



WRITEAWAY

Actions &
Achievements

2016

WriteAway

writing help ... online

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MESSAGE

WriteAway is thriving! In 2016, we saw our busiest year yet in student submissions, we launched a new website to provide tutors and coordinators easy access to information and resources, and we shared our experiences of online tutoring with the larger teaching and learning community at the annual Canadian Writing Centres Association conference in Calgary, Alberta.

As an asynchronous online service, it can be challenging to put faces to the names of people who cross paths on the eTutoring platform. In this *Actions & Achievements* report, I am pleased to introduce you to a few of the individuals who contribute to the vibrancy of the WriteAway community. Through the valuable contributions of tutors, the ongoing support of institutional coordinators, the facilitation of the WriteAway Administrative Centre, and the thoughtful governance work of the BC eTutoring Steering Committee, WriteAway provides students with access to anytime online feedback across service semesters.

We look forward to WriteAway's ongoing success in 2017!



Lyn Benn
BC eTutoring Steering
Committee Chair
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Consortial Value at North Island College

As an English Instructor, Peer Tutor Coordinator, Learning Commons Writing Support staff member, and WriteAway Coordinator and Tutor, Erin McConomy has a broad perspective on writing and learning support at North Island College (NIC).

NIC serves students across northern Vancouver Island and the mainland coast at four main campuses, satellite campuses, and through distance education. To accommodate these varied learning environments, NIC supports students with a range of writing services. In Fall 2015, NIC joined WriteAway, complementing their existing services and meeting even more of their students' needs. "NIC has a diverse student population with many part-time, mature, distance, and working students. The flexibility that WriteAway offers is a great benefit," says Erin.

Erin believes that the consortial model makes a service like WriteAway possible at NIC. "We don't currently have the resources to offer this type of service independently, especially with the depth of feedback that WriteAway tutors provide. As a smaller institution with more limited resources, it is very beneficial for us to be a part of this consortium." Consortial participation also brings value to staff and students, who gain a greater sense of belonging in the provincial academic community. "Many of our students will transfer to other institutions, so it's beneficial to work together with WriteAway partners and ensure we're all on the same page. This helps students understand that NIC is part of a larger group of institutions, that we're working together, and that we're offering services that are on par."

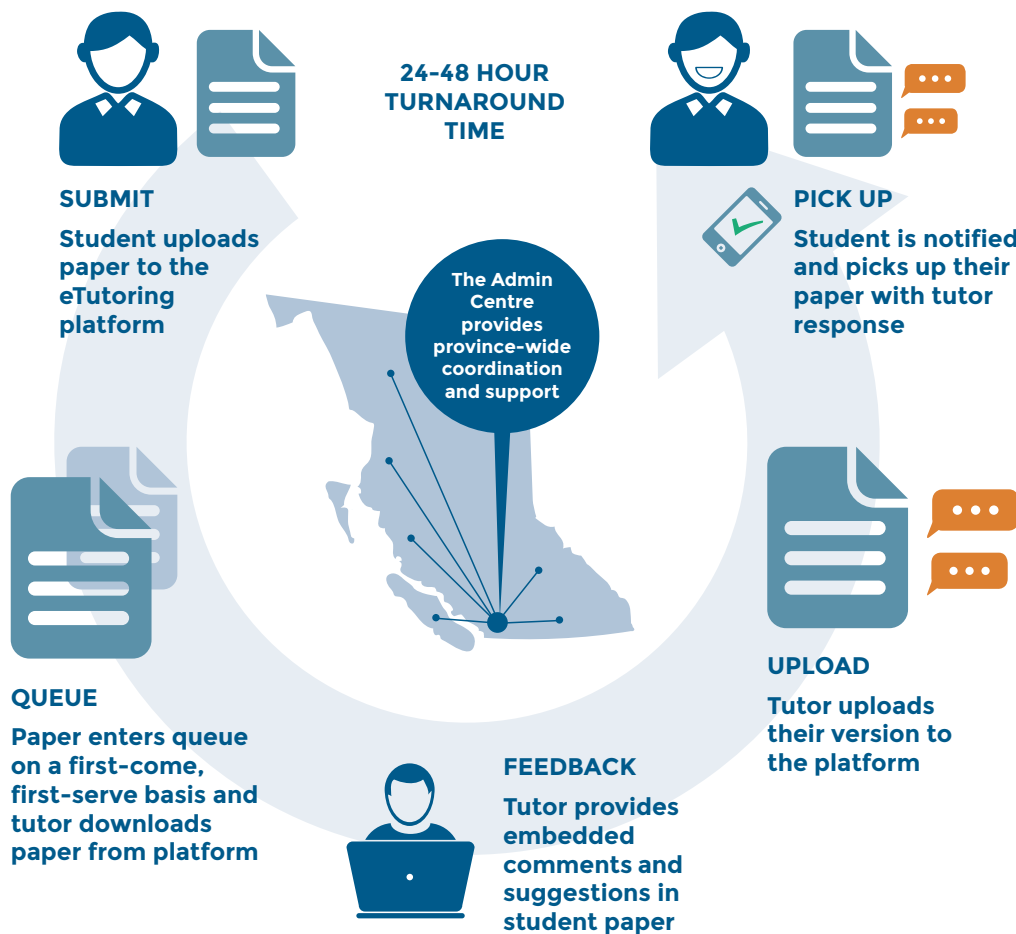


**"The WriteAway
Administrative
Centre has
made it easy to
be one of the
coordinators."**

ERIN MCCONOMY

WHAT IS WRITEAWAY?

WriteAway is BC's collaborative online tutoring service. Learners receive feedback and strategies to improve their writing from qualified tutors. Institutions receive centralised support from the Administrative Centre.



Why Join WriteAway?

WriteAway complements and extends existing institutional writing supports. Established tutor training, evaluation and assessment programs, and promotional assistance coordinated by the WriteAway Administrative Centre save institutions staff hours. Consortial, rather than individual, licensing of tutoring software yields significant cost savings for participating institutions.

WriteAway from an Instructor's Perspective



“I’ve seen first-hand that for many of my students, WriteAway is a healing experience.”

DR. MEGAN OTTON
LANGARA COLLEGE

“The writing support we offer students at Langara College often makes a world of difference.” Dr. Megan Otton, a faculty member in the Department of English at Langara College divides her time between teaching, providing writing support to international students, and coordinating the Writing Centre and WriteAway.

As an instructor, Dr. Otton often focuses on providing feedback on smaller grammatical issues, such as how to use a comma splice. “I don’t have as much time to look at the big picture, and that’s where WriteAway is invaluable to me.” Dr. Otton says that WriteAway does an excellent job addressing higher order writing concerns, such as how to develop a strong thesis statement, structure paragraphs, and include strong supporting evidence.

By participating in the consortium, Dr. Otton has the opportunity to hear how other institutions with different demographics are addressing writing challenges, and she appreciates that WriteAway tutors receive rigorous training.

Dr. Otton understands how stressful writing can be for students. “Some of my students have had very negative experiences with writing, and it can cause them anxiety. WriteAway tutors are very positive and encouraging. There’s no criticism or dismissal. There is always encouragement. I’ve seen first-hand that for many of my students, WriteAway is a healing experience.”

WriteAway from a Student's Perspective

“I’ve always wanted to help people.” Sukhnain Sidhu is a second-year student studying Psychology at Langara College. When she’s not busy with classes, Sukhnain volunteers at the Surrey Art Gallery and takes photographs.

Sukhnain first heard about WriteAway when she was a student in Dr. Megan Otton’s English class. “Megan would always talk about WriteAway. I asked myself, why have I not handed in just one or two paragraphs before?” With the encouragement of Dr. Otton and her mother, Sukhnain decided to submit a paper she’d been struggling with to WriteAway. She found the online service user-friendly, “It was much easier to submit than I actually thought. It’s really accessible.” Sukhnain appreciates that WriteAway tutors offer a fresh perspective on her writing. “WriteAway allowed me to present my writing on a clean slate. The WriteAway tutor highlighted the weaker parts of my essay and included the necessary information to help me improve. The tutor also went on to point out my strengths.”

Due to a positive experience with WriteAway, Sukhnain has learned to become a more resourceful and proactive student. “I’ll be taking a second-year English class in the summer, and I will for sure be using WriteAway again. I always like to check-in and know how my writing is coming along. Being open to improving has been a big lesson for me. WriteAway has made me a better writer. And, as my writing improves, I’ve also become a more confident speaker.”



“WriteAway allowed me to present my writing on a clean slate.”

SUKHNAIN SIDHU
LANGARA COLLEGE

FOCUSING ON VALUE

WriteAway generates tremendous value for BC post-secondary institutions, their staff, and their learners...



84%

saved by licensing tutoring software consortially



1,900 STUDENTS

received online writing assistance, an increase of

20%

from the previous year

86%

of students very satisfied or satisfied with WriteAway

100%

of students felt confident in their writing after receiving WriteAway assistance

“Extremely helpful - wish I had used this service earlier. My confidence has improved because I now know how to troubleshoot my most common questions.”

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY LEARNER



In exchange for

60 HOURS

per semester of staffing, institutions provided their students with access to

1000+ HOURS

of online writing tutoring

37 TUTORS

benefited from centralised expertise and consistent support, training, and evaluation

“WriteAway made me feel more confident about my writing and helped me focus on the areas that I needed to work on. I also found the embedded comments throughout the paper **EXTREMELY** helpful.”

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA LEARNER

“My tutor provided some excellent feedback. This is my first time using this online tutoring. I will definitely return as I appreciated how my tutor helped fine-tune my essay without rewriting it.”

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY LEARNER

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

WriteAway online writing support connects learners with expert help at point-of-need. The Administrative Centre provides centralised coordination for participating institutions, saving them time and money.

Service Vitality

- Confirmed continued funding from Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (UBC)
- Managed WriteAway's busiest year, with 17% more assignments submitted than the previous year
- Collaborated with eTutor Alberta to present and promote online tutoring at the Canadian Writing Centres Association Conference

Tutor Support

- Launched a new WriteAway website to support the work of tutors and coordinators through enhanced access to information and training
- Trained 30 tutors to meet WriteAway competencies
- Celebrated WriteAway tutors with a gift card giveaway during International Tutor Appreciation Week
- Streamlined evaluation for experienced tutors through evidence-based research to develop a comprehensive rubric

“The tutor gave me excellent feedback that improved the quality of my paper. They gave specific attention to areas of concern that I had noted, and provided resources for me to improve in those areas.

Through this service, I have no doubt that my paper will receive a higher grade.”

SELKIRK COLLEGE LEARNER

3,621 ASSIGNMENTS
submitted to WriteAway

99% STUDENTS
likely to return to WriteAway for
future assignments

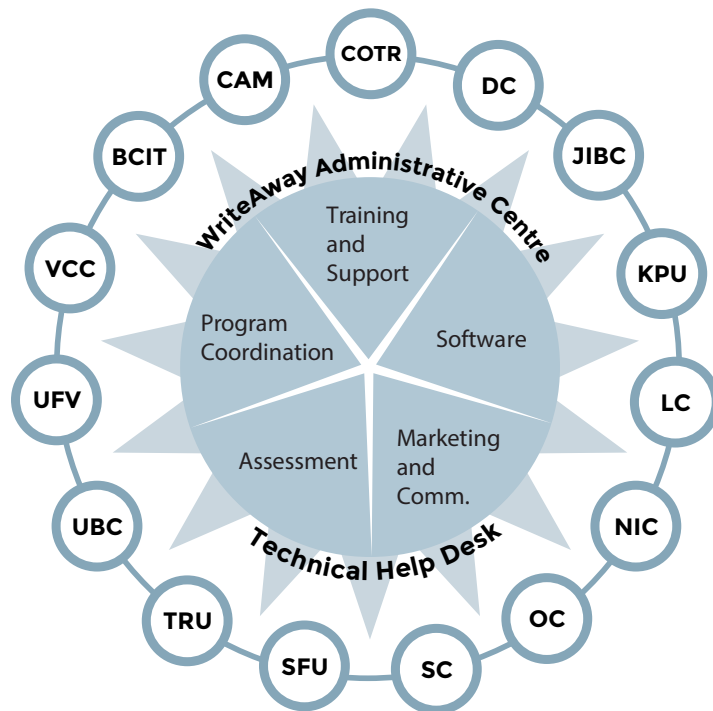
30 TUTORS
received comprehensive
WriteAway training



GOVERNANCE & COLLABORATION

BC eTutoring Steering Committee

The BC eTutoring Steering Committee includes constituency representatives for colleges, regional institutions, and universities as well as members-at-large who bring specific experience in composition and rhetoric, writing pedagogy, and online learning.



Essential Partners

WriteAway Administrative Centre hosting by the British Columbia Electronic Library Network (BC ELN). Funding provided by the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, and key technical infrastructure support from BCcampus.



BC eTutoring Steering Committee (as of December 2016)

Lyn Benn
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Chair

Meghan Aubé
University of British Columbia
Medium and Large Universities
Representative

Anita Cocchia
BC ELN Executive Director

Amanda Goldrick-Jones
Simon Fraser University
Member at Large

Denise Goudy
BCcampus Representative

Julie Mitchell
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre

Shahida Rashid
College of the Rockies
Colleges Representative

Nancy Squair
Douglas College
Member at Large

Paul Stephenson
Okanagan College
Member at Large

Sara Wolfe
Thompson Rivers University
Small and Regional Universities
Representative

Administrative Centre

Anita Cocchia
Megan Robertson

FINANCIALS

		2016/17 Projected
WriteAway is funded in partnership with the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (UBC) and participating institutions.		Revenue
	Participant Support	27,965
	Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (UBC) Support	8,000
	Miscellaneous Revenue (marketing, carryforward, etc.)	3,702
	Total	\$39,667
		Expenses
	Service Support	35,815
	Administration / Communication / Governance	782
	Technical Infrastructure	212
	Total	\$36,809
Revenue - Expenses		2,858

ON THE HORIZON



Reviewing Infrastructure

WriteAway has grown significantly since it opened in 2012. In this time, the service has more than tripled the number of participating institutions and seen a 196% increase in student submissions. In 2017, WriteAway will take steps to plan for the future, including a systematic review of existing technical infrastructure to ensure that students receive the timely and constructive feedback on which they have come to rely.



Supporting Promotion

Diverse institutions have diverse needs. Working together with institutional coordinators, the WriteAway Administrative Centre will continue to develop and tailor promotional strategies for individual institutions that reflect their unique culture and the expectations of their students, staff, and faculty.



Sharing Knowledge

The new WriteAway website provides opportunities for tutors across the province to exchange ideas and share information. Establishing an online forum will allow tutors to communicate with one another and bank valuable resources. Developing discipline-specific guides for best practices in online tutoring will help tutors respond to all types of writing assignments efficiently, effectively, and with greater confidence.

2016 AT A GLANCE

30 tutors were trained to meet WriteAway competencies.

1,900 students received feedback from qualified tutors on 3,621 draft assignments.

54% of assignments were submitted outside of regular business hours.

53% of students self-identified as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) learner.

The majority of students who used WriteAway learned about the service from their instructors.

 writeaway.ca

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