

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Writing Center Receives Stage Two Certification

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The University of the Virgin Islands Writing Center, located on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix, was approved for Stage Two, Level One certification by the College Reading and Learning Association's (CRLA) International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) this past August, UVI made known via press release Tuesday.

"Having the ability to certify our tutors is important because it validates their work," said Valerie Combie, associate professor of English at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and Writing Center director. "Ten hours of training in specific areas plus 25 contact hours boosts their confidence and makes students better at what they do. Many writing centers prefer to hire certified tutors nowadays, and tutoring can be a good job for

students who transfer or attend graduate school at other universities.”

The Writing Center’s re-certification will replace the Stage One certification that was valid from December 2014 through January 2016. The Stage Two certification will authorize the center to certify all tutors trained from 2016 to 2019. The Writing Center is part of the University’s Center for Student Success (CSS).

Tutor training certification requires a review of relevant topics such as learning theory and styles, role modeling communication skills, goal setting and planning, active listening, referral, and study skills and critical thinking, among others. The certification process also requires candidates to focus on the use of probing questions, brain dominance learning, cultural awareness, identification and use of resources, tutoring in specific skills and/or subject areas, and assessing or changing study behaviors. UVI’s Writing Center will begin to prepare for Stage Three certification in early 2019.

Combie prepared the logistics and program for the Writing Center which opened in 2005 because, as a professor, she recognized that students needed help. The Writing Center eventually became part of the CSS, which offers assistance with other subjects such as Spanish and science. But writing has always been a focus for tutoring because so many students struggle with the skill, and also because it crosses disciplines. “Students don’t just come in seeking help with English papers,” Combie said. “They have to write papers for classes in other disciplines as well.”

The Writing Center on the Sheen Campus, which offers one-on-one assistance with editing, conceptualizing ideas, grammar and workshops, started to welcome students for the Fall 2016 semester on Monday, Aug. 29. Center operating hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.