

## **The Active Involvement of Tutors in the Bern Writing Center's Assessment Process, Fall 2016 by Dr. Joy Ladin, Director of the Beren Writing Center & Gottesman Professor of English**

Discussions about tutoring and how to improve our work are a regular part of life at the Beren Writing Center. Because we see the assessment process as growing out of and feeding into those discussions, we develop our assessment questions with as much input from tutors as possible. Our goal is to develop meaningful assessment questions that will positively affect tutor awareness of and engagement in the tutoring process by reminding tutors, each time they fill out a post-session report, of aspects of that process we agree are important.

We begin each year with a Fall Practicum, at which we present past assessment results (or, prior to this year, annual report statistics) to tutors, and discuss their implications for what and how we have been doing. We then discuss how we want to change and improve our assessment process in the year ahead. Last year, this included breaking tutors into small groups to brainstorm student learning objectives relating to our mission statement. Some of the objectives that emerged from those discussions include, "Writers will be able to recognize when aspects of their drafts are not clear, logical, well-supported or otherwise effective for their readers" and "Writers will be able to reflect on their processes of writing". This year, small group discussions among tutors focused on developing and refining assessment questions pertaining to targeted objectives in the post-session report completed by both tutors and clients at the end of a tutoring session.

Results of the small group discussions are summarized and synthesized, and distributed to tutors for individual reflection and comment. The writing center administrative personnel then meet, and reach consensus on assessment questions that reflect the concerns and goals that have emerged through tutor discussion and will provide us with data we need to assess specific objectives. Those draft questions are distributed to tutors to see if they notice glitches, and then finalized questions go "live" and are incorporated into the post-session report forms for tutors and clients. Some of the assessment questions that resulted from this year's tutor discussions include, "Did your tutor help you understand what to do next on this assignment?" and "Did you use your discussion of the assignment to help the student identify an aspect or aspects of their writing that needs work?". We recognize the continuously evolving nature of the assessment process and the integral role tutors play in helping to develop and refine it. As a result, we invite tutors' comments on the assessment process throughout the year.