

**MARKETING**  
**THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATION CENTER**

**An Exploratory Study of Current Practices with  
Recommendations for Future Strategies**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2012, the Global Communication Center (GCC) opened at Carnegie Mellon University. The GCC's mission is to provide both undergraduate and graduate students with personalized instruction to strengthen their written, oral, and visual communication skills. As CMU's only writing center it fills an obvious gap in the university's academic support services, but the GCC has had difficulty attracting students from all of Carnegie Mellon's academic disciplines. Believing that all CMU students, regardless of major or class status, can benefit from improved communication skills, Director Joanna Wolfe has asked us to evaluate students' perceptions of the GCC and to investigate ways to increase the center's presence on campus.

To address this request, we gathered the opinions and recommendations of 6 current GCC tutors and surveyed 47 current GCC tutees and 79 students who do not use the GCC. These online surveys asked students to anonymously describe their experiences with writing at CMU (non-users), their experiences with the GCC (current users), and their perceptions of the center, social media habits, and workshop preferences (both users and non-users). We integrated this data with responses from our tutor interviews to learn the primary concerns and misconceptions about the GCC and to develop solid recommendations for how the GCC can improve its public image.

The primary problem we found is awareness: many students still do not know about the GCC or are confused about what it can offer them. To combat this and attract more students to the center, we discuss why the GCC should:

- collaborate with professors and teaching assistants from all academic departments
- develop a branding strategy emphasize tutor training and the center's focus on teaching writing as a process
- change its name so that it is clearer and reflect the broad range of services provided
- do more online outreach to students (bi-weekly email updates and facebook)
- Create a recognizable and distinct space for the GCC within Hunt Library

In addition these recommendations about how to improve outreach and student perceptions of the center, we also include a list of what our research indicated are effective GCC practices. These include the current format of the website, face-to-face tutoring sessions, tutor training and preparation, and workshops.

The GCC is an important resource for students to develop their communication skills and is integral to Carnegie Mellon University's mission to produce students who are well-rounded and marketable future employees. Therefore, it is our intention that after reviewing and implementing our recommendations, the GCC will strengthen its presence on campus and perhaps subsequently receive more support from the University.

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## WHY WE'RE HERE

### **WRITING CENTERS SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS.**

Writing centers provide one-one-one tutoring services that foster strong written communication skills. In addition to helping students present their academic work in a clear and professional manner, communication skills are among the most desirable skills in an employee according to Fox Business. Because of these obvious benefits, it is essential that universities provide students with resources to develop their communication abilities. To address this need, Carnegie Mellon University's first ever writing center, the Global Communication Center, opened in Hunt Library in the Fall of 2012.

### **CMU'S WRITING CENTER, THE GCC, IS NOT REACHING MANY STUDENTS.**

Though it has attracted a small and loyal clientele, the GCC isn't serving the expected number of students after it's first year on campus. Director Joanna Wolfe suspects this may be because many students are still unaware of the GCC and may also be confused or unsure about the kinds of services it can offer. Because of this, she has asked us to conduct an exploratory study of the GCC's current marketing strategies and student perceptions of the center.

### **WE WANT TO HELP IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THE GCC.**

The GCC's current marketing methods include posters, chalk messages on sidewalks, classroom visits, and references on the syllabuses of selected courses. These methods have proven to be effective in drawing some students to the center, but we want to help the GCC become a well-known campus resource that serves students from all academic disciplines. We have analyzed data from current student users, non-users, and GCC tutors and recommend that the center implement the suggestions we provide here to broaden their presence on campus and bolster their public image.

# WHAT WE DID

## PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION

To evaluate the extent of the GCC's current reach on campus we examined demographic information from 251 current GCC users. This data is collected by the GCC when students make an appointment for their first tutoring session and includes questions about their academic major, graduation year, and how they heard about the center. The data we used for our investigation was collected between August 2013 and November 2013 and thus reflects GCC tutees during fall 2013. We used this data for two major purposes:

### 1. TO IDENTIFY UNDERREPRESENTED ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES AT THE GCC.

We analyzed the distribution of academic disciplines at the GCC by combining student majors into groups by college. This information is provided in Figure 1. The colleges included were:

- Carnegie Institute of Technology (CIT)
- College of Fine Arts (CFA)
- Dietrich College (DC)
- Mellon College of Science (MCS)
- Tepper School of Business
- Heinz College
- School of Computer Science (SCS)
- Undecided/Other

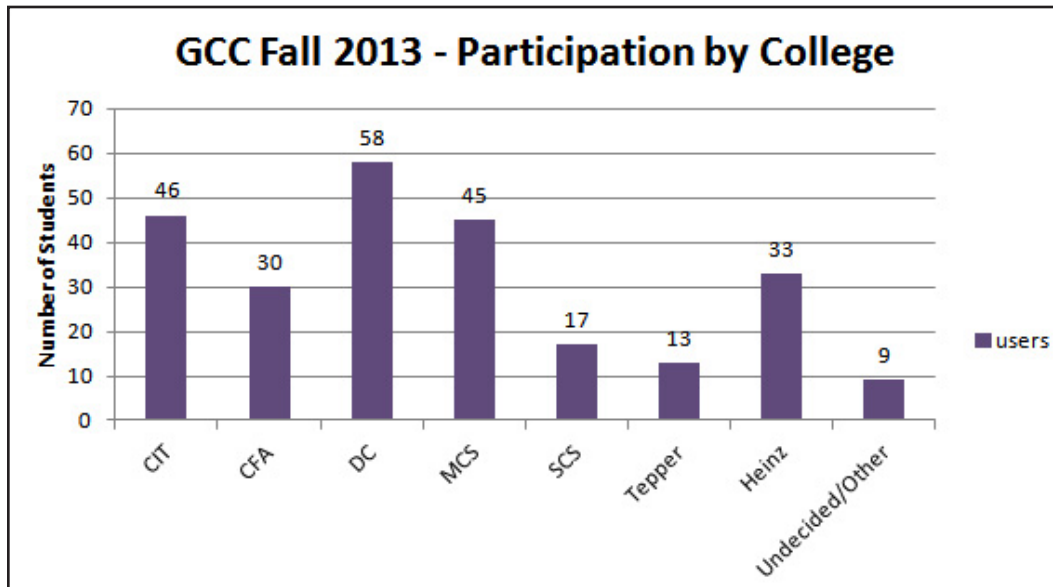


Figure 1. Current GCC user majors, categorized by college. Provided by the GCC.

Highest Participation:

- Dietrich College (23% of tutees)
- Carnegie Institute of Technology (18% of tutees)
- Mellon College of Science (18% of tutees)

Lowest Participation:

- School of Computer Science (7% of tutees)
- Tepper School of Business (5% of tutees)

## 2. TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGIES.

We analyzed GCC user responses to the question “How did you hear about the GCC?”

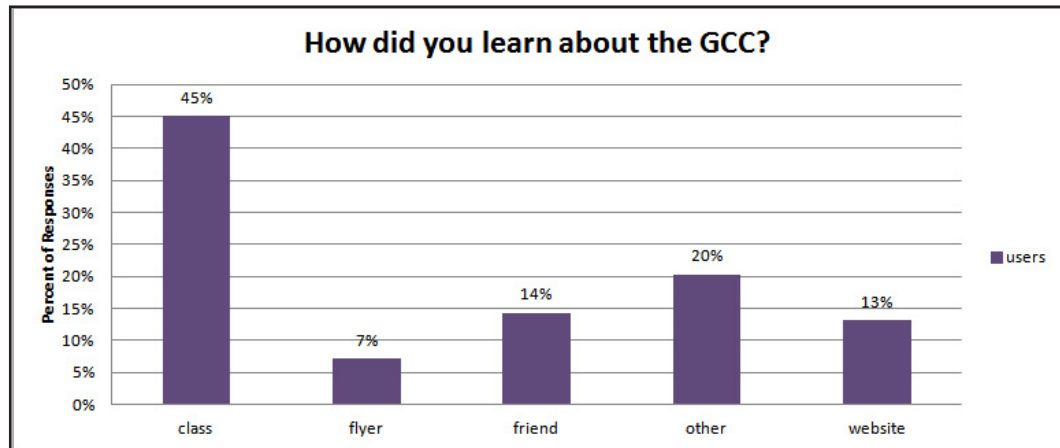


Figure 2. GCC users in the Fall 2013 semester most often learned about the GCC through their classes. Provided by the GCC.

### PRIMARY EXPLORATION

To evaluate student perceptions of the GCC and gain recommendations for marketing strategies, we gathered information from three major sources:

#### GCC TUTORS

We conducted one-on-one 15-20 minute interviews with 6 tutors that were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed. Tutors were asked for their opinions about students’ understanding and potential confusion about the GCC, underrepresented student populations at the GCC, ways to make tutoring more effective, and outreach strategies to expand student awareness and use of the GCC. For a complete list of questions, please see Appendix A.

Tutor Information:

- 1-3 semesters of experience at the GCC
- 2 PhD students and 4 MA students/candidates
- Gender: 3 male, 3 female

#### GCC USERS

Current users completed online surveys about their experiences with the GCC and their perceptions of the GCC’s services. These surveys were sent out as a part of users’ post-tutoring documentation and were thus completed after GCC tutoring appointments.

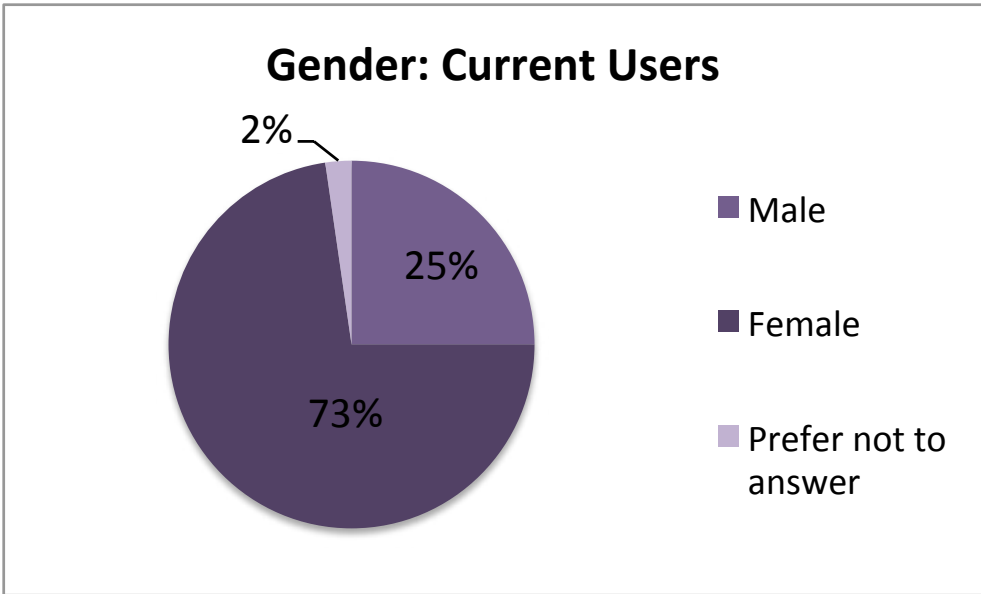
Survey questions consisted of a mix of:

- Short answer
- Multiple choice
- Likert rating scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
- For a complete list of questions, please see Appendix B.

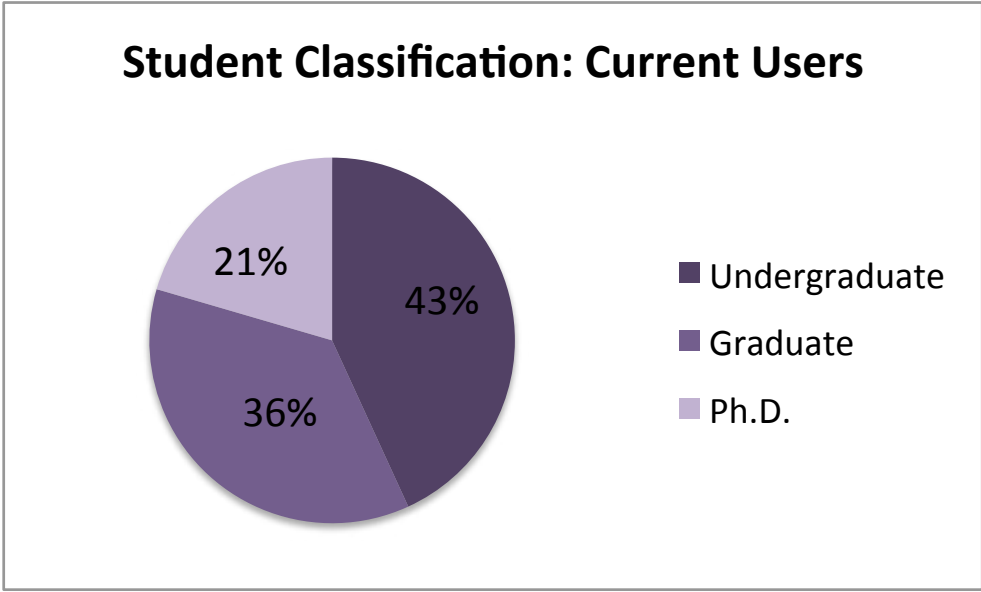
Users’ Information:

- Final Number 47
- Average Age: 23.09 years
- Age Range: 18-35 years

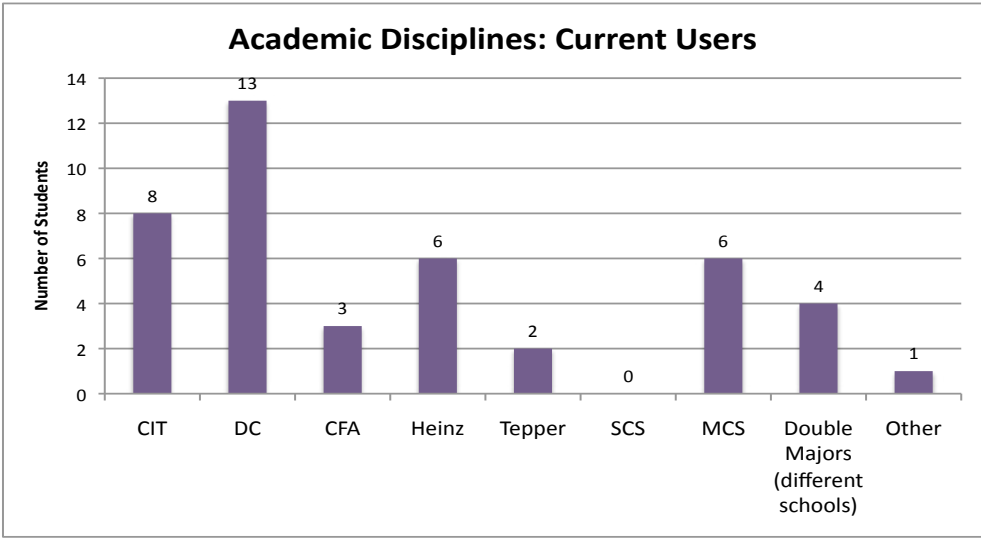
Note: Not all respondents answered every survey question. Where possible, we have indicated the number of respondents for each question.



Note: out of 44 responses.



Note: out of 44 responses.



Note: out of 44 responses.

## GCC NON-USERS

Carnegie Mellon University students who do not currently attend tutoring at the GCC completed online surveys about their experiences with writing assignments, preferences for tutoring/academic assistance, and perceptions of the GCC and its services. Participants were recruited electronically through emails from their professors or followed a link to the survey posted on facebook.

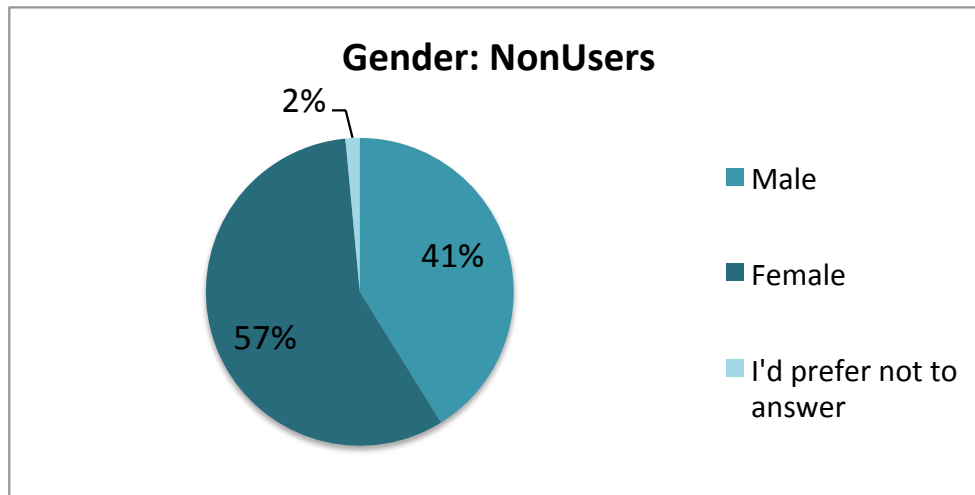
Survey questions consisted of a mix of:

- Short answer
- Multiple choice
- Likert rating scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
- For a complete list of questions, please see Appendix C.

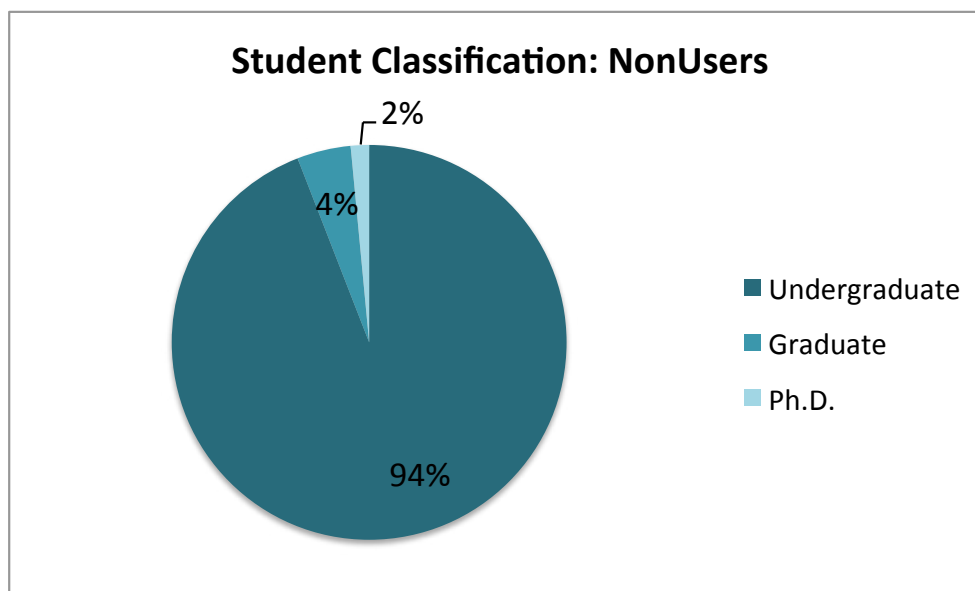
Non-Users' Information:

- Final Number: 79
- Average Age: 20.5 years
- Age Range: 18-28 years

Note: Not all respondents answered every survey question. Where possible, we have indicated the number of respondents for each question.

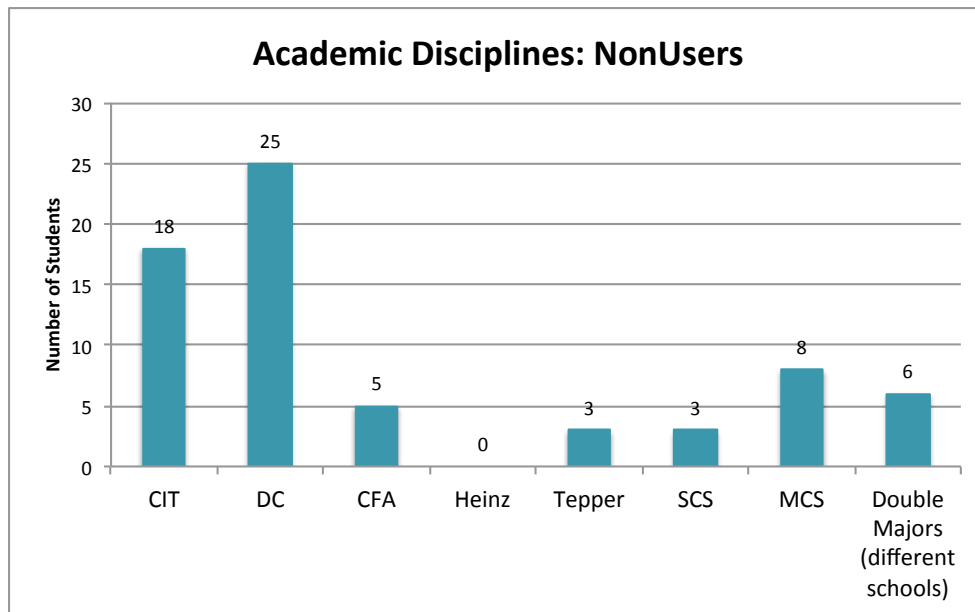


Note: out of 68 responses.



Note: out of 68 responses.





Note: out of 68 responses.

## LIMITATIONS

Our data collection was limited by the time constraints of this project and was collected over a period of two weeks in November 2013. In this short timespan, we were not able to reach a representative sample of both graduate and undergraduate students (as indicated by the non-users data) and students from all academic disciplines. Though a larger percentage of the current users we surveyed were graduate students, it is important to clarify that our recommendations are best suited to undergraduate students and that additional research is necessary to make claims about graduate students' needs and perceptions of the GCC. Our recommendations are also largely based on the thoughts and needs of students in Dietrich College and the Carnegie Institute of Technology, but we believe that they are applicable to undergraduate students in all academic majors and colleges.

Though our data collection window has closed, the surveys are still active and available to the GCC's director for further data monitoring.

## DATA ANALYSIS

We analyzed the transcriptions of interviews with current GCC tutors and the short answer questions in our online surveys for recurring themes, concerns, and suggestions. We used this information in conjunction with the quantitative data collected from our surveys to develop our recommendations.

# 1 WHAT WE RECOMMEND

## COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ACADEMIC RESOURCES.

### INSTRUCTORS AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Forty-four percent of current non-users who are aware of the GCC report hearing about it from an instructor (Figure 3). These instructors encourage their students to visit the GCC because they understand the benefits of working with a tutor. Moreover, Figure 4 shows that when students need help with assignments, they are most likely to consult with their instructors and TAs rather than academic resources. The GCC has already established relationships with instructors and should continue to build these types of relationships with other faculty--particularly those in departments where the GCC currently has little presence.

### OTHER ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES (E.G. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT)

If the GCC were to extend collaboration to other academic services such as Academic Development, more students would be encouraged to visit the GCC (Figure 4). Although Academic Development earned modest scores in our survey, with only 17% responding that they go there for help, it received twice as many responses as tutoring services such as the GCC. Academic Development may be able to help the GCC better understand what students need and how to bring them into the writing center in larger numbers.

### THE DATA

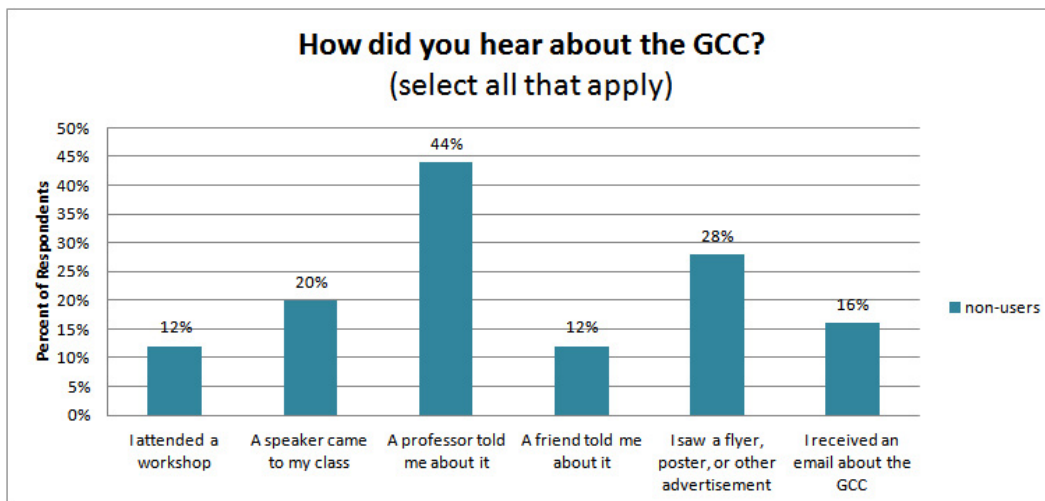
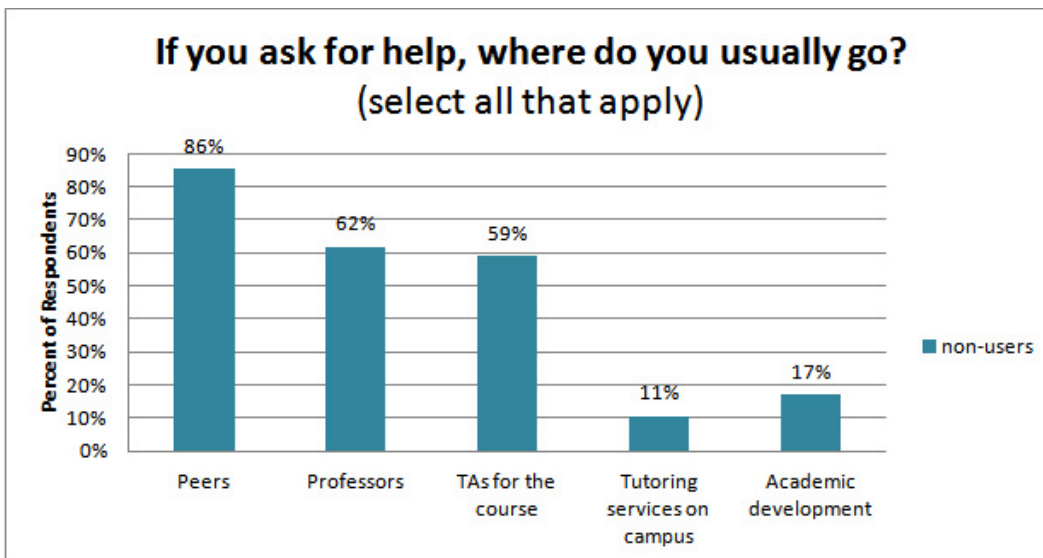


Figure 3. This data shows that of all the mediums of outreach, most students reported finding out about the GCC from their instructors.



**Figure 4.** Students who do not use the GCC mostly seek help from peers, instructors, and TAs. These responses suggest that students think the best help comes from within classroom walls.

#### TUTORS WEIGH IN

“I’m wondering if there needs to be... a closer relationship to some of these instructors that are teaching these huge classes and have these assignments, to be able to say, ‘Okay, I’ve worked with the GCC, and they know exactly what we’re doing.’”

“[A great place to start is] going outside the humanities in particular and having instructors in other disciplines really encourage their students to come here.”

“But I would think that there are other resources on campus... that could give us some language and concepts to understand what it is those students need and would respond to.”

**Figure 5.** Tutor responses show that they support collaboration with other academic resources, especially with instructors outside of the humanities. These respondents are also composition instructors and may better understand the needs of CMU students due to their dual roles. See Appx. D.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### ASSIGN TUTORS AS AMBASSADORS TO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

We recommend that the GCC establishes strong relationships with other academic resources by sending out tutors as ambassadors to instructors, program directors, and administrators in each academic department. Ambassadors would be responsible for maintaining regular communication with their assigned department, reporting back to the GCC with information about requirements for specific assignments, and devising plans for integrating what they have found into the GCC’s services. These ambassadors can also create handouts for professors and Teaching Assistants to distribute to their students that explain how the GCC can help with specific types of assignments.

## 2 WHAT WE RECOMMEND DEVELOP A BRANDING STRATEGY.

### EMPHASIZE PROCESS, NOT PROOFREADING

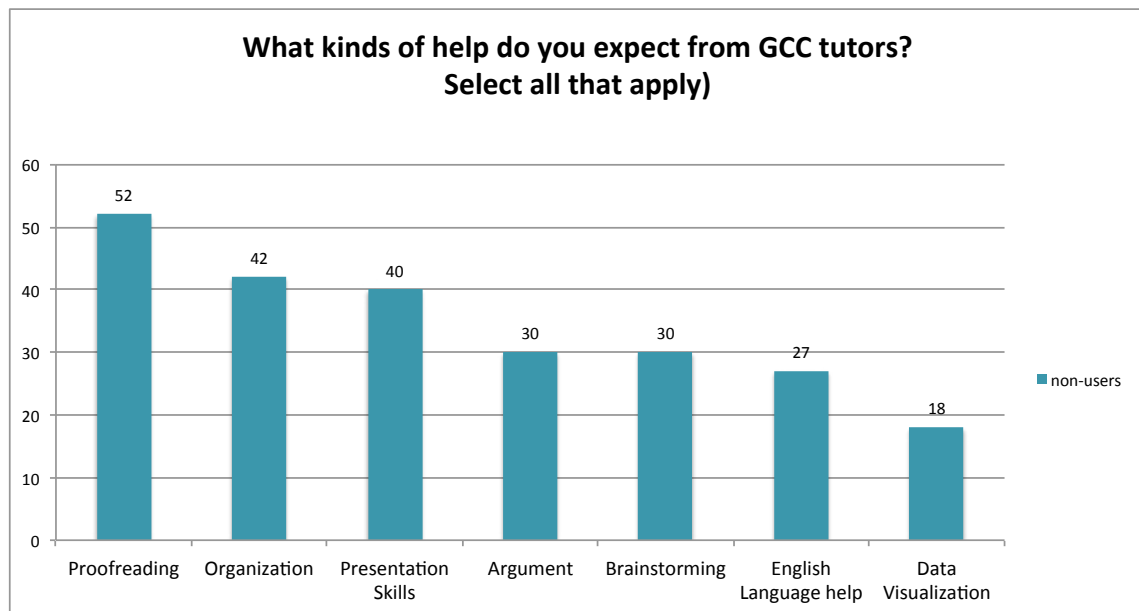
Our surveys indicate that proofreading/editing is the #1 reason that current non-user respondents would go to the GCC (Figure 6). However, what students want from the GCC conflicts with the GCC's mission: to teach the writing process. Although the GCC has made an effort to inform students that it is not a proofreading service—by featuring its philosophy prominently on CMU's website and preparing its tutors to confront misconceptions head-on during tutoring sessions—many students continue to make appointments with the intention of discussing grammar.

Interestingly, our data also shows that proofreading is not the main reason that current users list for coming to the GCC, suggesting that tutors dispel this misconception during tutoring sessions (Figure 7). Because of this disparity between current users and non-users about the nature of the GCC's services, we recommend that the GCC be more clearly branded as a center where expert writers work shoulder-to-shoulder with students to improve their writing process.

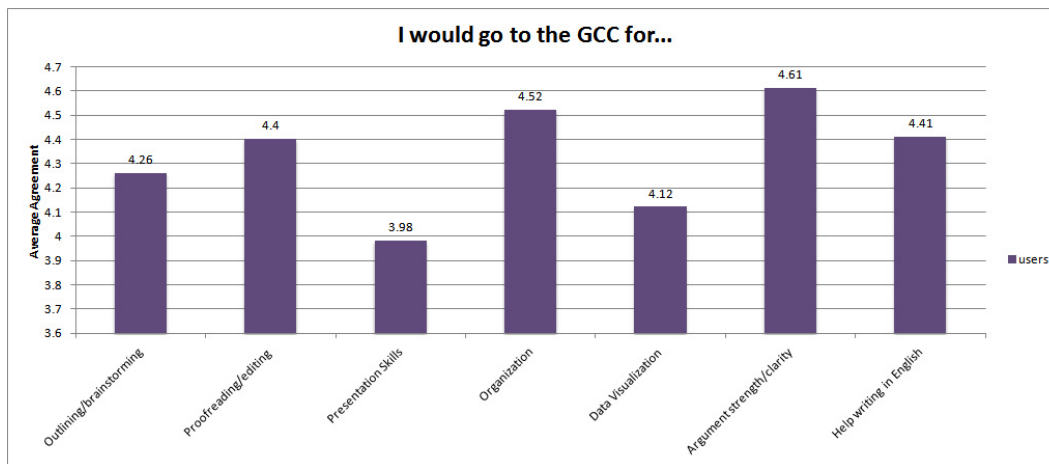
### EMPHASIZE TUTOR TRAINING

Finally, data visualization and presentations are the least expected services among both users and non-users of the GCC. Though the center is relevant for all kinds of assignments, including those dealing with data visualization and oral presentations, our data indicate that students are still largely unaware of these services. Because of this, the branding strategy should also emphasize that tutors are trained in a variety of academic disciplines and assignment types.

### THE DATA



**Figure 6.** Non-users expect the GCC to provide proofreading/editing services. The misconception that the GCC is, to some degree, a proofreading service is evident among students who have never visited.



**Figure 7.** Current students expect the GCC to provide assistance with argument strength/clarity. The differing expectations between users and non-users may be because their sessions at the GCC help them better understand the value of argument strength and clarity.

#### TUTORS WEIGH IN

“I want them to know we are a writing center. That’s what we specialize in. And that we are not a proofreading service!”

“Students [might be] unaware that a grammatically correct paper can be worse than one that addresses the prompt; they don’t understand the ethical implications of us editing their papers...”

“If you’re writing papers on a night-before basis, the GCC is not going to figure into your writing process, because you don’t have a writing process. I think that is part of the problem, making the idea of a writing process relevant.”

**Figure 8.** Tutor beliefs regarding student perceptions of writing and the GCC. Tutors agree that student misconceptions about the GCC might come from their understanding of the writing process. See Appx. D.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### BRAND THE GCC AS A WRITING CENTER THAT TEACHES THE WRITING PROCESS.

We recommend that the GCC develop a new branding strategy that portrays written, visual, and oral communications as processes that the GCC can help with at any stage. The GCC could include this information in descriptive taglines on promotional materials, perhaps directly under the center’s name, and could encourage professors, teaching assistants, and other affiliates of the center to stress these aspects when referring students to the GCC.

### MARKET TUTOR TRAINING.

To draw a more diverse clientele the GCC could more heavily emphasize that tutors receive extensive training in many genres and communication styles. This could help to emphasize the breadth of services that the GCC can offer and may also help to draw in students from a wider range of majors and academic colleges. If students in hard science and computer-related fields are convinced that tutors have the skills to help with more than just English assignments, they may be more likely to use the GCC’s services.

# 3 WHAT WE RECOMMEND

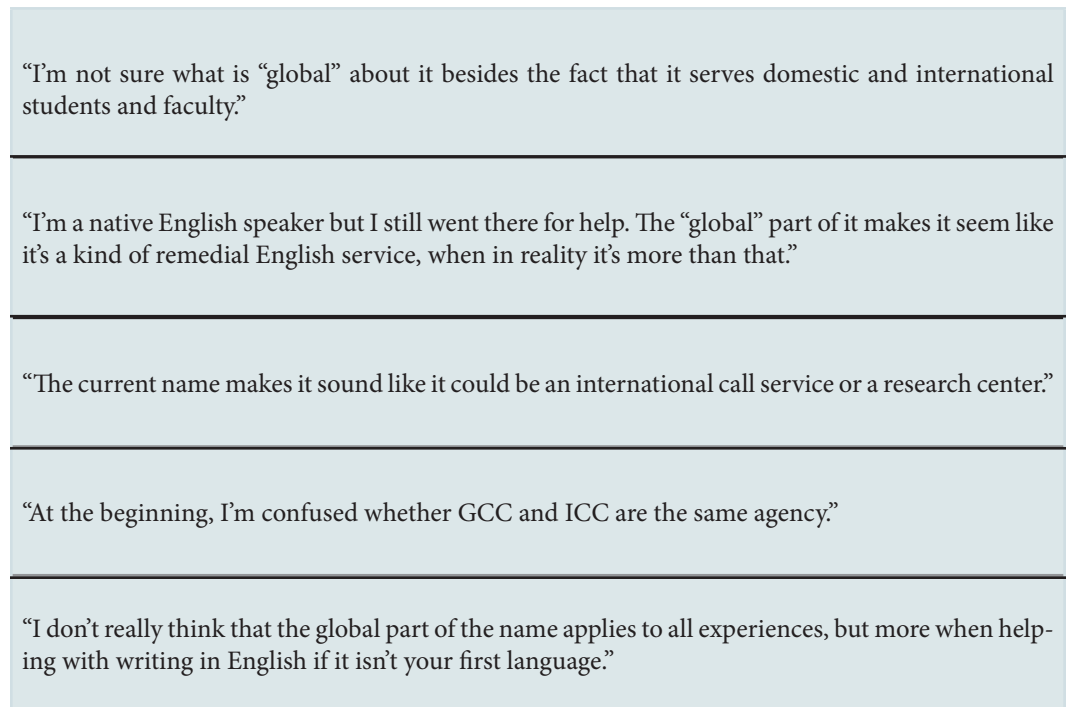
## CHANGE THE NAME OF THE TUTORING SERVICE.

### THE NAME IS CONFUSING

Consistent with Wolfe’s hunch that students are confused by the GCC’s current name, 68% of non-users said that the name “Global Communication Center” is ineffective at conveying that it is a writing center with qualified communication tutors (Figure 9). Interestingly, most current users report that the name is clear, but we found that some respondents were initially confused about the word “global” in the name (Figure 10). In fact, some of these respondents initially assumed that the GCC was a branch of the Intercultural Communication Center or was only for international students. GCC Tutors also expressed concerns about the clarity of the GCC’s name to students (Figure 11).

Based on these responses, we believe that the name of the GCC is a major barrier for students who have not visited the center before. To draw more students, we suggest that the GCC change its name to be clearer to non-users.

### THE DATA



**Figure 9.** Non-user responses to the statement:  
“The GCC name clearly explains that it is a center with writing tutors.”

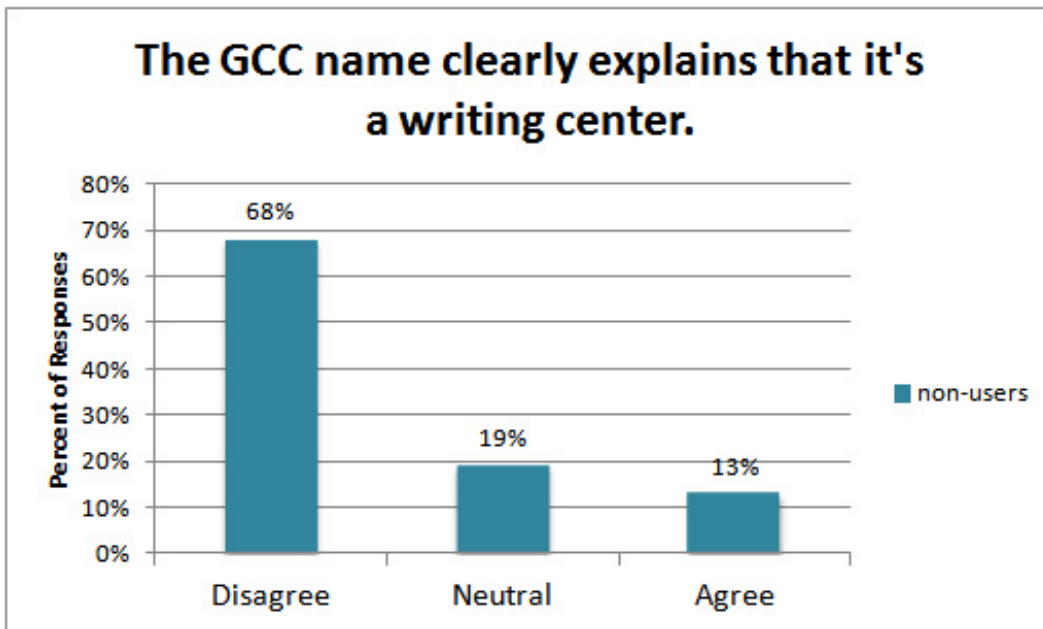


Figure 10. User feedback indicates a lack of clarity in the GCC's name.

#### TUTORS WEIGH IN

“Global Communication, that’s like a satellite, right? I see where they’re trying to sound formal and a touch abstract. Maybe that’s the problem, because that abstract also carries over to technology.”

“I think the name is what confuses people too, because it’s the Global Communication Center. It’s global because we have an English program in Qatar. [...] We have a reputation as a global institution.”

“I think we need to be more branded as a writing center; and I know that’s a strategic decision made by Carnegie Mellon. I always tell people I work in the writing center and it’s called the GCC, and people don’t know what GCC is.”

Figure 11. GCC Tutors discuss whether the name, GCC represents who they are. See Appx. D.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Based on this data, we suggest that the word “global” be removed from the name and that the name better reflects the written, visual, and oral aspects of tutoring.

# 4 WHAT WE RECOMMEND

## CREATE A DISTINCT SPACE FOR THE GCC.

Over 80% of current GCC users and 50% of non-users agree that Hunt Library is a good location for the GCC (Figure 12). Additionally, of the current users we surveyed, nearly 80% agree that the GCC was easy to locate on their first visit (Figure 13). While the users we surveyed generally found the GCC's location to be convenient and easy to find, we recommend that the GCC make alterations to address some of the concerns that respondents noted in an open-ended question regarding the tutoring space (Figure 14). Students stated that they had difficulty locating the specific location of the GCC on the first floor of Hunt Library. The GCC Tutors also expressed concerns about the GCC's space being recognized as a unified space (Figure 15). To address these concerns, we have two major recommendations:

### ADD SIGNS TO MORE CLEARLY INDICATE THE LOCATION OF THE GCC.

Our respondents indicated that although the GCC is not particularly difficult to find, it would be helpful to have more signs pointing to its location. Users reported that because the GCC is located behind the information desk and the website only indicates that it's on the first floor of the library, finding it could be a bit confusing for new tutees.

### REDUCE THE NOISE LEVEL AROUND THE GCC.

Another concern that user respondents had about the GCC's location is the open setting. Some users pointed out that they can be distracted by other noises within the library, particularly from other nearby tutoring sessions. The current proximity of the desks to one another, as well as to the areas open to all students, is distracting during tutoring sessions.

## THE DATA

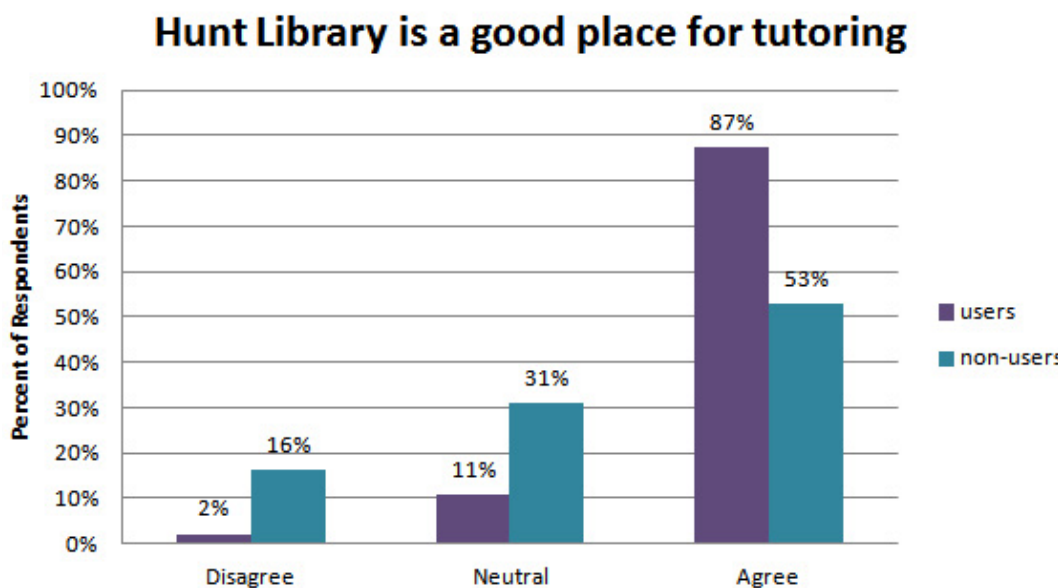


Figure 12. Most users and non-users agree that the GCC space in the library is good for tutoring.



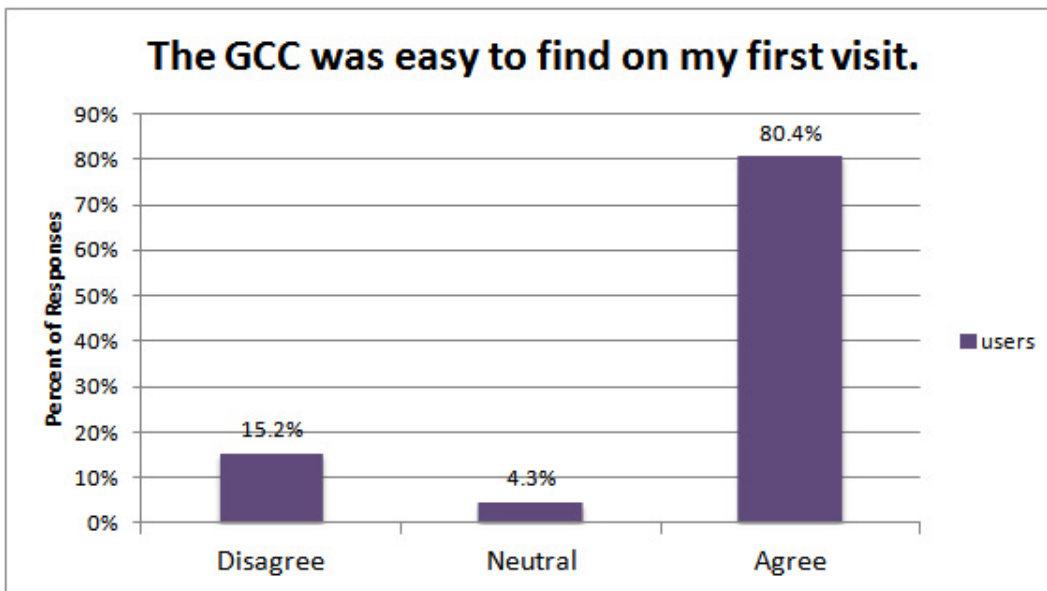


Figure 13. Current users found the GCC easily on their first visit.

<p>“I think just a standing sign with an arrow pointing to where the office is would be helpful for first time visitors.”</p>
<p>“I had to ask someone where the location would be because on the website it only says Hunt first floor.”</p>
<p>“I just didn’t expect it to be sharing a desk with information, so it was a little confusing.”</p>
<p>“Sometimes it gets a little loud when other students are in the library.”</p>
<p>“It is good to be in the library but it will be even better if we can have private space. I can overhear the other tutor’s conversation if two tutors are working at the same time.”</p>

Figure 14. User feedback regarding the GCC’s tutoring space.

## TUTORS WEIGH IN

“To me, a writing center is its own entity. . . I know they want to promote a collaborative environment, which I understand, but I don’t know. I’ve seen a lot of people get really confused seeing us mixed in with other students. I think if we had our own real writing center, our own couple of rooms, or just enclosed space, that would give us more of a static presence on campus. Right now I feel like we just move anywhere and everywhere, and no one really knows where to go.”

“[We need] our own presence that signifies we are something big, we are important. I think that’s the biggest thing we can improve upon.”

**Figure 15.** Tutors agree that the GCC’s environment can be problematic during sessions. See Appx. D.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

We recommend that the GCC considers the possibility of a guided path from the library’s front door to the reception desk or the consultation room. This strategy would not only help students locate the GCC for their appointment, but would also remind students in the library that the GCC is a service available to them.

To address the noise concerns, we propose that the GCC:

- Acquire more private tutoring rooms like the consultation room. If this is not feasible due to limited space, an alternative suggestion is that the GCC purchase more tutoring desks so that tutoring sessions are more separated.
- Install more tutoring desks in various locations so that tutoring sessions are more separated and do not interfere with one another.
- Requests the group work tables near the GCC be replaced by individual desks so that loud student group work is discouraged in the vicinity of the tutoring sessions

# 5 WHAT WE RECOMMEND DO MORE ONLINE OUTREACH.

92% of the students we surveyed indicated that they prefer to receive updates from an organization through email (Figure 16). These students would like to receive updates between once a week and once a month (Figure 17) that include information about upcoming workshops and changes to logistical information, like altered tutoring hours (Figure 18). In addition, the GCC Tutors believe that more time should be devoted towards online outreach (Figure 19).

## THE DATA

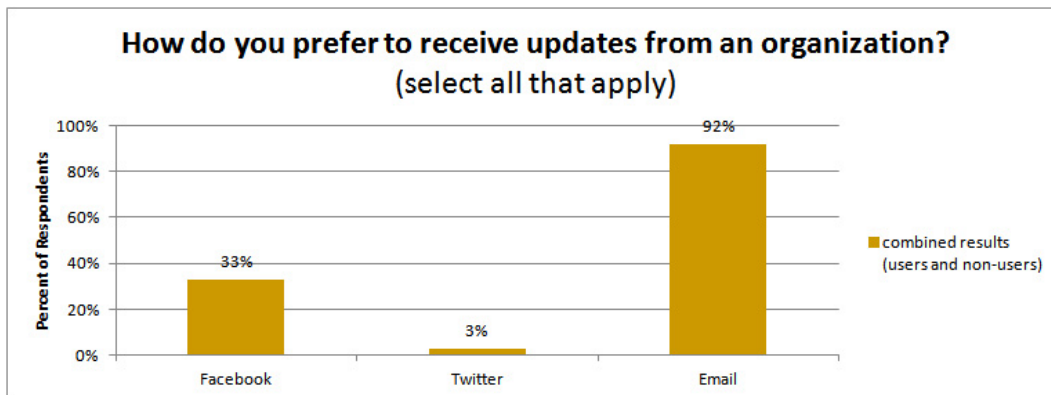


Figure 16. Media through which all surveyed students prefer to receive updates.

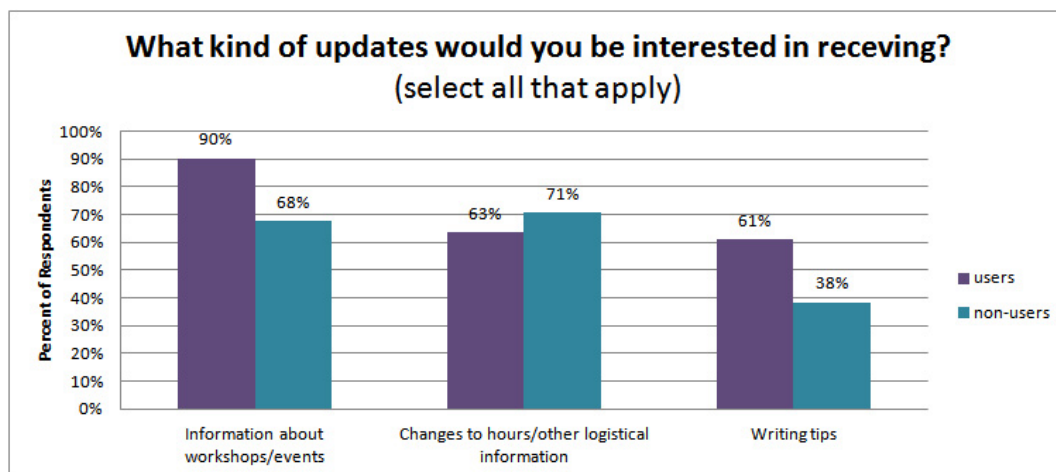


Figure 17. Most students prefer to receive updates between once a week and once a month.

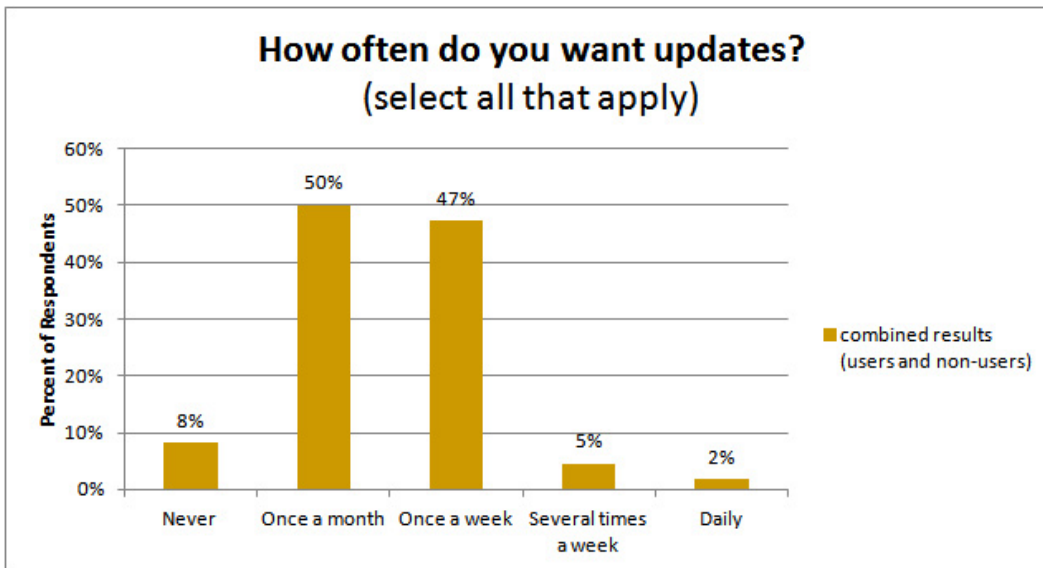


Figure 18. Information students would like to receive from an organization.

#### TUTORS WEIGH IN

“I think the thing is you need to set measurable goals and objectives, and find out what you can realistically do and what resources you have to allocate to these goals, and then decide how to go about doing it and what’s the most important thing.”

“You can’t just tweet and expect people to follow you.”

“I think it’s effective but could be more effective (more updates on events or just FAQs about the GCC, or photos...?).”

Figure 19. Tutors suggest more time be spent on online outreach. See Appx. D.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

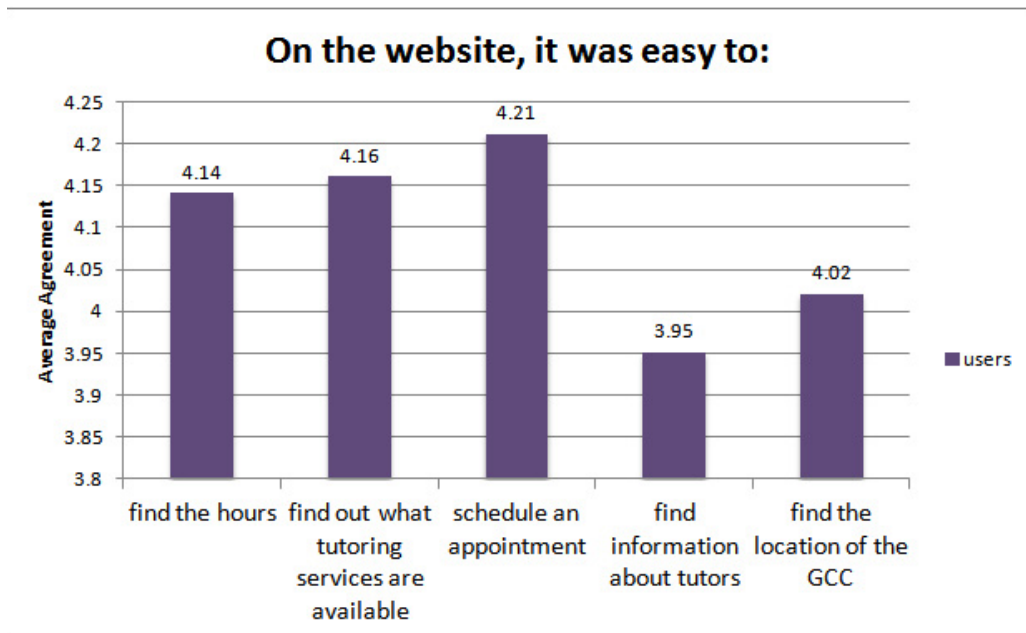
We believe that sending an all-campus email to students with information about the GCC’s hours, services provided, and location information may help bring in a more diverse client pool. Additionally, we recommend that students have the option to subscribe to further bi-weekly email updates. We recommend that these emails include writing tips, as 61% of the current users we surveyed indicated that they would like to receive writing tips from the GCC through email. We view this type of email, if it reaches non-users, as a great way to show them that the GCC is beneficial to all students at all stages of writing.

We also recommend that the GCC focuses on email communications and Facebook, but does not continue to provide updates through Twitter. The tutor responses provided in Figure 19 advise that the GCC’s online outreach needs a specific plan that allows for consistency in both type and frequency of communication. The GCC’s Facebook updates should focus on promoting workshops, providing logistical information, and occasionally providing writing tips and should be posted approximately once per week.

Responses to our surveys show that students are pleased with some of the features and services the GCC is already providing. In order to promote further success in these areas, we recommend that you continue to do the following:

# 1 WHAT YOU'RE DOING WELL LEAVE YOUR WEBSITE IN ITS CURRENT FORMAT.

Figure 20 shows that agreement was high among users that the GCC's website was easy to use. Of the features we asked about, scheduling an appointment was given the highest rating on average. This response is encouraging because the GCC is partially advertised by word of mouth among students. Appointments scheduled online usually translate into real tutoring sessions, or opportunities for tutors to show CMU students that the GCC is worth another visit. Currently, finding information about tutors is rated lowest of the features, though the difference is small.



**Figure 20.** Students who have visited the GCC's website think that it is user-friendly. They can easily schedule appointments and find other information they are looking for.

# 2 WHAT YOU'RE DOING WELL MAINTAIN YOUR HIRING, TRAINING, AND SERVICE QUALITY.

According to our surveys, current users of the GCC find their tutors to be friendly, knowledgeable, helpful, polite, approachable, professional, and qualified to help them (Figure 21). These responses validate that the GCC's hiring and training practices are effective. In addition, users are satisfied with their tutoring appointments (Figure 22) and feel their expectations for help with their writing were met (Figure 23). Users even spoke of specific skills they have learned as a result of their tutoring sessions (Figure 24). To see the complete list of what users say they are learning, see Appendix E.

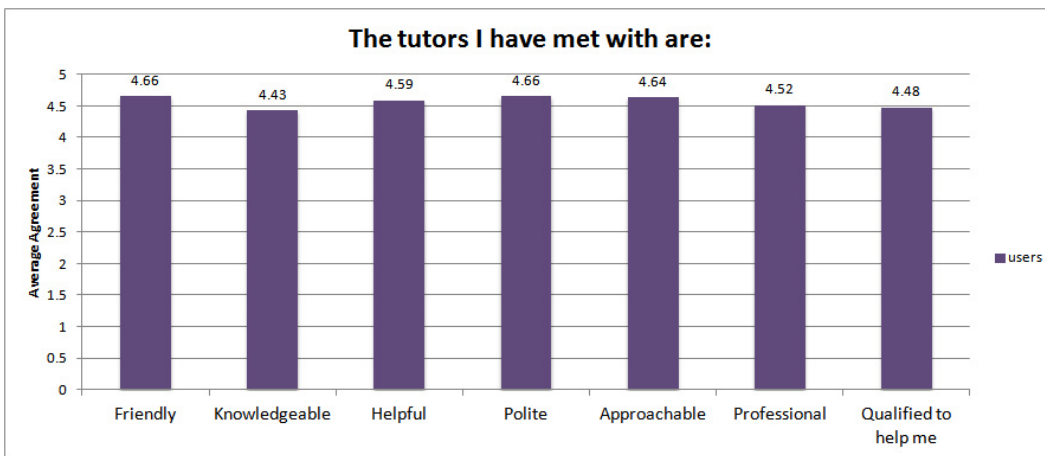


Figure 21. Users believe tutors are qualified to help them.

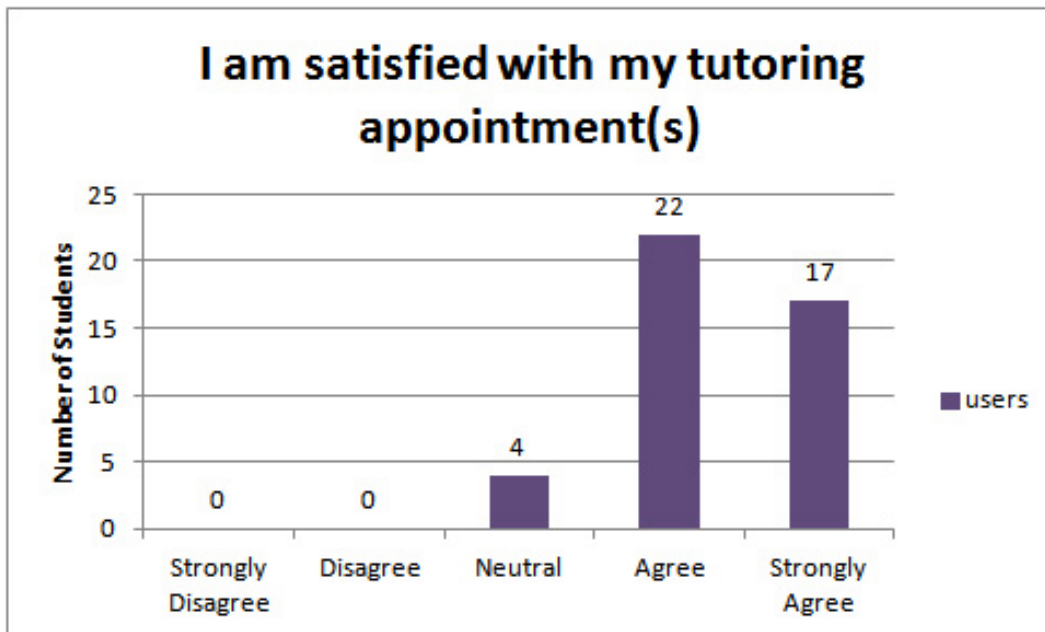


Figure 22. Users are satisfied with their tutoring appointments.

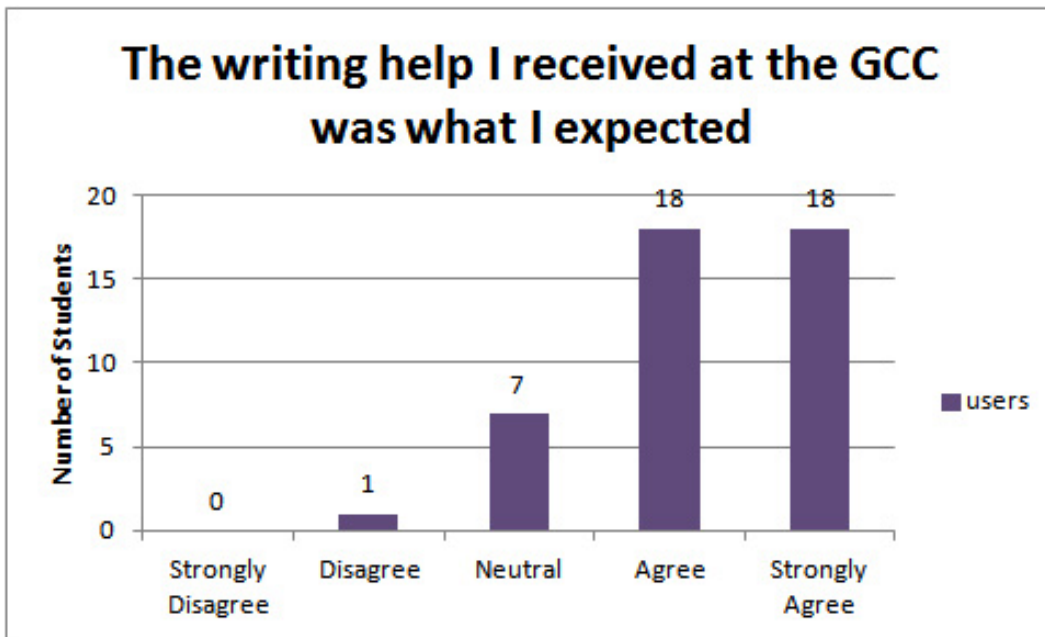


Figure 23. Users' expectations met by writing help.

<p>“How to be a better lab report writer”</p>
<p>“brainstorming skills, and organization skill. They were extremely helpful.”</p>
<p>“They helped me outline the argument better so that it flowed more.”</p>
<p>“I gained insight into how other people (outside of my group) saw my poster”</p>

Figure 24. What users are learning.

# 3 WHAT YOU'RE DOING WELL HOST WORKSHOPS.

Figure 25 shows that CMU students are interested in attending GCC workshops. For both users and non-users, the most popular were application materials for graduate school and career opportunities and writing research reports. Because CMU is so devoted to graduating students who are prepared to enter and excel in highly competitive, global markets, the popularity of the former topic is not surprising. Interest in brainstorming and planning differs the most between the two groups. About 50% of current GCC users would attend a workshop on this topic, but interest was much lower among non-users, reaching only 15%. The GCC could host workshops on application materials and other topics to help the university in this mission, to meet needs of both users and non-users, and to promote face-to-face tutoring. It is worth noting, however, that as a group non-users are less interested in workshops. Figure 26 and 27 indicate that the best time to host workshops is on Thursday between 4:00 and 6:00 PM or 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

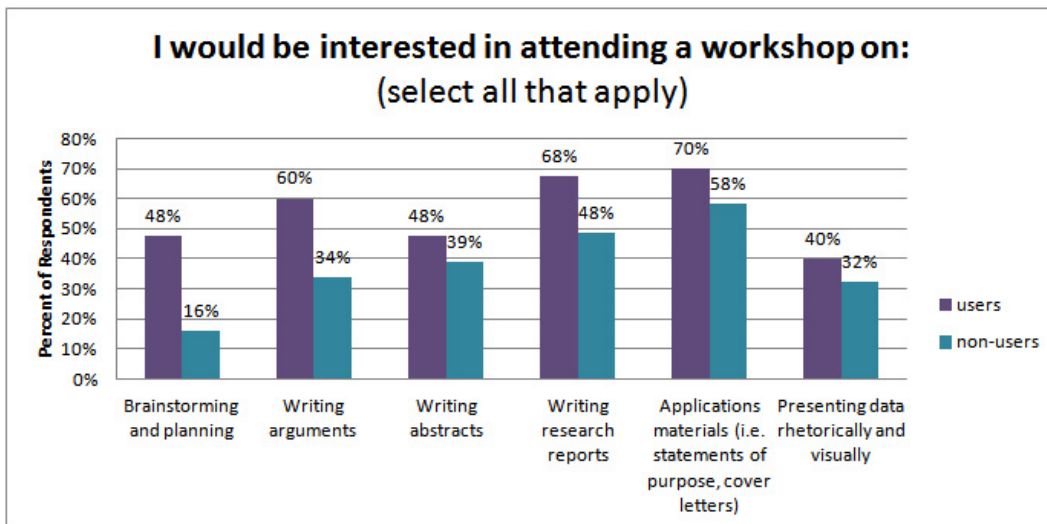


Figure 25. Students are interested in GCC workshops on a variety of topics, but the most popular are application materials and writing research reports.

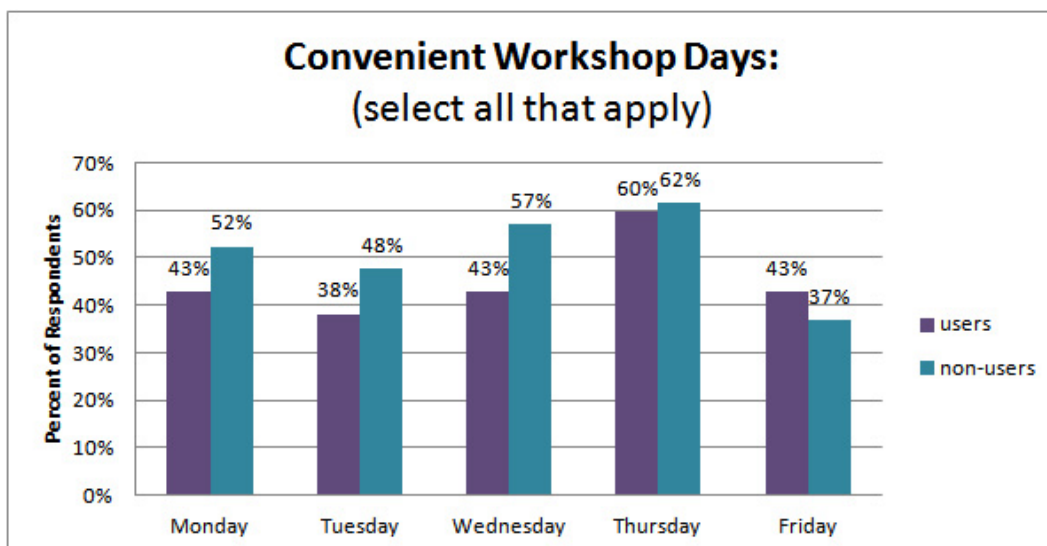


Figure 26. It would be most convenient for students if workshops were hosted on Thursday. Many students would still consider going to workshops if the GCC hosted them on other days.



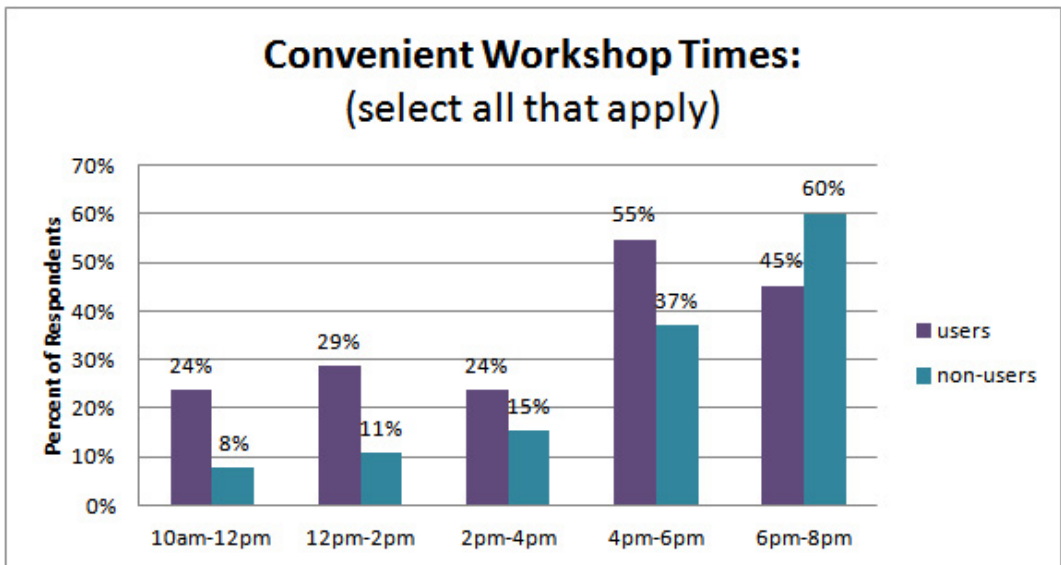


Figure 27. It would be most convenient for students if workshops started in in evening. Most GCC users prefer the 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM time slot. The best option may be 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, the most popular for non-users and a close second for users.

# 4 WHAT YOU'RE DOING WELL OFFER FACE-TO-FACE TUTORING SESSIONS.

Our research has uncovered a sustained interest in face-to-face tutoring sessions. While there is strong support for online tutoring, 51% of all the students we surveyed are either disinterested or neutral to the idea of online tutoring (Figure 28). When users and non-users are examined separately, the percentage drops to 47% for non-users, but raises to 57% for users (Figure 29). This variation in percentages indicates that students with previous experience of face-to-face sessions are more likely to see its value over online methods. In addition, when asked what type of online tutoring they would be interested in, 45% of users and 35% of non-users stated that they would prefer face-to-face sessions over online tutoring (Figure 30). This opposition towards online tutoring highlights the need for customized solutions for each student depending on their needs and preferences. GCC tutors stated in their interviews that online tutoring can be a beneficial solution, but it is not appropriate in every situation or for every student (Figure 31).

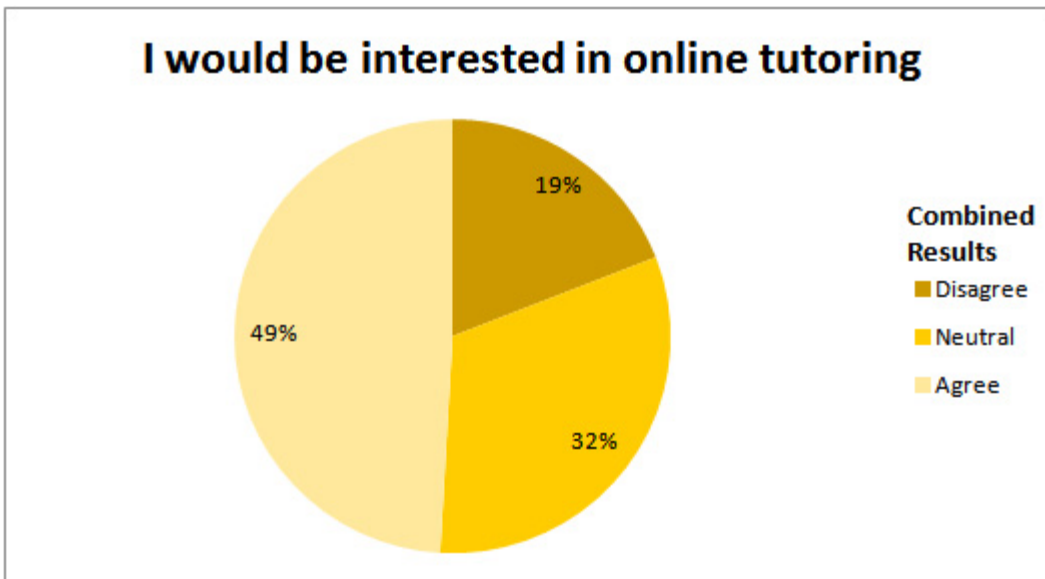


Figure 28. Students interest in online tutoring.

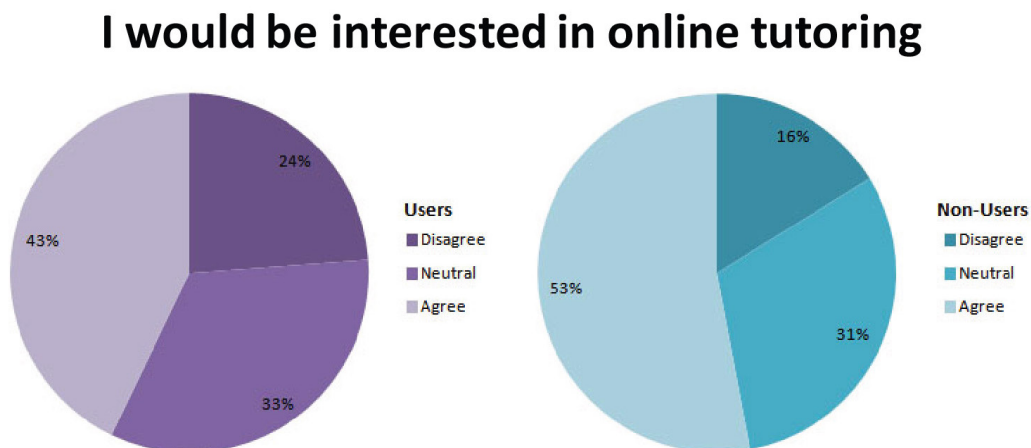


Figure 29. Non-users versus users interest in online tutoring.

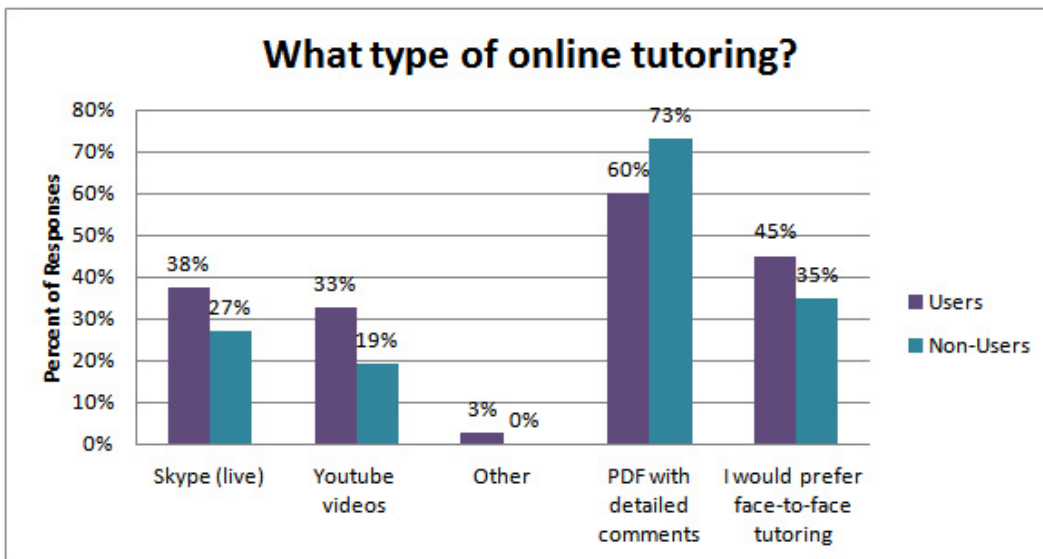


FIGURE 30. TYPE OF ONLINE TUTORING PREFERRED BY STUDENTS.

#### TUTORS WEIGH IN

“Online tutoring and face to face each have their place in certain situations/ some tutees & papers are inappropriate for online tutoring”

“I would say that more would be great, like more options for people, but that too much could actually be a negative because people lose some of what makes the GCC so effective, which is just working with a peer on your work.”

FIGURE 31. TUTORS RESPONSES SUPPORT FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE TUTORING BASED ON THE SITUATION. SEE APPX. D.

## APPENDIX A: GCC TUTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is one thing you would like students at CMU to know about the GCC?
2. Do you think students understand what the GCC is/what it can provide for them? What do you think they are unaware of or confused about?
3. Which majors is the GCC failing to reach? What kinds of writing have you not seen in your time as a tutor? How might the GCC bring them in in larger numbers?
4. What distractions or obstructions do you encounter while tutoring? What would help improve the privacy and quality of communication of tutoring sessions?
5. Would you be interested in online tutoring or would you prefer to continue face-to-face sessions? Why?
6. Do you think an expanded social media presence would help the GCC reach more students at CMU? Is the GCC participating enough on social media? Which social media platform should the GCC focus on most? Which would be less important/effective?
7. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think would help to A) make tutoring at the GCC more effective or B) encourage more students to come to the GCC for tutoring?

# APPENDIX B: GCC USER SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Current GCC Users

1. Thank you for taking advantage of the services offered by the Global Communication Center (GCC). We have a few questions about your experience with writing at CMU and how the GCC can better meet your needs in the future.

Tell us a little bit about your experience using the GCC:

I could visit the GCC for help with:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Outlining/brainstorming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proofreading/editing for grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentation Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data Visualization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Argument strength/clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help writing in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Tell us a little about the location of the GCC

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The GCC space in the library is good for tutoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The GCC was easy to find on my first visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate on your response. Please include things that you particularly like/don't like about the GCC's tutoring environment as well as suggestions for improvement:

## Current GCC Users

3. Do you think the GCC's name is clear and reflects the services it provides? Please explain.

4. Tell us a little about the GCC's hours

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The GCC's hours are convenient for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please list any times that you wish the GCC would be open, or any other comments/suggestions regarding the GCC's hours:

**Note: For full responses to the user survey, please visit the GCC's SurveyMonkey account.**

Thank you for taking advantage of the services offered by the Global Communication Center (GCC). We have a few questions about your experience with writing at CMU and how the GCC can better meet your needs in the future.

Tell use a little bit about your experience using the GCC:

1. I could visit the GCC for help with:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

Outlining/brainstorming

Proofreading/editing for grammar

Presentation skills

Organization

Data visualization

Argument strength/clarity

Help writing in English

2. Tell use a little about the location of the GCC

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

The GCC space in the library is good for tutoring

The GCC was easy to find on my first visit.

(Answer with open-ended response)

Please elaborate on your response. Please include things that you particularly like/don't like about the GCC's tutoring environment as well as suggestions for improvement.

3. Do you think the GCC's name is clear and reflects the services it provides? Please explain.

(Answer with open-ended response)

4. Tell us a little about the GCC's hours

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

The GCC's hours are convenient for me

(Answer with open-ended response)

Please list any times that you wish the GCC would be open, or any other comments/suggestions regarding the GCC's hours.

5. Have you used the GCC's website?

(Answer with Yes or No)

6. Tell us a little about your experience with the GCC website:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

It was easy to locate the hours

It was easy to find out what tutoring services are available

It was easy to schedule an appointment

It was easy to find information about tutors

It was easy to find out the location of the GCC

7. If you have used the website, please rate how easy it was to understand the following information:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

Hours

Tutoring Services

How to schedule and appointment

Information about tutors

Location of the GCC

8. Tell us about scheduling appointments through the website:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

Scheduling my appointment online was easy

9. Are you more likely to receive updates from an organization through:

(Select all that apply)

Facebook

Twitter

Email

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

10. How often do you prefer to receive updates from an organization?

(Select all that apply)

Never

Once a month

Once a week

Several times a week

Daily

11. What kinds of updates would you be interested in receiving?

(Select all that apply)

Information about workshops/events

Changes to hours/other logistical information

Writing tips

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

12. Tell us about your interest in online tutoring

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

I would be interested in remote tutoring (tutoring sessions over email, skype, or other electronic platform)

13. What type of remote tutoring would you like the GCC to offer:

(Select all that apply)

Skype (live)

Youtube videos containing screen captures (pre-recorded and emailed)

PDF with detailed comments (emailed)

Other

I would prefer to have only face-to-face tutoring sessions.

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

14. The tutors I have met with are:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

Friendly  
Knowledgeable  
Helpful  
Polite  
Approachable  
Professional  
Qualified to help me with my assignment

15. I would be interested in attending a GCC workshop on:

(Select all that apply)

Brainstorming and planning  
Writing arguments  
Writing abstracts  
Writing research reports  
Application materials (i.e. statements of purpose, cover letters)  
Presenting data rhetorically and visually

16. What time would you prefer that the workshop be offered?

(Select all that apply)

10am-12pm  
12pm-2pm  
2pm-4pm  
4pm-6pm  
6pm-8pm

17. What day would you prefer that the workshop be offered?

(Select all that apply)

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

18. Tell us a little about your tutoring session:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

I am satisfied with my tutoring appointment(s)

The writing help I received at the GCC was what I expected



19. Please tell us the most important thing you learned from your tutoring session(s).

(Answer with open-ended response)

20. Tell us a little bit about yourself:

(Answer with open-ended response)

What is your age?

21. What is your gender?

(Select response)

Male

Female

Prefer not to answer

22. What is your major?

(Answer with open-ended response)

23. What is your student category?

(Select response)

Undergraduate

Graduate

Ph. D.

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

24. Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your input!  
Is there anything else you want to tell us about your experience with the GCC?

(Answer with open-ended response)

# APPENDIX C: GCC NON-USER SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Students who do not use the GCC

1. Last fall, the Global Communication Center (GCC), a center for tutoring, opened in Hunt Library. We have a few questions about your experience with writing at CMU and how the GCC can better address your needs.

When you are having trouble with an assignment, do you usually ask for help? Why or why not?

2. If you ask for help, where do you usually go? (Select all that apply)

- Other students
- Professors
- TAs for the course
- Tutoring services on campus
- Academic development

Other (please specify)

Next

## Students who do not use the GCC

3. Have there been assignments on which you feel you could have benefited from help with brainstorming, writing, proofreading, general presentation skills, etc.? If so, please list what classes, and if possible, a brief description of the assignment.

4. Have you heard of the GCC?

- Yes
- No

5. If yes, how did you hear about us?

- I attended a workshop
- A speaker came to my class
- A professor told me about it
- A friend told me about it
- I saw a flyer, poster, or other advertisement
- I received an email about the GCC

Other (please specify)

Prev

Next

**Note: For full responses to the non-user survey, please visit the GCC's Survey-monkey account.**

Last fall, the Global Communication Center (GCC), a center for tutoring, opened in Hunt Library. We have a few questions about your experience with writing at CMU and how the GCC can better address your needs.

1. When you are having trouble with an assignment, do you usually ask for help? Why or why not?

(Answer with open-ended response)

2. If you ask for help, where do you usually go?

(Select all that apply)

Other students

Professors

TAs for the course

Tutoring Services on campus

Academic Development

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

3. Have there been assignments on which you feel you could have benefited from help with brainstorming, writing, proofreading, general presentation skills, etc.? If so, please list what classes, and if possible, a brief description of the assignment.

(Answer with open-ended response)

4. Have you hear of the GCC?

(Answer Yes or No)

5. If yes, how did you hear about us?

(Select all that apply)

I attended a workshop

A speaker came to my class

A profess told me about it

A friend told me about it

I saw a flyer, poster, or other advertisement

I received an email about the GCC

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

6. Have you ever visited the GCC's website?

(Answer Yes or No)

7. If you have heard of the GCC, but have never made an appointment, was it because:

(Select all that apply)

I don't have time

I don't have writing assignments

GCC hours inconvenient

I'm not sure if GCC tutors can help me with my assignment

I've never heard of the GCC

8. What sort of services would you expect from the GCC tutors?

(Select all that apply)

Brainstorming

Planning

Proofreading/editing grammar

Presentation skills

Punctuation

Concision  
Citation Style  
Clarity  
English Language help  
Use of sources/quotes  
Organization  
Flow  
Scientific Posters  
Data visualization  
Argument  
(Answer with open-ended response)  
Other (please specify)

9. People go to the GCC because they:

(Select all that apply)  
Are struggling with English  
Are not good at writing  
Want to receive feedback on their work  
Want to talk over their ideas  
(Answer with open-ended response)  
Other (please specify)

10. I would go to the GCC:

(Select all that apply)  
To receive feedback on a writing assignment before turning it in  
To talk out the ideas I have/brainstorm before writing anything  
To have someone else proofread my writing after I've done so myself  
To make sure that I am writing in formal English

11. Tell us about your perceptions of the GCC

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)  
The Hunt Library is a convenient place for me to go for tutoring  
The GCC name clearly explains that it is center with writing tutors

12. Have you ever tried to make an appointment with the GCC, but did not meet with a tutor?

(Answer Yes or No)

13. If yes, was it because:

(Select all that apply)

The hours weren't convenient for me  
I couldn't figure out how to schedule an appointment  
I got the help I needed from somewhere else  
I decided I didn't need help after all  
I didn't like the idea of being tutored in the library  
I've never tried to make an appointment  
(Answer with open-ended response)  
Other (please specify)

14. Currently, the GCC is open Monday & Thursday 11:00am-8:00pm, Tuesday & Wednesday 11:00am-7:00pm, and Sunday 5:00pm-8:00pm.

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

The GCC's hours are convenient for me

I would be more likely to use the GCC if walk-in appointments were guaranteed

15. Please list any times that you wish the GCC would be open, or any other comments/suggestions regarding the GCC's hours:

(Answer with open-ended response)

16. How do you prefer to receive updates from an organization?

(Select all that apply)

Facebook

Twitter

Email

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

17. How often do you prefer to receive updates from an organization?

(Select all that apply)

Never

Once a month

Once a week

Several times a week

Daily

18. What kinds of updates would you be interested in receiving?

(Select all that apply)

Information about workshops/events

Changes to hours/other logistical information

Writing tips

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

19. Tell us about your interest in online tutoring:

(Answer with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree)

I would be interested in remote tutoring (tutoring sessions over email, skype, or other electronic platform) from the GCC.

20. What type of remote tutoring would you like the GCC to offer?

(Select all that apply)

Skype (live)

Youtube videos containing screen captures (pre-recorded and emailed)

PDF with detailed comments (emailed)

I would prefer to have only face-to-face tutoring sessions

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

21. The GCC occasionally holds workshops to teach students about different writing and presentation skills. What workshops would you be interested in attending?  
I would be interested in attending:

(Select all that apply)

Brainstorming and planning

Writing arguments

Writing abstracts

Research reports

Application materials (i.e. statements of purpose, cover letters)

Presenting data rhetorically and visually

(Answer with open-ended response)

Other (please specify)

22. What time would you prefer that the workshop be offered?

(Select all that apply)

10am-12pm

12pm-2pm

2pm-4pm

4pm-6pm

6pm-8pm

23. What day would you prefer that the workshop be offered?

(Select all that apply)

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

24. What is your age?

(Answer with open-ended response)

25. What is your gender?

(Select answer)

Male

Female

I'd prefer not to answer

26. What is your major?

(Answer with open-ended response)

27. What is your student classification?

(Select answer)

Undergraduate

Graduate

Ph. D.

28. Do you have classes that require writing?

(Answer Yes or No)

29. Thank you very much for completing this survey. We appreciate your input!

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

(Answer with open-ended response)

## APPENDIX D: TUTOR INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

The following are select quotes from the interviews we conducted with GCC tutors, grouped as evidence for our recommendations.

### COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ACADEMIC RESOURCE ON CAMPUS.

“You know, I think a lot of the... in terms of instructor support is going outside the humanities in particular and having instructors in other disciplines really encourage their students to come here, and I think humanities instructors, probably more so than instructors from other departments, might encourage their students to take advantage of this service.”

“But I think, I’m sure there’s probably a lot of instructors who are just not aware of the GCC, or don’t see it as a priority. Or even improving their students’ writing, maybe they don’t see that as a priority. You know, I can kind of understand that when your top priority is research, but at some point you need to write up the results of that in a way of that, and it needs to be in a way that people can access and understand. You know, maybe if we had more handouts, things that the instructors could post on their office doors, for example, or even just something they can post on their Blackboard site that says if you need help with your writing.”

“I’ve only had two students attend the GCC from my class. So it’s good: 2 out of 19 is not terrible, but I would wish that more would come. There’s not really a strategy that’s worked for me, but I think next semester I might do an assignment where, rather than have them do a peer review, schedule a meeting at the GCC, because I feel like if they do it once, they’re more likely to try it again.”

“I wonder if part of it is that the instructor put on the assignment, ‘go to the GCC for help,’ and so we get a lot of them, and she reinforced it in class and said that people who did really well went to the GCC, and then we get a lot. I’m wondering if there needs to be more communication between instructors, to tell their students, ‘use this service.’ Or maybe a closer relationship to some of these instructors that are teaching these huge classes and have these assignments, to be able to say, ‘Okay, I’ve worked with the GCC, and they know exactly what we’re doing.’ And students might be like, ‘this is a resource that I can go to for lots of different things, not just this.’”

:And to that end, are there ways we can collaborate with some of these other services on campus like Academic Development that helps people strategize and build their time up. If there’s a student who’s really struggling to structure their time and has gone to Academic Development and has been put on a study plan, could we figure into that somehow? Same thing with RAs, can we get into that system somehow and just become part of the go-to thing that we get referrals from other places like that? Because I think part of that would be these are students who have reached out for help, but they don’t think to reach out—and I wouldn’t either—you don’t think to reach out to the GCC when you’re stressed out and having trouble with your time management. But maybe we could be part of that in terms of having a student be put on a study plan, so linking in to those other academic support systems.”

“But I would think that there are other resources on campus that have a good understanding of what struggling students need and could use that could give us some language and concepts to understand what it is those students need and would respond to, and that we don’t necessarily have to reinvent the wheel on that on our own.”

### DEVELOP A BRANDING STRATEGY.

“I think we need to be more branded as a writing center; and I know that’s a strategic decision made by Carnegie Mellon. I always tell people I work in the writing center/ and it’s called the GCC, and people don’t know what GCC is.”

“But going back to how I wouldn’t call this a writing center, I think that there’s a lot more thought put into what it is that we have to do here. So that would just be my biggest contrast to draw there, between the GCC and the stereotypical writing center. Is there some way that we can capitalize on that even? Can we evangelize superior training, some expert quality? Would that even be enough?”



“I want them to know we are a writing center. That’s what we specialize in. And that we are not a proofreading service!”

“Students [might be] unaware that a grammatically correct paper can be worse than one that addresses the prompt; they don’t understand the ethical implications of us editing their papers...”

“If you’re writing papers on a night-before basis, the GCC is not going to figure into your writing process, because you don’t have a writing process. I think that is part of the problem, making the idea of a writing process relevant.”

### **CHANGE THE NAME OF THE TUTORING SERVICE.**

“I think the name is what confuses people too, because it’s the Global Communication Center. It’s global because we have an English program in Qatar. [...] We have a reputation as a global institution.”

“Global Communication, that’s like a satellite, right? Cellphones . . . I see where they’re trying to sound formal and a touch abstract. Maybe that’s the problem, because that abstract also carries over to technology.”

### **CREATE A DISTINCT SPACE FOR THE GCC.**

“I think my biggest issue is the space, like the physical space. [...] To me, a writing center is its own entity; that’s been my experience in studying writing centers and in working in one prior to coming here.”

“I’ve seen a lot of people just get really confused, walking around here, seeing us mixed in with other students.”

“I think if we had our own real writing center, our own couple of rooms, or just enclosed space, and that gives us more of a static presence on campus. Right now I feel like we just move anywhere or anywhere, and no one really knows where to go.”

“If we just had one big glass room back here, this would be our space.”

“[We need] our own presence that signifies we are something big, we are important. I think that’s the biggest thing we can improve upon.”

### **BE MORE ACTIVE IN ONLINE OUTREACH.**

“I think it’s effective but could be more effective, with more updates on events or just FAQs about the GCC, or photos? We also have a twitter that I don’t think is utilized at all... I’m sure there are other outlets that could be used but I’m not sure what.”

“I mean I think having a fun Twitter is a great idea, but again you need to know how to promote it and spread it; you can’t just tweet and expect people to follow you.”

“We came up with a whole list of social media goals and ideas, Bekah and I did, and we were really excited about them, but we’re both so swamped with not having downtime here or doing other school work or work work that we don’t have time for it.”

“I think the thing is you need to set measurable goals and objectives, and find out what you can realistically do and what resources you can allocate to these goals, and then decide how to go about doing it and what’s the most important thing.”