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Writing Center
733 words

Students at Nicholls State University have the opportunity to become better writers through the assistance of student writing coaches who work in the writing center, located in 143 Peltier Hall.

Louie Charpentier, the writing center's coordinator, said writing coaches, also referred to as tutors, help students during any phase of a writing assignment. Coaches assess a student's writing and set goals for each writing session. Writing sessions are designed to last 30 minutes in length, but can extend up to an hour based upon the type of assignment.

Charpentier explained that writing coaches only help with composition, assignment requirements, revising, editing, and various proofreading techniques. If a student is looking for an easy way of having a paper or document proofread, he or she will have to look elsewhere. "We do not proofread documents or essays," Charpentier mentioned of the writing center.

According to Charpentier, most students that utilize the center are enrolled in classes that Nicholls considers writing intensive courses such as English 100, 101, and 102; however, the center does help students from all disciplines.

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Charpentier said the center helps with more than just English papers. Nursing and allied health majors and education majors come to the center too. He added, “We help with business class writing assignments and history papers. The list goes on and on.”

Each student enrolled at Nicholls State University is assessed a \$6 writing center fee each semester of enrollment, and Charpentier said that means each student is “entitled to a writing center appointment.” He warned that students must make an appointment because of the limited numbers of available tutors, as well as the center’s limited hours of operation. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday.

Charpentier said that the center is invaluable for many reasons, one being its cost to students. “Where else can one get upwards of two and a half hours of help a week for that price?” He mentioned that the center also provides a safe haven for students who need a little guidance or are too embarrassed to approach their professor.

“Our friendliness, helpfulness and professionalism make students feel at ease in our center and simultaneously help them become more effective and efficient writers,” Charpentier mentioned.

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Charpentier added that recent liaison and advertising with the Languages and Literature department, where he is also a fulltime instructor, has helped expose students to the center. He also said that old-fashioned word of mouth helps advertise, and that professors are more than willing to post fliers about the center on their Moodle pages for students to see. Charpentier referenced the *Wizard of Oz* joking, “We didn’t rely on Glinda to help us be popular!”

Charpentier mentioned he is having difficulty in finding students to become writing coaches believing it is due to pay, though does Nicholls compensate students who hold writing coach positions. He said, “We start at minimum wage and give raises based on their performance, and the coaches have the opportunity to make \$10 an hour by their junior or senior year.”

According to Charpentier, what sets Nicholls’ center apart from any other college writing center is that Nicholls is the one of few universities to certify their tutors. “We are certified by the College Learning and Reading Association of Louisiana and thus we can certify our tutors.” Charpentier said that tutors must successfully complete a certain amount of training hours each semester to be eligible for a pay raise. In addition to money, “They also get invaluable experience as a tutor,” he assured.

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He also said that he has appealed to professors in the Languages and Literature department to have students to apply for a job, but few to no students have done so. “I am really not sure why. It’s great job experience and it looks stellar on a résumé or a college transcript,” he said. Charpentier was a tutor in this very center when he was a student.

Regarding the 25-year history of the writing center, Charpentier said that it was originally called the “WAC lab” (Writing Across the Campus), then it was later known as the writing center. Its current home in 143 Peltier is not its original. Before now, the writing center called Beauregard and even Shaver Gymnasium home.