program by providing advanced writing skills and strategies that would benefit teaching and learning in WI classes.
Writing Minor and Addition of Writing Concentration to English Major

The UWP continued to administer the Writing Minor and upper-level writing (WRIT) courses offered by the Department of English & Philosophy.

During AY 2018-19, 16 students graduated with a Minor in Writing, and 17 new students enrolled in the minor for a total of 35 students (up from 30 in AY 2017-18).

In 2018-19, the Department of English & Philosophy approved adding a Writing Concentration to the English Major. To carry out the revision to the English major, the UWP:

- Created syllabi for seven new WRIT courses and proposed these and two WRIT courses created by colleagues in English & Philosophy to support the Core and Writing Concentration of the revised BA in English.
- Worked with Dr. Gabriella Ibieta, Director of English Programs, to revise guidelines for the senior project.
- Held information sessions (planned with Dr. Ibieta) on new curriculum for existing majors.
- Attended accepted student days.

DREXEL WRITING CENTER

The Drexel Writing Center (DWC) continued to meet the needs of student writers through three programs: the Peer Reader Program, the Graduate Writing Consultants (GWCs) program, and the ESL Faculty Reader Specialist program. While austerity measures at the university have created pressures limiting the ways these programs might grow, these programs have continued to provide the strongest one-to-one support for student writers at Drexel. Students and faculty in these programs have also benefitted greatly from professional development that consistently improves practice and provides an intellectual community to grow as citizens of the university and the world.

Peer Reader Program

The Peer Reader program consists of highly trained undergraduate students who collaborate with their peers to help them develop as writers. Training begins in WRIT 210: The Peer Reader in Context and continues throughout employment at the DWC through a refined professional development structure that includes peer-to-peer observation, observation by UWP staff with formative feedback, assigned readings and reflective written responses, and weekly professional development meetings.

Focus on Antiracist Pedagogy

Prof. McCloskey continued to lead the sustained focus on antiracist pedagogy, a topic that has recently come to the forefront in the writing center studies and composition and rhetoric. She continued to integrate this training into the Peer Reader program through three full-day professional development events, weekly meetings, readings and reflective writing, and collaborative projects in the DWC. She and the UWP team worked with Peer Readers to develop more fully their understanding of antiracist work, particularly in writing studies and in working with writers.

Prof. McCloskey introduced Equity Centered Community Design, a framework created by Creative Reaction Labs that focuses on a community’s culture and needs to develop tools to dismantle systemic oppression and create a more equitable future. This framework functioned as an invaluable tool in solidifying the extensive work Peer Readers have done as a community in antiracist writing and tutoring.
pedagogy and practices. It enabled us to begin planning the articulation and dissemination of this work to the writers we work with and to invite the wider Drexel community to do this work with us. The use of this framework has been difficult, challenging, and fruitful. It has helped Peer Readers understand how to do this work with an institution instead of in opposition to that institution.

Professional development readings, workshops, and conversations continued to focus on issues of antiracist pedagogy and linguistic diversity. Peer Readers read and reflected on issues pertaining to race and anti-racist pedagogy in genres ranging from journalism to fiction to academic journal articles. Readings included such diverse selections as “White Fragility” by Robin DiAngelo, “Leaving Home Sweet Home: Towards Critical Reading of Writing Center Spaces” by Jackie Grutsch McKinney, and Claudia Rankine’s interview with Krista Tippet on the On Being podcast, “How Do I Say This So We Can Stay in the Car Together.” Professional development weaves this focus on antiracist work into the program, making it an essential part of how Peer Readers develop as readers, writers, and tutors.

**Graduate Writing Consultants Program**

The GWC program continues to struggle to meet the demand for support for graduate student writers. Prof. McCloskey maintained the program, provided scaled-back professional development, sometimes on an individual basis due to trainees’ scheduling constraints, for consultants, and hired and trained three new consultants. She offered two half-day professional development events for GWCs providing support and training in working with multilingual writers and an introduction to antiracist writing practices.

The loss of a coordinator for this program continues to be a challenge for maintaining and growing the program to meet the needs of the graduate student population.

**Faculty Reader ESL Specialists Program**

The ESL Specialist program was not as busy in AY 2018-19 as it has been in the past, perhaps due to changes in Drexel’s recruitment of multilingual students. As a result, the program was stable this academic year. Usage is expected to increase because of the more central Korman location.

Prof. DiMaio, Coordinator for the Faculty Reader ESL Specialist Program, regularly led professional development sessions with ESL Specialists to share and develop best practices in working with multilingual writers, discuss current scholarship in the fields of writing centers and language acquisition, explore ways they can improve their interactions with students, and build community.

**Language, Writing and Research**

In the Fall, Winter, and Spring of AY 2018-19, 10 students who submitted a total of 23 writing assignments sought help from this service, which integrates services from the DWC, the Drexel Library, and the English Language Center; papers included including reflective essays; business projects; law papers; case studies for bio-ethics; cover letters for internships; business audits; marketing essays; essays for English 101, 102, 103; book reviews; and annotated bibliographies.

**Outreach and Collaboration**

The DWC serves the entire university, interacting and collaborating with students, staff, and faculty in a variety of ways. In AY 2018-19, the DWC consulted and collaborated with fifteen programs/units in 37 interactions. Prof. McCloskey worked with Drexel University Online to create a scripted and recorded workshop for prospective incoming students, consulted with the Lindy Center on antiracist pedagogy in training students workers, gave a workshop to the Learning Alliance on incorporating antiracist
pedagogy into their programs, met with Steinbright career counselors to discuss advising students applying for co-op in genres of writing of the job market, among other interactions.

Peer Readers conducted class visits, demonstrating and facilitating effective peer review, supported students applying for STAR scholarships, and provided drop-in tutoring at the Learning Alliance-sponsored Study Jams in the Fall, Winter, and Spring terms.

The move to the Korman Center provided the opportunity to rethink how our physical presence at Drexel represents our values and work. Co-op Operations Manager Sarah Miller worked with Prof. McCloskey to create a marketing plan using cohesive design to create new marketing materials that brand the DWC and reintroduce us to the Drexel Community.

**Drexel Writing Center Usage Data**

This year, 21 Peer Readers (including nine English majors), four Faculty Readers, and five GWCs conducted 3,288 individual appointments, meeting with 1,038 individual students. Prof. McCloskey hired and trained eight new Peer Readers and three new GWCs. Our overall appointment and student numbers from AY 2018-19:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>AY 2018-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique Student Users</strong>*</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appointments</strong></td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>3288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unique student users represents the number of students using the DWC in a particular time period. Because many of these students are return users within and across terms, the number of unique student users for AY 16-17 in the final column is less than the total of all four terms.

**User Snapshot**

Students from the College of Nursing & Health Professions used the DWC most again this year, followed by students from the LeBow College of Business, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the College of Engineering. Freshmen visited the DWC more than any other class ranking with 1,405 appointments, followed by graduate students with 773 appointments.

Non-native English speakers accounted for 47% of DWC appointments and made up 35% of users in AY 2018-19. This data was reflected in the decreased usage of the Faculty Reader ESL Specialist program.

Students visited the DWC during every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to copy editing, though the majority of appointments, 54%, were made when students where in the revision stage of the writing process; 22% were writing the first draft, 8% were copyediting, 6% were brainstorming, 3% were brainstorming, and 3% were conducting research.

**Data Summary**

DWC overall usage increased in 2018-19, though there were changes worth noting:

- While there were fewer appointments with graduate students this year compared with the previous AY, reflecting the decrease in staff for that program, the need for graduate writing support has steadily increased, indicating the need for increased resources for this program.
The percentage of clients for whom English is their first language increased this year and the number of overall appointments with ESL writers decreased, likely reflecting changes in language proficiency requirements the university implemented in the last several years.

Prof. McCloskey responded to decreased usage in AY 2017-18 with renewed efforts at marketing the center through class visits, traditional advertising venues (*The Triangle*, *Infonet*, flyers), and social media. This approach seems to have been effective and will be a focus in the future.

**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: WRITERS ROOM**

Writers Room (WR), a University-Community literary arts program, was launched in 2014. Following Fall 2018, WR moved from the Department of English & Philosophy to the College level. Initially begun at the Dornsife Center for Neighborhood Partnerships, WR has successfully brought students, faculty, and staff together with local residents for productive conversation through a range of programs, from side-by-side classes to monthly writing workshops, visiting writers, and cultural events. The studio space on the first floor of MacAlister Hall, started in Fall 2017, continued to be a collaborative, cross-disciplinary hub and popular event space open to all. Fall 2018 marked the beginning of the fifth season of regular programming at Dornsife and in MacAlister.

UWP Faculty Writing Fellows Dr. Kirsten Kaschock and Dr. Valerie Fox continued to play integral roles in programming at both locations, at partner sites around the city, and with sponsored projects, which included:

- Continuing the Canon Tripod Project into its second year: 18 writers-in-residence drawn equally from campus, neighboring communities, and local high schools. As in the program’s pilot year, using writing and photography, the groups told stories about their lives and their neighborhoods and demonstrated a desire for collaborative opportunities in our joint communities.
- Beginning the Home Symposium Series with a $30,000 grant from TD Charitable Foundation.
- Embarking on a two-year $200,000 community-led research study on affordable housing and the potential of university-community cooperative living.

**ArtistYear Fellowships for Alumni**

Jasmine James (English, 2018) began an ArtistYear Fellow role at Robeson High School in September 2018. Lauren Lowe (English, 2017) originated the WR Alumni Fellow role the previous AY. This AmeriCorps organization enables artists to dedicate themselves to a year of service.