

Indiana University – Purdue University Fort Wayne Opus: Research & Creativity at IPFW

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Presentations

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

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360 Degrees And 3-D: Holistic Assessment of Writing Centers

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360 DEGREES AND 3-D: HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WRITING CENTERS

**East Central Writing Centers Association Conference
March 4-5, 2011**

Alicia Alabbas, Writing Consultant

Mary Arnold Schwartz, Writing Center Coordinator

Jane Ehle, Associate Director of CASA

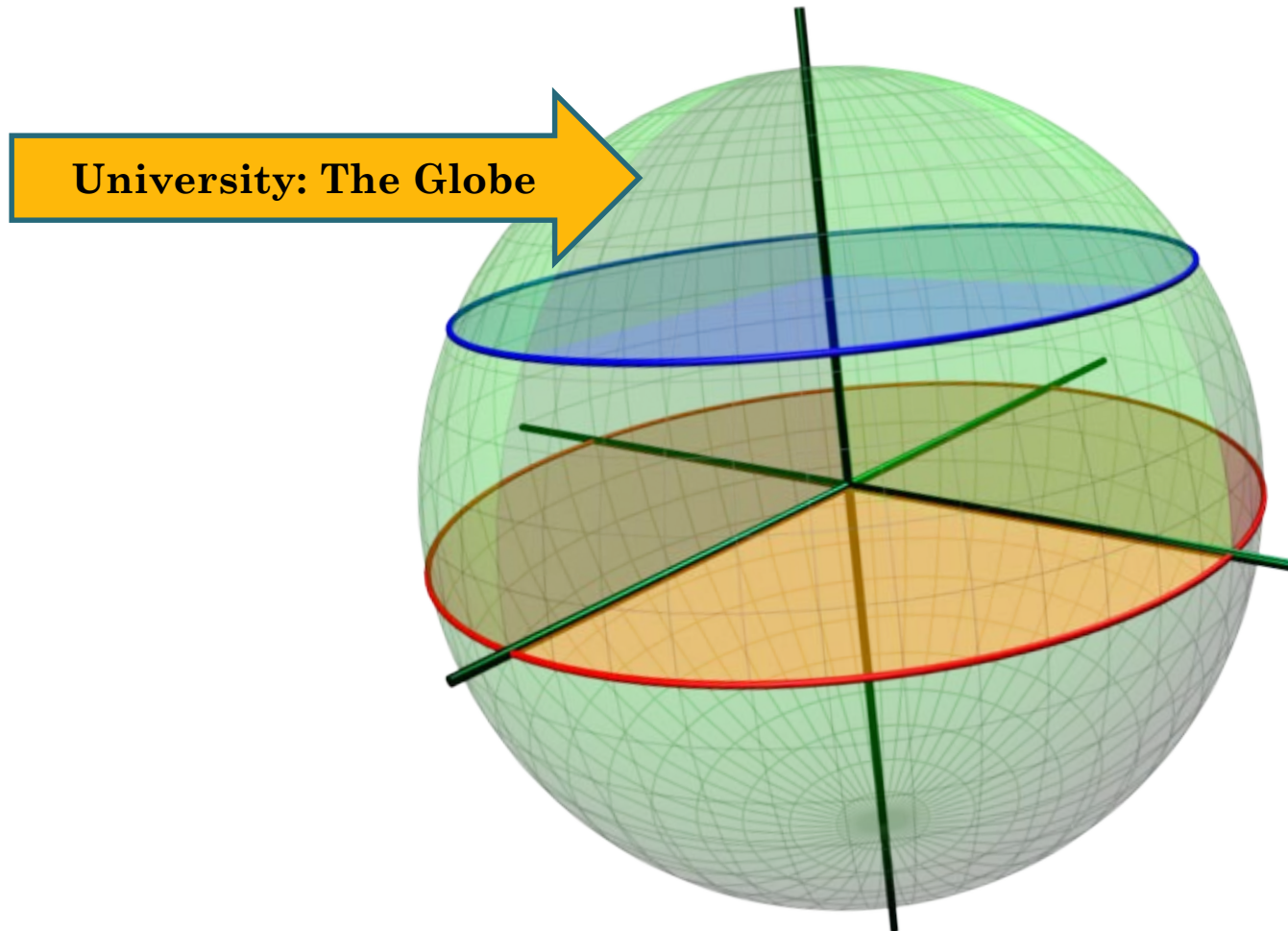
Bruce Busby, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Success

WHERE IS THE IPFW WRITING CENTER?

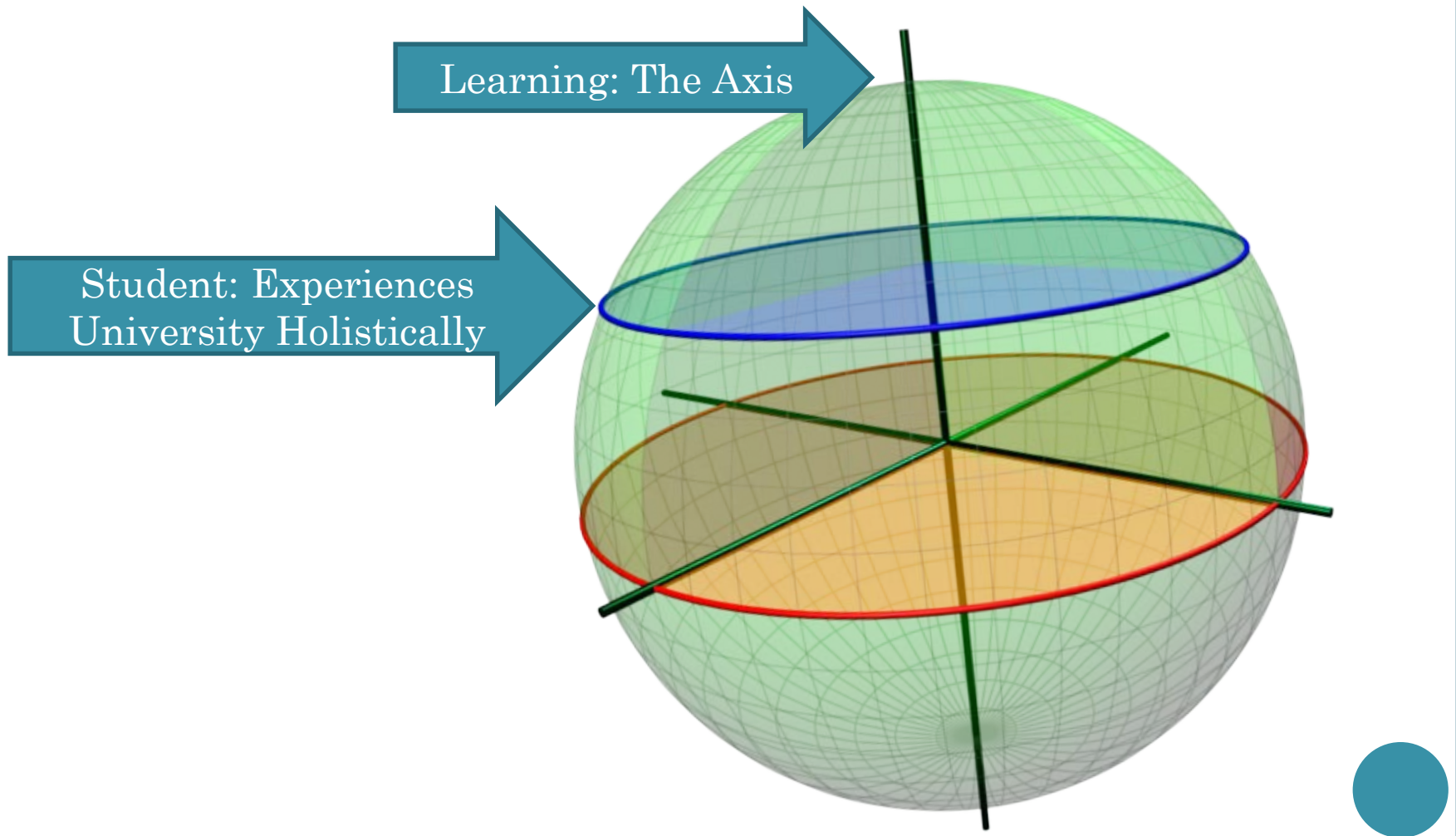
- Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
 - Enroll 14,192 undergraduate and master's level graduate students
 - Northeast Indiana (most), Indiana (94%), all states but 8, and 252 countries
- Student Affairs
 - Academic Success Center—Bruce Busby, Associate Vice Chancellor
 - First Year Experience
 - Mastodon Advising Center
 - Center for Academic Support and Advancement (CASA)
- CASA—Jane Ehle, Associate Director
 - Learning Center—Jane Ehle
 - Writing Center—Mary Arnold Schwartz, Coordinator
 - Consultants—Alicia Alabbas, Graduate student in Communication
 - Math Test Center



360 DEGREES AND 3-D



WE ASSESS TO IMPROVE THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE



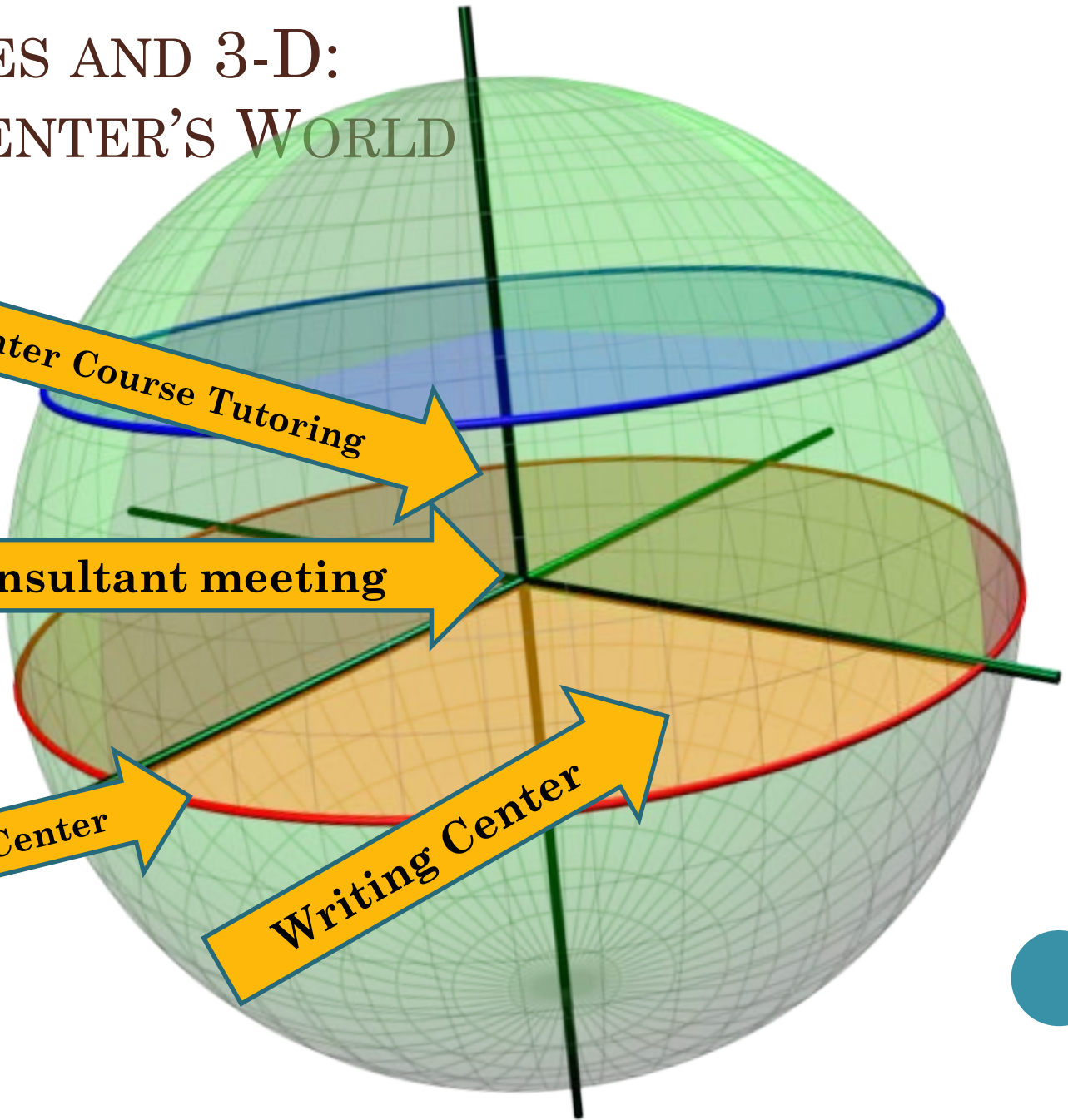
360 DEGREES AND 3-D: WRITING CENTER'S WORLD

Learning Center Course Tutoring

Writer & Consultant meeting

Academic Success Center

Writing Center



IN OTHER WORDS,

- Writing Center programming is always part of the student's larger experience of the university.
- Writing Center operates always as part of the university's contribution to student learning.



AGENDA

- Assessment is to improve

- Programming effectiveness

- Are we doing what we should and could be doing?

- Do students' learning during the consultation reflect the university's goals for their learning? (Alicia Alabbas)
 - How do our consulting practices reflect disciplinary writing standards and our writing center discipline's standards?
 - How does consulting with the Writing Center affect student learning? (Mary Arnold Schwartz)
 - How is our programming perceived and understood? (Jane Ehle)
 - What opportunities for programming can we consider? (Jane Ehle)
 - How can the university use Writing Center assessments? (Bruce Busby)

- Programming reach

- Are we reaching a sufficient percentage of the student population?

- Our challenge



DO STUDENTS' LEARNING DURING THE CONSULTATION REFLECT UNIVERSITY GOALS FOR THEIR LEARNING?

- Writing Center Observation form



BACCALAUREATE DEGREE FRAMEWORK

- Acquisition of Knowledge
- Application of Knowledge
- Personal and Professional Values
- A Sense of Community
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication



SIX DEGREES OF CONNECTION

- Promoting student engagement
- Fostering a multicultural and international campus community
- Facilitating opportunities both inside and outside the classroom for student/faculty interaction
- Assisting students in identifying and acting on motivation for graduation
- Developing academic and social capital in our students
- Supporting a well and caring campus community



HOW DO OUR CONSULTING PRACTICES REFLECT DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS FOR WRITING?

- Standards for what we share about writing is strongly informed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators' *WPA Outcomes Statement for First Year Composition*
- This statement also is used to establish standards for teaching in the IPFW Writing Program.



IPFW WRITING OUTCOMES (FROM WPA OUTCOMES)

Students shall be able to demonstrate measurable learning in the following categories:

- **Rhetorical Knowledge**
- **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing**
- **Writing Processes** (including the use of electronic resources, communication media, and word processing features)
- **Knowledge of Conventions**



WRITING CENTER MISSION

- “The mission of the IPFW Writing Center is to help writers learn to use language more effectively, produce clear writing appropriate to their purposes and audiences, and develop positive attitudes about writing and about themselves as writers.”



HOW DO OUR CONSULTING PRACTICES REFLECT DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS FOR WRITING CENTERS?

- Staff education not tied to the English Department
- What are our field's standards for consultant education?
 - Indiana Writing Centers meeting, November, 2009
 - Follow up meetings at IWCA @ CCCC, (2010) and ECWCA (2010)
- Incorporating visits from professors who discuss writing in their disciplines with the Writing Center staff during education meetings.



HOW DOES CONSULTING WITH THE WRITING CENTER AFFECT STUDENT LEARNING?

- Tables of information about our effectiveness with writers in first year composition
- What these tables suggest—we are quite effective with the writers who visit us.



HOW IS THE PROGRAMMING PERCEIVED AND UNDERSTOOD?

- Contributors:
 - Students
 - Writing Center
 - University Community
- The Assessment:
 - Who
 - Review participants
 - Ball State University 4 year doctoral granting institution
 - 18,000+ residential students
 - IPFW 4 year masters institution
 - 12,000 (700 residential students and remaining are commuting students at the time of review)
 - Rhodes State College – community college
 - 4000 students on quarter system
 - Stakeholders questioned
 - Students who use the services
 - Students who do not use the services or work for CASA
 - Students who work for CASA
 - Staff in other departments
 - Faculty
 - administrators
 - How:



WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP

- A focus group is a guided discussion whose intent is to gather open-ended comments about a specific issue
- For student learning assessment, “specific issue” usually means student learning objective
- Usually involves a moderator, and between six and twelve participants who are chosen from a specific area of interest
- Requires careful creation of an interview guide after consultation with the interested parties (department chairs, etc.)
- Requires careful content analysis
- Often used as a qualitative method of assessment in combination with other assessment methods (questionnaires, field observations, etc.)
- Appears simple, but actually involves much work and coordination



HOW IS THE PROGRAMMING PERCEIVED AND UNDERSTOOD?

- What:
 - 3 questions
 - What is your impression of the CASA Centers and their services?
 - What would the ideal academic support center look like?
 - How could CASA better market current or future support services?
 - The review



THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAMMING

- The assessment provided
 - Multiple inputs
 - University
 - Professionals
 - Goes beyond facts
 - Continuing programming
 - Benefits beyond programming



HOW CAN THE UNIVERSITY USE WRITING CENTER ASSESSMENTS?





IS THE WRITING CENTER REACHING A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF STUDENTS?

- Programming reach: Our Challenge at IPFW
- Reaching what percentage of the student body will satisfy us?



ENROLLMENT AT IPFW—FALL SEMESTER

Class	2010	2009	2008	2007
First Year	5,097	5,021	4,639	4,800
Sophomore	2,744	2,658	2,558	2,562
Junior	1,649	1,549	1,491	1,371
Senior	2,346	2,255	2,099	1,926
Graduates	699	697	685	681
Subtotal	11,836	12,168	11,472	11,340
ND-UG	1,566	1,393	791	451
ND-Grad	91	102	75	152
Totals	14,192	13,675	12,338	11,943



VISITS TO WC—FALL SEMESTERS

	2010	2009	2008	2007
Total Visits	2487	2086	1687	1524
First Year	1487/60.0%	831/39.8%	298/17.7%	338/22.2%
Sophomore	341/13.7%	555/26.6%	402/23.8%	236/15.5%
Junior	268/10.8%	224/10.7%	398/23.5%	288/19.4%
Senior	275/11.1%	358/17.2%	492/29.2%	562/36.9%
Graduates	115/4.6%	115/5.5%	83/4.9%	81/5.3%
Blank	1	3	14	19




PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT BODY CONSULTED (AS A % OF FALL DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS)

	2010	2009	2008	2007
Of Total Degree-Seeking Enrollment	8.5	7.3	6.1	6.2
First Year	11.5	6.9	3.0	3.1
Sophomore	4.8	8.4	7.2	4.8
Junior	7.0	6.9	11.3	9.8
Senior	5.6	7.5	8.9	13.6
Grad	5.3	6.2	3.6	5.1
Of Total Enrollment	7.1	6.5	5.7	5.9



SUMMARY

- Writing Center assessment should always involve looking at
 - Our consulting practices with student writers (including consultants) as individuals—and
 - How consulting practices effect the university's plans for students' learning
 - How the consulting practices (and center programming) reflect disciplinary and field standards (and variation in programming)
 - The learning outcomes of all the students *visiting* compared with those *not visiting* the Writing Center
 - How the Writing Center's programming is perceived by its stakeholders and how to incorporate their suggestions
 - How the Writing Center's programming and assessment contribute to the mission of the university
- 

DISCUSSION

- Feedback? Questions?

Potential discussion questions

- What purposes for assessment does your center have that we have not addressed?
- What other approaches do you use to assess your writing center's effectiveness and reach?
- How will you use our discussion when you return home?

