QEP IMPACT REPORT
WRITE TO THE TOP: ENHANCING STUDENT WRITING THROUGH A WRITING INTENSIVE PROGRAM

Executive Summary of the Quality Enhancement Plan
The goal of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to enhance the ability of students to write effectively and appropriately in the disciplines. The QEP will improve undergraduate student skills in both general writing and professional writing in their disciplines. Student learning outcomes for improving general writing skills and professional writing skills in academic disciplines encompass skills in four areas: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading and writing; processes; and knowledge of conventions.

Four initiatives are planned to achieve the goals of the QEP. These include a Writing Intensive Program that continues and expands the Plus-One Program in the Freshman Composition Sequence and will require students to complete nine hours of Writing Enriched and Writing in the Discipline courses. A Faculty Development Plan will provide faculty with training in the best practices for assigning and responding to student writing. Strengthening the University Writing Center and providing for the improvement of student writing through the use technology are the third and fourth initiatives.

List of Goals and Intended Outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan
Goals and Objectives
The goal of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to enhance the ability of students to write effectively and appropriately in the discipline. The QEP was designed to improve undergraduate student skills in both general writing and professional writing in their disciplines.

- **General writing** demonstrates critical thinking, style, and fluency appropriate to the audience and task; consistency in focus and reasoning; structural integrity; and mastery of standard edited English.
- **Professional writing** should also exhibit style and vocabulary appropriate to the discipline and task; synthesize research in writing appropriate to the discipline; and exhibit the ability to access, evaluate, and utilize information from a variety of sources and media.

Student learning outcomes for improving general writing skills and professional writing skills in academic disciplines were identified in four areas derived from the Outcomes Statement of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA). These areas are as follows: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and writing; processes; and knowledge of conventions.

Changes Made to the Quality Enhancement Plan
Changes to the four initiatives that were planned to achieve the goals of the QEP were minimal. These are discussed below as well as what was achieved as a result of the QEP

Initiative One—The Writing Intensive Program—The Plus-One Program
The QEP called for the expansion of the Plus-One Program in the Freshman Composition Sequence through funding for the hiring of additional faculty. The Plus-One Program provides at-risk and other students in the General Education English Composition sequence, ENG 1050 and 1060, with an additional hour of contact time with a Composition instructor. The University has continued to provide funding for additional faculty for the Plus-One Program, although not through the QEP. Student performance in Plus One courses has continued to exceed that of students in non-Plus-One courses.

Initiative One--Writing Enriched Courses and Writing in Discipline Courses

The Writing Intensive Program required students to complete nine hours of Writing Enriched and Writing in the Discipline courses. There have been no changes to this initiative. The University implemented a graduation requirement for all students entering in fall 2011. The University has approved one hundred thirty-six Writing Enriched and Writing in the Discipline courses and offers approximately one hundred twenty-eight course sections of Writing Intensive courses to students every semester.

Initiative One--Information Literacy and the Writing Intensive Program

The Information Literacy Initiative called for Library personnel to provide information literacy instruction to additional sections of ENG 1060 and to provide information literacy instruction to all upper division courses (3000 or 4000 level) designated as Writing in the Discipline courses. While not achieving the intended levels of instruction, the QEP was successful in increasing information literacy instruction to these groups, thus helping with the creation of a culture of academic writing here at UNCP. Since fall 2011, the QEP has provided information literacy instruction to approximately 38 "unique" Writing Enriched and Writing in the Disciplines Courses and reached between 10 and 15 percent of all QEP-related courses offered each semester.

Initiative Two—The Faculty Development Plan

A Faculty Development Plan was to provide faculty with training in the best practices for assigning and responding to student writing. The Faculty Development Plan consisted of four half-day workshops offered over the course of one semester. This sequence of professional development workshops was offered every semester for the first three years and once a year for the last two years of the QEP. Follow-up professional development was provided to some faculty following the completion of the faculty development workshops but not on a large scale because the required training for all faculty teaching writing intensive courses was judged to be adequate. Development in the faculty population was also to be assessed in part via portfolios. This activity did not take place as it was judged to be impractical given the commitment of faculty time involved.

Initiative Three—The University Writing Center

Initiative Three of the Quality Enhancement Plan was to strengthen the University Writing Center by increasing the number of student tutors, recruiting student tutors from a variety of disciplines, and developing a cadre of professional tutors who would train and mentor disciplinary student tutors. For the first three years of the QEP, the University provided additional funds to the University Writing Center for the hiring of additional tutors and recruiting of students from a variety of disciplines. Although the development of professional tutors was not as extensive as envisioned, the University piloted the project using graduate student assistants as tutors in two departments, Social Work and Nursing.

Initiative Four---Technology Enhancement

The Technology Enhancement initiative called for the University to seek to find and implement technology tools for the improvement of student writing, including the development of online resources using the enhanced features of Blackboard Enterprise Academic Suite and other applications including open source software. An instructional designer/technologist with a writing specialty or a background in writing instruction was to be hired who would develop online resources, including an online portal for asynchronous training of faculty. It was determined that existing staff could be used to develop a Blackboard site for faculty to access workshop materials including PowerPoint slides, workshop documents, and videos of workshop presentations.

Impact of the Quality Enhancement Plan on Student Learning
Initiative One—The Writing Intensive Program
The Quality Enhancement Plan has enhanced the ability of students to write effectively and appropriately in the discipline. The QEP improved undergraduate student skills in both general writing and professional writing in their disciplines. The University used the enhanced version of Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) to assess written communication skills. The CLA assessed first-year and senior students in the areas of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, written communication, and problem solving by means of a Performance Task and Selected Response Questions. When student performance on the CLA+ was examined in 2014, it was found that students who had taken Writing Intensive Courses performed significantly better on the Performance Task and the Selected-Response Questions than students who had not. The overall average score on the CLA+ for students who had taken Writing Intensive courses exceeded that of students who had not by more than forty points. In addition, the average scores on Performance Task and Selected Response Questions increased the more Writing Intensive courses the student had taken. The pattern was the same for each of the sub-score areas. The graph below illustrates these findings.

Further, the University used the Waypoint Outcomes Software to evaluate student writing and track student writing performance. This software allows faculty to give students detailed feedback on their writing based upon a rubric for the QEP rubric created from the QEP learning goals and objectives. The program also collects and aggregates data on large numbers of evaluations of student writing assignments.

CLA+ SCORES OF STUDENTS TAKING WRITING INTENSIVE COURES
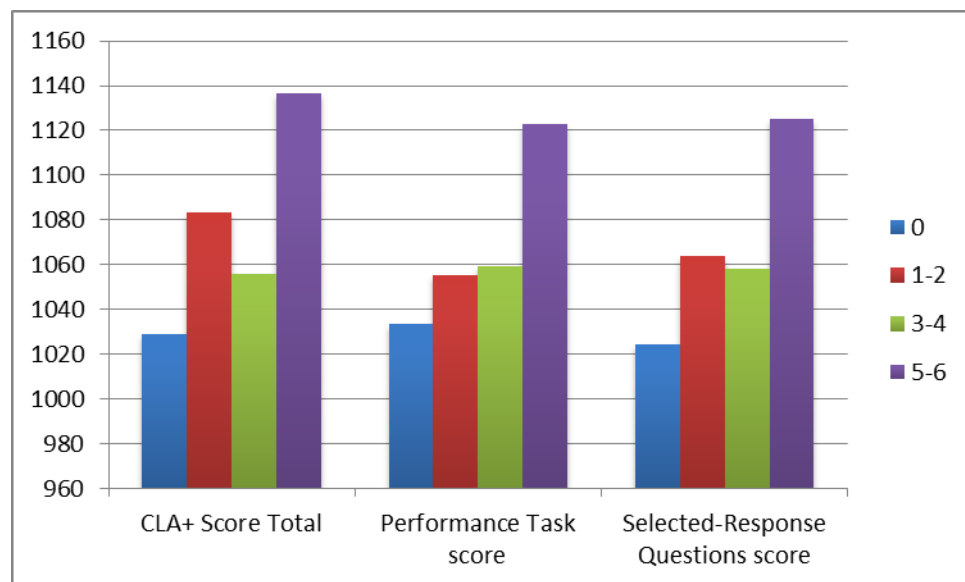
N==160 Students

Data from the Waypoint Outcomes Software were collected and aggregated for all courses at the end of every academic year for the duration of the QEP. An analysis of these data showed that student performance on writing assignments met or exceeded the benchmark set by the University. The benchmark was that 80% of students would perform at level 3 or 4 of the QEP Rubric. In the area of clarity and organization, 88.22% of students performed at level 3 or 4 on the rubric; 80.93% of students performed at those levels in the area of grammar, mechanics, and documentation; and 86.19% of students performed above the benchmark in the area of purpose and development.

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There were 2,165 assignments evaluated by 63 faculty assessors between 2012 and 2015. These data are presented in the table below.

STUDENT PRFORMANCE ON ASSIGNMENTS GRADED WITH QEP RUBRIC
2012-2015

Performance Level (N= 2,165 Assignments Graded)	Clarity and Organization	Grammar, Mechanics and Documentation	Purpose and Development
1	2.17 %	3.70 %	2.31 %
2	9.61 %	15.38 %	11.50 %
3	39.9 %	52.81 %	39.95 %
4	48.3 %	30.12 %	46.24 %
Total % Level 3 and 4	88.22%	80.93%	86.19%
% Above Benchmark	10.28 %	1.16 %	7.74 %
Average Student Performance Level on Assignments (N=1,636 Assignments Graded)	3.4	3.1	3.3

In addition to the CLA, the University administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which is an indirect measure of student achievement. The NSSE is a survey of first-year and senior students used to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices empirically linked to learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes.
In 2008, the NSSE data showed that UNC Pembroke students did less writing, especially after their freshman year, than students at peer institutions or than other schools surveyed. In 2014, students reported writing more papers, reports, etc. and preparing more drafts of those papers than students at peer institutions and were more certain that their education has contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively than comparison groups. They reported a higher estimated number of pages of writing than students at other institutions. The gains between freshman and senior year were also greater in 2014, with students reporting that the estimated number of pages of writing had nearly doubled from freshman to senior year (from 41.2 to 79.5) The 2014 data are presented in the table below.

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE
NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE)
2014

2014	Class	UNCP	UNCP Peers	NC Schools
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often				
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.	FR	3.00	2.60	2.90
	SR	2.90	2.60	2.60
During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following length have you been assigned? 0=None, 1.5=1-2; 4=3-5; 8=6-10				
Number of written papers or reports of 11 pages or more.	FR	.50	.80	.70
	SR	2.40	1.60	2.10
Number of written papers or reports between	FR	2.00	1.70	1.90

6 and 15 pages.	SR	3.20	3.0	3.60
Number of written papers or reports up to 5 pages	FR	5.90	5.70	6.50
	SR	6.80	6.70	7.20
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a Bit, 4=Very Much				
Writing clearly and effectively.	FR	3.00	2.90	3.10
	SR	3.20	3.00	3.10
Estimated number of pages of assigned student writing	FR	41.2	40.3	44.4
	SR	79.5	66.1	77.7

NSSE data are reinforced by responses to the UNCP Student Perceptions of Writing Survey. In 2008, forty-two percent (42%) of students reported a total of four or fewer writing assignments per semester in *all* of their classes. Over thirty percent (>30%) of students reported taking only one or two classes per semester requiring *any* writing assignment, and the survey showed some tendency among students to avoid courses requiring "a lot of writing." After the implementation of the QEP, the percentage of students responding that they had less than five writing assignments in *a single course* ranged from 22% to 37%. Between 63% and 78% of students responding to the UNCP Student Perception of Writing Survey from 2011 to 2015 reported completing five or more assignments per course. Between 75% and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that they were better able to articulate a purpose and present relevant details from credible sources in their writing. Similar results were reported for questions about conveying information in a clear and organized fashion, using conventions of Standard American English, producing high-quality in-class writing, revising work and completing multiple drafts, and producing high quality formal writing. Between 70% and 78% believed that their writing had improved overall as a result of taking a writing intensive course. Data on the results of the UNCP Student Perceptions of Writing Survey are presented below.

UNC PEMBROKE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING SURVEY
2011-2015

Questions	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
How many writing assignments did you complete this semester in this course?					
Less than 5	30.6	36.8	21.6	33.9	37.1
5 or more	69.3	63.1	78.4	66.1	63.0
I am better able to do the following as a result of this course:					
a. articulate a purpose and present relevant details from credible sources in my writing					
Strongly Agree and Agree	85.5	85.9	85.3	75.3	83.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.2	11.3	13.0	19.1	11.8
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	5.2	2.8	1.8	5.6	4.7
b. convey information in a clear and organized fashion in my writing					
Strongly Agree and Agree	80.0	81.6	85.3	74.8	85.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.0	15.6	12.4	20.5	10.0
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	4.0	2.8	2.4	4.7	4.12
c. use the conventions of Standard American English with respect to format, language, and documentation in my writing					

Strongly Agree and Agree	86.8	83.0	81.6	76.4	82.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.5	14.9	15.5	18.1	12.9
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	2.6	2.1	3.0	5.5	4.1
d. write high-quality short essays					
Strongly Agree and Agree	78.9	77.4	80.6	68.3	78.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15.8	19.0	15.9	27.8	16.0
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	5.2	3.5	3.6	4.0	5.9
e. produce high-quality in-class writing					
Strongly Agree and Agree	75.0	73.1	79.2	71.4	81.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.7	22.7	18.3	24,6	13.6
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	5.2	4.2	2.4	4.0	5.9
f. revise my work and complete multiple drafts					
Strongly Agree and Agree	81.4	79.4	86.1	77.8	81.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.7	17.0	11.4	18.2	12.4
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	4.0	3.5	2.4	4.0	6.47
g. produce high-quality formal writing of less than ten pages					
Strongly Agree and Agree	80.0	80.2	85.7	75.0	82.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.7	17.0	10.7	21.8	12.4
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	5.3	2.8	3.6	3.2	4.7
h. produce high-quality formal writing of more than ten pages					
Strongly Agree and Agree	67.1	61.3	67.7	62.0	65.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26.3	29.6	25.3	26.5	21.3
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	6.6	9.1	7.0	11.6	13.0
i. write high-quality research papers					
Strongly Agree and Agree	73.6	73.9	78.2	68.3	72.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.4	22.5	16.5	24.1	17.8
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	3.9	3.5	5.3	7.5	9.5
6. I believe that my writing has improved overall as a result of this course.					
Strongly Agree and Agree	77.6	77.4	76.5	70.1	75.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15.8	17.6	18.2	24.4	17.1
Strongly Disagree and Disagree	6.6	4.9	5.3	5.5	7.7
N=	**76**	**142**	**169**	**127**	**170**

Initiative Two—The Faculty Development Plan

The impact of the Faculty Development Plan was assessed using the UNCP Faculty Perception of Writing Survey. Baseline surveys were administered to determine the levels of participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward student writing. At the conclusion of each semester, faculty participants were surveyed again, using the same instrument, to gather data on any changes in these areas.

Prior to the implementation of the QEP, it was found that eighty-seven percent (87%) of faculty respondents believed "students should know how to write" before enrolling in their courses, and eighty-four percent (84%) reported frequently or occasionally giving feedback on student rough drafts. After the implementation of the QEP, the UNCP Faculty Perception of Writing Survey was administered to faculty who participated in the faculty development sessions as part of the QEP. The results showed changes in faculty knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Fewer faculty (by as much as 46.4% less after completing the workshops) agreed or strongly agreed that students should know how to write well before they enroll in their courses. Large percentages of faculty

(between 92.9% and 100% after completing the workshops) reported frequently or occasionally giving feedback on student rough drafts. Other changes were reported as well. These included:

- More emphasis on writers having a clear sense of the rhetorical context of the composition and less on the conventions of standard English
- More emphasis on reworking topic sentences as the main purpose of revising early drafts as opposed to editing for grammatical errors and typing mistakes
- Viewing successful student writers as those who have the ability to revise their work rather than master the conventions of standard English
- Assigning more faculty responsibility for ensuring that UNCP graduates can write well
- Less concern that taking time in courses to attend to student writing will compromise the quality of course content
- More emphasis on revision as the key to proficient writing
- Less belief that the best way to respond to student writing is to correct all errors
- More emphasis on using writing assignments to learn new material and for reflection and assessment
- Assigning more formal (short and mid-length) and informal writing assignments
- An increase in requiring students to submit different parts of the assignment prior to the final draft, providing feedback to students' drafts, providing a written , specific description of the assignment, providing students with a formulated set of grading criteria, and articulating the writing conventions unique to the discipline
- Making assignments that require the use of the writing center more often

Data from this survey are presented in the table below.

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING SURVEY
2012-2014

| Questions	Fall 2012 % Pre	Fall 2012 % Post	Fall 2013 % Pre	Fall 2013 %Post	Fall 2014 % Pre	Fall 2014 % Post
1. To compose effectively, a writer must have a clear sense of (Check all that apply) a. Conventions of standard English b. Rhetorical Context of the composition	100 88.0	92.9 92.9	100.0 88.9	89.5 89.5	84.6 84.6	100.0 88.9
2. Students who are successful as writers have two main characteristics: a. A mastery of the conventions of standard English b. An ability to revise their work with global perspective	56.0 44.0	21.4 64.3	55.6 16.7	10.5 73.7	30.8 46.2	55.5 55.5
3. Who is responsible for making sure UNCP graduates can write well? (Check all that apply) a. The students b. All UNCP faculty	36.0 92.0	26.6 100.0	33.3 94.4	36.8 100.0	15.4 100.0	33.3 94.4
4. If I take time in my course to attend to student writing, I will compromise the quality of content instruction a. Strongly Disagree and Disagree	80.0	85.8	66.7	89.5	84.6	66.7

b. Strongly Agree and Agree	20.0	14.3	33.3	10.5	15.4	33.3
5. Students should know how to write well before they enroll in my course						
a. Strongly Disagree and Disagree	28.0	42.8	16,7	63.2	16.7	53.9
b. Strongly Agree and Agree	72.0	57.1	83.3	36.9	83.4	46.2
6. Good writing is best characterized as error-free prose						
a. Strongly Disagree and Disagree	72.0	78.5	72.2	89.5	58.3	72.2
b. Strongly Agree and Agree	28.0	21.4	27.8	10.5	41.7	27.8
7. Good writers should be able to produce good writing in one draft						
a. Strongly Disagree and disagree	100.0	100.0	94.4	94.7	100.0	94.4
b. Strongly Agree and Agree	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.3	0.0	5.6
8. Revision is the key to proficient writing						
a. Strongly Disagree and Disagree	4.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.0
b. Strongly Agree and Agree	96.0	100.0	100.0	89.5	100.0	100.0
9.The best way to respond to student writing is to correct all errors						
a. Strongly Disagree and Disagree`	8.0	0.0	27.8	0.0	100.0	72.2
b. Strongly Agree and Agree	82.0	100.0	72.2	100.0	0.0	27.8
10. How often do you assign short, formal assignments (1-3 pages)?						
a. Never	52.0	64.3	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.0
b. 1-4 times a semester	64.0	78.6	22.2	42.1	69.2	22.2
c. 5-10 or more times a semester	68.0	78.6	77.8	47.4	30.8	77.8
11. How often do you assign mid-length, formal assignments (4-9 pages)?						
a. Never	18.0	7.1	5.9	10.5	7.7	5.9
b. 1-4 times a semester	80.0	92.8	70.6	89.5	92.3	70.6
c. 5-10 or more times a semester	4.0	0.0	23.5	0.0	0.0	23.5
12. How often do you assign formal writing assignments (10 or more pages)?						
a. Never	40.0	42.9	35.3	52.6	46.2	35.3
b. 1-4 times a semester	60.0	57.1	64.7	47.4	53.9	64.7
c. 5-10 or more times a semester	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
13. How often do you assign informal writing assignments?						
a. Never	16.7	7.1	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0
b. 1-4 times a semester	25.0	28.5	35.3	21.1	53.8	35.3
c. 5-10 or more times a semester	58.4	64.2	64.7	79.0	23.1	70.6
14. How often do you require students to submit different parts of the assignment prior to the final draft?						
a. Frequently and Occasionally	72.0	92.8	88.2	84.2	84.6	88.2
b. Rarely, Never and Do Not Assign Writing	28.0	7.1	11.8	15.8	15.4	11.8
15. How often do you provide feedback to students' drafts?						
a. Frequently and Occasionally	80.0	92.9	100.0	94.7	91.6	100.0
b. Rarely ,Never and Do Not Assign Writing	20.0	7.1	0.0	5.3	8.3	0.0
16. How often do you provide students with a written, specific description of the						

assignment? a. Frequently and Occasionally b. Rarely, Never and Do Not Assign Writing	100.0 0.0	100.0 0.0	100.0 0.0	94.7 5.3	100.0 0.0	100.0 0.0
17. How often do you provide students with a formulated set of grading criteria (e.g. grading rubric)? a. Frequently and Occasionally b. Rarely, Never and Do Not Assign Writing	76.0 24.0	92.3 7.7	94.1 5.88	84.2 15.8	84.6 15.4	94.1 5.9
N=	25	14	18	19	15	18

Initiative Three—The University Writing Center

The University Writing Center is an academic support program that provides individual peer tutoring in writing to all UNCP students. The primary mission of the University Writing Center is to provide one-to-one tutoring in writing to UNCP students who are working on writing related to UNCP coursework, scholarships or other applications. The University Writing Center employs student tutors from all disciplines. The QEP provided additional funds to the University Writing Center during the first three years of the QEP for the hiring of additional tutors and recruiting of students from a variety of disciplines. In 2010-2011, the first year of the QEP, the Writing Center provided tutorials to 1,791 students. In 2011--2012, the number had increased to 1,832 tutorials. In 2012-2013, the number was approximately 2, 000, and by 2013-14, it had jumped to 2,529. The increase in student writing tutorials is represented in the graph below.

WRITING CENTER USAGE
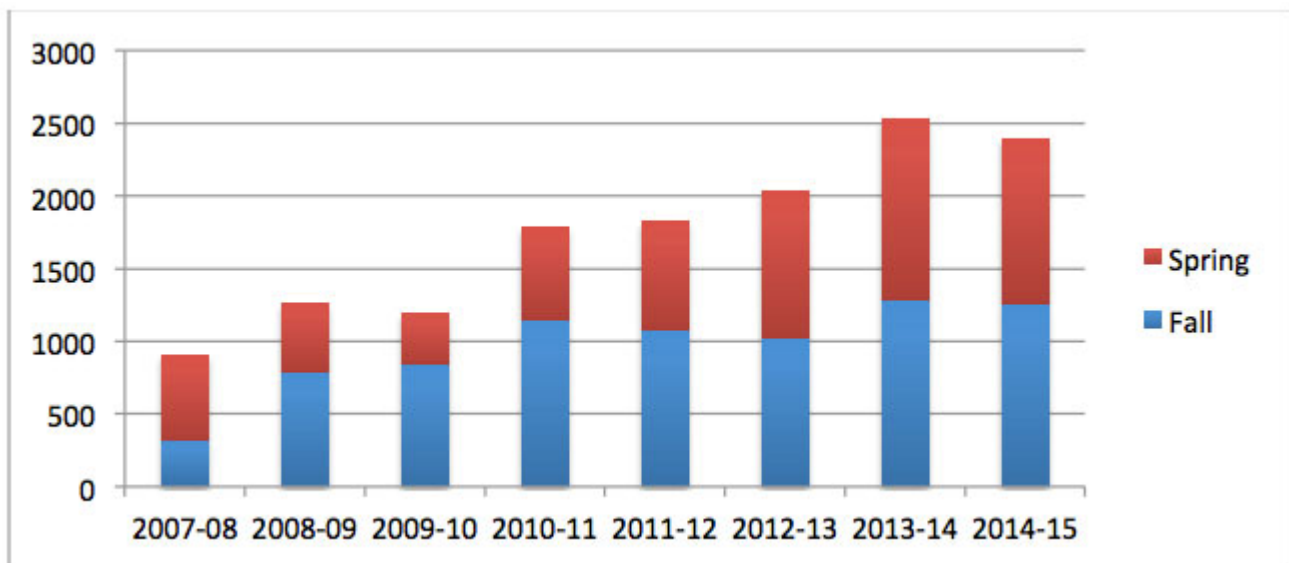
Writing Center Annual Report 2014-2015

The Writing Center Annual Report, 2014-2015 notes that, "As is evident in the usage data above, the Writing Center's student usage has grown significantly over the past eight years. This growth has been facilitated by additional funds granted each year upon request and a permanent funding increase granted in 2013-2014. This in part accounts for the higher usage over the past academic years. The Writing Center as a student academic support unit plays a role in student success and retention. The additional funding has helped the Writing to play this role effectively. "

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Reflection on What the Institution Has Learned as a Result of the QEP Experience

Consistent with its mission to prepare students for meaningful employment and graduate and professional school, the University has engaged in several initiatives in the Quality Enhancement Plan to improve student writing skills. In planning these initiatives, the University learned that students were not sufficiently engaged in the writing process. They were not assigned writing tasks of sufficient length frequently enough and were not taking enough courses containing substantial amounts of writing. The University learned that to address these deficiencies is a labor intensive process that requires continuous instruction in writing throughout the students' college career. With sufficient effort and a program that addresses writing at all stages in the curriculum, improvements can be made.

Faculty development can change faculty attitudes and behaviors relative to the teaching of writing. During the QEP, faculty learned to think more deliberatively about crafting assignments and courses, require more formal and informal writing, require more drafts of papers, provide more feedback, and provide more specific descriptions of writing assignments and grading criteria. Faculty came to assume more responsibility for making sure that UNCP graduates can write well and for the teaching of writing beyond what is done in the English Composition sequence (ENG 1050 and ENG 1060).

With the Quality Enhancement Plan that began in 2010, the University has taken a step in the development of a culture of quality enhancement in student learning. A foundation has been established upon which to build new initiatives for the improvement of student learning. The University affirms its commitment to providing the resources, administrative structure, and support necessary to continue the program and to build on the success of the initiatives of the Quality Enhancement Plan, "Write to the Top: Improving Student Writing through a Writing Intensive Program."