



15 September 2017

Dear SWCA Certification Committee:

I am writing in support of the Athens State University Writing Center. I have known and worked with Dr. Joy Bracewell since she took over as the Writing Center Director in May 2015, and I have witnessed the Writing Center grow in scope and function under her professional leadership as Director. It is a pleasure to inform you of my experiences as a sociology faculty member and the impact that the Athens State University Writing Center has had on the entire campus.

When Dr. Bracewell arrived at Athens State University, the writing center was just a place off in the corner of the library--it was difficult to even know where the writing center was. In her first year, Dr. Bracewell worked very hard to get glass walls, new furniture, and consultant desks to more clearly designate the space of the writing center in the library learning commons. She has recently added signage and custom designed paintings that really make the writing center a destination rather than just an area in the library. The newest addition to the writing center "physical plant" is a multimodal room. This room is frequently used as a place to design and practice class and professional presentations for anyone on campus. Mainly, though, this area serves as a quiet place for writing consultants to work with students online and in-person to discuss their class projects.

It is vital that the writing center reach out to the campus community. I have worked with other writing center directors; it is in this area that Dr. Bracewell goes well beyond the minimal requirements. Joy is never hesitant to meet with professors on campus to discuss their needs from the writing center. I have seen her meet with faculty and/or provide class presentations at all hours and on any day of the week! Dr. Bracewell provides the face of the writing center in ways that can only be described as laudable: there is not a single faculty member that can say that this director is not there for them and their class needs.

I have helped Dr. Bracewell provide writing consultant training. I feel that she does a masterful job preparing the writing consultants with what they need to provide excellent student service. She institutes a series of trainings for her writing consultants that cover a broad spectrum of what they will experience while working with students. She has brought me into the trainings as a sociologist to help the consultants with multicultural issues. It is this diversity training that will provide the tools for writing consultants to better meet students where they are at in their course work and personal writing styles.

The writing center provides a series of workshops to the general student population. These learning opportunities range from how to develop a working thesis, peer review, using writing styles (APA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian), and annotated bibliographies. Our campus is a junior-



senior, two-year university. It is often very difficult getting students to participate in on-campus activities. Dr. Bracewell has worked diligently to make attendance at her workshops sufficient enough to provide the writing center services to as many students as possible. I have talked with students that have taken some of her workshops. They all agree that the information provided in the workshops was timely and useful.

Lastly, I would like to let the committee know about Dr. Bracewell's annual writing retreat. Athens State University is undergoing a shift in our faculty culture. The administration has begun to put more of an emphasis on research and creative activities by the faculty. We are a small campus. The faculty wear many hats. As such, it is often hard to find time to complete research projects. Dr. Bracewell has moved the writing center to not only help our students, but to also help our faculty. She has developed a faculty writing retreat that provides a quiet place to work, lunch, and all the resources of the writing center to support faculty scholarly/creative work. This effort is new, but is starting to gain more interest from the faculty. Athens State University has never had this type of support for faculty research. It is Dr. Bracewell that made this faculty support possible!

I have been at Athens State University long enough to see several attempts to create a campus writing center. We have not had a lot of success in developing a well-rounded writing center that supports students and the faculty. All that changed when Dr. Joy Bracewell became the Athens State University Writing Center Director. The students and faculty of our campus community now enjoy a truly professional writing center. It is under the guidance of Br. Bracewell that this has become a reality.

Sincerely,

James H. Gadberry, PhD
Associate Professor of Sociology
Athens State University
Athens, AL 35611
256 233-6539
james.gadberry@athens.edu