**Call for Proposals**

 **Special Issue *WLN, A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* on Budgets and Resources**

We are calling for submissions that focus upon the material needs and resources of writing centers. In 1997, and again in 2015, Neal Lerner asserted the challenge and necessity of counting “beans”—tangible, measurable outcomes (e.g., improved grades, greater retention rates) readily understood and appreciated by those who oversee budgetary plan implementation and resource allocation for their institutions’ writing centers. While the ubiquity of centers may suggest that they are valued by institutions, and while assessment of the “results” of center work may be more available, few centers contribute easily-calculable financial value to colleges or universities. As a result, writing center administrators often struggle to articulate an expected return on investment (ROI) for increasing, or even maintaining, material support.

The pressure for accountability, which merges assessment and funding, is tremendous during times of financial downturns. We invoke the spirit of Lerner’s call for attention to “beans” at this time of massive inflation and enrollment declines. The question we ask our contributors to this special issue is whether the resources allocated to our centers reflect the impact they have on institutional priorities such as student well-being (e.g., mental health, self-efficacy), retention, and graduation.

Those of us who work in writing centers know that we are in an environment in which academic support is considered central to retention. However, many institutions are financially challenged because of enrollment downturns caused by cultural changes, fears of student debt, and the pandemic. The work we do in our centers is empowered or constrained by funding available for staffing, technology, and space. The publication of a special issue focusing on funding and resources is designed to help our community do what it does best: collaborate.

We encourage vivid descriptions of not only wild success, but epic failure, perhaps about the changes that have occurred within the last decade. Interdisciplinary references are encouraged, as is an examination of the exploitation of passion in center work. Related questions may include (but are not limited to) the following:

* How do you measure your center's institutional value? How do others measure that value? Is that value expressed in resources?
* What efforts are you taking to bolster your center's campus profile? How does that translate into requests for resources?
* What role does your center play in augmenting your institution's efforts to increase retention and graduation? How well are your center’s efforts known?
* What additional services does your center provide to keep your institution financially viable?
* Does your center enable the institution to meet external needs for compliance with ADA standards, TRiO or other federal grants, dual credit legislation, etc.? Is your center compensated for that role?

**Schedule**

For priority consideration, send article proposals (300-500 words) by **October 1, 2023,** to guest co-editors Lynn Briggs (lbriggs@ewu.edu) and Brennan Thomas (bthomas@francis.edu). Please provide full contact information with your submission. In your proposal, clearly describe your focus, the theoretical and research base from which you will draw, and your plans for structuring a 3000-word article (Works Cited and Notes included in the word count). Invitations to submit full articles will be issued **November 30, 2023**. Please note that tutors are encouraged to submit a proposal (200-250 words) for a 1500-word Tutors’ Column that responds to the theme of this special issue.

**Suggested Readings**

Fels, Dawn, et al. “Contingent Writing Center Work: Benefits, Risks, and the Need for Equity and Institutional Change.” *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 39, no. 1/2, 40th Anniversary Special Double Issue, 2021, pp. 351-380. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/27172225.

Lape, Noreen. “The Worth of the Writing Center: Numbers, Value, Culture, and the Rhetoric of Budget Proposals.” *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-4. <http://hdl.handle.net/2152/62143>.

Lerner, Neal. “18 years after ‘Beans’ — Neal Lerner Reflects.” *Connecting Writing Centers Across Borders: A Blog of WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 6 Apr. 2015, <https://www.wlnjournal.org/blog/2015/04/18-years-after-beans-neal-lerner-reflects/>.

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Lundquist, Anne E., and Christine Kelly. “Assessment: Using Data to Support Graduate Student Success and Program Effectiveness.” *A Practitioner’s Guide to Supporting Graduate and Professional Students,* edited by Valerie Shepard and April Perry, Routledge, 2022, pp. 185-198.

Martini, Rebecca Hallman. *Disrupting the Center: A Partnership Approach to Writing Across the University*. UP of Colorado, 2022.

Metzenroth, Jessica Weber. *Building a Workplace Writing Center: A Sustainable Solution and Practical Guide*. Routledge, 2022.

Pleasant, Scott, and Deno P. Trakas. “Two Approaches to Writing Center Assessment.” *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, vol. 45, no. 7-8, 2021, pp. 3-10. <https://www.wlnjournal.org/archives/v45/45.7-8.pdf>.

Ruecker, Todd, et al., editors. *Retention, Persistence, and Writing Programs*. Utah State UP, 2017.

Salazar, Jesús José. “The Meaningful and Significant Impact of Writing Center Visits on College Writing Performance.” *Writing Center Journal*, vol. 39, no. 1/2, 40th Anniversary Special Double Issue, 2021, pp. 55-96. *JSTOR,*<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27172214>.

Williams, Bronwyn T. "Writing Centers, Enclaves, and Creating Spaces of Change Within Universities." *Writing Center Journal*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2022, pp. 6-20. doi: https://doi.org/10.7771/2832-9414.1015.

Zuccarelli, Joseph. “Measuring the Effect of Writing Center Visits on Student Performance.” *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2022, pp. 3-10.<https://www.praxisuwc.com/193-zuccarelli-et-al>.