

## I. Summary of Writing Lab Services and Their Use

### Statistics

During the 2001-2002 academic year, the Purdue University Writing Lab served Purdue students and faculty as follows:

Heavilon Hall Writing Lab:

Number of individual users:	4,904
Total number of times used:	8,128

The Purdue University On-line Writing Lab (OWL):

Website:	9,712,084 requests
E-mail tutoring:	1,040 emails answered

More detailed breakdowns of the use and users of the Purdue University Writing Lab are included in Appendix A.

### Services

- **Serving Student Learning**
  - Improving writing skills
  - Increasing students' confidence in their abilities
  - Upgrading the resources of the English as a Second Language (ESL) self-study center
  - Developing professionalism of Lab staff, both graduate and undergraduate tutors, by providing opportunities to enhance teaching skills, to conduct research and present it to other scholars, and to develop high-level technological skills
  - Helping students write resumés, other employment documents, and applications for scholarships, professional schools, and graduate schools
  - Outreach to instructors, including meetings with mentoring groups for new composition instructors and an open house for faculty and instructors across the university
- **Incorporating use of technology in instruction**
  - Conducting 62 classroom workshops on topics of teachers' choice, including developing writing skills, using the OWL, and improving Internet research processes
  - Developing 6 new multimedia instructional presentations (in PowerPoint format) and upgrading 2 of the 18 presentations now available on the OWL

for teachers to use, thus creating the potential for multimedia enrichment in traditional classroom courses (funded by MIDC grant). These PowerPoint presentations were used for 40 workshops in the Writing Lab, and were downloaded 151,414 times this year.

- Developing 2 new self-study hypertext workshops, for a total of 6 workshops, which were downloaded 645,838 times (also funded by MIDC grant).
- Upgrading OWL handout bank by creating 18 new handouts, revising 11 handouts, and making printer-friendly versions of all handouts (over 200); OWL handouts were downloaded 5,962,370 times during this academic year.
- Creating a new section on using the Writing Lab and OWL for teachers, which includes strategies for introducing the Writing Lab and OWL and information about incorporating the Writing Lab and OWL into various courses.

#### ❖ **Maintaining International and National Stature of Writing Lab**

- Winning 3 additional awards for OWL site ([EditAvenue.com](http://EditAvenue.com) Writing Tips Award; *Awesome Library* Editor's Choice; [homeworkspot.com](http://homeworkspot.com) featured "top-notch tool")
- Increasing *The Purdue OWL News* online newsletter subscribers over 100%, from 3,239 subscribers to 6,975
- Increasing the *Writing Lab Newsletter* subscription base worldwide to about 900; piloting sending the Newsletter electronically to 9 of its international subscribers
- Archiving 20 volumes of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* (1976-1996) on the OWL Website, creating the first and only electronic archive of this material and maintaining the availability of back issues
- Presenting 11 talks and poster sessions at international and regional writing center conferences and one panel presentation at the national Computers and Writing conference, involving 17 Writing Lab staff: 1 faculty member, 6 graduate students, 11 undergraduates, and 1 clerical staff member

#### ❖ **Contributing to Purdue University Engagement Initiatives**

- Providing OWL resources worldwide, to users in over 125 countries, including public libraries, colleges, industry, government, non-profit organizations, and private users
- Showcasing OWL at the 2002 Teaching, Learning, and Technology Showcase (February 2002)
- Responding to over 315 phone inquiries on the Grammar Hotline
- Responding to over 1,040 e-mail inquiries from Purdue students, Indiana residents, and users from around the world
- Providing Writing Lab and OWL in-lab tours for visiting scholars from the United States and abroad and providing consultations by phone and e-mail for faculty and administrators designing new writing centers or upgrading existing ones

## II. Discussion of Staff, Services, Users, and Future Plans

### Staffing

- Two faculty members: Dr. Muriel Harris, Professor of English (Director)  
Dr. Linda Bergmann, Associate Professor of English  
(Associate Director)
- Fifteen graduate teaching assistants
- Ten undergraduate teaching assistants (funded by the English Department) to tutor students in English 100 and other first year composition courses
- Eight undergraduate business writing consultants (funded primarily by other university sources) to assist students with resumés and other job-related writing
- Two graduate student OWL staff members, the OWL technical coordinator and the OWL Coordinator (funded by University Reinvestment Grants), who design and update the OWL materials, generally keep the site running, and maintain writing lab technologies; also, hourly workers who develop electronic instructional materials.
- Receptionist and secretary
- Six student work/study clerical assistants

### Services

#### ❖ Accomplishments for this year

##### 1. Serving student learning

As indicated in Appendix B, evaluations from students and teachers remain very high, with 99% of responding students placing their tutor in the “helpful” range. This positive response indicates that tutoring helps student enhance their writing abilities by providing needed one-to-one assistance. In open-ended comments, students particularly commended their Writing Lab tutors for helping them to “discover” what they wanted to write, for helping them think on their own, and for developing skills that could be applied to subsequent writing tasks. Students feel that the tutors help them engage the skills, understanding, and confidence they need to improve their writing. (See Appendix B.)

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinator, funded with an ESLIM grant from the Dean of Graduate Studies, upgraded and organized the ESL materials; the number of recorded users of the ESL self-study corner more than doubled, from 26 last year to 60 in 2001-2002. This facility offers CD-ROM

materials on language, listening comprehension, pronunciation, and TOEFL exam preparation, as well as a sizable collection of books and tapes. The ESL coordinator also established ESL conversation groups attended by 39 students and gave presentations on effective ESL tutoring practices to staff meetings and the practicum for new graduate tutors.

The undergraduate Business Writing Consultants work in one-on-one tutorials with students working on resumés and cover letters, conduct workshops on these documents, and develop instructional materials and PowerPoint workshops. This year's projects included upgrading handouts and developing new materials for teaching and learning, which were then put on the OWL. This year the professional writing directory alone received over 123,496 hits, with more than 64,992 Business Writing PowerPoint presentations downloaded. The business writing tutors also began a long-term public relations project with several components, including assembling a media kit, creating a PowerPoint presentation about business writing services in the lab, and building relationships with other offices on campus that help students seek jobs.

## **2. Incorporating use of technology**

OWL's ever-improving website continues to serve a widening range of Purdue students and faculty, as well as serving as a resource for users all over the world. The Writing Lab uses computers as an integral part of the tutoring and learning process, and tutors use them in a growing number of ways: to improve students' computer writing processes, to help students effectively access OWL resources, and to demonstrate how to access and evaluate sources on the Internet. See Appendix C for a more detailed analysis of OWL activities for this year and responses from OWL users. For ESL students, the Lab's efforts in acquiring, updating, and publicizing new computer-based and audio-visual resources have created a dynamic new self-study resource for improving English language skills.

## **3. Supporting faculty development and campus engagement**

This year the Writing Lab staff presented over 102 workshops on writing skills to some 1,505 students. Of these workshops, over 62 were held in courses (including ASM, AGECON, COM, Engineering, FNR, PolSci, and English) and other venues around the Purdue campus, including residence halls and student organizations. In addition, teachers had access to these on-line teaching materials for their own use in classes, as well to print-friendly copies of handouts for downloading. The Writing Lab responds to frequent requests for hard copies of handouts in our files, helps classroom teachers in English and across the disciplines develop writing assignments and strategies for grading writing, and coordinates writing assistance with several courses in a variety of disciplines. New this year was an open house for teaching faculty, which drew some 20 participants from across the university, and which led to requests for further efforts to help faculty more effectively use the Writing Lab and its resources.



#### **4. Supporting national and international engagement and student recruitment**

OWL's reputation as one of the foremost writing web sites provides an ongoing contribution to Purdue's international stature, as well as a real service to students, teachers, and writers across the nation and around the world. OWL's reputation is continually enhanced by references in college textbooks on writing and web development, and by citations in the scholarly literature of computer assisted writing, writing centers, and composition studies in general. OWL contributes to recruiting efforts as a featured site on the [HomeworkSpot.com](http://HomeworkSpot.com) K-12 website and by its continual receipt of awards from various educational technology venues; many states link their secondary education web resource sites to Purdue's OWL, as do most other writing centers in the country. This wide-ranging awareness of the Purdue OWL accounts for the more than 9 million hits received in the past year from around the world. Appendix C contains a more detailed account of OWL activities and a sample of messages of praise and appreciation sent to OWL in 2001-2002.

#### **❖ Instructional services in the 2001-2002 school year**

##### **1. In-Lab services for students and instructors**

- Tutorials: one-on-one tutoring by appointment
- Drop-in assistance: tutorials available daily on a first-come, first-served basis
- Required lab component for the English 100 (Developmental Composition) Program, including weekly tutorials for every student, with peer tutors trained by the Writing Lab integrated into classroom work
- In-Lab workshops (40 multi-media presentations)
- Writers' groups: assistance to student writing groups and students working on group projects
- Instructional handouts: over 200 handouts on various writing skills and concerns, available by request to students and teachers in the Writing Lab, all of which are now available for downloading from OWL in printer-friendly formats
- ESL self-study center: newly-updated facility for computer-assisted self instruction, where international students can improve listening and reading comprehension, pronunciation, and speaking skills and can prepare for the TOEFL and other language exams
- Computers available for word-processing and computer-assisted instruction: open lab facilities for word processing and web research, this year including a direct link to THOR's on-line reference pilot project
- Library of books, journals, and reference materials for student and faculty consultation; also, a sizable selection of recent composition textbooks and handbooks that students can check out.

## 2. Credit courses

- English 390A and English 390B: training courses required for potential undergraduate tutors
- English 502W: In-service practicum for graduate teaching assistants in their first semester of tutoring

## 3. Outreach to Purdue community

- Traveling tutor sessions: workshops held in classrooms, residence halls, and student organizations
- Faculty development, including workshops and open houses, poster session at the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Showcase, and meetings with staffs and departments across campus to discuss student writing in various disciplines
- Faculty consultations to assist with creating and grading writing assignments, with integrating writing into courses across the disciplines, and with most effectively using Writing Lab resources

## 4. Outreach to Purdue community and engagement beyond

- OWL (Online Writing Lab), a website offering writing assistance, including our wide range of handouts and workshops available for use locally and around the world
- *The Purdue OWL News*, distributed on-line weekly to some 6,975 subscribers
- E-mail interaction with tutors, who responded to 1040 e-mail messages and queries from writers at Purdue and across the globe
- Grammar Hotline, which responded to 315 questions phoned in by students, faculty, and staff at Purdue, as well as calls from across the State of Indiana and across the United States

## 5. *Writing Lab Newsletter*

Edited by the Writing Lab director and published by the Department of English, this newsletter, with about 900 subscribers, is one of two nationally-distributed and indexed publications on writing center theory, pedagogy, and administration, and is an affiliate publication of the National Council of Teachers of English.

## ❖ Users

The Purdue Writing Lab is a resource for writers, students, teachers, and others, on campus, nationally, and internationally.

- Students enrolled in English Department writing and literature courses
- Students writing papers in hundreds of courses across the campus
- Students learning English as a second language
- Graduate students
- Students engaged in such other writing projects as resumés, professional school applications, dissertations, co-op reports, fellowship and scholarship applications, etc.

- Teachers assigning writing in various departments across campus, who use Writing Lab handouts in their courses and OWL as the writing resource on course websites
- Teachers planning to expand or enhance the writing component of their courses
- Writing center administrators from other institutions, who use the Purdue Writing Lab and OWL as models for their own practices
- School districts, universities, and other institutions who use OWL as a resource for writing materials and instruction
- Writers who access OWL handouts, workshops, and other resources
- Writers, teachers, and students from across the state, nation, and world, who e-mail questions to OWL and call the Grammar Hotline

### ❖ **Future plans and goals**

1. Maintain excellence of on-on-one tutoring, which is the heart of the Writing Lab's activities.
2. Increase efforts to coordinate Writing Lab learning, discovery, and engagement initiatives with projects in other departments, programs, and services across the university.
3. Consider reclassification of Writing Lab clerical positions to recognize their administrative content. The Writing Lab has two full time clerical positions, currently listed as Clerk III and Clerk IV. The Clerk III not only manages the daily operation of the Lab but also supervises 6 student receptionists and coordinates assessment procedures for all Lab projects; her classification should be re-evaluated by Human Relations. The Clerk IV is the administrative manager of the Writing Lab and managing editor of the *Writing Lab Newsletter*. Last year a request to upgrade this position to level V or administrative assistant was submitted and should be re-considered.
4. Other specific goals of various project coordinators in the Writing Lab include:
  - Continue upgrading workshop offerings, including assessing and upgrading existing workshops and designing new projects aimed at helping instructors to use Lab resources, particularly instructors teaching English as a Second Language courses and Writing Intensive courses across the disciplines.
  - Continue development of OWL, including developing more interactive features for the website, revising existing content, working with the Business Writing tutors to develop a job search workshop and to further their collaboration with the Center for Career Opportunities to develop employment search materials, and collaborating with various departments in Writing Across the Curriculum initiatives.
  - Continue enrichment of English as a Second Language resources in accordance with the results of a survey conducted in Spring 2002, including developing workshops



and handouts and launching a website for ESL conversation groups, which would publicize meetings and provide resources for students and group facilitators.

- Continue in-service development of tutors, particularly by providing more ESL training and clearer collaboration with Professional Writing courses.