David Charbonneau:

One of the things we really emphasize is that tutoring is not remedial in the sense that you don't come to the Writing Center necessarily because you are a bad writer. You come to the Writing Center because you want to be a better writer, whatever level you're at. And our focus is on how do we help develop the writer's voice and their sense of authority, and how do we help them navigate the expectations of academic discourse, which students are just sort of thrown into once they're thrown into a college classroom.

Christina Barsi:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezzell:

And, I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina Barsi:

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground so to speak by bringing to you the activities and events, you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun Ezzell:

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4:

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals. And I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 5:

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to CalPoly Pomona! Psychology major, English major.

Speaker 6:

And transforming part-time into full time.

Speaker 7:

I really like the time that we spend with Julie, about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

Speaker 8:

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 9:

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina Barsi:

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC, alumni, and producer of this podcast.

Sun Ezzell:

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

Christina Barsi:

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

Sun Ezzell:

Hi, and welcome back. In today's episode, David Charbonneau, Nicole Blean, and longtime tutor, Jackie, from the Mt. SAC Writing Center share how the Writing Center is supporting students during this time of online learning and social distancing. David, Nicole and Jackie talked with the Magic Mountie Podcast about the journey of moving a Writing Center online, the discoveries they made along the way and how those discoveries are fostering connections with students.

Sun Ezzell:

Let's get started. This is so strange not to be face to face in a room with you all, but welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. And thank you so much for joining us today. Do you want to go ahead and introduce yourselves and tell a little bit about your work at the Writing Center?

David Charbonneau:

I'm David Charbonneau. I'm the director of the Writing Center. I've been the director, 13 years, this coming August. I came here from Illinois. I'm a Midwest boy born and bred, and I came from a small liberal arts college directorship there and coming to the largest single campus community college in Southern California was quite a cultural shock in a number of ways for me.

David Charbonneau:

And there was a significant learning curve in terms of adapting to a different kind of institution and an ed code that's like as long as an Encyclopedia Britannica, which I had never experienced at any other institution. But yeah, I've been here 13 years and I'm the director and I really enjoy the job. And now we've grown a great deal over those 13 years with a lot of help and a great staff, including Nicole and Jackie, who we have here today.

Nicole Blean:

Hi, my name is Nicole Blean, and I'm the Writing Center assistant director. And I have been working at the Writing Center a little before David, came on. I started as adjunct faculty at Mt. SAC in my other hat. I still am adjunct faculty in English on Saturdays. I have been here, like I said, about a semester before David, came on and we started the Writing Center together after actually, meeting in Oregon at the International Writing Center Association, Summer Institute, where we learned a great deal about creating the Writing Center from the ground up.

David Charbonneau:

We did.

Nicole Blean:

Yeah, so that was really exciting. And that was back in 2007, when we started with seven tutors and now we've got over 40 to 50.

David Charbonneau:

Yeah, isn't it like at low 50s right now. Yeah, I mean-

Nicole Blean:

Yeah.

David Charbonneau:

… a little less because of the online, but it was low 50s before we went online.

Sun Ezzell:

And now, Jackie, did you want to introduce yourself?

Jackie:

Yeah. So I'm Jackie, I'm one of the Writing Center tutors. I was a Mt. SAC student back in 2014 to 2016, and then I transferred over to Cal State Fullerton. And now I'm currently still at Cal State Fullerton working on my grad studies in English. And I've been with the Writing Center, I think four years now.

David Charbonneau:

Jackie is also a tutor in the classroom. That's our version of supplemental instruction where the tutor is embedded in the classroom. And that's a program that reaches about 1500 students every semester and supports of 63 sections, I believe it is this spring. It's a really important program. And so Jackie has experienced both as a tutor and then also as the embedded tutor, TC in the classroom.

Sun Ezzell:

Awesome. Thank you. So I was wondering, could you talk a little bit about the Writing Center and the work, the philosophy of the Writing Center?

David Charbonneau:

The focus of the Writing Center, of course, as the name implies is writing. We help students who are doing any kind of writing on campus, and we will help them in any stage of the writing process. So about 65% of the students who come to us are from AMLA and English, where they have composition courses, but the other 35%, so about a third of our students come from all over campus.

David Charbonneau:

They come from sociology, history, microbiology, working on science reports, child development students come for help with their personal statements or their answers for the college applications in the fall, the CSU system in particular. So we really help students with writing anywhere, any time, so long as they are a student at Mt. SAC. And so that's our focus and that's the focus of all our services, whether it's the tutoring or the embedded tutors or the workshops, which break down the writing process in many, many different ways, because it's a very complicated process with a lot of steps.

David Charbonneau:

One of the things we really emphasize is that the tutoring is not remedial in the sense that you don't come to the Writing Center necessarily because you are a bad writer. You come to the Writing Center because you want to be a better writer, whatever level you're at. And our focus is on how do we help develop the writer's voice and their sense of authority and how do we help them navigate, the expectations of academic discourse, which students are just sort of thrown in to once they're thrown into a college classroom. That's kind of what I would say is the sort of 30,000 foot level of what we're about.

Nicole Blean:

To add to that, not to repeat anything that David was saying, but just to kind of chime in regarding the writing across the curriculum aspect, we do see a lot of students come in with papers from courses other than English. And we really do want the campus to know that we are here to help students with all kinds of writing assignments. And we love when they come in from psychology, we've got psychology article reviews that come in, we have worked with the paralegal department.

Nicole Blean:

We have worked with the science, the biology department, and we've had professors come in and train our tutors regarding how to do bio lab reports. And we're also working … we were currently working this spring before we went remote with a new faculty in business writing to train our tutors in terms of how we can effectively help the business writing students with that totally different kind of writing style.

Nicole Blean:

And so I just wanted the campus to know that we're available for students who are working on any kind of writing assignment. We have partnered with career placement to help with the transfer essays. So we are just here for writing, no matter what kind of assignment it is. So it's not just English. So I just kind of wanted to emphasize that. Thank you.

Jackie:

I would actually emphasize something else as well. Some students come in thinking that this is a place where they show us their work and then we're supposed to kind of edit it for them, but that's actually not what the Writing Center is at all. We're not supposed to be editing or necessarily fixing their work, but we're supposed to be guiding them and helping them to become better writers by actually tutoring them and guiding them and giving them tips to improve their writing skills.

David Charbonneau:

Yeah, absolutely, to both of those answers.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. So what is the Writing Center offering online right now, especially now that we've transitioned to online instruction?

Nicole Blean:

So the Writing Center is really excited to be offering our online tutoring as we were doing before, but now in a more robust manner where we have many more appointments available, many more students working as online tutors, remotely, both live tutoring, and now brand new, newly we are offering asynchronous tutoring, which is drop-off tutoring for the first time we are offering this, and this is where students can come in and drop off their papers, get feedback from a tutor within 48 hours.

Nicole Blean:

So for those students who may not have the technological capabilities such as like the video and the webcam and audio for the live sessions, the synchronous sessions, they have the option of uploading their papers and getting a response from the tutor that way. So we're really excited to be able to offer those two kinds of online tutoring as well as online workshops. So we've moved pretty much all of our workshops online via Zoom.

Nicole Blean:

Honestly, we're really excited about the numbers of students who are coming because basically it's the same numbers that we were seeing back on campus. So the students seem to really be enjoying coming to the Zoom workshops. And we also offer individualized workshops for faculty in their classes, such as writing a research paper and NoodleTools. So we had our first ever individualized workshop for one of the English faculty yesterday and her classes.

Nicole Blean:

And that went really well. And so it's just really exciting. We also have, and Jackie, can speak more to this students meeting with their TCs, with their tutors in the classroom, such as Jackie, and also assisting instructors online via Zoom breakout sessions. So I'll turn it over to Jackie now. And she can chime in a little bit about how that's going.

Jackie:

Yeah. So part of the TC program is you're meeting with students every week. You offer face to face tutoring, and we also offer group sessions. And so those usually last an hour for each class. And what's nice was that we were still able to offer those group sessions. It's a little harder to navigate now with all the technology issues that come about, but it's still nice that we're able to meet as a group and at least be able to still discuss different concepts.

Jackie:

So you're still able to get somewhat of a class experience with whoever shows up, but we have been successful. And I think we've even seen more students show up to group session than to one-on-one tutoring, which is nice. I think the transition is still going okay, it's going well for at least what we're working with so far.

David Charbonneau:

Jackie, how does the attendance in the Zoom group sessions compare with the attendance you had in group sessions before we went all online?

Jackie:

Right now, it's hard to tell because there's a lot of students who are missing. I usually was seeing about 80 students twice a week or so. Now, I regularly see maybe up to 20 students and that's just because some of them aren't communicating but I think as far as meeting with group session, more of them tend to show up to group sessions because they don't get that same element of discussion that they did in the class.

Jackie:

So I always tell them we're starting a new text, come to group session, if you're confused, or if you want to talk about it so we can start brainstorming ideas for your paper. And I think they really appreciate that aspect of the class still being available for them.

David Charbonneau:

That's great.

Jackie:

Yeah.

David Charbonneau:

That's great. You know, the DLA program is continuing so that tutoring is continuing to happen. The DLAs are accessed via the website. DLA stands for Directed Learning Activity, and those are accessed via the website and then students sign up for the online tutorials. In order to do that we are still continuing with our tutoring for ELL students as well, English Language Learner students. That's another specialty of the Writing Center that's available on our website. And our website is just, www.mtsac.edu/writingcenter. You can get to us under the Tutoring Centers as well through the portal.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. I was just wondering so many of us get into education because we like collaborating. We like working together. We build rapport in the classroom and when we're tutoring with students. What's it been like to transition to online?

David Charbonneau:

I know that at least for me, it's been felt very challenging because tutoring is an interpersonal relationship and you make those connections one-on-one and you build trust and you build rapport and you build a relationship with the in person face to face communication. I mean, tutoring and a Socratic dialogue began face to face one-on-one Socrates and a few students. So trying to, how do we replicate all of this online has been a great challenge.

David Charbonneau:

In some ways, the hardest part of that isn't always even just that face to face moment, because to some degree you can replicate that via Zoom and other platforms when people have video capabilities and chat functions. But some of the things like when somebody has a question, they would just wander into the Writing Center and ask the front desk, I'm here and I'm supposed to do this thing that my professor assigned to me. That's all the information the front desk person has and they could figure it out, like well, you're talking about a DLA or do you have to go to a workshop?

David Charbonneau:

And so, there would be this conversation and then that person would get the help they need. It's hard to replicate the front desk experience when we're online, we've created a virtual front desk and we're working on that, but that kind of thing, and the sort of warmth and trust that that helps build same kind of thing that's tutor training, the training of tutors and the supervising of tutors and the supervisor being within earshot of a tutorial and right there if the tutor has a question. All of that sort of stuff is difficult to replicate in an online environment, but we're working on it.

Jackie:

One thing that's been hard is you have the platform, Zoom or conference Zoom. And I think it only works best well, one, when students actually have access to it, but then it also works best when you can actually see the student. I've noticed that the students who don't have access to the webcam or don't want to be on the webcam.

Jackie:

It's a lot harder because you're kind of talking to a blank screen and you don't get to see their face or their expression when you ask them a question or to see, or to check their understanding. So you're kind of left to think, okay, do you get it? Do you not get it? Do I need to clarify anything? So I think that part has been a challenge for me, at least.

David Charbonneau:

That's a really good point, Jackie.

Nicole Blean:

Yeah. To piggyback on what Jackie, I am a face to face person and so this transition has been difficult for me in terms of losing out on all that. However, I've been surprised at how much I enjoy Zooming with students in the workshops and going on the webcam video in our synchronous tutoring sessions to see the students. So I do agree with Jackie, that I prefer if students do have the technological capabilities to appear on video, because you can just see, you can experience so much more and you can visually just check in to see if they're paying attention and receiving the info.

Nicole Blean:

So I do agree. I was actually surprised at what a positive experience I'm having connecting with students via webcam. So, I mean, it's just making my day, each time I have a workshop but each time I do tutorial and the students show up. So not that it's could ever replace the face to face, but I'm very grateful that we have this kind of technology to where we can make these things happen.

Nicole Blean:

So under the circumstance, we're doing the best that we can and we are in my philosophy is if it doesn't work, figure something else out, keep trying. If the student can't appear on webcam, okay, then we're going to do the chat. But doing whatever I can to be able to try to make that connection, even if it's not video. So it's been a challenge, but I've been excited to try different things, so to connect with the students. So that's been my experience.

Sun Ezzell:

That's awesome. I'm smiling, hearing the enthusiasm as you share about what it's been like for you. Do you have a sense too, of how it's going for students? Have you gotten any feedback?

Jackie:

The hardest part about all of this is that because I also go to a university and I found that transition to be a lot smoother because most students didn't have a problem just accessing technology. However, when you look at the community college students that you really see the big difference of how many students have access to just wifi or just a computer at home. And then you see how many don't have that access.

Jackie:

So now they're missing not just being in a face to face class, but now they're actually missing portions of the class. So when we came back from the small break that we had, everybody was just everywhere. Some students were on top of it, but there were a lot of students who were just confused about how the class is working. They were confused about just the dynamics of how the class is going to move forward.

Jackie:

And it took a while to adjust back to, okay, now let's also teach you how to write and how to read and comprehend and get you through this 1A class. I think that was the biggest struggle for them was just utilizing Canvas because the professor I was working with, he had it set up, but he didn't, make them rely on it. And now they had to, they had to keep checking emails. They had to keep checking notifications and announcements. So that's been an adjustment for them.

David Charbonneau:

It's clearly a grand and compulsory experiment on the part of the nation. And of course, particularly the State of California, there's a lot of buzz and talk about online education and transferring things online and how that might be more cost effective and might more efficient for students. What we're experimenting here is what does that really look like? And what are the consequences for that? And we're starting to see some of the realities of the digital divide that Jackie, just referred to in terms of the different students having different access to technology.

David Charbonneau:

And we are hearing about some students having online fatigue, it's just they don't want to look at the Zoom window anymore after hours of classes on Zoom. And then to also sort of reach out to a tutor. We want to find out how this works for our students. So we're going to be surveying students in the last couple of weeks of May on their experiences. We do this every spring, but this spring there'll be questions in the survey. It really focused on what their experience of the online modality was like and how that worked for them, what the challenges were.

David Charbonneau:

And then we'll also be looking of course, at the attendance numbers at the end of the semester to see how much usage are we getting on the online environment, as opposed to before that, and also who is using it. Do you see student equity gap increasing when we move into the online environment. So I think the college and the state is going to get a lot of rich data over the next six to eight months if we go through this fall with this talking of what we can learn about an online modality and what we have to do to make it work.

Nicole Blean:

It's really great to hear Jackie's feedback regarding working with students. Because I know she's really at the front lines. I really have to take my hats off to students right now, especially community college students in which this whole online transition has created an immediate economic divide, and inequality divide. And I've seen it in working with students in my class, but in the Writing Center, what I'm seeing is I'm seeing students not show up for tutoring sessions in larger numbers.

Nicole Blean:

I'm seeing students who are logging in after 15 minutes to the workshops and what I would just say as an adjunct faculty and Writing Center to whoever's listening to the podcast is that we really need to more than ever have extended grace to everybody, to students, to other faculty, to each other because of all these technological dynamics and the family dynamics that we're dealing with, the health dynamics that we're dealing with on top of everything else.

Nicole Blean:

I mean, we're really dealing with so many complexities right now. And I think just remaining persevering right now as a student, I've got to take my hats off to those students that just keep trying, because there are just so many challenges right now with this whole transition that we've gone through. And I mean, even making a tutoring appointment, scheduling the tutoring appointment, registering on Zoom for a workshop, the students really have got to be persevering to stick with it.

Nicole Blean:

And I just really take my hats off to students right now for doing all this. So I think we really need to extend grace and be understanding. And if a student comes in late to class after 15 minutes or to Jackie's TC session after 20 minutes, whatever they can do basically to participate, I think is great. They're going to get something out of it. And so that's kind of my way of looking at everything right now is just really we're all just doing the best that we can and with all of these challenges.

Sun Ezzell:

I'm so glad you said that Nicole, it's not just an unexpected and sudden switch to online learning, but an unexpected sudden switch to online learning during a global pandemic. That's something that none of us have ever experienced before. So I love what you said about extending grace to students and to each other.

Sun Ezzell:

I was wondering, is there a silver lining to all of this during this whole process of moving online? Do you think that maybe you've discovered any tools or collaborations or connections that have turned out to be pretty great something that came about as a result of the transition that you think we should keep doing after we're not in the situation anymore?

David Charbonneau:

Absolutely. I mean, Nicole mentioned it a while ago just to see so many students using the online tutoring servicing and that's received 10 times more students and 15 times more students use the online tutoring than we have using it before. And I'm sure that when we go back to on the ground, that some of those students will continue to prefer that modality now that they've explored it and grown comfortable with it. So I'm sure we will be doing more online tutoring in the future no matter what the situation is.

David Charbonneau:

And I also feel like just for me personally, I've had kind of a crash course in several things as Zoom Conferencing, asynchronous tutoring, and I've always kind of some degree shied away from technological aspects of my job because there was plenty to do that was not technological. And so I didn't have to always confront that learning curve or confront it as robustly as I needed to. And now I've been forced to climb that learning curve. And that's a good thing for my own growth and for also the growth of the center services

Nicole Blean:

I just wanted to say on a positive note in terms of the benefits of this online transition to piggyback on what David, was saying is that I have had so many technological fears that have just kept me procrastinating from learning more about different aspects of technology that would really help me and that I need to know. So this basically forced me to face those technological fears. And I have to say that I've seen that the Writing Center team do that.

Nicole Blean:

I've seen us pull together and bring everything online for students. That was our goal. That's what we pulled together to do and it strengthened us as a team. It broadened our technological expertise. And in fact, I checked in with some faculty and found that we in the Writing Center initially, in the beginning of April, were kind of ahead of the curve and we were doing Zoom workshops or synchronous and asynchronous tutoring. And it really, to me, I felt built our confidence as a Writing Center team, as a tutoring center.

Nicole Blean:

So I was really excited to see that. And I think that just built our momentum and in terms of the services to see that we're able to offer a virtual front desk, that students can just Zoom in and they see our virtual front desk assistant there during those hours on our website, that we now also have the drop off tutoring that we've got the Zoom workshops, the TC sessions, I'm wondering the next thing we were talking about is putting together a video orientation that's accessible to all faculty through Canvas, and I'm wondering what can we keep?

Nicole Blean:

And I was even on my lunch break today, walking in my neighborhood with my daughter, who's doing online classes for Cal State Fullerton and brainstorming about maybe we could still Zoom, when we get back to campus and we're face to face, maybe we could still be able to Zoom those workshops so students who are online still have that flexibility and that accessibility. And like David was saying, students now are experimenting with using online.

Nicole Blean:

Well, I mean, they have to use online tutoring now. So they're getting used to, they're getting the hang of that. And so being able to offer that kind of those flexible resources to them even when we do go back on campus, I think it's really going to expand the resources that we can offer and I'm really excited about that aspect of what we're utilizing right now and how this will even help in terms of students who have accommodations, who have needs ADA, how can we make more services equitable available online?

Nicole Blean:

So I think this is really moving us. I think we can take what we're doing right now and move us into that direction as well when we get back on campus, think about how we can do that. So it's really exciting to see we're doing it, we're doing it because this has forced us to do it. So anyway, now I want to turn it over to Jackie, who I knew had something to say.

Jackie:

Yeah, I was just going to say this one silver lining that I've found is that when we had to drive to campus, I was one of the ones who had to drive to multiple campuses on different days. So when giving students my tutoring times, they were always very limited because they were always when I could be on campus. And that was maybe only three times a week, but the flip side, I think to all of this is that now, instead of being available just Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, I'm available Monday through Friday.

Jackie:

And so there's more times available for students. I told them if these times don't work, just let me know. If I see that it's really not working for the class, I can change a lot of the times because now I have all this flexibility because I don't have to go anywhere. I can just do everything from home and that's quicker to navigate. I think just being available to students, especially during this time was really helpful.

Sun Ezzell:

Awesome. Thank you so much. I was wondering David and Nicole, listening to you talk about kind of your tech journey. I was wondering how, and maybe Jackie as well, how do you think your tech journey affects your work with students now that we're doing everything online?

Nicole Blean:

That's a really great question Sun. Honestly, I feel like I kind of always have the attitude with students. I don't hide anything. I just say, you know what? This is all new for me. And you're probably going to learn something from, for example, this webcam tutorial. I can't figure this, the white board aspect out here. I just flat out tell them I'm learning this too, and we're figuring it out together and we do, and it's really exciting. And so we've learned from each other.

Nicole Blean:

So I feel like having that attitude and just being open with them, I come to a session and I find out, I might have a little bit more technological expertise than this particular student or in the next session they have more than I do, but we're basically stumbling along helping each other. And I think one of the best things I heard actually was at a meeting. It was at an English department meeting recently where we were kind of amazed at one of the faculty was telling us all these things that she could do in Zoom.

Nicole Blean:

And she said, well, I just push buttons and figure out what happens. And I thought, my gosh, I'm always afraid I'm going to break something or mess it all up. And so I think just kind of having that attitude of just kind of the growth mindset attitude of, I'm just going to keep trying and we're in this together and we'll figure it out. And then honestly we learn from each other. So I think just having that mentality that we're all learning just really helps a lot. And it's really easing my technological fears.

Nicole Blean:

And then, just like David was saying, we're going to be doing this online tutoring survey. And I think that'll be great to find out what are the technological challenges that students are facing that may be hindering them from using services, just kind of communicating about it. I think really getting tips from each other at our staff meetings is just really helpful. I think that's just the best thing is that we're in this together. We're not alone. We've got IT help. We've got help from each other.

David Charbonneau:

I think one of the things that strikes me is just that, how that I was a little surprised by is that how much the workshops via Zoom can feel like the workshops when you're face to face. Particularly if you can get people to be on video, because as Jackie, was mentioning, there's a awful lot you pick up and physical cues from people when you can see them that you don't get when it's just their name and a black box there. So I usually kind of strong arm them to show up on video and most of them do it without any problems.

David Charbonneau:

It feels still very interactive and warm, and I'm always impressed that they're, that they're there. And they just figured out how to get there. And, you know, it's the workshop. They had to go sign up on Live Whale and they had to be registered for the CRN and non-credit in order to get to all of this. And yet somehow they navigated that course and they got there. So I'm always impressed with their perseverance and their resilience.

Jackie:

I think I want to say again, and Nicole, alluded to this point earlier, you see their perseverance and you see that the students aren't just doing this for the grade, but they also, especially in English classes because that's what I'm working closer with. They want to know how to write and they come in sometimes feeling intimidated or nervous about it.

Jackie:

So during this transition, it's been hard because they have to not only transition and figure out how to navigate Canvas and keep up with assignments, but they still have to also try to get something and take something away from the class. But I do applaud those who are consistently emailing and asking questions and trying to figure out, how do I meet with you? Can you look at my paper? I'm really trying. So I do applaud those students who have stuck around and not just dropped and gave up like a lot of other students that I've seen.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. I was wondering, so for somebody who maybe hasn't ever ventured online for tutoring or maybe a faculty member who hasn't referred their students to online tutoring before, do you have any suggestions how could people get started?

David Charbonneau:

Definitely visit the website and if they're using Canvas, if they can provide a link on their Canvas page to the Writing Center, because of the way we set up the homepage of the Writing Center, now you come in and there are two big, I think they're blue or maybe one's blue and one's black. There's two big buttons there. And one of them is to access our virtual front desk and the other is to register for tutoring.

David Charbonneau:

So if you go to the front page and then also on that front page is our sign up for the workshops. So basically access to all the services is right there on the home page at the Writing Center. And it's just a click away to begin that process. And so if faculty could take a look at that and then steer their students towards that, I think that would be actually the most effective thing for them to do.

David Charbonneau:

There's also the early alert system, but I would actually encourage faculty to go straight to the source or send their students straight to the source. If it's writing or tutoring and then if it's not whatever tutoring center is appropriate because they're going to get to sign up for tutoring right there and then rather than sort of complicated process of referrals.

Jackie:

And kind of to add onto that, I've noticed that if you can get the student to register and make one appointment as soon as they do a onetime, I've noticed students come back all the time. Like I see them regularly because now they've kind of gotten over, okay, I know how to get there. I see the tutor. This is actually helpful. I'm going to keep using this. So if faculty can encourage them or even make it a requirement to try to see us once I think most students usually end up coming back because they see that they really are getting helped.

Nicole Blean:

One project that we were thinking about doing for the summer, since it looks like classes are still going to be online for quite some time is putting together a video orientation because we did constantly do in-class presentations about the Writing Center. When we were back on campus to various faculty, we gave those, we had students come in for orientations and like Jackie, was saying getting them to come to the Center is really the door that they need to take to become aware to start using the services.

Nicole Blean:

But now that we're online so, we were thinking of one of the projects that we'll be working on this summer is putting together a video orientation so students, we could kind of help them navigate through our services for students and faculty. Also, I just spoke with our front end. I just Zoomed in on our virtual front desk person today and she said an adjunct faculty member was coming in asking her questions. And we always encourage faculty members to contact David, or I, via email. And we do have Google Phone.

Nicole Blean:

That's something that we're looking into for ourselves so we can be available for faculty to ask us questions regarding using the Writing Center services. So we are always available to guide faculty through it, to work with them, if there's any delays or if they want to even do individualized research paper workshops like we did yesterday for one of the English professors or NoodleTools. So yeah, we are happy to work with faculty and do what we can, even in this online situation to get our services to their students.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. So I want to be mindful of the time. So I just thought I'd ask, is there anything that you wanted to share that I haven't thought to ask you about?

David Charbonneau:

Sun, there was one thing I since given your audience that I did want to underscore, and this might be a little bit so proxy, but it's for the students so I think it's important. One of the changes, one of the realities of going online is that we are simply making it a lot harder to get to the services than before in the sense that before they walked in to the Writing Center and they said, I want to see a tutor and everything happened right then and there. We registered that student, we scheduled their appointment. Often they saw a tutor that same time in a walk in basis and so that person's need was met.

David Charbonneau:

Now, when somebody wants to see a tutor, they have to find their way to a tutoring center. Then they're going to have to meet the tutoring center to go back to the portal with CRNs to register for the courses that are associated with that tutoring center. And then come back to that tutoring center and go through whatever process. Like, they'll sign up for the workshops or the making an appointment online that is that Tutoring Centers way of handling the traffic.

David Charbonneau:

We have to find a way so that students don't have this multi step process. And we need to look at the fact that we need to find a way to automate the CRN registration element of this process so that once a student arrives online at a center, it's a one stop shop. That we're not bouncing them out to register and having them come back again, because we know and Sun, you know this well as somebody who works in the ASAC, this is how we lose students. And it's particularly how we lose the most vulnerable students. We have to be compliant with the ed code. We have to be compliant with positive attendance, but we also have to solve this problem so that it's easier for students to get to the services that they need.

Nicole Blean:

Well, the only thing that I wanted to add, and this is just about our specific services that we're excited that are upcoming to be able to offer online our research paper study sessions. So we do have study sessions that will be coming up towards the end of the month, the end of May, beginning of June. I don't know if the podcast will be out at that time, but if they're successful we'll offer study sessions again in the summer session online.

Nicole Blean:

And the only thing I'm extremely sad about is that we won't be able to offer the free coffee and donuts, but we do encourage students to grab a doughnut and coffee at home and we can all virtually enjoy that together during our study sessions where we will have tutors and TCs available for students just to come in, Zoom in if they have any questions regarding their research papers, in which they will be working on at the end of the term in abundance.

Nicole Blean:

I'm sure because research papers season will be upon us soon. So anything having to do with MLA, a documentation, APA they're annotated bibs, putting together their research out, paper outline, integrating quotations so we can help students there'll be available just to Zoom on in and ask their questions. So we'll be posting the publicity on our website soon.

Jackie:

For faculty or for students listening as well. Just again, try to come to the Writing Center. I know we're in this weird situation right now, and we're working on the ease of access and everything, but I think once students get acquainted with it, the technology issue won't be so much of an issue anymore. And they can still rely on the Writing Center to continue to help them during the semester. So at least I hope to see that in summer. I hope it goes a little bit smoother.

Sun Ezzell:

Well, David, Nicole, and Jackie, thank you so much for joining me today. I have been so inspired to hear you talk about your work with students and all the hard work it has taken to move the Writing Center online. It made me smile to hear your excitement in your voices, as you shared about connecting with students online and making that work out for everyone. So thank you so much on behalf of everyone on campus for all of your hard work in supporting students during this challenging time.

Christina Barsi:

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