

Prioritizing the Work of the Writing Center

"We found ourselves using a metaphor about creating a healthy fire—that we need good string logs on the fire, but also need space and air in between to keep the fire burning. If there are too many logs, the fire burns out. We talked through specific initiatives and priorities, and sorted them into categories."

- Firewood/Logs (those things we need to prioritize)

- Kindling (things we need to do but may need to set boundaries around)

- Woodpile (things we need to set aside for now so that we have time to focus on the priorities)

- Horse Bedding/Pellets (things we need to stop doing)

(University of Denver CTL Retreat, Nov. 2018. Adapted by Sorcinelli, M.D., CTL at TAMUQ, February 2019 and adapted again by Wilson, K. and Hodges, A. at MENAWCA 2019.)

Looking back...

What have you already accomplished?

What is ONE THING that you are especially pleased to have done in your writing center? (It can be something from this academic year, this past month, or any other time since you've been there.)

Looking ahead...

Articulate 3 goals you would like to achieve by end of FALL 2019. What are the highest priority tasks for you to focus on to move the WC forward? (And, what about you? At least one of these goals should be about your personal development.)

1)

2)

3)

Moving forward...

Pick 1 of your goals/priorities listed above. What is the most important (concrete and tangible) step that you need to take toward achieving this goal? It can be very simple, but it is what you need to do first.

Now, what comes next? What needs to happen next week? Next month? During summer? Identify a few specific actions to take and set deadlines.

How Does a Writing Center Create Sustainability? How to Know and Decide What to Do?

1. Does the initiative or program address the mission, vision, values of your Writing Center?
2. What exactly would the WC gain from pursuing the initiative or program? (Possibilities include better support for students, better support for the teaching of writing on your campus, new learning for WC staff that would benefit future programs, and having potential new partners for collaborations.)
3. How much of a priority is the initiative or program for the overall institution? (Who would like, or in some cases is asking, you to do this work?)
4. How could you adapt your current workshops, programs, consultations, publications, etc. to include this initiative or program?
5. Who or what could benefit from the WC taking on this initiative or program? How big of an impact could your work have?
6. Which university offices, individuals, and academic units could you collaborate with on this initiative? What would your role be?
7. Where would you get resources for this initiative or program?
8. How much work would it entail? For you? For your staff?
9. Given the workload of the WC staff, can you manage to take on this initiative or program? If not, what could you give up?

Adapted from How Does a Teaching Center Decide What to Do? Provided to TAMUQ CTL staff by Mary Deane Sorcinelli
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