

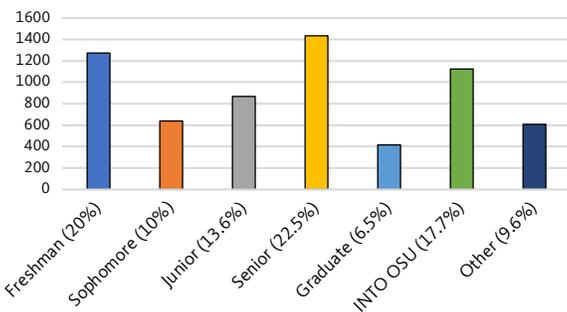
## The Year in Review

During the 2019-20 academic year, the Writing Center advanced its mission of supporting the academic success of Oregon State University's graduate and undergraduate students. This report represents the work of the Undergrad Research & Writing Studio (Studio) and the Online Writing Suite (OWS). Last year, the Studio and OWS completed 6362 consultations with 3077 unique students across four of OSU's campuses.

Students' Primary Campus	# visits	% total visits
Corvallis	5234	82%
Ecampus	638	10%
Cascades	80	~1%
PDX	6	<1%
Non-Student or Unknown	404	6%

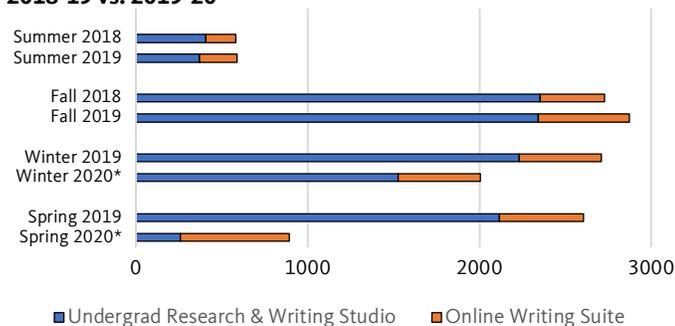
As in prior years, students at all educational levels used the Writing Center. In 2019-2020, the Writing Center supported first-year students, seniors, and INTO OSU students at higher levels than students at other educational levels.

**Figure 1. Writing Center Visits, according to Student Classification**



Analysis of Writing Center use over the past two years shows that during the first two terms of 2019-20, the Studio and OWS (combined) experienced a modest increase in the total number of student visits. This analysis also shows that students are increasingly turning to the Online Writing Suite for support.

**Figure 2. Total Visits, according to Writing Center Program 2018-19 vs. 2019-20**

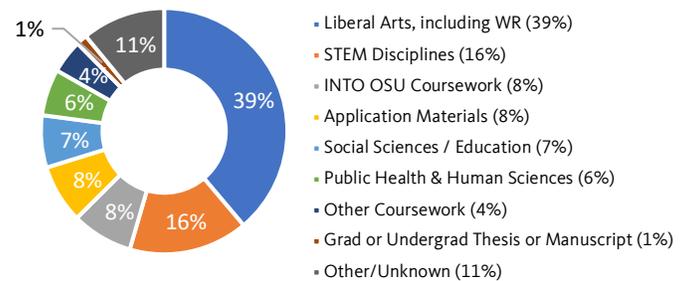


\*Decreases in student usage in Winter and Spring 2020 are discussed in detail on page 2, "Meeting the Challenges ..."

## Types of Writing We Supported

Students seek support from the Writing Center for a variety of classes, but students also work with our consultants on writing for other purposes, like resumes and cover letters, important e-mails, and thesis projects. Last year, students sought assistance with writing in the liberal arts (39% of all visits) and STEM disciplines (16%) at higher levels than they did for writing in other disciplines. Additionally, the Writing Center's support of students in INTO OSU courses and for students working on important application materials comprised 8% of total visits.

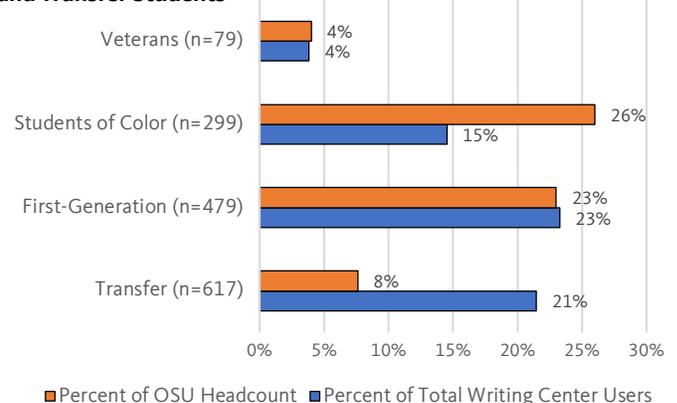
**Figure 3. Writing Center Visits according to Course/Purpose**



## Contributing to OSU's Diversity Strategic Plan

The Writing Center strives to contribute to the university's Diversity Strategic Plan, specifically DSP Goals 3 and 4: We hope to contribute to an inclusive environment for students and staff and to provide innovative and transformative learning experiences that help retain all students. We intend to help eliminate inequitable opportunity gaps experienced by students of color, veterans, first-generation students, and transfer students. Additionally, the degree to which students of color, veterans, first-generation students, and transfer students are being supported by the Writing Center is a metric by which we can gauge our contributions to the Diversity Strategic Plan. Figure 4 shows that we have work to do here.

**Figure 4. Use of the Writing Center by Students SOC, FG, Veterans, and Transfer Students**



One goal the Writing Center has continually made progress on, and will continue to refine, is to recruit a diverse staff that is representative of the OSU student population. 2020-2021 will bring more intentionality in this area, as we plan to examine our hiring practices in light of this goal.

### **International Students and English Language Learners**

The Writing Center is an important source of writing support for international students and English language learners (ELL)<sup>1</sup>. One measure we use to determine the impact of Writing Center support for specific groups of students is the average number of visits per year. International students and ELL students visit frequently, raising the average visits per year for those two groups above the average for domestic students and native speakers of English. (See Tables 2 and 3.) More frequent use of the Writing Center suggests that international students and ELL students are regularly seeking reader feedback as an integral part of their drafting, revision, and final proofreading/editing process. While we do not assume the reverse is true—that domestic students and native English speakers are not seeking reader feedback as a regular part of their writing process—concerted efforts to encourage frequent use of the Writing Center by all students would likely increase the average number of visits by domestic and native English speaking students.

	Unique Students	Total Visits	Average Visits per Year
International Students	711	2032	2.86
Domestic Students	2354	3926	1.66

	Unique Students	Total Visits	Average Visits per Year
Self-Identified ELL Students	581	989	1.70
Self-Identified Native English Speakers	1184	1549	1.31

### **Meeting the Challenges of 2020**

The Writing Center faced two significant challenges in 2020. The first was the need to reduce student support hours due to an impending budget reduction, and the second was COVID-19. While adjusting staffing and support hours due to budget challenges is an ongoing reality in higher education that must be navigated regularly, COVID-19 and the Spring 2020 shift to remote student support was entirely unexpected.

Fortunately, the Writing Center was prepared to pivot student writing and research support to 100% remote delivery because of some very quick thinking and

efficient work from our Studio Coordinator and Online Writing Suite Coordinator. The Studio Coordinator worked with the Writing Center Director to move our entire in-person program into a Slack/Zoom platform. By week 1 of Spring, the Studio Coordinator had developed staff training that prepared consultants to work within the Slack/Zoom environment. Additionally, we had focused our Winter 2020 training on online writing pedagogy, so the number of staff prepared to provide OWS written and Zoom consultations increased from 7 consultants to 20 beginning in Spring 2020. As a result, in Spring 2020 we were able to offer 100 additional OWS appointment slots each week, bringing the total available appointments each week to 140 (up from 30-45 per week prior to Spring 2020).

While the total number of students using the Studio dropped significantly in Spring 2020 compared to Spring 2019 (see page 1, Figure 2), the Online Writing Suite and the Undergrad Research & Writing Studio combined completed almost 900 remote consultations during Spring 2020 and maintained the welcoming atmosphere that the Studio and OWS have strived to achieve over the past academic year.

### **Student Feedback**

Both Writing Center programs invite students to evaluate their consultations. The Online Writing Suite gives each student the opportunity to complete a “post-feedback evaluation” via Qualtrics, which allows the student to rate the consultation on helpfulness and to provide written comments. Additionally, beginning in Fall 2019 the Undergrad Research & Writing Studio began inviting students to complete a brief evaluation after their consultation. The results of these evaluations are almost entirely positive. The average rating (1-4, with 4 being superior) for Studio visits was 3.75 (n=1251), and almost 100% of the OWS post-feedback evaluations were positive in all categories. Below are a few selected student comments from those evaluations.

*“Erica . . . has provided truly expert feedback beyond anything I could've expected. . . . She has single handedly made my application far more competitive and has helped me improve my writing drastically.”*

*“The person who helped me gave great feedback which helped me work on my own. It was a great experience.”*

*“Honestly I came in here to get signed off for my class, but now I'm going to come back to get help! I like it here, very helpful!”*

*“Very friendly and welcoming, first time here, will definitely be back.”*

<sup>1</sup>International student totals are derived from CORE-coded international indicators, and ELL totals are derived from student self-reported ELL status. We do not use these descriptors interchangeably. Not all international students are English language learners, and not all English language learners are international students.