

WriteAway Actions and Achievements 2021

Annual report for the WriteAway online writing support service.



Message from the Chair

WriteAway continued to see high student submission numbers in 2021. Participating institutions met the strong demand by maintaining elevated staffing levels that were put in place during COVID-19, and reorganizing the collaborative schedule so that students would receive feedback as quickly as possible. WriteAway also welcomed its nineteenth participating institution – Northern Light College – expanding online academic writing support to students in northern regions.

WriteAway's focus on developing academic writing skills means that the feedback students receive will not only help them improve the assignment they submitted, but future writing as well. I'm pleased to see results from a recent survey bear this out: 84% of students polled said they would also apply what they learned from their WriteAway interaction to future assignments.

WriteAway is a robust, growing service thanks to the collaborative efforts of coordinators and service providers. Thanks to all for the ongoing hard work to make WriteAway great.

- Gregg Currie, College Librarian at Selkirk College, WriteAway Advisory Committee Chair

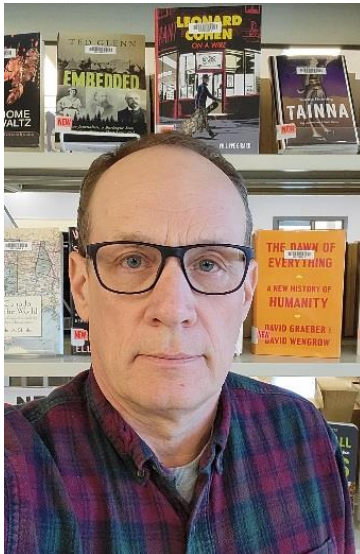


Photo 1: Gregg Currie

About WriteAway



Truly Collaborative

19 institutions across BC and Alberta collaboratively staff WriteAway.

An Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from participating institutions, oversees the service.

The BC Electronic Library Network ([BC ELN website](#)) manages the WriteAway Administrative Centre on behalf of participants.



Feedback and More

In 2021, WriteAway service providers responded to 6,729 draft assignments.

On average, WriteAway also receives 150 eQuestions a year. These writing-related questions range from asking how to write a compare-contrast paper, to how to write an email to a course instructor. Detailed responses from service providers point students in the right direction.



Quick and Convenient

As an online student support service, WriteAway lets participating institutions meet students wherever they are, whenever they need help.

WriteAway is staffed 7 days a week, and more service providers are scheduled at peak times in the semester to meet increased levels of need. Most papers get a response in 24-48 hours.

2021 Achievements

Responding to Need

- As COVID-19 disrupted in-person student support services again in 2021, WriteAway enabled institutions to continue meeting students' need for writing feedback – uninterrupted – online. To meet the heightened demand for assistance, WriteAway:
- Maintained increased staffing contributions that were implemented when COVID-19 began in 2020; institutions collaboratively contributed 24% more staff hours than in 2019
- Implemented a re-defined concept of “weekend” service provision to include Friday and Monday, resulting in a more balanced schedule throughout the week for more consistent response times

Advancing the Service

- WriteAway focuses on providing meaningful feedback to students from qualified staff. The service took steps in 2021 to strengthen service provision:
- The Administrative Centre hosted a round table discussion for service providers to discuss student-centred responses
- BC ELN submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training to seek bridge funding that could be used to bolster WriteAway and bring on more institutions
- WriteAway coordinators from participating institutions met in December to discuss service updates and brainstorm improvements to training service providers

Maintaining the Infrastructure

- With oversight provided by the Advisory Committee, the WriteAway Administrative Centre coordinates WriteAway on behalf of participating institutions. Every term the Administrative Centre manages a collaborative schedule of approximately 60 individuals, trains new and returning service providers, and communicates timely service updates to the WriteAway community. In 2021:
- a temporary support staff member was trained in order to maintain the service as a coordinator search unfolds
- 37 service providers were trained to use the WriteAway software and to follow service protocols

- WriteAway distributed new promotional materials and released the Next Draft newsletter
- the Admin Centre provided an orientation to staff at Northern Lights College, the most recent institution to join WriteAway

The Student Experience

WriteAway offers students “anytime, anywhere” access to writing feedback. WriteAway service providers carefully review draft writing assignments and respond with suggestions and resources. The emphasis is on developing students’ academic writing skills.

How WriteAway Works:

1. Student submits a draft undergraduate-level writing assignment and it enters a queue.
2. A WriteAway service provider reviews the draft assignment and provides comments and further resources to help the student.
3. Student receives feedback via email and uses suggestions to guide their next draft.

How Feedback Helps Students:

In fall 2021, students that used WriteAway were surveyed to find out how the feedback helped them:

- 94% said “I will be able to make changes to improve my assignment.”
- 84% said “I will apply what I have learned to future assignments.”
- 66% said “I will feel more confident about my writing.”

Satisfaction

95% of students that complete an exit survey give their WriteAway experience a top score (5/5) for helpfulness.

Student Quotes

- “Very informative and detailed feedback, I really appreciated it because this is my first time doing a research paper and I needed a lot of help.” College of New Caledonia WriteAway User

- “I was better able to organize my writing, provide better analysis and rewrite my introduction and conclusion. Much appreciated, thank you.” Trinity Western University WriteAway User
- “The feedback I have received has helped me immensely! There is a focus on what I have done well and suggestions as to how I can improve! I feel much more confident and have been provided with more resources.... Thank you!!!” Thompson Rivers University WriteAway User

WriteAway Financials

Thanks to collaborative software licensing, staffing, administration, and governance, WriteAway helps BC and Alberta’s post-secondary sectors avoid \$370,000 in costs.

Revenue	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Projected
Partner Institution Support Fee (Service & Infrastructure)	\$54,274	\$57,021
BC ELN Contribution	\$10,000	\$10,000
Miscellaneous Revenue (Carryforward, Marketing, etc.)	\$1,603	\$9,897
Total	\$65,877	\$76,918

Expenditure	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Projected
Staffing and Coordination Infrastructure	\$50,986	\$55,506
Administration/Communication/Governance	\$352	\$490
Software & Technical Infrastructure	\$8,842	\$8,850
Total	\$60,180	\$64,846

WriteAway Revenue over Expenditure (Carryforward):

- 2020/21 Actual Carryforward: \$5,697
- 2021/22 Projected Carryforward: \$12,072 (Note: Carryforward due to delay in hiring replacement WriteAway Coordinator; expected to be fully expended in 2022/23.)

A Look Ahead to 2022

In the coming year, the service will:

- Ensure that WriteAway continues to be a consistent support for students at all levels of undergraduate study.
- Refresh the delivery of service provider orientation and software training, and develop response resources for varying levels of provider experience.
- Develop strategies to encourage more students to make use of the opportunity to submit multiple drafts of the same assignment for feedback and writing skill development.
- Undergo action planning and update Advisory Committee Terms of Reference to ensure alignment with service host BC ELN and BC ELN's other service areas.

If your institution is interested in joining WriteAway, or you have questions about the service, please contact the WriteAway Administrative Centre. We'd be happy to talk with you: office@writeaway.ca

If you have comments or feedback about this accessible PDF, please email leahh@bceln.ca. Your suggestions are welcome.