

# WriteAway

## Online Collaborative Tutoring

Actions & Achievements 2015





British Columbia Electronic Library Network

Released March 2016

# A Message from the Chair

2015 was an exciting year of growth for WriteAway. The service continues to make strides towards financial self-sufficiency through contributions from service support fees and attracting new institutions. The establishment of the BC eTutoring Steering Committee brings together valuable perspectives that will ensure the ongoing success of WriteAway and eTutoring in BC. With 15 institutions now participating in WriteAway, more and more students across the province have access to 24/7 online writing support during service semesters.

Building on its strong foundation, WriteAway is quickly becoming an essential service for post-secondary students seeking to improve their writing skills. During this time of growth and change, I extend my sincere thanks to Anita Cocchia, Leah Hopton, and Megan Robertson at the WriteAway Administrative Centre for their ongoing service support.

It is my pleasure to share the *WriteAway Actions & Achievements 2015* report to demonstrate how WriteAway contributes to student success in British Columbia.



**Lyn Benn**  
BC eTutoring Steering  
Committee Chair  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University



**WriteAway was awarded the 2015 Merit Award for Program or Service by the British Columbia Library Association. This award recognizes outstanding achievement during the preceding year in a new or ongoing service.**

## Tutor Spotlight

WriteAway tutors bring a wealth of teaching and learning experience to their work providing feedback to students. Kaylee Magee, a tutor from Simon Fraser University, provides this insight into her work with WriteAway:



**Kaylee Magee**  
WriteAway Tutor  
SFU

“WriteAway is a great platform for developing my own teaching skills while still contributing to student development. Originally, the online interface posed quite the challenge for me: how can I build trust and generate a rapport with a student that I never see? Without the ability to connect with a student face-to-face, I had to develop new strategies to more clearly communicate writing ideas and concepts. On a more personal level, the feature I enjoy most about WriteAway is the rare ability to assist students from multiple post-secondary institutions. It is very rewarding to know I am helping students from a variety of disciplines and majors, and always exciting to see what corner of the province each new paper is from!”

# What is WriteAway?

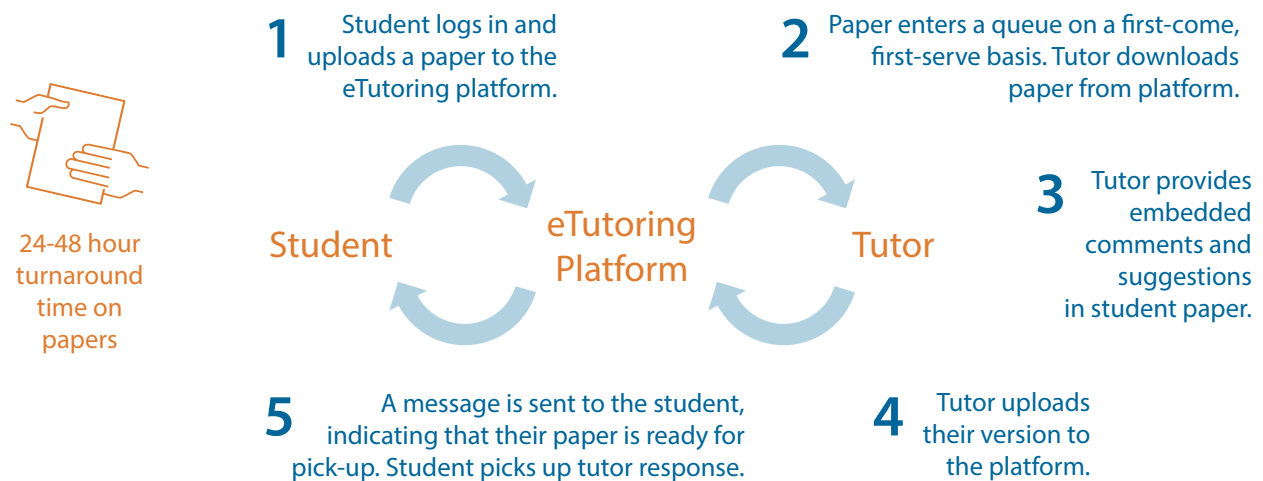
WriteAway is BC's collaborative online tutoring service. Learners receive feedback and strategies to improve their writing from qualified tutors. 15 participating institutions serve approximately 100,000 FTEs.

“I think that this is a great service that more students should know about!

The combination of positive and constructive feedback was really helpful.

UBC learner

## How Does WriteAway Work?



## Why Join WriteAway?



### Extension of Institutional Learning Support

- WriteAway complements and extends in-house writing services to support distance students and those who prefer online services
- WriteAway is open 24/7 during the term; service goal is a 24-48 hour turnaround time



### Established, Supportive Infrastructure

- WriteAway Administrative Centre provides central coordination, including tutor training, evaluation, service assessment, and promotion assistance
- BCcampus hosts eTutoring platform on privacy-compliant BC servers and offers technical support for the service



### Financial Value

- Consortial software licensing of eTutoring platform saves participating members between 66-86% of the cost of independently-licensed online tutoring software
- A consortial approach saves participating institutions time and money by leveraging the expertise of an established community of practice

# Focusing on Value

WriteAway generates tremendous value for BC post-secondary institutions...

**1,528**  
students received  
assistance in 2015

On average, institutions  
commit 5 hours a week  
to the consortia and  
benefit from  
**75 weekly**  
tutoring hours  
for their students

**82%**  
of students  
satisfied or very  
satisfied with  
WriteAway

**58%**  
of assignments submitted  
outside regular class hours  
(9am-5pm)

“ I use the resources  
the tutor sends  
to enhance my  
writing in other  
classes!  
North Island College learner

**27%**  
growth in participating  
institutions in 2015

**97%**  
of students felt  
confident in their  
writing after receiving  
WriteAway assistance

**59%**  
of students who  
submitted assignments  
self-identify as English  
as an Additional  
Language (EAL) learner

15 institutions benefit  
from BC ELN's  
**25+ years**  
of project management  
and supportive,  
collaborative services

Will students come back?



**very likely**  
likely  
somewhat/not likely

Why did students  
choose WriteAway?  
**53%** prefer online  
services  
**45%** at home or  
off-campus

“ My tutoring  
experience was  
superb. I felt as  
though the tutors  
really wanted to help  
me grow and improve  
my writing.  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
learner

**37 tutors** benefit from  
centralised expertise  
and consistent  
support and training

# Achievements & Outcomes

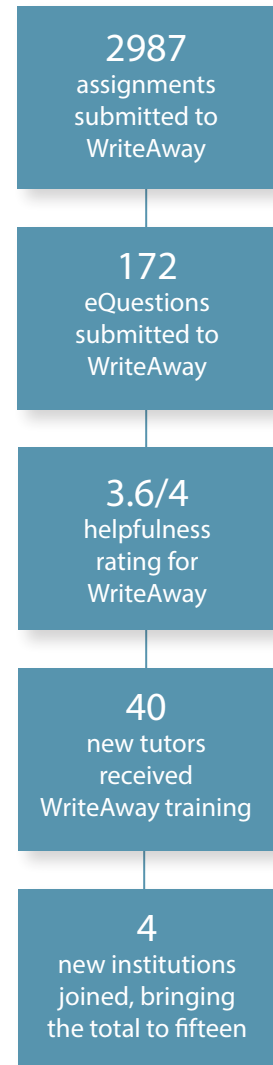
WriteAway online writing support connects learners with expert help at point-of-need. The WriteAway Administrative Centre provides centralized coordination for participating institutions, saving them time and money.

## Key Achievements

- Confirmed WriteAway support funding from BCcampus and Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, UBC
- Provided orientation, coordination, and support for four new WriteAway participating institutions Langara College, North Island College, University of the Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Community College, bringing fall 2015 participation to 15 institutions
- Reenvisioned BC eTutoring and WriteAway governance with the creation of the BC eTutoring Steering Committee to provide oversight for WriteAway and guide the development of collaborative online eTutoring services in BC
- Continued discussions with eTutoring consortia in Alberta and the United States to encourage reflection on and enhancement of service models, promotion, program assessment, tutor training, and communication with students
- Created WriteAway-specific tutorials, including online videos, to help new tutors become familiar with service expectations

## Outcomes

- Students across the province have access to writing support, gaining vital skills for success in the classroom and in the workforce
- Participating institutions have clear directions on how to staff and promote the service, introducing valuable support to more learners
- Infrastructure and coordination is enhanced through centralized administrative and operational support provided by BC ELN, contributing to service stability and longevity



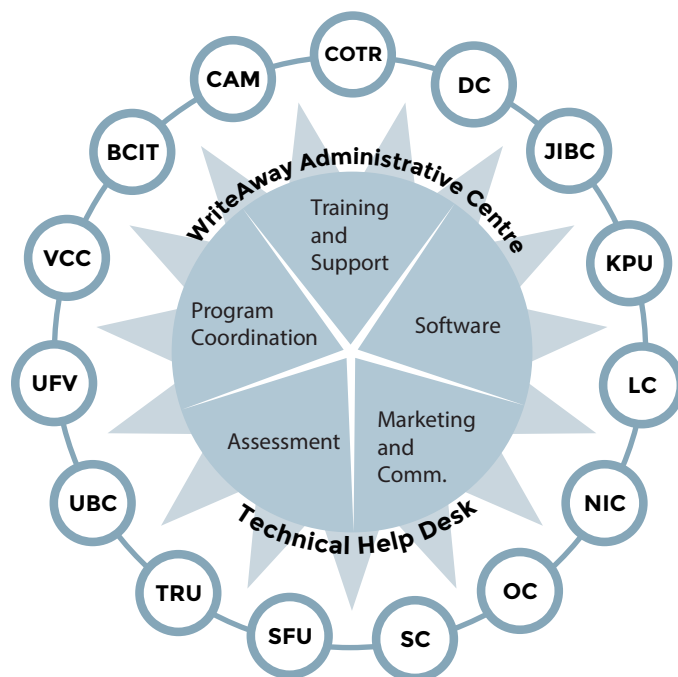
“ I love WriteAway!! The people that review my work and give me feedback are wonderful. I will continue to use this site for as long as I am in school. Thanks so much for such a great service!!!

College of the Rockies learner

# 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

Funding provided by the **Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, UBC.**

Key technical support and funding from **BCcampus.**

WriteAway Administrative Centre hosting by the **British Columbia Electronic Library Network (BC ELN).**

eTutoring platform and support from **Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC).**

## BC eTutoring Steering Committee

**Lyn Benn**  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
Chair

**Anita Cocchia**  
BC ELN Executive Director

**Amanda Goldrick-Jones**  
Simon Fraser University  
Member at Large

**Denise Goudy**  
BCcampus

**Ramona Montagnes**  
University of British Columbia  
Medium and Large University  
Representative

**Simon Neame**  
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (UBC)

**Shahida Rashid**  
College of the Rockies  
College Representative

**Nancy Squair**  
Douglas College  
Member at Large

**Paul Stephenson**  
Okanagan College  
Member at Large

**Sara Wolfe**  
Thompson Rivers University  
Regional, Institutes, and Small  
Universities Representative

## Administrative Centre


Anita Cocchia  
Leah Hopton  
Megan Robertson


# Financials


Through collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation, WriteAway is making great strides towards financial sustainability.

	2015/16 Projected \$	
	Revenue	Expenses
BCcampus Support	8,000	
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, UBC Support	10,000	
Participating Institution Support	18,905	
Miscellaneous Revenue (incl. marketing, carryforward, etc.)	5,589	
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,494</b>	
Service Support		40,358
Administration / Communication / Governance		1,546
Technical Infrastructure		591
<b>Total</b>		<b>42,494</b>
<b>Revenue - Expenses</b>		<b>—</b>

# Moving Forward

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**Recruiting New Members**  
 Now is an ideal time to join WriteAway to take advantage of financial savings and benefit from the administration and coordination offered by participating in a collaborative consortia model. WriteAway seeks to support more and more students from across British Columbia by attracting new participating institutions to the service.
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**Streamlining Operations**  
 Maximizing institutional contributions remains a key focus for the WriteAway Administrative Centre. Continuing to schedule tutors with peak submission times in mind and ongoing review of evaluation procedures are just two of the ways that the Administrative Centre helps tutors and institutional coordinators use their time efficiently. In 2016, the Administrative Centre will maintain its focus on supporting participating institutions with efficient and cost-effective training for tutors, promotional strategies, and ongoing service support.
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**Engaging Community**  
 Strengthening connections with regional, provincial, national, and international writing centres ensures that the WriteAway service is guided by research-based pedagogical and learning approaches. In 2016, WriteAway stakeholders, including members of the governance committee, institutional coordinators, and Administrative Centre staff will share their experiences at the Canadian Writing Centre Association conference. Participating in this type of knowledge exchange means that project coordination continues to be informed by contemporary best practice in writing support and educational fields.



# In Their Own Words

Hear how students describe WriteAway as an essential service that has a lasting positive effect on their writing skills, confidence, and willingness to seek support...

## “THIS SERVICE WAS AMAZING!

My tutor was the BEST she was so kind in her feedback, yet very constructive. I usually hate getting others to read my work as I am very self-conscious and take feedback badly but my tutor was very kind, informative and she even linked me to resources right in my document.

I will definitely be using this service more often. It also encourages me to write papers on time and way ahead of the deadline making me more prepared for assignments!

**Thank you so much. I can't believe this is free!**

UBC learner

## “This is fantastic!

It is easy for me to get people to read papers for grammar, but it is more difficult to get feedback on the paper as a whole. The tutor really found some key areas for me to improve on and the feedback came back super fast!

**I will definitely be using this again.**

Okanagan College learner

“ Writing is not my strong suit, so I found it very useful to have this service available to me. [The tutors] were able to give me useful feedback on how I could make my paper better and it also assisted me with

**building knowledge on how to become a stronger writer in the future.**

Camosun College learner

“ I appreciate the assistance of **making myself a stronger writer**, making my paper stronger, and as a result getting a better mark on my paper!!! I also like that I am given resources that I can mark and return to at a later date when I need to refresh or remember how to make a strong intro, abstract, or conclusion. Tutors have been very cordial, respectful, and timely!

Selkirk College learner

“ **Can't say enough good things**

about the **WriteAway service**, everything has exceeded my expectations. **Thank you!**

SFU learner



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