

DATE: October 1, 2022
FROM: Kristina Quynn, Director CSU Writes
RE: Report on Research & Scholarly Writing Support, 2021-22

Summary of the CSU Writes report on “Research & Scholarly Writing Support: Institution Survey”

CSU Writes has completed a survey of writing programs that support early-career through late-career researchers at more than 100 highest-ranked research institutions. The survey included our peer institutions and select aspirational institutions. Responding institution sizes ranged from those that served graduate student populations of ~1500 to ~9400. In 2021-22, CSU’s graduate student population was ~3600.

The purpose of the survey was two-fold: 1) to better understand the program arrangements of and approaches to writing productivity support, and 2) to open pathways of communication and potential collaboration among writing program directors for studies of advanced writing research.

The survey findings will also help CSU improve our support of publications, proposals, and submissible documents (theses, dissertations, reports, and more) across the career spans of our researchers.

Select key findings from the report:

- Research/scholarly writing support can be housed in various campus locations—most commonly in graduate schools and writing centers, but also in colleges, libraries, and resource centers.
- Program size varied significantly and spoke to the idiosyncrasies of institutional histories, funding, and interests in research writing productivity. Size did not correspond with grad student population.
- Reported yearly program attendances ranged from 160 to 3500. One program (a CSU peer institution) reported providing 4000 consultations to graduate students.
- 76% of programs reported having peer consultants/tutors on staff
- Program staffing also varied significantly: 40% have one FTE staff; 45% more than two FTE.
- Covid brought inconsistent impacts: Several programs reported suspending or canceling programs while a couple programs reported being well equipped to cope or higher attendances at events.
- The survey reveals the ingenuity of program administrators to provide a range of specialty programs, workshops, and other offerings to suit the changing needs of writers at their campuses.

Select key insights for CSU:

- CSU Writes was one a few programs designed to work with faculty as producers of research.
- CSU Writes was unique because we work with graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other researchers across the career span.
- CSU Writes endorses field-driven (not curricular) measures of high-quality research writing.
- CSU Writes had the highest number of reported faculty attendance of universities reporting support for faculty writers.
- With yearly program attendances exceeding 3500, CSU Writes also has one of the overall highest rates of reported attendances.
- CSU Writes can reach across discipline, rank, and skill-level differences to provide graduate student, researcher/postdoc, and faculty writing support in a single program.
- Only two programs reported exploring manuscript editing services for either graduate student and/or faculty writers—a service long-requested by our faculty and international scholars.
- Reminder: Professional manuscript editors and writing coaches can provide targeted support for individual writers for various manuscripts/proposals.
- We can make CSU the first university to come in mind when researchers think of excellence and innovation in research writing and productivity.