



Nebraska Wesleyan University



# Cooper Center

---

We work *Better*  
when we work *Together*

[nebrwesleyan.edu/coopercenter](http://nebrwesleyan.edu/coopercenter)

## ANNUAL REPORT

---

2022-2023



# ABOUT US

---

The Cooper Center is the Academic Resource Center at Nebraska Wesleyan University. We support collaborative learning through one-on-one and small group peer tutoring across disciplines. We also provide workshops on a variety of writing and study skill topics, host all campus events that promote collaborative learning within our community, and support faculty with writing curriculum development.

## MISSION & VISION

---

### **Mission**

The Cooper Center for Academic Resources (Cooper Center) serves as a multidisciplinary and collaborative academic resource for all members of Nebraska Wesleyan University's community. Academic consultants work with individuals and groups at all levels of proficiency, from all disciplines, and at any stage of the academic process, to foster academic success.

### **Vision**

To foster academic success by creating and empowering confident and effective learners.

## LEADERSHIP

---

The Director of the Cooper Center is Melissa Hayes, Ph.D. who is in her second year in the director position. She has been with the Cooper Center since 2016. Her background and expertise are in 20th-century American Literature, and Rhetoric and Composition.

Tracy Ensor, MAS, is in her second year as Assistant Director. Her background and expertise are in applied science, educational outreach, and program management.

Both Cooper Center administrators oversee the undergraduate peer tutors. They are considered "embedded consultants" by directly serving the student population through in-class workshops and one-on-one writing consultations with graduate students.



# PEER TUTORS

---

This year, 43 College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) certified Peer Tutors offered 450+ tutoring hours per week for their undergraduate peers. Peer Tutors utilized both in-person and online options for their appointments in Writing, Biology, Chemistry, BioChem, Physics, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Math, Accounting, Music, Nursing, Modern Languages, Computer Science, and Praxis preparation.

In addition to the undergraduate Peer Tutors, the Cooper Center employed one student staff assistant and five welcome/help desk workers this year. For graduate student appointments, Melissa and Tracy offered 20 hours per week of open availability in both daytime and evening slots to fit the busy schedules of graduate students.

Our efforts to hire staff that reflect the NWU community have been successful. This year we employed a diverse group of students. Our staff included persons of color, neurodiverse thinkers, those of varied abilities, LGBTQ+ individuals and allies, student-athletes, and first-gen students.



## TRAINING

---

All Peer Tutors completed online and in-person training before the Cooper Center opens for the fall semester. We utilized "Tutor Essentials" online tutor training, developed by Purdue University and certified by the CRLA. All tutors who complete this training are lifetime CRLA-certified tutors. In-person training reiterates the Purdue/CRLA curriculum and helps tutors identify tutee needs and learning strategies, pedagogical strategies, and time and session management. Weekly staff meetings throughout the year continue their professional development.



Additionally, staff also attended a spring training in January 2023, which focused on best practices, team building, and outreach. In February 2023, all Cooper Center staff and administrators participated in a continuation of 2022 DEI training by Inclusive Communities of Omaha.

# NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

## Learning Center Leadership Certifications (LCLC)

This nationally-recognized credential through the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) provides learning center professionals with a set of standards by which to foster their future growth and development. It also validates individuals' expertise in the field of learning assistance through external review. Melissa and Tracy both applied in May 2023.

[https://nclca.wildapricot.org/leadership\\_cert](https://nclca.wildapricot.org/leadership_cert)

## Social Media Presence

The Cooper Center uses Instagram to connect with students, faculty, and staff. We have 308 followers, with 62 new followers added this academic year. Additionally, our reach is up 70% from the previous year!

## Staff Meetings Formalized

Staff meetings are important not only for problem-solving and team building, but for the continuing education and professional development of Peer Tutors. The Cooper Center is working to create a more formalized curriculum for staff meetings throughout the year. This year, we explored a wide range of topics on building productive interactions with tutees. Topics ranged from goal setting and giving feedback to motivation and communication styles. Additionally, Janelle Andreini from the Career Center visited to discuss resume writing and revision.

<https://bit.ly/NWUCCStaffMeeting22-23>

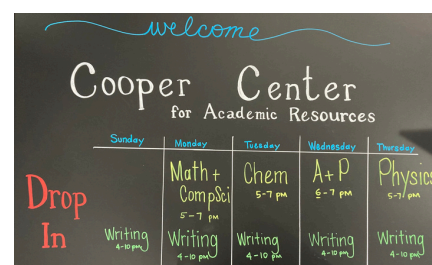
## New Drop-In Hours

The Cooper Center created a new drop-in system for high-demand subjects. Students could attend drop-in hours without an appointment during set times throughout the week. These were well attended, particularly for Chemistry, A&P, and Computer Science.

Drop-in hours were advertised on the Cooper Center website and with a chalkboard directly inside the doors of the Cochrane-Woods library and adjacent to the Cooper Center entrance. These hours were also communicated to NWU faculty.

## Athletic Collaborations

The Cooper Center worked with Men's Soccer and Women's Volleyball to foster group and individual study. Student-athletes logged study hours at the Welcome/Help desk. We also visited the all-staff meeting for Athletics to discuss Cooper Center services.



welcome				
Cooper Center for Academic Resources				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Drop In	Math + CompSci 5-7 pm	Chem 5-7 pm	A+P 5-7 pm	Physics 5-7 pm
	Writing 4-10 pm	Writing 4-10 pm	Writing 4-10 pm	Writing 4-10 pm



# NEW AND NOTEWORTHY, CONT.

---



## Performance Evaluations and Self-Assessments

Peer Tutor performance evaluations were completed for the first time in recent memory. Peer Tutors were first asked to do a self-assessment which served as the basis for a performance evaluation written by Melissa and Tracy. This process was required for any Peer Tutor wishing to return to the Cooper Center for the 2023-2024 academic year. Both the self-assessment and the performance evaluation were based on the standardized evaluation NWU uses for staff. Not only do we find this process helpful for the Peer Tutor's growth and development, but also aligns the Cooper Center with best practices for learning center administration.



## PRAXIS Prep

This spring, the NWU Education Department asked the Cooper Center to help with Praxis prep for students wishing to enter the Education Training Program. Working with Antwan Wilson, the Cooper Center worked to create a pilot program to prepare students for the writing portion of the Praxis exam during the 2023 summer. Melissa and Tracy created a curriculum and schedule that could accommodate two cohorts in anticipation of the spring and summer Praxis exams. Unfortunately, of the eleven students who were candidates for this pilot program, only one decided to participate. This student worked directly with Abbey Parten, a Cooper Center Peer Tutor in writing and an education major who has successfully completed the Praxis exam. This student met regularly with Abbey and was diligent in her preparation and work between sessions. We are awaiting the test results from this student. <https://bit.ly/NWUCCPraxisPilotSp23>



## Chat GPT

With the rapid changes in AI technology and particularly ChatGPT, the Cooper Center decided to create a position statement on the use of ChatGPT. Melissa and Tracy also met with Eric Wendt for a feature article in Archways magazine about the implications of AI in the classroom, learning center, and beyond. The use, features, and ethical implications of Chat GPT were also discussed with Cooper Center staff during a weekly meeting. <https://bit.ly/NWUCCChatGPT>



## Conferences

Cooper Center Staff presented at the Nebraska Writing Center Consortium annual conference (Melissa is current NWCC President) in September 2022 and at the NCLCA Conference in October 2022. Additionally, Tracy attended the Nebraska Women in STEM conference in March 2023. All were great learning and networking opportunities.



# SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

---



## Workshops

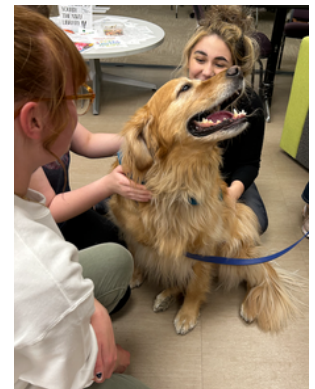
The Cooper Center continued its outreach to Archway, Integrative, and Success Seminars. In the Fall 2022 semester, we saw a greater engagement with these classes. Additionally, we presented workshops for PAWS, Research Methods, Senior Capstone, Athletic All-Staff, and more. Peer Tutors were also more engaged with outreach and gave "Intro to the Cooper Center" Workshops in a variety of classes.

- **63 total** workshops and presentations.
- 24 Archway, Integrative, and Success Seminar workshops.
- 13 Peer Tutor led workshops
- **117% increase** in workshops from the 2021-2022 academic year



## Study-A-Thon / Write-A-Thon

The Cooper Center continues to host campus-wide events that bring together students, faculty, and staff. During the these events, students utilized a Pomodoro study room, took a yoga break, and relaxed with therapy dogs. In the spring semester, the Study-A-Thon and Write-A-Thon were combined. This proved to be a big success, and we will keep these events together and promote them as one MEGA event in future years.



## Advisory Board

The Cooper Center Advisory Board (CCAB) continued to meet this year. Martha Tanner joined the 8 faculty/staff and 3 students on the board. Meetings took place every other month. The board focused on two key areas this year: greater outreach to the NWU community and gathering materials for future LCE certification. Additionally, bylaws are in the process of being drafted. The CCAB executive committee consists of President Bill Motzer, Vice President Bryce Swiggum, and Secretary Kate Slama. Due to graduation, there will be two student seats and the position of Secretary available on the CCAB next year.



## Student Success Strategic Planning

Melissa and Tracy have been involved in various strategic planning initiatives this year. Melissa is a team leader for the Student Success Initiative. Tracy is a member of the Student Success and Incubator/Innovation Hub teams. The Cooper Center has a vested interest in developing innovative approaches to how NWU supports student success. On September 9th, Melissa and Candice Howell presented the team's Student Success Initiative Strategic plan to the Board of Governors. This plan was later approved by the Board and facets of this plan will be implemented on an ongoing basis.

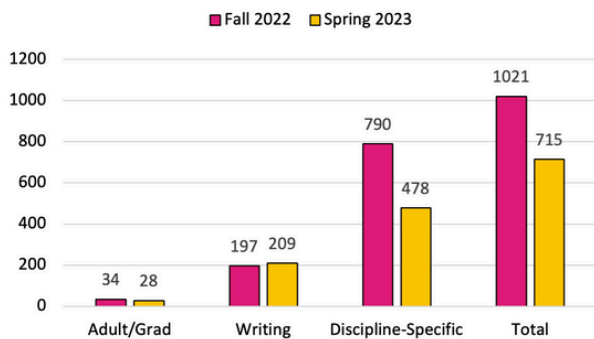
# YEAR AT A GLANCE

In 2022-23, the Cooper Center served 20% of the NWU student population with a total of 328 unique clients visits.

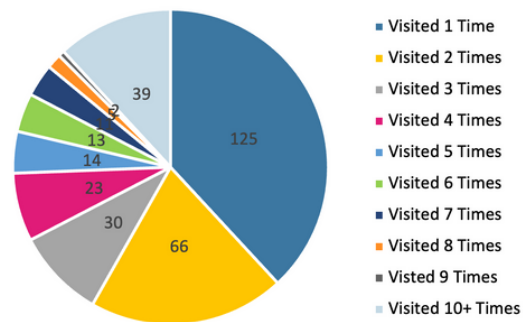
Of the 1,777 client appointments, 59% took place during the fall semester.

62% of clients visited two times or more. Eight students visited more than 30 times each, with one of these students visiting 198 times!

Appointments by Semester



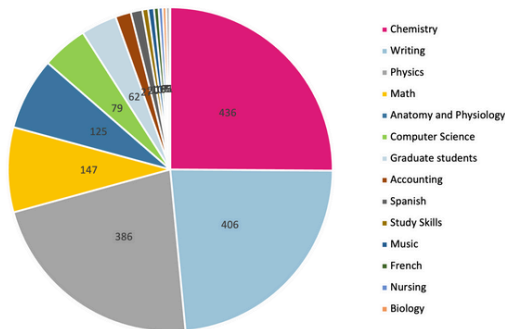
Number of Visits per Client



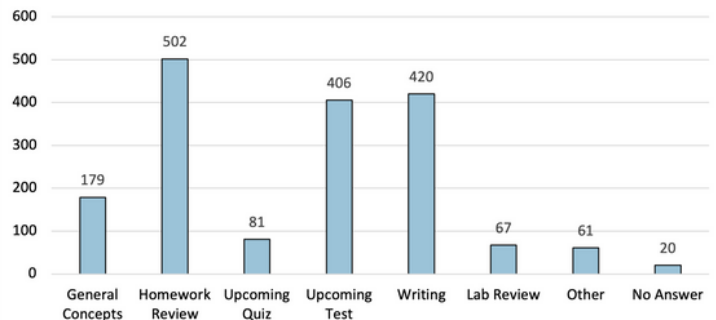
Of all appointments focuses, the most popular were Chemistry (25%), Writing (23%), Physics (22%), Math (9%), and A&P (7%).

The most popular reason for visiting the Cooper Center was Homework Review, followed by Writing and Upcoming Test.

Number of Sessions by Focus Area



Type of Assignment in Sessions



# 3,471

Number of visits to the Cooper Center for use of public printing, to ask questions about tutoring, or to seek information during staffed Welcome/Help desk hours,

**3,316**  
public printing

**61**  
CC Tutor Question

**15**  
WCO Account

**19**  
General Library Help

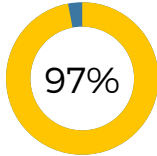
**18**  
Tech/WITS

**42**  
Other

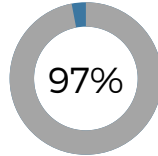


# A FOCUS ON STUDENTS

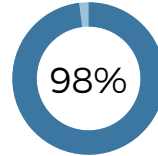
Students who completed a session at the Cooper Center were sent a survey to capture their thoughts and provide feedback about Cooper Center services.



97% of students indicated a Peer Tutor helped them feel better about their concerns.



97% rated their sessions as Very Good / Excellent



98% planned to return to the Cooper Center



100% would recommend the Cooper Center to a friend

## What students are saying...

"[Tutor] is measured, thoughtful, and kind. He listens to my questions carefully and answers them in a way I can understand. He also offers resources or a different way to understand a problem that feels more relatable. This has greatly reduced my math anxiety."

"[Tutor] was awesome! She was always building off of what I was saying and making my arguments stronger!"

"I am glad I went there because [Tutor] is definitely helping me become a better person and I have trust in myself again."

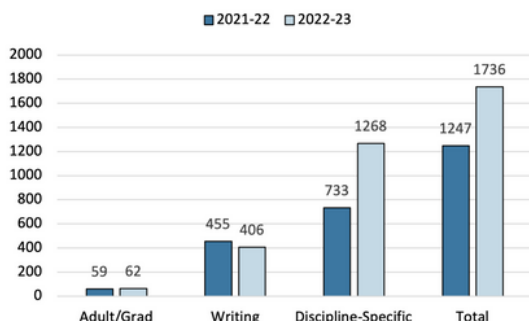
"I was actually very nervous when I came in, but I felt so much better afterward. I am the kind of person who has feelings after a situation based on how well I took an experience, and I was relieved and grateful after my appointment. I got a lot of amazing help and information that can help my paper better."

# A COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS YEARS

**In 2022-23, the Cooper Center served fewer unique clients, yet these clients returned for additional appointments at a greater rate when compared to the previous year.**

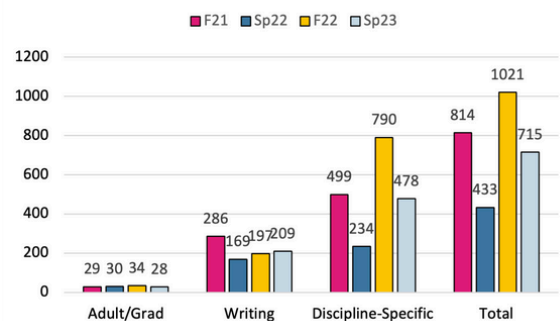
Client appointments increased 39% from last year while total number of unique clients served decreased by 21%. The number of unique clients who visited more than once increased 18 percentage points.

Appointments by Year



Graduate appointments stayed steady compared to last year, while writing appointments declined by 10% and discipline-specific appointments rose by 73%.

Appointments by Semester, F21 - Sp23



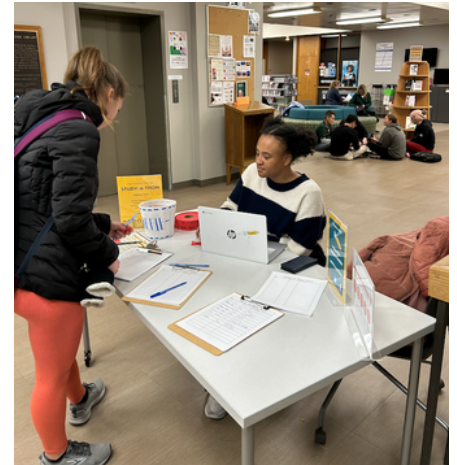
Fall appointments increased 29% over the same period last year, while spring appointments increased 69% over the same period last year.

# OUTREACH

One of the ongoing goals of the Cooper Center is to increase awareness of our services for NWU students, faculty, staff, and the greater learning center community. We strive to promote the power of collaborative learning, create a safe space for all members of the NWU community, and foster a culture of help-seeking. We do this through all-campus outreach events, social media, custom workshops, promotions, relationship building within departments, and advocacy and outreach to other colleges/universities.

## This year the Cooper Center...

- Met regularly with Cooper Center Advisory Board.
- Hosted the Write-A-Thon & Study-A-Thon with over 300+ students attending these events in fall and spring semesters.
- Delivered in-class workshops to Archway, Integrative, and Success Seminars.
- Participated in New Student Orientation, Involvement fairs, STEM for You, International Student Orientation, PAWS series, Staff and Faculty meetings, Prairie Wolf Launch, Jumpstart for Juniors, and more.



- Maintained an Instagram account for campus awareness, calendar updates, and event promotion.
- Surveyed all NWU employees about their perceptions of the Cooper Center on campus, which had a response rate over 10%.
- Presented at regional and national conferences.
- Conducted Pedagogy of Compassion training for Southeast Community College (Lincoln, NE) and Howard County Community College (Baltimore, MD).
- Met with the Support Services team from Doane University to discuss support strategies, common pedagogies, and program development.



# FUTURE GOALS

---

2022-2023 has been another successful building year for the Cooper Center. As we look towards future growth, we have identified the following goals and projects as priorities:

- **Learning Center of Excellence (LCE) Certification**
  - This learning center certification through NCLCA promotes professional standards of excellence for learning centers and encourages centers to develop, maintain, and assess quality programs and services to enhance student learning. We plan to compile our application in the 2023 -2024 year. [https://nclca.wildapricot.org/LCs\\_of\\_excellence](https://nclca.wildapricot.org/LCs_of_excellence)
- **Update training curriculum**
  - We are searching for a new online training curriculum since Tutor Essentials no longer meets our needs. In addition to deploying new online training, the Cooper Center would like to rework in-person training for CRLA certification. Training that is CRLA-certified reflects student diversity, cutting-edge pedagogical approaches, and prioritizes learning center best practices.
- **Campus Collaboration**
  - In alignment with the Student Success Strategic Plan, the Cooper Center hopes to build a closer working relationship with the Office of Student Life, the Office of Students with Disabilities, and Advising. These collaborations will lessen the current siloed approach and will create a more integrated network of support services.
- **Continued Campus-wide outreach**
  - Over the next year, we aim to create a stronger presence in programs such as LSAMP and Wesleyan Honors Academy.
- **Update registration and assessment software**
  - Our current software lacks the features necessary for LCE certification. We plan to update this software as soon as funds allow.

# CONTACT US

---

## Director

Melissa Hamilton Hayes, Ph.D.  
147 Cochrane-Woods Library  
402-465-2489  
[mhayes@nebrwesleyan.edu](mailto:mhayes@nebrwesleyan.edu)

## Cooper Center Welcome/Help Desk

101 Cochrane-Woods Library  
402-465-2326  
[coopercenter@nebrwesleyan.edu](mailto:coopercenter@nebrwesleyan.edu)

## Assistant Director

Tracy Ensor, MAS  
307 Cochrane-Woods Library  
402-465-2458  
[tensor@nebrwesleyan.edu](mailto:tensor@nebrwesleyan.edu)

