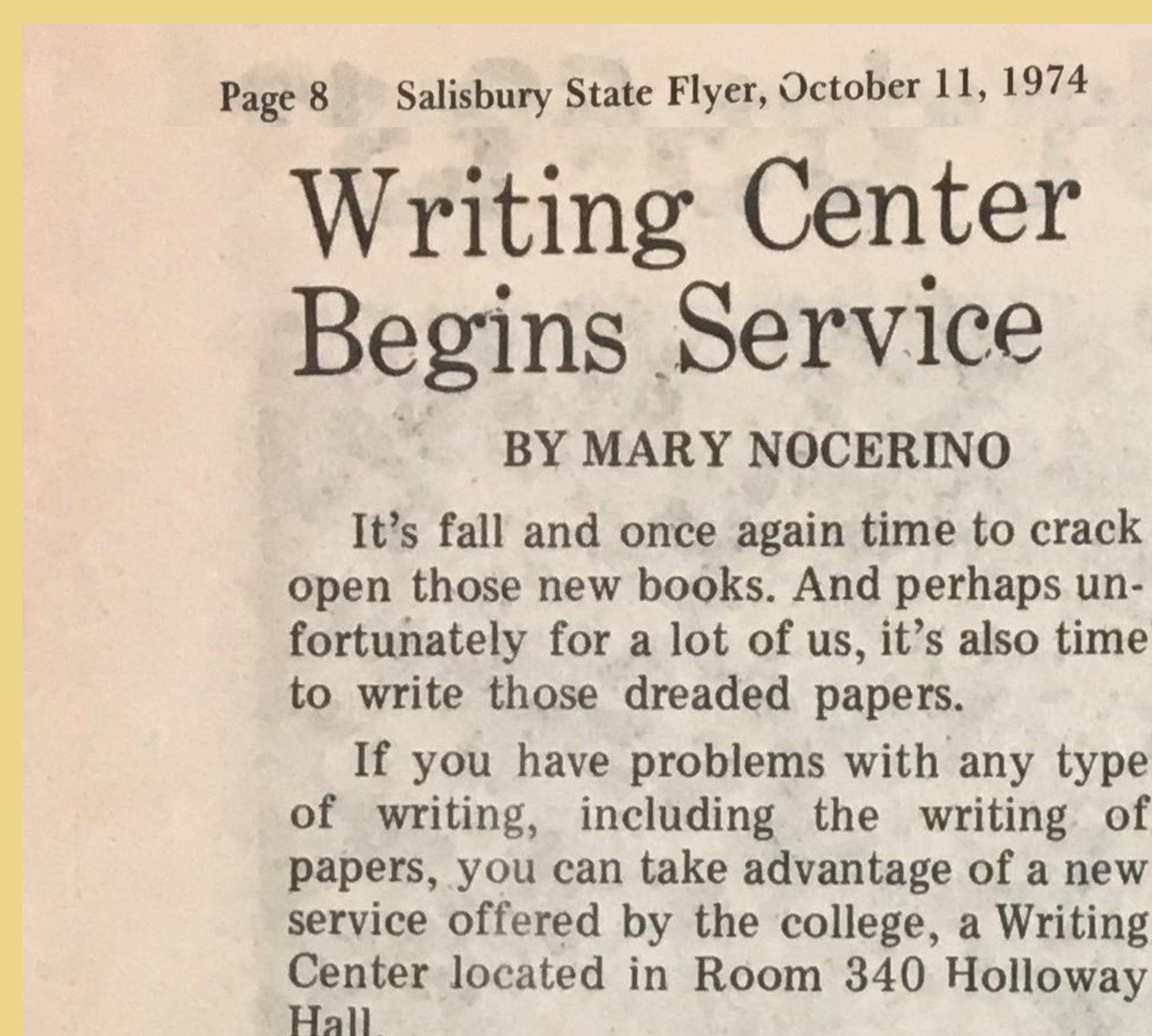


Writing Center Theories and Practices: Exploring our Local History, Understanding our Present, and Preparing for our Future

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Introduction

Through a class-based project, I compiled archival information dating back to 1974 about the writing center where I am an undergraduate student consultant. I found specifics of our original center as well as programs run by both the center and Salisbury University's English department. I applied writing center theories and principles to real scenarios in our center to observe how they are effective across time.



University newspaper excerpt announcing the opening of the UWC in 1974



Holloway Hall Room 340 today

SU Summer Programs

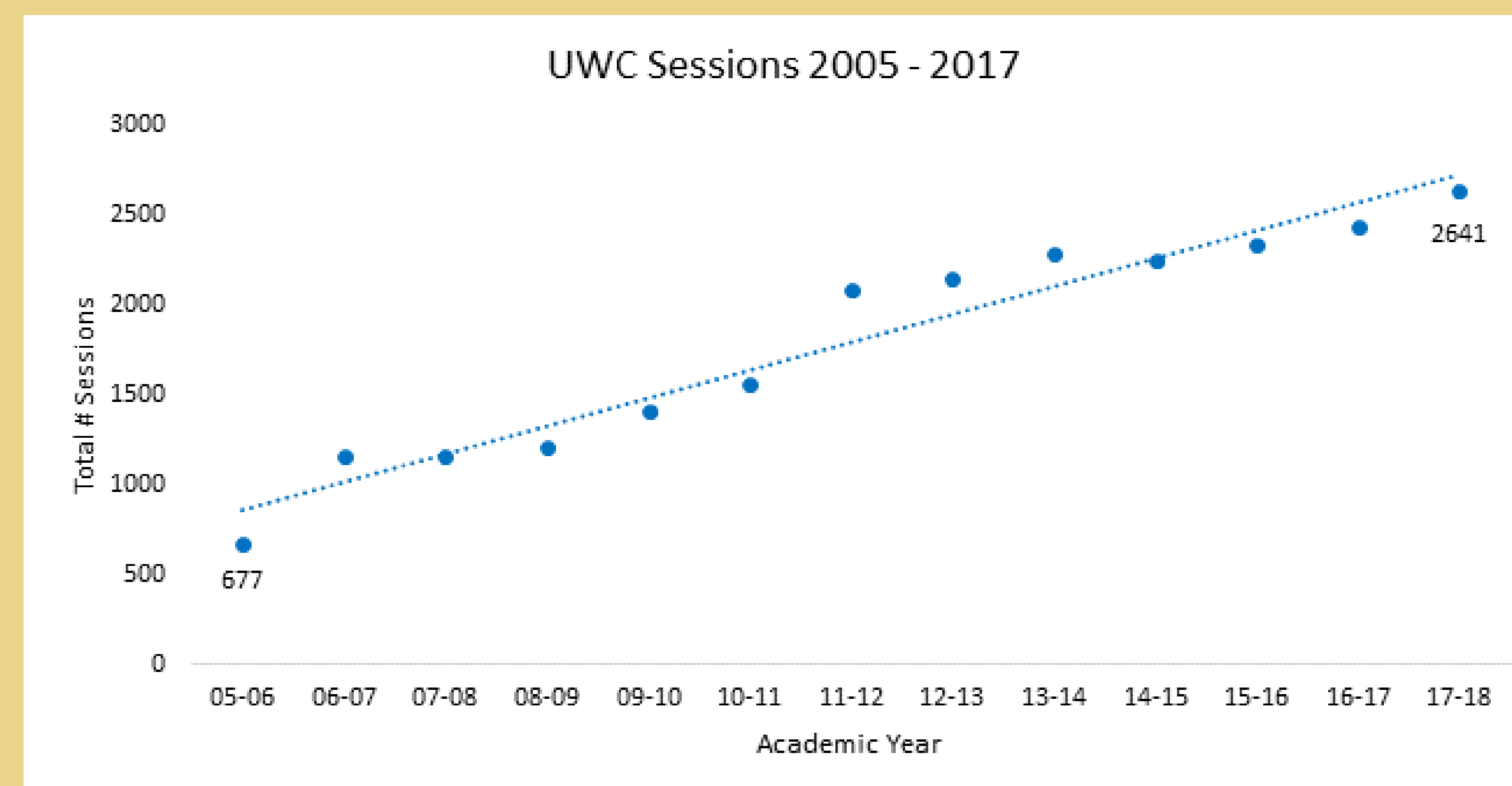
- (1977) Reading-Writing Enrichment Program → “bolster the students’ basic skills and to facilitate their further entry into [SU]” (“Proposal”).
 - Two three-week sessions
 - Held by Center directors and two grad students
 - Diagnostic tests → personalized assistance
 - On-going to improve overall reading and writing

Local Needs

- (1976) 7th-12th grade teachers taught how to properly teach linguistics, rhetoric and composition, teaching composition, spoken and written English, the “nature of the essay,” and the “nature of the writing assignment.”
 - Hagar: “composition is not taught in Eastern Shore schools with intensity...” and teachers do not have adequate training in it (“A Proposed”).
- (1976) Writing Proficiency Requirement → Hagar saw a lack in “proper” English skills necessary for college-level courses
 - Goal: “to insure that every student develops and habitually uses the necessary communication skills” (“Communication”).

National Context

- (1976) Writing Proficiency Requirement
 - “the ability to express ideas in a logical, organized, coherent, and convincing manner is an integral part of a liberal arts education” (“Writing Proficiency”).
 - Mimics The Dalton Plan
 - “community conditions prevail as they prevail in life itself” (Lerner 19).
- (1977) Reading-Writing Enrichment Program
 - Mimics “back-to-basics” movement” (Harris)
 - Reflective of remedial programs in 1930s
 - assess skills of “(a) capitalization, (b) punctuation, (c) grammar, (d) sentence structure, and (e) spelling” then ““segregate into special groups”” based on scores (Lerner 31).
 - Taught by grad students and faculty
- (2017) Workshops → Our writing center implemented staff training to discuss and practice how to best help ESL students



Sessions per academic year since 2005

Future

- Our writing center should continue to look at national successes other WCs have had and apply them effectively.
- Summer programs should be run again to help prepare high school teachers and students for college-level work as best we can.
- Students should not be *forced* to visit the WC, but staff, professors, and other students should encourage visits via WC Welcomes and advertisements across campus.



Our newest WC space

References

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- Harris, Muriel. “SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) Statement: The Concept of A Writing Center.” *writingcenters.org*, <http://writingcenters.org/writing-center-concept-by-muriel-harris/>. Accessed 11 November 2018.
- Lerner, Neal. *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory*. Board of Trustees, 2009, pp. 16-32.
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- “Writing Proficiency Requirement,” Records of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (SUA-074), [Box 23, Folder 151,] Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, Salisbury University, Salisbury, Maryland.