

UReCA Report for Assessor Committee

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Dear UReCA Assessor Committee, I am writing to you to report my engagement and progress on the UReCA supported project “Bring the Center to the Library: A Community Writing Center for Oklahoma”. I will begin with a summary of the project, followed by a description of the processes used, and an analysis of the results. I will end with a discussion of the project’s impact and a reflection on my growth as a scholar through the process. Further, I would like to extend my gratitude for your investment in students through the Provost’s Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Fellowship. Your time and energy are well spent in developing students into effective researchers and scholars.

Bring the Center to the Library: A Community Writing Center for Oklahoma is a keystone project to explore and validate the possibilities of a Community Writing Center (CWC) in the Norman Oklahoma Community. It’s premise is simple: to reach a wider audience of community members, we must go into the community; that is, if we wish to invest in writing literacy of the public, we can’t expect the public to come to us—we must go to them. To enact and test this premise I, a writing consultant trained by the University of Oklahoma Writing Center (WC), began by extensively researching community writing centers. This research included gaining an understanding of current and past CWCs and included an informal interview with Dr. Matthew Capdeville, director of the University of Notre Dame Writing Center, which gave invaluable insight into community writing centers and prepared me to execute the project. Then, through June 14th to July 26th, I spent Fridays and Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm at the Norman East Branch Library providing free writing tutoring to any interested community members. This project provided opportunities both to actively invest in the writing literacy of the Norman Oklahoma community and provide perspective and data on CWCs to be used by OU’s and other Writing Centers.

The execution of the project consisted of advertising efforts and the actual tutoring. Advertising was done through the creation and physical/digital distribution of a flyer advertising free writing tutoring. The physical flyers were distributed primarily at the East Branch Library and the digital flyers were distributed through social media groups including posts on Facebook, Instagram and Reddit. The digital distribution was targeted to relevant groups such as writing and community support groups. Due to time and knowledge constraints advertising efforts were limited with a total of 10 digital posts made. The count of physical flyers distributed is not known but is estimated at 20. The rest of the execution was simply being present on promised days. Due to an unexpected illness presence was not upheld for 2 days but otherwise occurred smoothly.

The results of the project come in two forms. Primarily, data was recorded on the number of tutoring sessions performed and the contents of those sessions. Further, the experiences and relationships formed through the project represent another form of success. In pure numbers, the project did not perform up to its defined goals. Initially, I set the goal of performing 25 sessions over the course of the project. In actuality, I performed 5 sessions. With a session rate of 20% of the goal, this does not reflect success in the first category. Yet, it must be remembered that those

5 sessions represent writers in our community actively getting free support. I suggest that in no way was this a failure as we reached and aided the writing community. Further, not represented in the numbers is the perspectives gained on CWCs which can be shared in publications and at conferences, and the relationship formed between the OU WC and the Norman East Branch Library. Especially the last point has important impact as conversations have started about other ways we can support the community. Lastly, I am pleased to report that I have been accepted to deliver a presentation on this project, CWCs, and community ties at the National Conference for Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) this October. This represents the main deliverable of the project and my engagement in my studies' scholarship.

Finally, I am excited to share my personal growth as a scholar through this experience. As an undergraduate student it is undeniably difficult to determine, precisely, what I wish to do with my career. This opportunity has greatly helped me realize my passion for community literacy research and my excitement for investing in the Oklahoma writing community. It has opened doors to conference presentations and has inspired ideas for publications. It has, in short, kickstarted my path into community writing scholarship and begun to prepare me for an animated career.

It is with my personal growth, and the investment in Oklahoma's unique voices, in mind that I once more extend my gratitude for the Provost's Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Fellowship. It has allowed me to both invest in my local community and reach a national community of relevant scholars. I am very excited to build on this experience and further invest in community writers with the knowledge I have gained.