

Growing the Graduate Writing Initiative

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"I can handle anything, because of the connections and relationships I have made at Graduate Write-Ins. It took six years to find the perfect way for me to learn to write. In the end, it's all about preparation, forethought, and follow-through."

UMKC Master's Student, Education

Today's Goals

1. Let you know who we are and what we do
2. Seek your input on how to grow the Graduate Writing Initiative

How we started

- Grassroots group with representatives from School of Education, Libraries, Writing Studio, and SGS
- Partnered with SGS to survey graduate students and faculty in Fall 2013
- Analyzed results and formed Graduate Writing Advisory Committee

History of Graduate Writing Initiative



Who we are

GRADUATE WRITING ADVISORY COMMITTEE CORE GROUP:

- Kara Kynion, Writing Studio/SGS (Chair)
- Jen Salvo-Eaton, UMKC Libraries
- Dr. Thomas Ferrel, Writing Studio
- Danisa Dan-Irabor, Student
- Dr. Michelle Paquette, Physics
- Christine Serpe, Student
- Dr. Anita Skarbek, Nursing/Online
- Dr. Peggy Ward-Smith, SGS
- Cassandra Whitney, Student

GWAC ADVISORY GROUP:

- Dr. Ruth Cain, Assessment
- Lona Davenport, Diversity and Inclusion
- Nora Franco, UMKC Libraries—Hospital Hill
- Dr. William Gutheil, School of Pharmacy
- Michelle Heiman, School of Graduate Studies
- Stephen Holland-Wempe, Applied Language Institute
- Desiree Long, Department of English
- Jennifer Sackhoff, UMKC Online
- Dr. Candace Schlein, School of Education
- Dr. Lori Sexton, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology

What is the Graduate Writing Initiative (GWI)?

A response to a **demonstrated need** for cross-campus support for graduate-level writing.

The GWI **guides, supports, and evaluates** UMKC's resources and programs for graduate writers, and **provides resources** for faculty working with graduate students.

What we do

- Identify writing and research needs of graduate students
- Collaborate with graduate students, departments and offices across campus
- Provide resources and learning opportunities, with the goal of improving student understanding and mastery of writing
- Support writing through multiple channels and formats to accommodate various student needs
- Connect students with peers and mentors to build community

The GWI is...

- All volunteer, grassroots and self-driven
- Funded by the School of Graduate Studies
 - Funds for half-time Graduate Writing Specialist position
 - \$5,000 annually for:
 - supplies for Write Ins, workshops and writing groups
 - writing consultant time for Write Ins
 - marketing
 - graduate workstations (e.g. software licensing costs and upkeep)
 - offices supplies and expenses for Graduate Writing Specialist
 - professional development

2013 Survey Recommendations

Recommendation	Status
Form Graduate Writing Advisory Committee	✓
"Graduate Writing" web page	✓
Designated graduate writing spaces	✓
Graduate writing groups	✓
Writing workshops	✓
Writing retreats	✓
Writing courses	Under discussion
GTA or GRA line for Writing Studio	✓*
Designate "Faculty Writing Specialist" for each department	
Online modules/video tutorials	

At least $\frac{1}{4}$ of
students who begin
a PhD don't finish.

(COUNCIL OF GRAD STUDIES PH.D. COMPLETION
PROJECT, 2008)

Why Provide Graduate Writing Support?

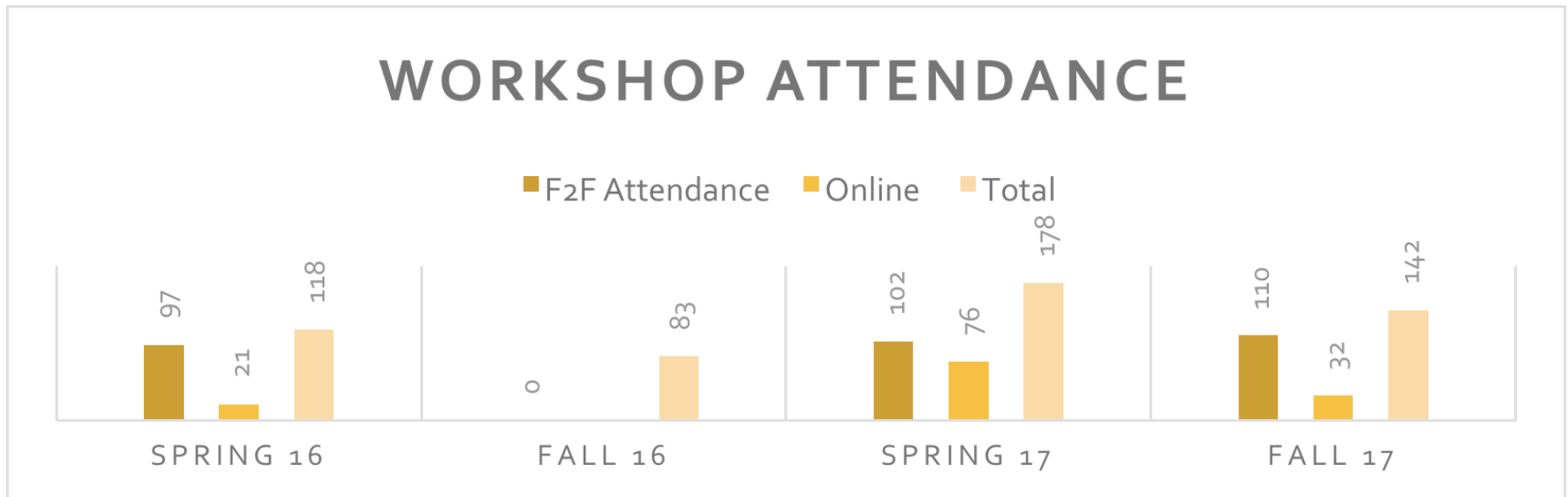
- Across academia, there's a "felt need" for graduate writing support
 - (Simpson, Caplan, Cox, & Phillips, 2016)
- Biggest roadblock? Often, writing the dissertation.
 - (Council of Grad Studies Ph.D. Completion Project, 2008)

What about at UMKC?

- At UMKC:
 - Graduate **students feel underprepared** and sometimes feel left to fend for themselves (2013 Survey)
 - **Faculty request support** for their students (2013 Survey)
 - Provost has expressed a **need for stronger graduate programs** (especially Master's programs)
 - **Time-to-degree** concerns
 - Writing is a **transferable skill**—employers in the Kansas City area request writing and communication skills

Our Impact: Workshops

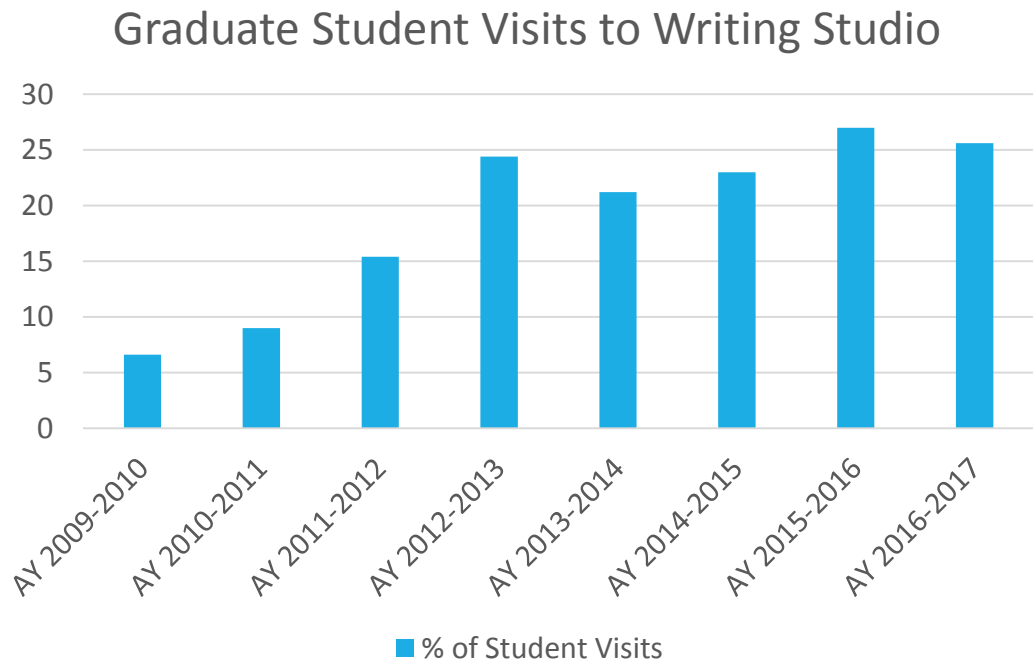
Workshop attendance increased by 114% between Fall 2016 and Spring 2017



Our Impact: Writing Studio Appointments

Grad population Fall 17 is about 31% of total student body

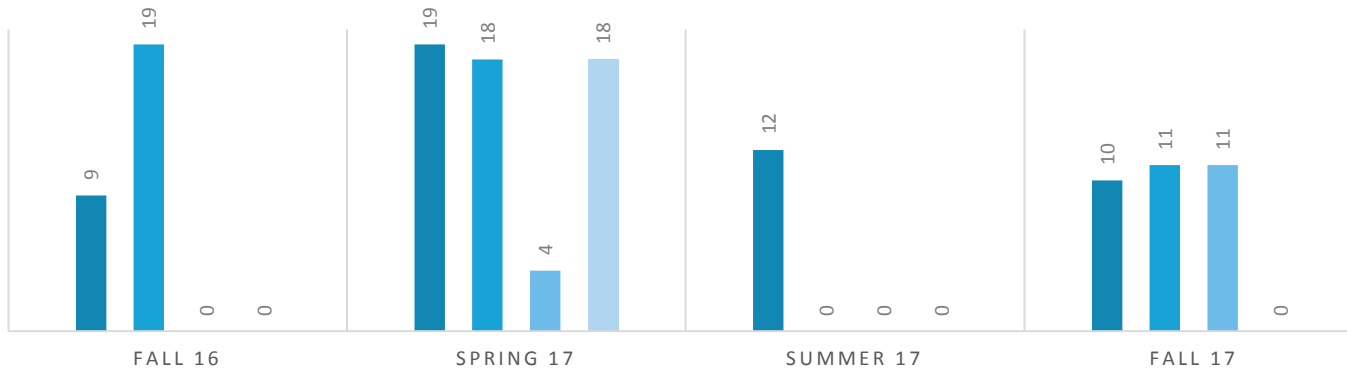
Since the GWI began in AY 2012-2013, graduate student visits to the Writing Studio have increased by 20.75%.



Our Impact: Write Ins

WRITE IN ATTENDANCE

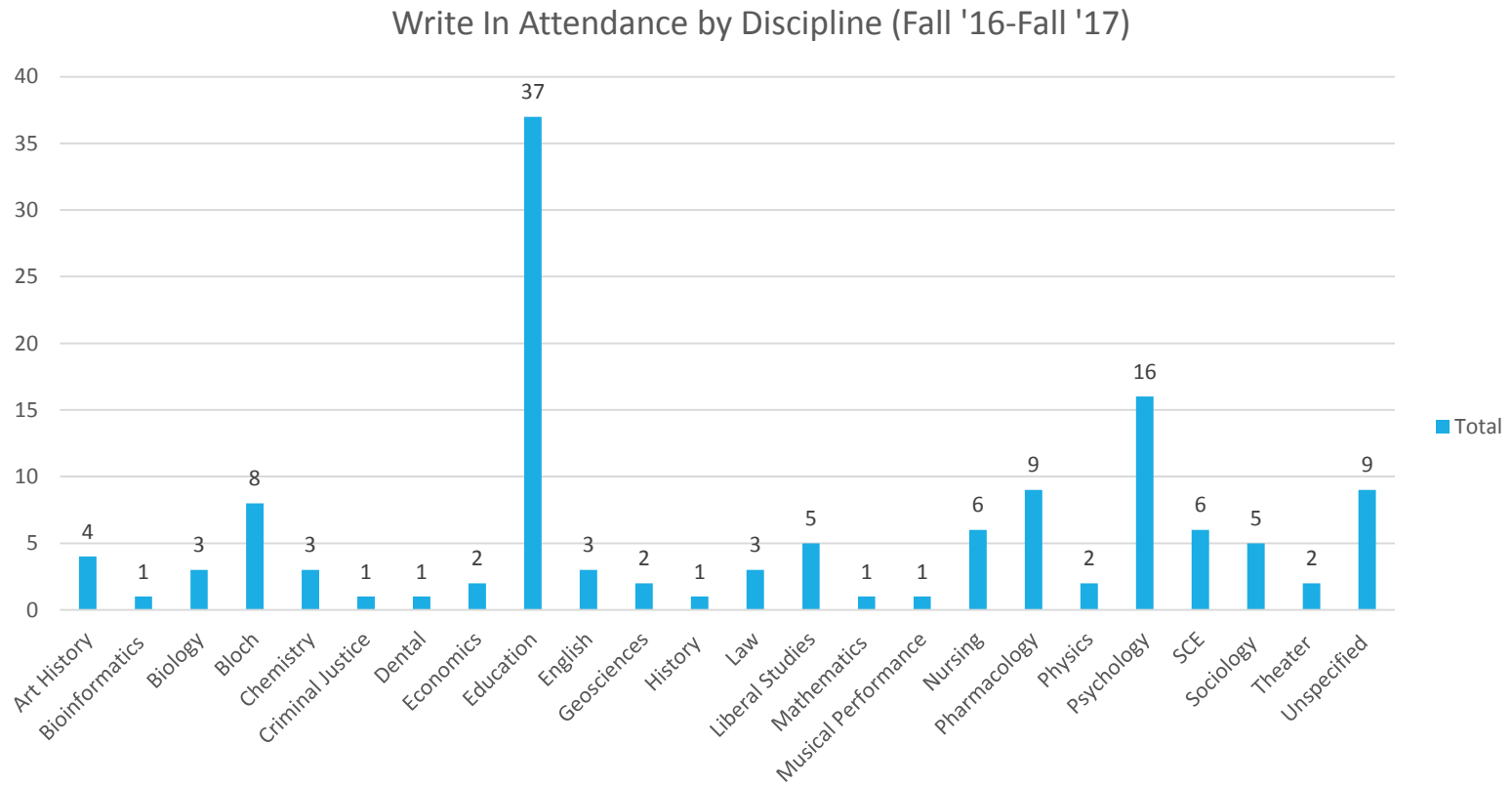
■ 1st Write In ■ 2nd Write In ■ 3rd Write In ■ 4th Write In



Spring '17: 12 students
attended 2 or more
Write Ins.

Fall '17: 7 students
attended 2 or more
Write Ins.

Our Impact: Write Ins



Our Wish List

- Become more formalized within the university
- Hire more dedicated personnel (= funding) across campus
- Expand workshop offerings
- Offer credit-bearing courses
- Offer "Camp Completion"
- Hire more graduate consultants in the Writing Studio
- Train and implement writing group facilitators
- Expand and improve partnerships with departments
- Work with FaCET to support faculty in their mentorship of graduate writers

“[The GWI has] mostly reassured me that I can be a capable or competent student, whether it’s writing or a research task...knowing who the experts are and who I can turn to for help. And given that, that I’m not alone, with all my colleagues on campus. We certainly have the tools in place to be successful together.”

UMKC Doctoral Student,
Experimental Psychology

Now, let's hear from you!

How can we grow the
Graduate Writing
Initiative?

Supplementary Information

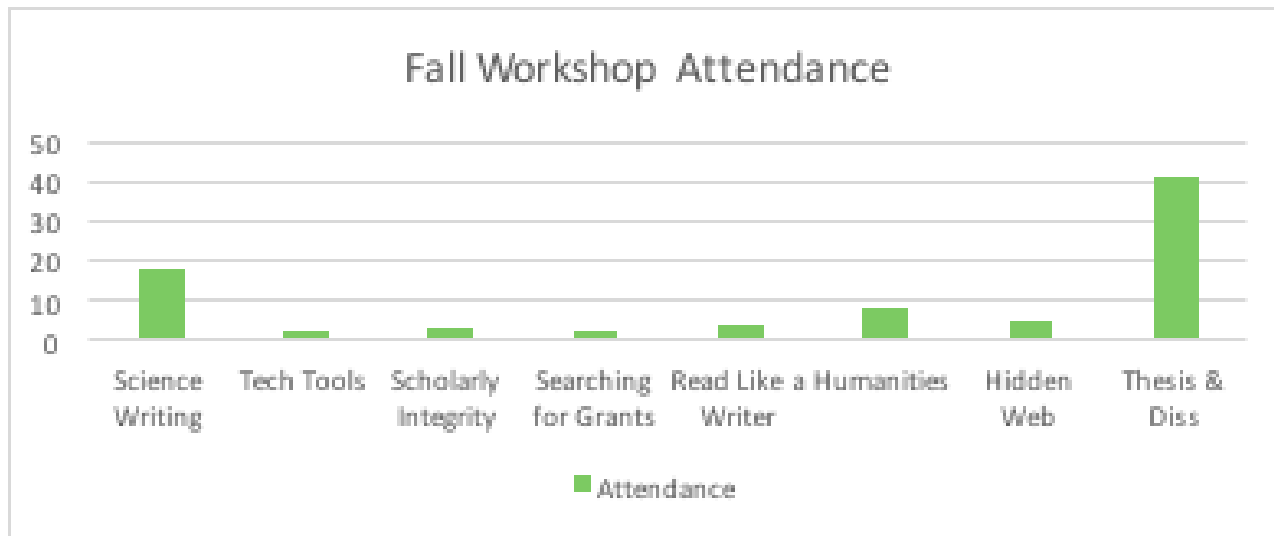
Our Impact: Writing Studio Visits

Academic Year	Students	Visits	% of Total Visits to Writing Studio
AY 2009-2010	64	170	6.6%
AY 2010-2011	84	198	9.0%
AY 2011-2012	142	449	15.4%
AY 2012-2013	304	1151	24.4%
AY 2013-2014	299	957	21.2%
AY 2014-2015	286	1006	23.0%
AY 2015-2016	291	1182	27%
AY 2016-2017	239	1008	25.6 %

Since the GWI began, there is a clear increase in graduate student visits to the Writing Studio. This chart shows that in addition to an increase, there's also a qualitative difference—students are coming back for multiple appointments because they recognize the value.

Our Impact: Fall '16 Workshops

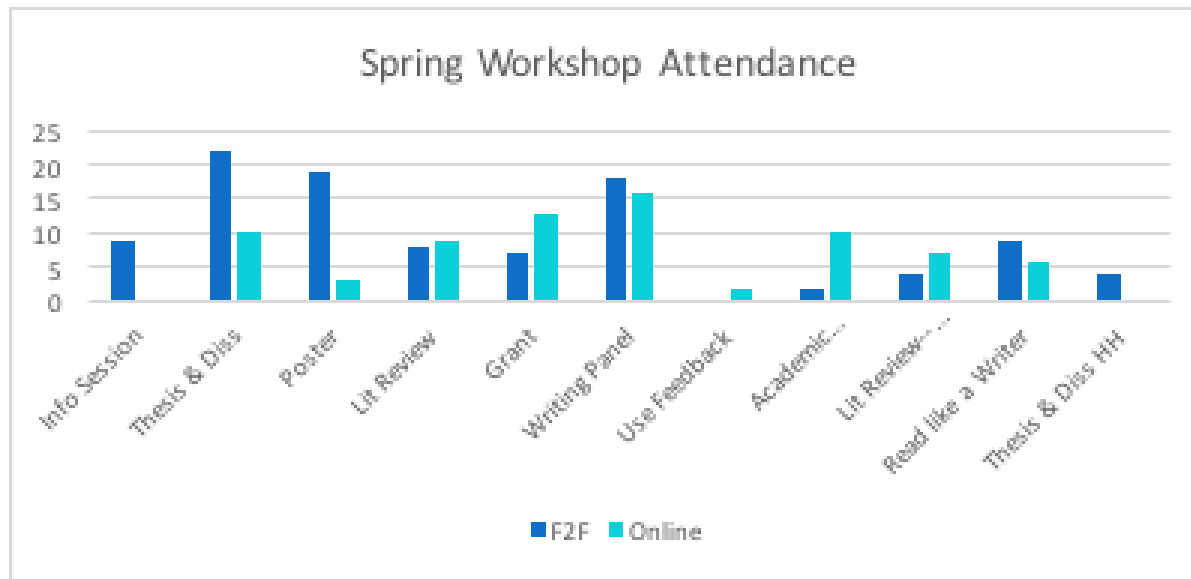
Total # of Students Served through Fall '16 Workshops: 83



Our Impact: Sp '17 Workshops

Total # of Students Served through Spring '17: 178
(increase of 95 students from F16, a 114% increase)

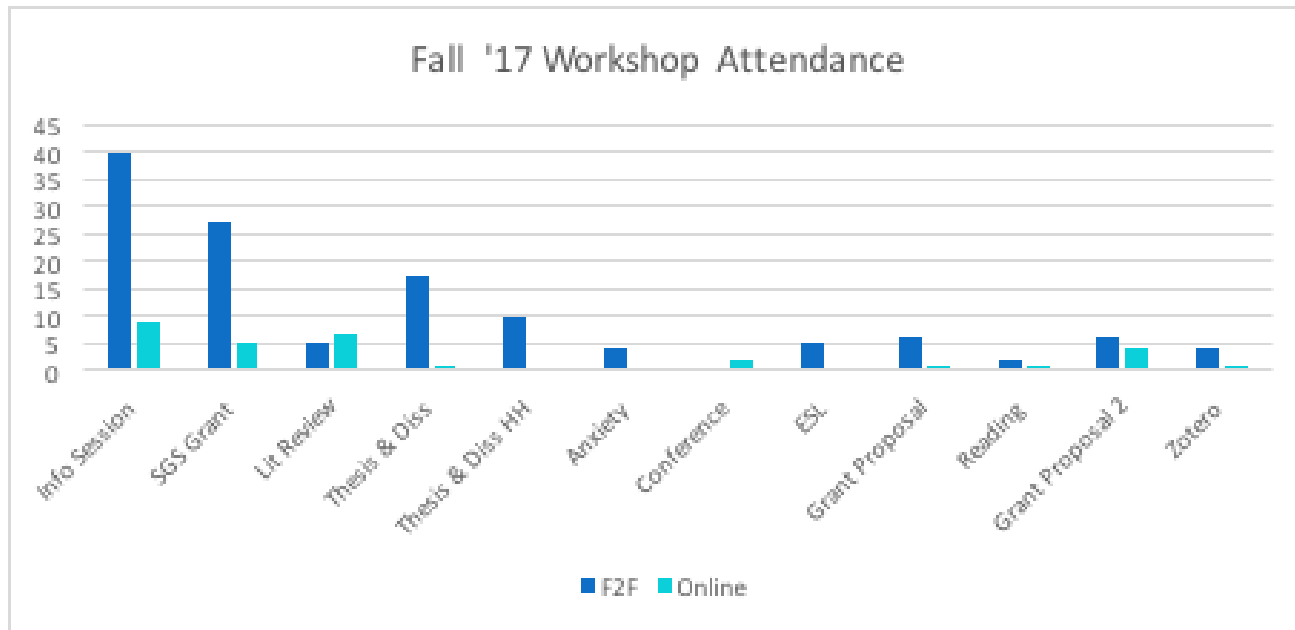
- F2F: 102
- Online: 76



Our Impact: Fall '17 Workshops

Total # of Students Served in Fall '17: 157 Decrease from Spring '16 (178) but increase in F2F (102)

- F2F: 126
- Online: 31



Graduate Write-Ins

Write-Ins provide dedicated time for writing, community & collaboration, and resources like writing consultants and research librarians

Total # of Students Served at Write-Ins

- *Fall '16*: 28 (2 Write-Ins)
- *Spring '17*: 59 (4 Write-Ins)
- *Summer '17*: 12 (1 Write-In)
- *Fall '17*: 32 (3 Write-Ins)

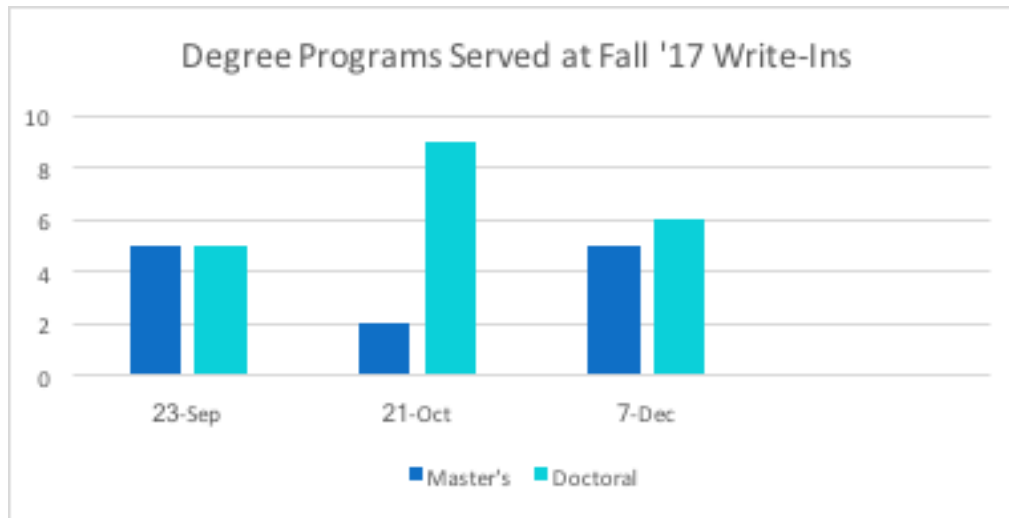
Attended 2 or more Spring '17 Write-Ins:

- 12 students (Education, Biology, Art History, Liberal Arts, Chemistry, Pharm/Tox, Bloch School, Sociology)

Attended 2 or more Fall '17 Write-Ins:

- 7 students (Education, Art History, CSE, Biology, Pharm & Tox)

Graduate Write-Ins

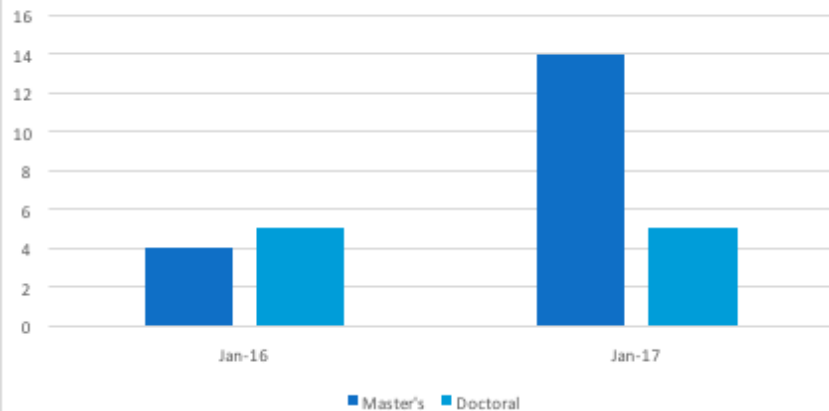


Fall 2017: 32 students total:

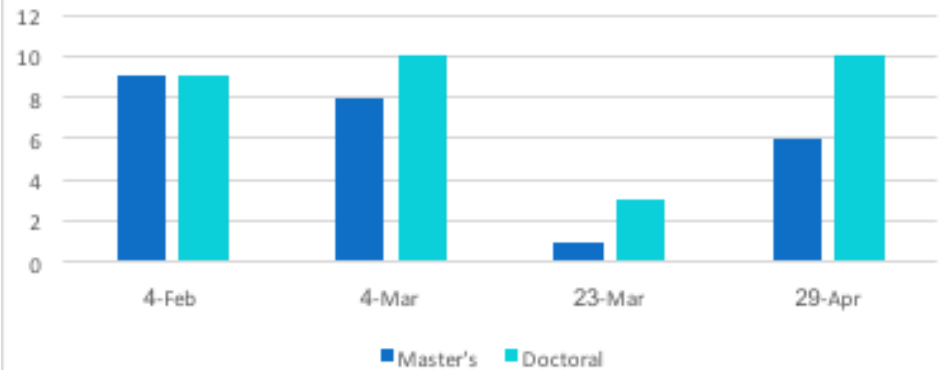
- Sept 23—10 students: 1 writing appointment
- Oct 21—11 students: 5 writing appointments; 4 library appointments
- Dec 7—11 students: 4 writing appointments; 5 library appointments

Graduate Write-Ins

Degree Programs Served at Fall '16 Write-Ins



Degree Programs Served at Spring '17 Write-Ins



Writing Groups

Our most successful writing group has been meeting since Summer 2016 and continues to meet this semester (Spring 2018).

Summer '16 (Pilot)

- 46 students organized into 9 writing groups
 - End of summer: 6 out of 9 groups meeting on regular basis

Fall '16

- 60 students organized into 11 groups (1 continuing from Summer '16)

Spring '17

17 students; 6 groups (1 continuing from Summer '16)

- Offered set times for students to sign up in; added "Accountability Groups"
- 4 groups meeting at end of semester

Summer '17

- 21 students; 6 groups (1 continuing from Summer '16)

Fall '17

- 31 students; 6 groups (1 from Summer '16)