

Upcoming Events

Accessing Higher Ground: Web Accessibility Conference

Join AHG November 13 - 17 at the Westin Westminster in Colorado for a week of workshops, labs, and networking! AHG focuses on the implementation and benefits of accessible media, Universal Design, and Assistive Technology in the university, business, and public setting. Conference attendees have access to over 100 hours of sessions, one dinner featuring a keynote speaker and admission to our two-day Exhibit Hall highlighting innovative companies and products related to our industry.

Visit the AHG website for the complete conference program: <http://accessinghigherground.org>

CFI's January Symposium

Mark your calendar on Wednesday, January 4th, 2018 for CFI's January Symposium. An all day conference focusing on faculty scholarship, January Symposium aims to be responsive to diverse interests and needs, offering a variety of workshops, roundtables, scholarly talks, and lockdowns. Learn more at <http://www.jmu.edu/cfi/academic-culture/january-symposium.shtml>

Online Learning Council Update

JMU's Online Learning Council (OLC), which formed in the fall of 2016, is busy at work again this fall. In the spring, the group completed a SWOT analysis of JMU's distance online learning environment. Now, the 34-member Council is generating a list of potential strategies to clarify direction and strengthen support for JMU's distance online learning efforts. In Spring 2018, the group will start to develop JMU's first comprehensive strategic plan for online learning. To guide their work, the Council is using what are known as the national C-RAC Guidelines, comprised of 9 Hallmarks of excellence, plus an additional 10th Hallmark developed by the Online Learning Coordination Team (you can view the hallmarks at http://www.jmu.edu/online/olc_hallmarks.shtml).

OLC members represent academic departments and support units across JMU. If you would like to learn more about the OLC and JMU's online learning efforts, feel free to contact any of the OLC members or someone from JMU's Online Learning Coordination Team.

Doug Hearrington
Online Learning Coordinator
Maury Hall, room 113
568-7403
hearridb@jmu.edu

Sarah Cheverton
*Assistant Online Learning
Coordinator*
568-5321
cheverse@jmu.edu

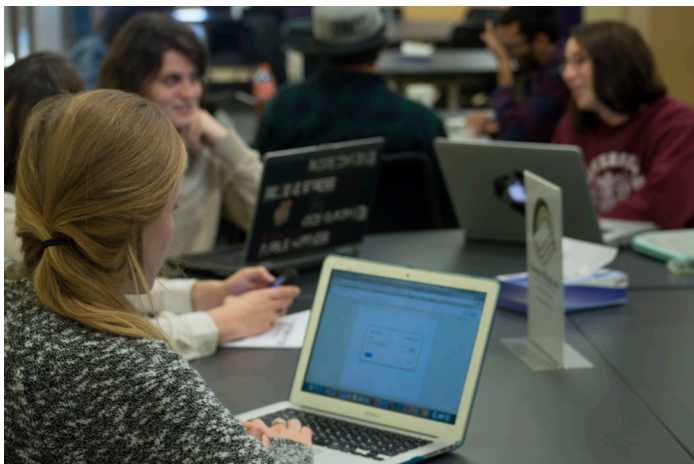
Leanne Shenk
Administrative Assistant
568-4059
shenklr@jmu.edu

UWC Expands Services to Include Online Students

By Jared Featherstone

The University Writing Center continues to expand its online tutoring services to make writing assistance more accessible to an evolving JMU community. The number of online writing center appointments doubled from Fall 2016 to Spring 2017, and this academic year, more tutors are being trained to tutor online.

The writing center began offering online tutoring in the fall of 2009. Jared Featherstone, then a new addition the UWC faculty, had been a consultant in the online writing centers of Smarthinking.com and University of Maryland University College. He was able to design and implement a similar model of asynchronous online tutoring at JMU. In the asynchronous model, students upload drafts of their paper along with notes about their writing concerns. Within 48 hours, the tutor would send the student a response form with comments, explanations, examples, and links to help the writer make effective revisions.



The asynchronous online tutoring at that time was only open to students who had difficulty getting to the writing center because of a full time job, family obligations, location, or disability. Many of the center's early online clients were adult learners returning to school for degrees in education or nursing. As the clientele grew, Featherstone trained other UWC faculty like Laura Schubert and, eventually, some experienced peer tutors and graduate assistants, to conduct online sessions. The service continued at a limited basis for several years, serving those students who could not otherwise make use of writing center services. By 2015, the number of online courses and degree programs had increased significantly at JMU. The UWC partnered with the libraries to use their LibChat system for online tutoring. The system, which powers the Ask-a-Librarian chat function, enabled the writing center to provide real-time chat-based tutoring services. The tutors, who were accustomed to face-to-face tutoring, were given

specialized training to facilitate the chat sessions. Session transcripts off all sessions were automatically saved, enabled the UWC faculty to continuously assess and improve the center's online tutoring practice.

In the spring of 2016, the University Writing Center closed its satellite locations in Rose Library and the Athletic Performance Center, due to low usage. In order to catch some of the students who may have used the satellites or students who had trouble getting to the main location in the Student Success Center, online tutoring services were expanded. The center began offering more online sessions in the tutoring schedule, experimenting with late-night online hours. This offering also allowed some flexibility for tutors, who could work those hours remotely from anywhere with a reliable internet connection.

Fall of 2016 saw a shift from the LibChat system to the WC Online tutoring system, one designed for writing centers. This change allowed the UWC to have the face-to-face appointment reservations and online sessions in the same interface. Specific tutors could be enabled for online sessions, and clients would have the choice of online or face-to-face tutoring.

With the increase in online tutoring capabilities, the UWC was able to pilot new programs. In the spring of 2017, UWC peer tutor Jorden Gunessever was able to continue tutoring stateside JMU students remotely from her study abroad site in London. That semester also saw the pilot of the UWC's partnership with TED University in Ankara, Turkey. The Turkish institution had approached the writing center hoping to eventually establish its own center, but, in the short term, they needed writing help from native speakers of English. The UWC held online sessions for students at TEDU that spring and may continue to partner with the institution in the future.

In addition to the services provided to clients, the University Writing Center has also explored online learning in the training and professional development of its tutors. In the summer of 2015, the required 3-credit preparation course for writing tutors was offered completely online for the first time. With that infrastructure, the UWC now conducts the training every semester as a hybrid course. Last spring, in order to help develop tutors' expertise during and after training, the UWC made use of the University of Wisconsin's Case Scenario/Critical Reader software to create online simulations of tutoring sessions.

For the 2017-2018 academic year, the UWC continues to integrate online learning to develop its staff and to empower writers in the JMU community.

For more information about the UWC or to make an appointment, visit our website: <https://www.jmu.edu/uwc/>

By the Numbers: JMU Online Enrollment Increases

We ran a comparison of the SCHEV Annual Course Enrollment Data for the 2006-2007 academic year and the 2016-2017 academic years for online and distance learning classes at JMU. Here's what we found:

over the past ten years, total enrollments in 100% online courses jumped from 4,143 in 2006-07 to 34,574 this past academic year. That's a 510% increase.

We anticipate that the number of enrollments in online courses will continue to increase with the demand for online and hybrid courses in the future.

National Reports

Digital Learning Compass: Distance Education Enrollment Report 2017

In May, the Babson Survey Research Group published *Digital Learning Compass: Distance Education Enrollment Report 2017* (Allen & Seaman). Based on Fall 2015 IPEDS* data (the most recent available at the time), the report details distance learning enrollment trends among U.S. degree-granting institutions of higher education. The overall findings include:

Distance education continued its pattern of growth for another year, increasing by 3.9% over the previous year.

In higher education, nearly 30% (29.7%) of all students are taking at least one distance course.

The number of completely campus-based students dropped by nearly 1 million between 2012 and 2015.

67.8% of distance learning students take their courses from public institutions, although trends indicate significant growth in the private, non-profit sector.

Go to <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/read/digital-learning-compass-distance-education-enrollment-report-2017/> to download a copy of the full report.

*IPEDS is the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS).

Online College Students: Comprehensive Data on Demands and Preferences

In June 2017, Learning House and Aslanian Market Research published the report, *Online College Students: Comprehensive Data on Demands and Preferences* (Clinefelter & Aslanian). The report represents the responses of 1,454 individuals who were, as of Spring 2017 “recently enrolled, currently enrolled, or planning to enroll in the next 12 months in a fully online undergraduate or graduate degree, certificate, or licensure program.” Key findings include:

They want to be part of a community and interaction with classmates and instructors is an important way to achieve that. About 25% of the respondents suggest that more interaction would improve online course experiences.

Price is a factor, but not the only one. Students will pay more for perceived quality or programs that meet their unique needs.

Students consider a greater number of schools than they used to before selecting which one to attend. The number of students considering only one school fell by 12% from 2016 to 2017.

Career services are important. 77% of online college students report using their school’s career services.

Go to <https://www.learninghouse.com/ocs2017/> to download a copy of the full report.

CFI Welcomes New Faculty Associates!

CFI’s Faculty Associates are full-time JMU instructional faculty who contribute substantially to the development, delivery, and evaluation of programs that support the development of JMU faculty.

Becca Howes-Mischel, Scholarship Area, *Assistant Professor of Anthropology*

Lindsey Harvell-Bowman, Scholarship Area, *Assistant Professor in Advocacy in the School of Communication Studies and Affiliate Faculty in the Department of Psychology*

Raymond Rodriguez, Scholarship Area, *Assistant Professor in Educational Foundations and Exceptionalities (EFEX)*,

Kristi Lewis, Teaching Area, *Assistant Professor, Health Sciences*

Peter Eubanks, Teaching Area, *Associate Professor in Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*

Michael Kirkpatrick, Teaching Area, *Associate Professor of Computer Science*