

A large, detailed bronze sculpture of a bison, facing left, stands in the foreground. The sculpture is highly textured, capturing the fur and features of the animal. In the background, a multi-story university building with many windows is visible, along with some trees and a clear sky. The entire image has a greenish tint.

**FY24 IN REVIEW**

# **Center for Writers**

**North Dakota State University**

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*This report begins with an At-a-Glance section (pp. i-iii) that includes statistics from FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). Contents (pp. 1-4) summarize Center for Writers activities, services, and program over the same period. More in-depth reports on these services are available.*

**The Center for Writers continued serving the NDSU community of students, faculty, and staff while transforming along with the institution in a year that saw a lot of institutional changes (college mergers, budget changes, etc.). The number of consultations increased significantly, weekly writing groups were implemented, writing workshops were refreshed, persistence among writers was increased during writing bootcamps, and new partnerships across campus were forged. These positive impacts were possible because of the dedicated, empathetic, and skilled people who work at the CFW; the constructive collaboration of others across campus; and the budgetary support of key partners.**

**Mary Pull, who retired in May 2024, deserves special thanks for her more than two decades of work at the Center for Writers. She leaves a legacy of kindness and professionalism that the CFW will carry forward.**

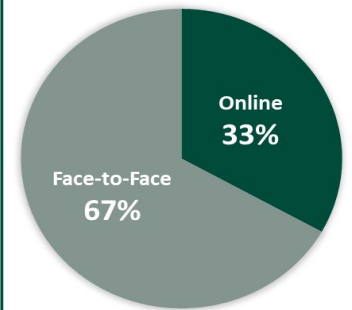
Data for this report were drawn from WOnline and internal CFW records. The report was written by Stephen Disrud, in August 2024, last updated 15-Aug-24.

# 1911 Appointments

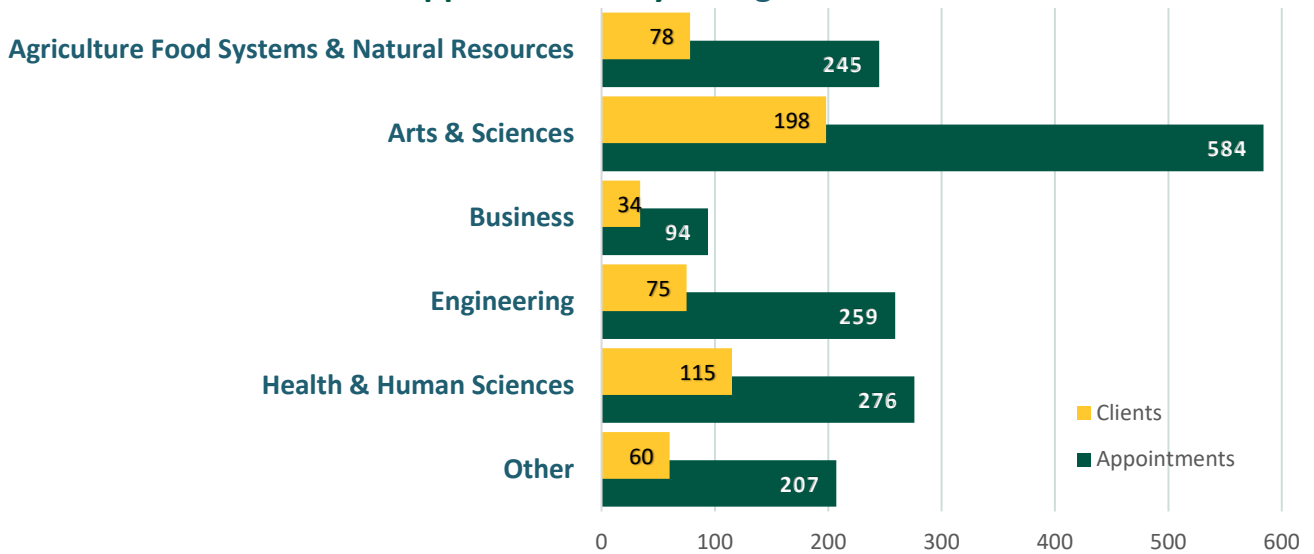
**+17% YoY**  
FY24/FY23

**2040**  
hours

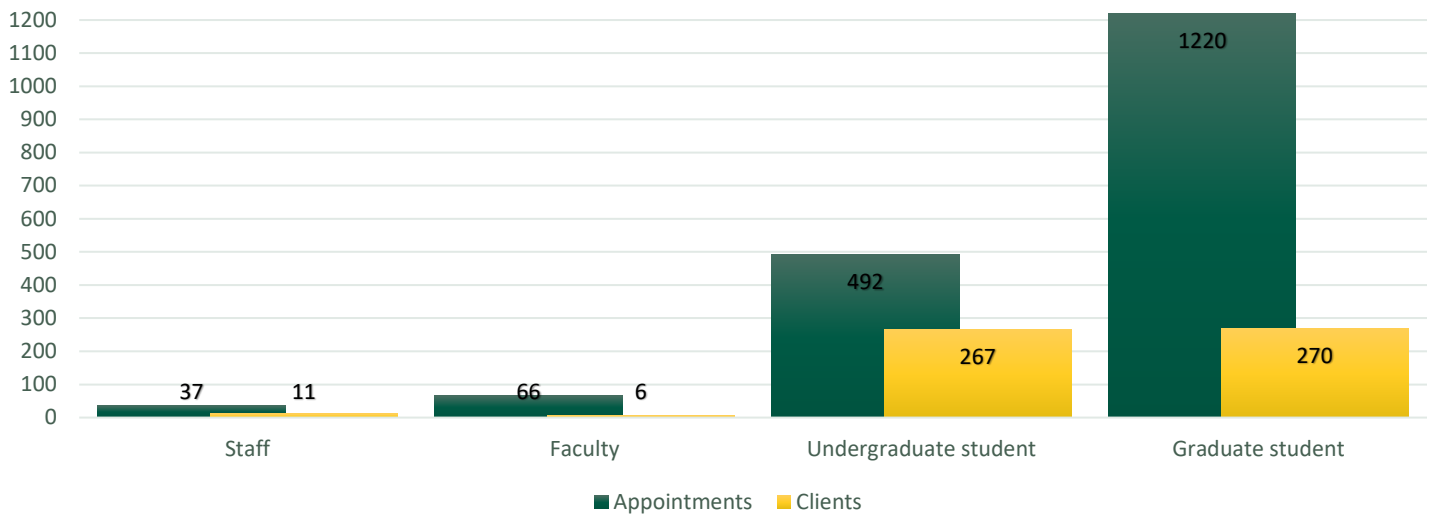
**560** clients



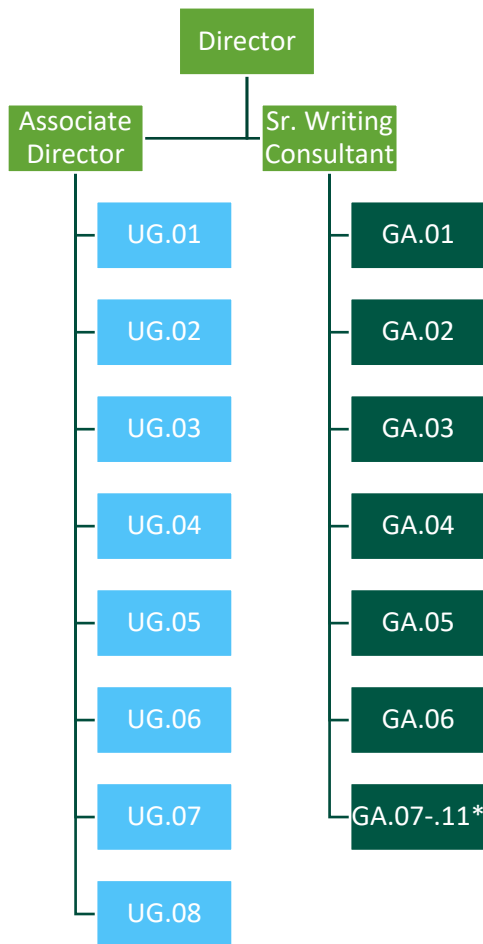
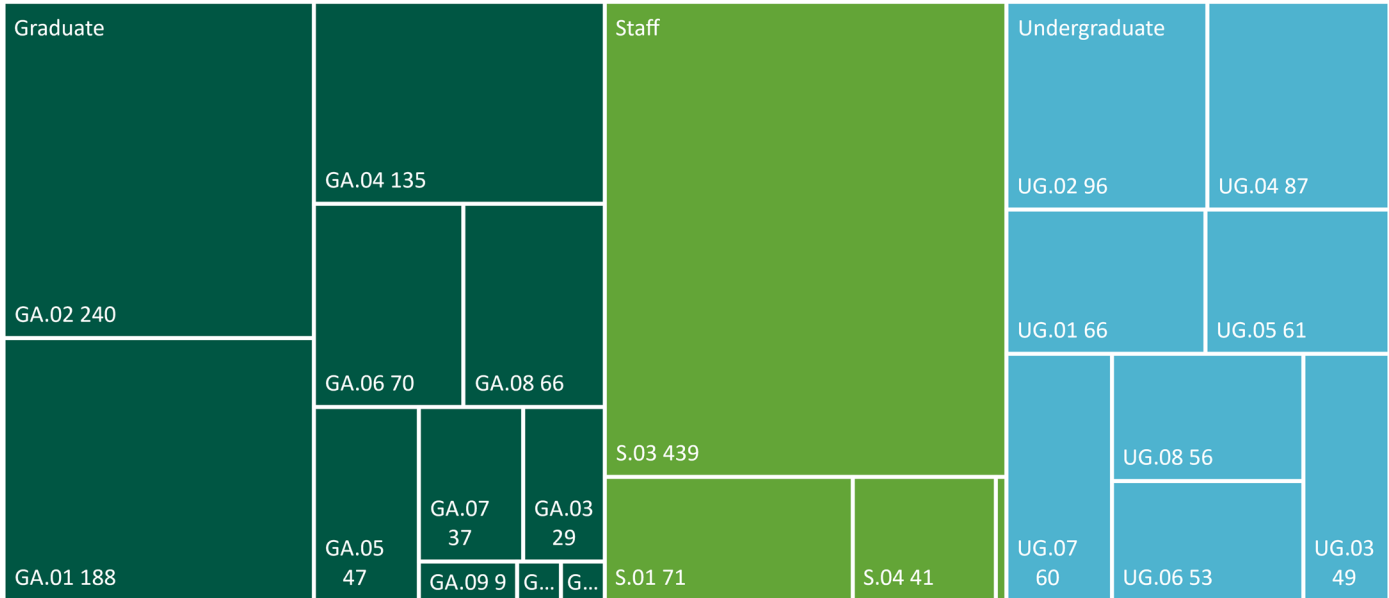
## Appointments by College



## Appointments by client status



Appointments by personnel



Staff

- Director, 12 mo., FT
- Associate Director, 9 mo., 50% FT
- Sr. Writing Consultant, 9 mo., 66% FT

Undergraduate consultants, hourly

- 8 on staff, providing an average of 10h/wk each
- Chandice Johnson Fellowship awarded to UG consultant

Graduate consultants on 9 mo. CGIS stipend

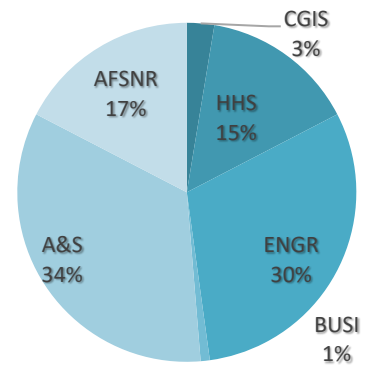
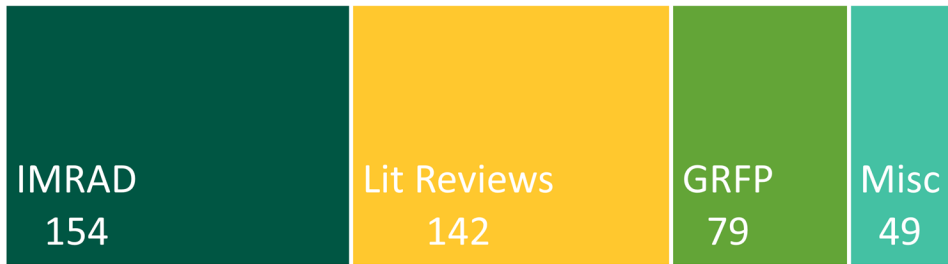
- Engineering specialist, 20h
- Disquisition specialist, 20h
- Agriculture specialist, 10h
- Writing group & event lead, 10h
- UG Research & RaMP specialist, 10h
- Generalist, 10h

\*Graduate consultants, additional

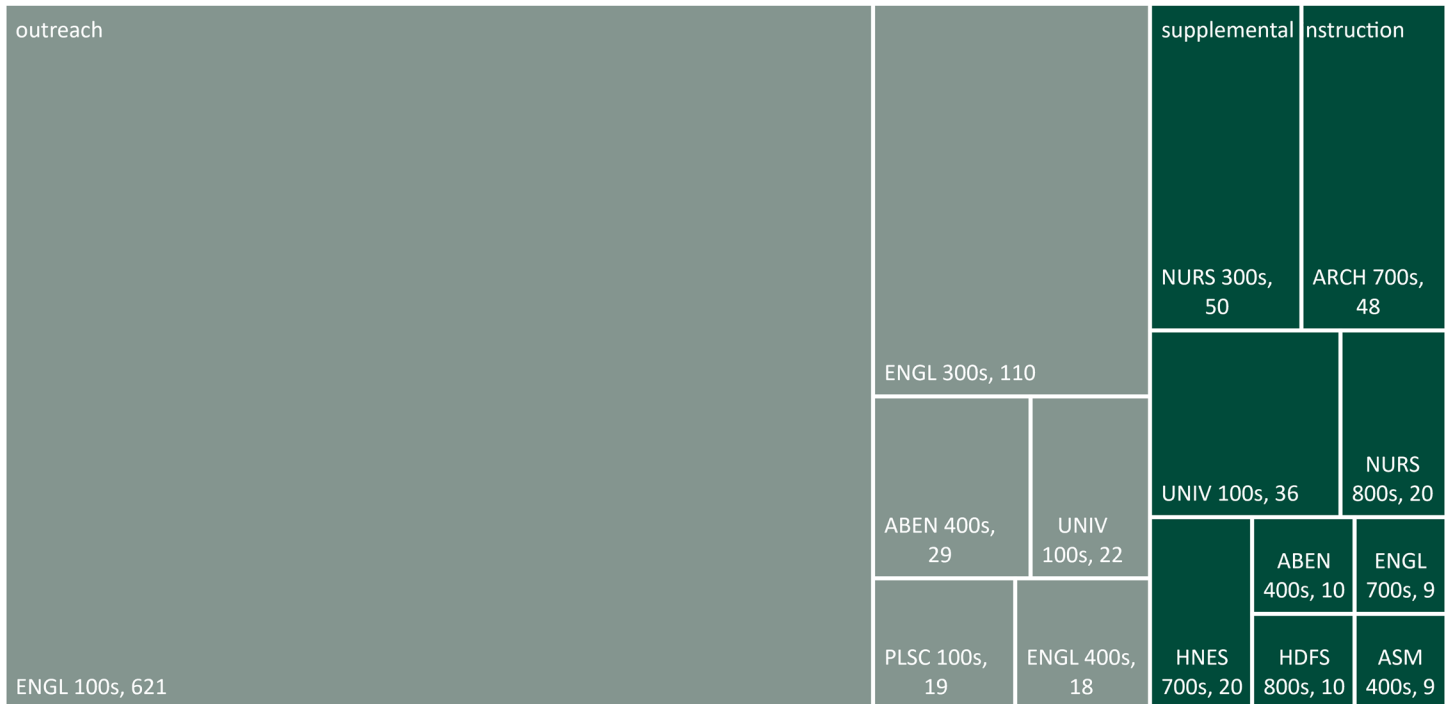
- ENGLISH GTA, 20h fall, 10h spring
  - ENGL stipend
- NCI Visiting Scholar tutor (summer only)
- Summer, hourly
  - 60h/wk., 5 GAs



Participation by theme



Class Visits: 58 classes, 1031 students





## About the Center for Writers

The CFW reports to the College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies (CGIS, "The Grad School"). CFW services are multidisciplinary in approach, with graduate services focusing more on STEM writing. The CFW serves the NDSU community of students, faculty, and staff by providing direct, individual writing support and co-curricular instruction on writing. Consultations (scheduled appointments/tutorials), supplementary writing instruction, weekly writing groups, workshops, and disquisition bootcamps constituted the core support activities over the academic year. The CFW is located in the Main Library at NDSU.

In FY24, the CFW was staffed by twenty-two people, including a full-time director (staff, CGIS), part-time associate director (Sr. Lecturer, CGIS/English), and a part-time Senior Writing Consultant (Lecturer, CGIS). Student workers included eight undergraduates (hourly) and a total of eleven GTAs (five, CGIS; one, RaMP grant; one, English; four, hourly). New in FY24 was a GTA who specialized in disquisitions. In late FY24 (June 2024), the position of Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator (a.k.a. Disquisition Processor) was moved from CGIS Student Support to the CFW.

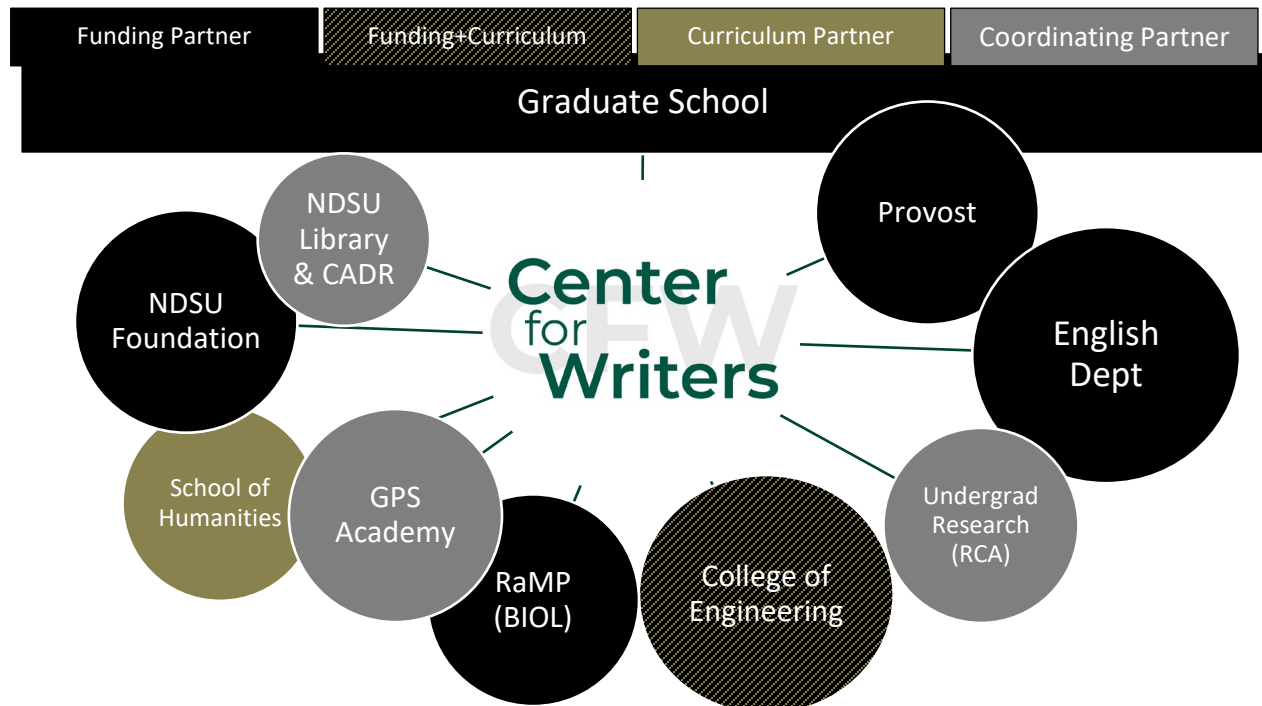
### MISSION

Through collaborative, personalized, and adaptive writing support for the community of students, scholars, and professionals at NDSU, the Center for Writers advances high standards of transformational education and the production and communication of innovative research.

### VISION

To be seen as a resource where productive writing work happens and as an essential part of the educational priorities and research production at NDSU

## Institutional Partners



## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Center for Writers has collaborated closely with a variety of units across campus.

- Not only does the CFW report to the *Graduate School* but CGIS also provides critical funding for some GTA stipends and hourly work.
  - Key persons: Susan Sell (Dean) → Mark Nawrot (Dean), Audra Hart (Business Coordinator), Melissa Selders-Ortez (Academic Support Administrator)
- Within the Graduate School, the *Graduate Professional Skills Academy* (GPS Academy) has been important in coordination of graduate student support and promoting events among graduate students.
  - Key person: Matt Warner (GPSA Coordinator)
- The *English Department* in the College of Arts & Sciences shared funding for the Associated Director (Sr. Lecturer position) who was the primary supervisor for undergraduate employees, coordinated for undergraduate services, and shared other operational duties. The department also provided a GTA consultant during the academic year and the CFW director served on the Writing Program committee. Additionally, a doctoral student completed field experience credits at the CFW.
  - Key persons: Sean Burt (Chair); Lisa Arnold (Director of Writing Program); Alison Graham-Bertolini (graduate program coordinator)
- The office of the *provost* provided supplemental funding for hourly employees.
- The *College of Engineering* provided partial funding for a GTA who specialized in Engineering writing and was the academic home for ENGR 722 (Academic Writing in Engineering).
  - Key person: Scott Pryor (Associate Dean)
- The *School of Humanities* was the academic home of LANG 701 & LANG 702 (Strategies of International GTAs & Tutorial) and LANG 709 (Language Strategies for Research Writing).
  - Key person: Heath Wing
- The *Undergraduate Research* Director for Research & Creative Activity (RCA) collaborated with the CFW to provide workshops on research writing and applying to graduate studies.
  - Key person: Ying Huang (Director of Undergraduate Research)
- The *Research and Mentoring Program* in Biological Sciences (RaMP) included new funding for a part time GTA position in the CFW to support RaMP students.
  - Key person: Tim Greives (RaMP PI)
- *NDSU Foundation* funds established by the family of Chandice Johnson support an undergraduate fellow in the CFW. The CFW also established a general fund with the NDSU Foundation in FY24.
- Located in the Main *Library* and sharing space with the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (*CADR*), the CFW coordinates closely to effectively use space for services and programming.
  - Key person: Mark Coppin (CADR Director) → Molly McKinnon (CADR Director), Jolie Graybill (Dean), Linnae Weinrich (Library Admin)

**Thank you to our friends and partners. Our work would not be possible without you!**

## Services

### Consultations

Scheduled consultations, mostly one-on-one with peer consultants, constitute the core CFW service. Scheduling is done through WC Online. Consultations were offered throughout the academic year, including summer semesters, excluding the first and last weeks of the semester and Disquisition Bootcamp weeks. Appointments are typically an hour, though longer appointments are also offered. In total, **1911 appointments** (2000+ hours) were conducted, a **17% increase** over the previous year. While the number of appointments varies with the rhythms of the academic semester, **35-55 hours per week** of consultations is the general range. **One-third** of appointments were conducted **online**.

**Clients** include undergraduate students (48%), graduate students (49%), faculty (1%), and staff (2%). A large majority (**67%**) of appointments were with **graduate students**, who tend to make multiple appointments as they work on more extended writing projects. The larger proportion of international students in the graduate population may also impact the higher number of consultations in contrast with the undergraduate clients. The **College of Arts & Sciences had the largest share of clients**, while College of Business had the lowest share of clients; other colleges were evenly represented in appointments and clients.

### CHANGES IN FY24

- **Writing Groups.** Troy Reisenauer led a pilot to add facilitated weekly writing groups as a scalable consultation service with the aim of offering at least one multidisciplinary writing group per weekday in FY25.
- **Disquisition Specialist.** Isaac Mensah was hired in a new, 20h GTA position to specialize in assisting students with disquisition formatting.
- **RaMP consultant.** A 3-year, NSF-funded grant in the Biosciences provided funding for Isaac Rush as a part-time CFW consultant to support students in the program.

### Workshops

Writing workshops are designed around topics that are common issues for academic, research, and professional writing and address an audience of graduate students and upper-division undergraduates. *STEM research writing* was emphasized in genre and substance, covering different parts of the IMRAD, literature reviews, research statements, and applying for grants (esp. a 6-part series on the GRFP).

The CFW offered 28 workshops through the year, about **weekly during fall and spring semesters**. An **average of 15 participants** attended these workshops, though the range of attendance was quite wide. Most participants were from the colleges of **Arts & Sciences** and **Engineering**, though the colleges of Health & Human Sciences and Agriculture, Food Systems & Natural Resources were also well represented among the **424 participants**. The number of workshops and attendance was consistent with past years.

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*Designating SPACE FOR WORKSHOPS and other programming continues to be a challenge. The CFW does not have its own workshop space so reserved the adjoining CADR space, the Grad Hub, the Main Library conference room and the Digital Visualization Lab, and rooms in the Memorial Union, depending on what was available. More consistency in space would likely benefit attendance and simplify administration.*

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**CHANGES TO WORKSHOP DESIGN (SPRING)**

A committee was formed to rethink and revamp workshops with the aim of making workshops more participatory and connecting multiple workshops across themes. This was an opportunity to think creatively about a co-curricular service that the CFW had offered for years and shift design to critical pedagogy that would be less a delivery of information and more problem-posing and experiential for participants. This committee met weekly in the spring and their work is on-going.

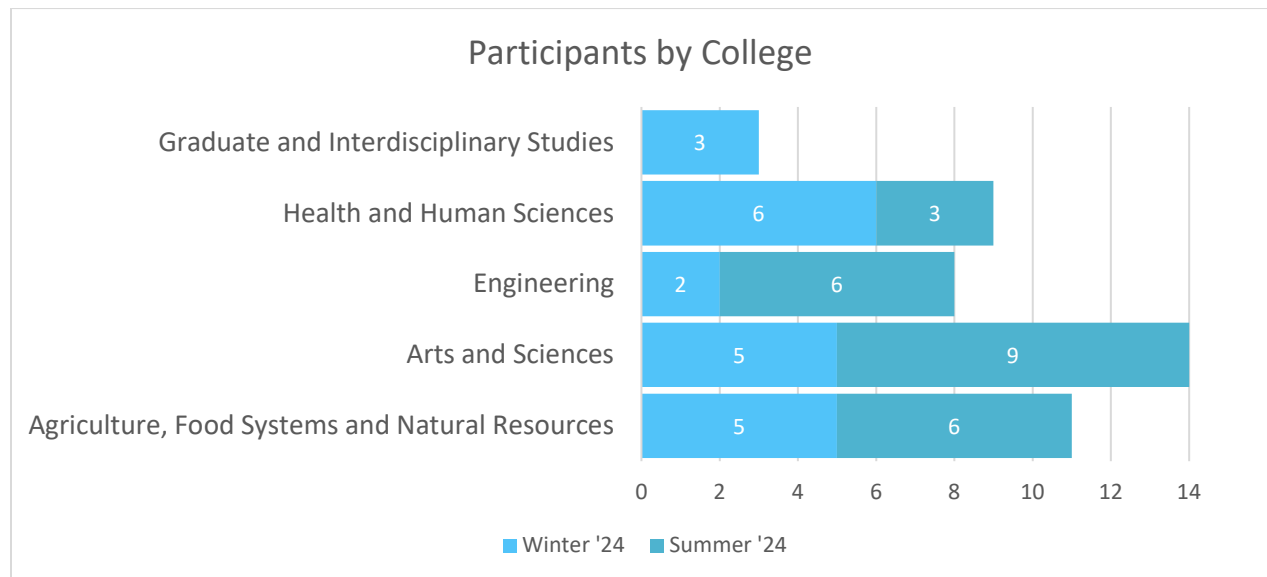
Committee members: Kristina Caton, Troy Reisenauer, Drew Taylor, and Isaac Mensah

DIRECTIVE

*Unifying workshops in themed series will benefit the CFW in several ways. Internally, themes provide focal points for brainstorming workshop topics, sensibly sequencing and scaffolding those topics, and distinguishing leadership and professionalization opportunities for consultants. Administratively, themes are useful for promotion of events, communicating CFW identity across campus, assessing needs, and collecting data on resource management. This committee will provide leadership in re-imagining workshops and distributing assignments/tasks to CFW personnel to advance this project.*

**Disquisition Bootcamps**

Disquisition Bootcamps support graduate students who are working on degree-completion texts (papers, theses, dissertations). By setting aside full days of writing work, bootcamps provide opportunity for students to make significant progress on these high-stakes documents. Two three-day, in-person bootcamps were offered in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), a “winter” bootcamp in early January and a “summer” bootcamp in late May. Troy Reisenauer (GTA), Isaac Mensah (GTA), and Stephen Disrud (director) coordinated planning and implementation for both bootcamps. **45 graduate students** participated (21 in Winter, 24 in Summer). Approximately 2/3 worked on dissertations and 1/3 worked on Master’s papers or theses.



A limited number of optional writing workshops were provided to address common concerns. **NEW INITIATIVES** in FY24 included: 1) project-planning groups, 2) advisor outreach, 3) campus leaders as lunch guests, 4) wellness activities/checks, and 5) dedicated collaboration/conversation space.

## Dissertation & Thesis Processing

The CFW took a more direct role in disquisition processing in FY24. In the summer of 2023, Drew Taylor supported the Graduate School Disquisition Processor (Scarlet Gray Bernard) by taking on some of the workload of disquisition processing. In the fall, the CFW hired Isaac Mensah to specialize in disquisitions and work one-on-one with students on preparing and formatting their disquisitions. Finally, in the summer of 2024, the position of Disquisition Processor was reformulated as *Dissertation & Thesis Coordinator* and moved from the Graduate School. By moving the position to the CFW, we hope to develop this role as more comprehensively supportive of students in this high-stakes stage of their writing. Drew Taylor was selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants.

## Curriculum

*Language Strategies for Research Writing* (LANG 709, 3cr), *Classroom Strategies for International TAs* and *Language Tutorial* (2 sections: LANG 701, 3cr; LANG 702, 1cr), Practicum in English (ENGL 894, 1 cr), and *Academic Writing for Engineers* (ENGR 722) were taught in FY24. Sixty-eight (**68**) students enrolled in these courses for a total of **190 student credit hours**.

## Supplementary Writing Instruction

On faculty request, the CFW provided support for writing instruction in a variety of classes in the form of lectures and structured student activities. Kristina Caton, Isaac Mensah, and Troy Reisenauer coordinated with faculty to deliver instruction on topics related to specific genres (e.g., literature reviews, industry technical reports), writing and revision techniques (e.g., improving flow, organization), and rhetorical principles (e.g., audience, purpose). The CFW also worked with instructors on how to provide effective feedback on student writing. Supplemental writing instruction was provided on **15 occasions** for a total of **227 students**, both undergraduate and graduate.

## Outreach

Consultants and staff promoted CFW services in a variety of ways, including **43 class visits** where hundreds of students were informed about the CFW, multiple **contact tables** and a **display case** in the Memorial Union, a *Spectrum* story written by Cody Goehring highlighting the CFW, and **resource fairs**. Undergraduate consultants are the CFW's most effective advocates.

## Research

Stephen Disrud, Mafruha Shifat, and SJ Williamson gave a panel presentation at the Rhetorical Society of America on "Rhetorics of Writing Center Scholarship: Fostering Justice and Equity in American Universities" that discussed the praxis of writing centers can promote access and justice for students with diverse abilities and linguistic backgrounds, research that was directly informed by Shifat's and Williamson's work at the CFW.

## People

Twenty-two (**22**) **people** worked in some capacity at the CFW in FY24, including staff, faculty, undergraduate student hourly employees, graduate student TAs, graduate student hourly employees, and an intern.

### LEADERSHIP (3)

**Stephen Disrud** (Interim Director), **Mary Pull** (Associate Director), and **Kristina Caton** (Sr. Writing Consultant) worked together to administrate the CFW, train and supervise employees, and design and deliver programming.

### UNDERGRADUATE CONSULTANTS (9)

**Brooke Anderson, Cody Goehring, Grace McIntyre, Kira Eliason, Laura Overbo, Samuel Schotzko, Taylor Severance, Phoebe Diem, Alexia Lekander** worked at the CFW to provide peer consulting, outreach, and workshop support. Cody Goehring was the Chandice Johnson Fellow. The undergraduate consultants provided and average 65-hours per week of service in the CFW.

### GRADUATE CONSULTANTS (9)

**Andrew Taylor, Jeffrey Lackmann, Troy Reisenauer, Nicholas Humphrey, Isaac Mensah, Isaac Rush, Shikha Phillips** were *GTAs on Graduate School stipends*, providing a total of 80h per week, with several also providing hourly work in the summer.

**Frederick Gaisie** was a *TA supported by the Department of English* who worked 20h in the fall and 10h in the spring at the CFW.

**Md Mahmudul Haque, Mafruha Shifat, and SJ Williamson** worked on *hourly wage* in the summer.

**Suman Dey**, a doctoral student in English, completed an *internship* focused on AI in writing centers in the spring.

## Consultant Training

**Onboarding** new consultants required a series of readings in Writing Center scholarship, observe a number of consultations by veteran consultants, be observed by other consultants, and complete reflections on their readings and experiences before doing consultations on their own.

All consultants have **continuous training** through weekly staff meetings where we collaboratively share and discuss specific issues that arise during our experiences in the CFW, determine solutions to any problems we are facing individually or as a unit, and collaborate on a variety of special projects, which also require occasional presentations at the meetings. Readings in Writing Center topics are assigned and discussed throughout the semester. Meetings were separate for undergraduate and graduate staff.

Late in fall semester, a full-day all-**staff retreat** was conducted where activities brainstormed new ideas for the CFW, presentations celebrated accomplishments, and group work identified on-going and future needs.





Mary Pull retires



contact table



MU display



workshops



bootcamps



GRFP



Spectrum story