Writing Retreats: Creating a Community of Practice for Academics Across Disciplines

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Abstract: *The writing retreat has been positioned as an effective response to the pressure to "publish or perish" in higher education. An academic writing retreat is a professional development event that allows scholars to immerse themselves in writing for publication and to receive on-site support for that writing. In 2012, the Office of Research and Innovation Services at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, Canada introduced a biannual writing retreat for faculty and staff across the disciplines. This program evaluation examines 252 retreat evaluations submitted between 2015 and 2019. Our goal is to identify what participants perceive to be the benefits of the retreats. A review of the international research literature suggests primary benefits of retreats include protected writing time and space, the development of a sense of community, increased motivation to write, increased productivity during retreats, and organizational investment in follow-up support. These findings are consistent with our study. However, the overarching benefit of our retreats lies in their development of a supportive community of writing practice that extends back to campus. Participants report their retreat experience is reshaping the ways that they write elsewhere, and that they are collaborating on projects with other retreat participants. This research contributes a Canadian example to a growing body of evidence that suggests retreats can help academic writers prioritize the task of writing over other conflicting demands. A unique contribution of the study is its cost-effective, flexible, interdisciplinary, day-away retreat model, which is an alternative to the discipline-specific, residential retreats within the literature.*

Keywords: *Community of practice; academic writing retreat; research administration*

Introduction

Academics in higher education are required to publish for promotion and tenure. However, many academics find it difficult to focus on writing because of competing administrative, research, and teaching priorities, limited collegial support, and the isolation of writing (Kornhaber et al.,

2016). The academic writing retreat has been positioned as an effective response to the pressure to "publish or perish" in higher education (Kornhaber et al., 2016; Swaggerty et al., 2011), particularly for groups with additional competing demands, such as women (Swaggerty et al., 2011), early-career faculty (Kent et al., 2017), and faculty in health sciences, who have heavy teaching and clinical workloads (Bullion & Brower, 2017).

An *academic writing retreat* is a professional development event that provides scholars with the opportunity to immerse themselves in writing for publication, and to receive on-site support for that writing. The retreat contrasts with writing groups and workshops by providing intense, dedicated time for writing over one or more days. Retreats also offer the likelihood of engaging with colleagues across research fields and disciplines, which can have the additional benefit of developing new collaborations (Noone & Young, 2019). In an integrative literature review of 11 peer-reviewed studies from around world, Kornhaber et al. (2016) found evidence that retreats "facilitate measurable increases in publication outputs including grant applications, ... book chapters and number of peer-reviewed articles submitted and accepted" (p. 1212). This is of interest to postsecondary research offices who support academics in securing research funding, because "building a publication profile is pivotal to developing and increasing an academic's competitiveness to win grants" (p. 1211).

In 2012, the Office of Research and Innovation Services at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada introduced an off-campus writing retreat to provide dedicated time, space, and support for academic writing for researchers in the social sciences and humanities. When the first retreat was announced, available spots were taken within a few hours. Due to demand, the retreat immediately became biannual and extended to all disciplines, with ratings consistently scoring excellent. This program evaluation examines 252 retreat evaluations submitted by participating faculty and staff between 2015 and 2019. The goal of our study is to identify what participants perceive to be the benefits of the retreats. Our research question is *What are the benefits of writing retreats for participants?* Findings are presented within the context of international research on the benefits of writing retreats for academics in higher education, as well as the theoretical framework of community of practice.

Literature Review

In March 2020, we conducted a systematic search of the Canadian Business & Current Affairs (CBCA) Complete, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, OMNI, and ProQuest databases for publications between January 2009 to 2020. Boolean connectors were used to combine search terms ("writing retreat*" AND "writers retreat*") AND ("academic" OR "higher education" OR "postsecondary"). This search yielded 32 discrete publications. We sought original research that investigated writing retreats in higher education settings and was published in English in peer-reviewed journals. Because we host retreats for faculty members, we excluded studies on retreats for graduate students, as well as studies on other writing strategies such as workshops and groups. Excluded from our search were academic publications outside of peer-reviewed journals, such as conference proceedings, theses, opinion pieces, reports, and book chapters. The reference lists of the final set of articles helped us identify additional publications

not captured through the search strategy that proved useful for context setting, identifying a theoretical framework, and interpreting findings.

Our search culminated in nine studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals, plus an integrative literature review (Kornhaber et al., 2016). Studies were mixed methods or qualitative (excepting Bullion & Brower, 2017). Sample sizes were small, ranging from 4 to 53. The retreats under study were in Ireland (1), the United States (3), and the United Kingdom (5). All retreats were attended by academics from single units or disciplines, primarily health sciences and education, with two retreats in psychology. Retreats averaged 3 days in length, and most were residential; that is, participants slept and ate their meals at the off-campus retreat site. All retreats had structured writing programs with planned activities such as goal setting, mandatory writing workshops or discussions, peer-feedback groups, meals, and social activities.

Benefits of Retreats

In keeping with our research question, our literature review paid close attention to findings on the benefits of retreats. To guide our analysis, we used themes and subthemes identified in the integrative literature review of Kornhaber et al. (2016). The list below describes each theme and associated subthemes (*italicized*):

1. Protected time and space: Retreats provide legitimate, justifiable time to write, away from conflicting demands and priorities; they give participants permission to dedicate time and space for writing over other conflicting priorities (legitimizing time and space for writing). An effective retreat is offered in a space that is supportive, comfortable, and quiet (writing sanctuary). The retreat space is free from the usual interruptions and distractions—such as colleagues, family, and even wifi—which encourages the writer to focus or enter the flow of writing (uninterrupted time).

2. Community of practice: Retreats help to develop an ongoing writing community that is characterized by the shared vision or purpose of participants, leading to a sense of connectedness with other writers. The community is further developed by collegial support or encouraging feedback on writing from peers; by access to mentorship from experts in academic writing; and by social interaction during shared meals and other group activities.

3. Development of academic writing competence: Retreats include supports to strengthen participant writing ability (writing pedagogy). These supports may include workshops, structured writing time, and goal-setting sessions.

4. Intra-personal benefits: Some intra-personal benefits of retreats include increased self-awareness of the barriers and enablers to one's own writing, increased writing confidence and motivation to write, and reduced writing-related anxiety.

5. Organizational investment: Organizational investment in writing retreats influences their success, sustainability, and publication outcomes. Examples of this investment include ensuring the availability and willingness of experienced mentors, such as senior academics, who can provide support for junior writers; the allocation of resources such as space rental and staff to organize and facilitate the retreats in a cost-effective manner; the provision of

funding to attend retreats; and follow-up support to sustain writing momentum, such as ongoing mentorship or writing days.

6. <u>Increased productivity</u>: The integrative literature review conducted by Kornhaber et al. (2016) positions the above benefits of retreats as cumulating in increased publication outputs by participants (p. 1221). For our analysis, we positioned productivity as its own theme, and looked for studies that reported increased productivity during or after the retreats.

Table 1 summarizes the appearance of the above themes within the nine studies that we reviewed. We identified the themes from the foci of each article's discussion and conclusion, paying attention to such cues as subheadings and the topic sentences of paragraphs. When deciding on themes, we also considered the title, keywords, and abstract of each article. The primary themes of the reviewed studies were

- benefits of the protected time and space afforded by retreats
- development of a community of writing practice as demonstrated by the shared vision, social interaction, and collegial support of retreat participants
- intrapersonal benefit of increased motivation to write due to retreats
- organizational investment in follow-up writing support
- increased writing productivity during retreats.

Table 1. Themes in Literature Review (themes based on Kornhaber et al., 2016)

Themes	Sub-themes	Bullion & Brower 2017	Casey, Barron & Gordon, 2013	Eardley, Banister & Fletcher, 2020	Kent et al. 2017	Murray & Newton, 2009	Macleod, Steckley & Murray, 2012	Murray, Steckley & Macleod, 2012	Noone & Young, 2019	Swaggerty, et al. 2011
Protected time and space	Legitimizing time and space for writing			x		x	x	x	x	x
	Uninterrupted time	x		x	x		x	x		x
	Writing sanctuary		x					x		
Community of practice	Shared vision		x	x	x	x			x	x
	Social interaction									
	Mentorship								x	x
	Collegial support		x	x	x	x			x	x
Development of academic writing competence	Writing pedagogy					x				
	Goal-setting								x	x

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Intra-personal benefits	increased self-awareness of barriers to individual writing										X
	increased self-awareness of enablers to individual writing						X				
	increased writing confidence									X	
	increased motivation	X	X	X	X					X	X
	Reduced writing-related anxiety			X			X	X			
Organizational investment	Availability and willingness of experienced mentors							X			
	Allocation of resources	X				X		X			
	Follow-up support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Increased productivity	Reported at retreat	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
	Reported after the retreat										X

Theoretical Framework

Several studies in our literature review suggest that retreats can develop communities of writing practice (Eardley et al., 2020; Kent et al., 2017; Kornhaber et al., 2016; Murray & Newton, 2009). A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do, and they learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). According to the framework developed by Wenger and others, a community of practice has three characteristics:

1. <u>Domain</u>: Members of the group share a domain of interest (Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). In case of the retreat, that shared interest is academic writing, which includes grant proposals, conference papers, journal articles, book chapters, course syllabi, research reports, and research-creation texts such as poetry.

2. <u>Community</u>: Group members build a sense of community by regularly engaging in shared activities (Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). In the instance of retreats, these common activities can include shared meals, social activities, peer review groups, co-writing in the same room, and collaborative work that carries over beyond and between retreats. Table 1 includes themes designated as community-building by Kornhaber et al. (2016): the *shared vision* or purpose of writing, *social interaction*, *mentorship* by senior writers and other writing experts, and *collegial support* through both informal and formal peer feedback on writing. Our literature review suggested additional themes related to developing a sense of community among retreat participants. These additional themes include the practice of designating protected time and space in which to engage in uninterrupted, side-by-side writing, which helps retreat participants to *legitimize time and space for writing*. The theme of *organizational investment* in follow-up support is also characteristic of a community of practice which extends back to campus.

3. <u>Practice</u>: Through their ongoing activities, community members eventually develop new knowledge and capabilities related to their shared interest (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). Accordingly, participants in ongoing writing retreats may report positive change in their writing practice; they may observe that they are becoming more confident, competent, or productive writers over time. Related themes in the retreat literature include *development of academic writing competence*; intrapersonal benefits, including increased self-awareness of the enablers and barriers to individual writing; and *increased productivity*.

Setting: Writing Retreat Hosted by University of Windsor

The University of Windsor is Canada's southernmost university, located in the city of Windsor on the Ontario-Michigan border. This mid-sized comprehensive university has over 16,000 full-time and part-time students, and 9 faculties with over 500 members (University of Windsor, 2021). In 2012, the Office of Research and Innovation Services hosted the first of what became a biannual writing retreat. The primary objective of the retreats is to facilitate the mobilization of research knowledge by providing space and uninterrupted time for the development of publications and grant proposals. The secondary objective is to offer writing support; that is, to bring researchers together with experts who, through informal consultations and workshops, can provide constructive suggestions for writing improvement. The final objective is to create a space for researchers to cultivate working relationships that will lead to new and interdisciplinary research collaborations (Wiebe, 2018). When conducting this study, we recognized that each retreat objective is aligned with a characteristic of a community of writing practice. The first objective expresses the domain of the community of writing practice—academic writing. The second objective of offering support is prerequisite for strengthening the writing practice that

characterizes the community. The third objective prioritizes creating the sense of community that is a feature of a community of writing practice.

The retreat is offered for two consecutive days every April, between final exams and the onset of conference season, and for two consecutive days every August, before the start of the new academic year. The research office provides funding for catering and rents rooms in Willistead Manor, a historic building that has become a popular conference centre in Windsor, Ontario. There are 34 seats available to faculty members and staff from across the university, which is the most we can comfortably fit into the rental space. We designated a conference room on the second floor of the Manor as the quiet (no-talking) writing space. The grounds and dining room are available to participants who prefer background noise to write, or who wish to discuss their work with co-authors or with experts who typically include the workshop facilitators, consultants in the scholarship of teaching and learning from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, consultants in grant writing from the Research Office, and the Associate Dean, Research from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The dining room is also used for a buffet lunch and workshops. Some workshops are open to faculty and staff who are not attending the retreat. This efficiency enables our small research office to concentrate its workshop-development efforts at times when faculty are most likely to attend and when they have grown to expect workshops to be offered. Opening select workshops to non-retreat participants also enables staff from the Research Office to meet new faculty and introduce them to the retreat with the hope that they will be more apt to reach out with questions about research funding or to register for retreats in future.

Unlike the single-discipline retreats that dominate the literature review, the event is attended by faculty from across disciplines at the University of Windsor—arts, business, education, engineering, humanities, human kinetics, law, library sciences, nursing, natural sciences, scholarship of teaching and learning, and social sciences. While our initial retreats included peer-review groups and compulsory workshops, participant feedback quickly led to more independent writing time and optional workshops and writing consultations. In contrast with the structured and residential retreat programs described in the literature, our participants build their own writing programs from the itinerary provided (see Appendix 1). They choose their own start and end times between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, and return home at day end. Nearly half arrive before 9:00 AM, many to secure their favorite writing spot, and most stay for the full day. We no longer have a morning orientation session because, on average, two-thirds of participants are returnees (Wiebe, 2018). Return participants help to acculturate newcomers, as does the itinerary. Moreover, staggered arrivals mean the retreat facilitators can introduce newcomers to the retreat facilities and practices. Follow-up support includes one-Friday-per-month retreats in a welcoming new building on the University of Windsor's vibrant downtown campus (introduced in 2017), as well as the opportunity for ongoing consultations with experts met at the retreat.

Retreat workshops have traditionally been focused on reducing writing-related anxiety (meditation, yoga), grant writing, and research practice. We have facilitated 50 workshops over the past 5 years, of which 18 were opened to University of Windsor faculty and staff from outside the retreat. Workshops are coordinated by the same staff who organize the retreat, and sometimes led

by them as well. Two-thirds of the workshops have been led by retreat participants. Some repeat workshops include insider looks at grant review committees, collaborating with community and international partners, writing knowledge mobilization plans, writing policy briefs, surviving and thriving as early-career researchers, and decolonizing and Indigenizing teaching and research. See Appendix 2 for all workshops offered during the retreats under study.

Methodology

Data Collection

Our qualitative study is a program evaluation of 10 retreats hosted at Willistead Manor by the University of Windsor between 2015 and 2019. The study uses two sources of data to assess the benefits of the writing retreats for participants: attendance records and anonymous post-retreat evaluations. Attendance records for the retreats and the workshops within them are used to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the retreats and to interpret findings related to the theme of mentorship. The evaluations completed by participants at the end of each retreat form the primary source of data (see Appendix 1). Evaluation questions pertinent to this study include:

1. What did you work on? (select answers from grant proposal, journal article, conference presentation, and/or book chapter, and/or specify any other writing projects)

2. What was the most useful or effective feature of the retreat? (open-ended question)

3. What did you accomplish or learn? (open-ended question)

Beginning in 2016, participants who had previously attended a retreat were asked:

4. How many writing retreats at Willistead have you attended in the past?

5. Have you noticed any long-term benefits of the retreats?

This last question provided several options for answers and space to comment, including:

- Not yet
- I rely on the retreats to help me move my writing projects forward
- I count on the retreats to help me plan my research program or courses
- Connections made at a retreat lead to a new working relationship
- A workshop changed my writing or teaching practice
- My retreat experience has reshaped how I write in other environments
- Other.

Reminders to complete the evaluations were given in the itinerary, during the retreat lunches, and in a post-retreat email. Evaluations were initially completed on paper, with the option of submitting an online evaluation form created in Qualtrics survey software offered in 2016. By 2019, evaluations were submitted entirely online. In this study, we numbered the hard-copy evaluations Arabically (e.g., 1, 2, 3), and we numbered the online evaluations with a short form of the identifier assigned by Qualtrics (e.g., #ymy). We received 252 retreat evaluations from 335

faculty and staff who participated in one or more of the retreats during the 5-year period of our study, giving a 76% response rate.

Data Analysis and Additional Themes

To analyze the attendance data, we totaled the number of participants in each retreat and in each retreat workshop, and calculated participation averages. To analyze the retreat evaluations, we conducted a thematic analysis. We began by using the themes in the codebook from our literature review. We coded each evaluation response against these themes and recorded our determinations in Excel worksheets. Through the coding, we identified two additional themes to those named in Table 1: new collaborations developed through retreats, and planning of research programs and courses during retreats.

Findings

Attendance

As previously noted, the retreats are open to all faculty and staff from the University of Windsor, regardless of discipline. We averaged 35 different participants at each retreat under study. There are 34 seats available, but sometimes participants were able to attend only one day and gave away their seat on the second. Eighty-nine percent of participants came from the nine faculties, or groups of departments, within the university: Business, Education, Engineering, Human Kinetics, Law, Library, Nursing, Science, and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Eleven percent of participants were from administrative units such as the Research Office and Centre for Teaching and Learning. Most participants (39%) were from Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, which is the largest faculty at the University of Windsor, with 11 of its 13 academic departments represented in our sample: Communication, Media and Film; Creative Arts; Dramatic Art; English and Creative Writing; History; Interdisciplinary Studies; Political Science; Psychology; Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology; Social Work; and Women's and Gender Studies. Sixteen percent of retreat participants were not permanent faculty members at the time of registration, holding limited term, adjunct, or staff appointments.

Each retreat offered an average of five workshops for which attendance was optional rather than required. See Appendix 2 for a complete list of workshops. The number of retreat participants at each workshop averaged 10, meaning roughly one-third of retreat participants opted to attend each. Workshops were organized by the retreat facilitators, who were two staff from the university's Research Office. These staff were also available for grant-writing consultations primarily related to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), a Canadian federal funding agency. The staff met with an average of 7 grant writers during retreats for which consultation records were kept. Records were not kept concerning the number of writing consultations with other experts such as workshop facilitators, Associate Deans, members of the Research Ethics Board, and staff from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, most of whom attended the retreats. However, one representative from Mitacs, a Canadian federal funding agency, who has an office at the university, reported meeting with 20 individual faculty during her first retreat in 2015 (Wiebe, 2018).

Two hundred and fifty-two retreat evaluations were completed during the period of study. Seventy-four percent of respondents reported attending more than one retreat. These respondents attended an average of 3.5 retreats.

Most Useful

In their evaluations, participants were asked about the most useful aspects of the retreat. This was an open-ended question, and respondents identified numerous aspects of the retreat that they found useful. We identified which themes best matched their responses. As shown in Figure 1, more than 80% of responses fell under the theme of *protected time and space*. Thirty-seven percent of responses fell under *community of practice*, describing such things as feeling part of a writing community, feeling "synergy" or "camaraderie" with other writers, socializing over lunch, and appreciating mentorship through consultations and workshops. Twenty-four percent wrote comments that suggested *organizational investment* in staff, space, and food were among the most useful aspects of the retreat.
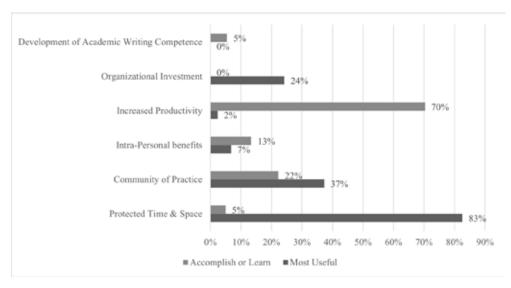

Figure 1. Themes in responses to "What was the most useful feature?" of the retreat, and "What did you accomplish or learn?" at the retreat, 2015-2019.

Most Useful: Protected Time and Space

The quiet space that was available to the participants at Willistead Manor and the lack of interruptions were important. Meeting off campus, in an historic house once owned by a wealthy local family, along with catered lunches, created a sense of excitement and newness. The venue provided writing spaces ranging from a large room where silence was maintained to communal spaces indoors and out where people could write and discuss their writing. One respondent stated, "The most useful part is always the ability—and permission!—to be in a beautiful location

with food and beverages, free of distractions so that I can spend a solid day writing in peace and solitude" (April 2015, Respondent #1). Another described the writing sanctuary of the retreat in this way:

> Having a quiet, beautiful space to work in and not having to think about the practical aspects of life, like making lunch [was most useful]. I really appreciate the loveliness of the space and the catering. Also, it feels like a very supportive environment. (August 2015, Respondent #9)

The time and space dedicated to writing was consistently the most valued feature of the retreats. The importance given to writing in a space with others suggests that time and space are not the only useful aspects of the retreat. Even when producing co-authored pieces, writing is often a solitary practice. Although much of their time at the retreat is spent in silent writing, numerous respondents mentioned feeling like they are a part of a community. This was noted in responses that mentioned that it was useful to write in silence, eat, socialize, and exercise with others. These shared practices were valued. For some, writing as a collective, in a supported environment, created accountability and motivation. As an April 2019 participant wrote, "writing is a lonely process but writing in a group and having the right atmosphere—physical space and community—everyone has the same interest which adds not so much peer pressure as peer modelling, helps you persevere" (Respondent #ymy). Co-writing with others, even silently, was found to be energizing and focus-sustaining.

Most Useful: Mentorship Activities within the Community of Practice

In addition to writing in the presence of others, many respondents noted that the presence of staff from the Research Office was useful. These staff facilitated the retreats. They were also available to discuss research funding opportunities and grant writing, as were experts in other genres of academic writing who routinely included associate deans and staff from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Also valued were workshops facilitated by Research Office staff and others. Topics included knowledge mobilization, the experiences of early-career researchers, and funding programs (see Appendix 2). In response to the question, "What was the most useful aspect of the retreat," 15% of respondents described specific workshops and/or consultations (see Table 2). Typical feedback included comments such as "Most useful was a conversation with two of the organizers ... about a grant application and the presentation on knowledge mobilization" (August 2016, Respondent #11).

Table 2. Selected Mentorship Activities at Retreats and Percentage of Respondents who Reported Mentorship to be Most Useful

Retreat	No. of Workshops	No. of Workshop Seats taken by Retreat Participants	No. of Grant-Writing Consultations with Research Office[a]	Respondents who Reported Mentorship as "Most Useful"
2015 April	6	64	Unknown	48%
2015 August	3	58	Unknown	4%
2016 April	5	33	6	11%
2016 August	8	65	11	32%
2017 April	5	32	8	15%
2017 August	6	44	7	0%
2018 April	7	78	Unknown	7%
2018 August	4	93	5	12%
2019 April	5	35	Unknown	4%
2019 August	1	7[a]	Unknown	14%
Totals	50	509	37	15%

[a]Note: Records were not kept of the number of writing consultations with other experts.

We observed that respondents from the April 2015 and August 2016 retreats were most generous in volunteering positive feedback on workshops and consultations. Accordingly, we took a closer look at the attendance data for these two retreats. We found that an organized grant-writing group attended the April 2015 retreat (Wiebe & Maticka-Tyndale, 2017), and two workshops were designed with them in mind. The workshop facilitators met individually with most members of the grant-writing group to answer questions and review sections of their writing. We also noticed that the August 2016 retreat had the highest number of presentations and workshops of any retreat, with three geared to grant writing for SSHRC. The SSHRC workshops included one presentation by a review committee member and a research workshop led by two senior sociology researchers, one of whom led the third workshop. In short, the retreats during which most respondents identified workshops and consultations as among the most useful aspects were those that included customized support for a sub-group of participants engaged in the same writing task.

Most Useful: Organizational Investment

The importance of *organizational investment* was an unexpected theme that emerged in the responses about the most useful aspects of retreats. Related to organizational investment was the university's *allocation of resources* to organize the retreats. The university designated two staff from

the Research Office to develop, promote, and lead the retreats. As retreat facilitators, we aimed to create a flexible schedule that allowed participants to create their own writing programs. While each retreat day began and ended at set times, and there was a lunch hour during which a buffet was served, participants were able to choose when to come and go, whether to participate in workshops, and whether to eat lunch in the dining room (most did) or bring a plate to the quiet writing room. As facilitators, we were responsible for establishing and maintaining the schedule and ensuring that quiet was maintained in the quiet writing space. Respondents noticed and appreciated these efforts, with one writing that the most useful aspect was "quiet writing, food provided, ... session [on the Early Researcher Awards funding program in Ontario, Canada], and having Nicole and Natasha readily available" (April 2018, Respondent #1).

In addition to designating staff to facilitate the retreats, the Research Office covered the costs rather than requiring participants to pay. For approximately the amount of sending one person to an international conference, our day-away retreats support an average of 35 participants over two days. Since the retreats are funded by the university, and participants are not charged a fee to attend, their writing was validated. They felt that their institution was giving them permission to separate themselves temporarily from the other responsibilities of their jobs as well as their personal lives. Several respondents mentioned food and activities such as qi gong, yoga and meditation as being among the most useful aspects of the retreat. Thinking about and preparing food and exercise are routine distractions that the retreat eliminated for participants, thus giving them permission to focus on writing. One respondent wrote that the most useful aspects of the retreat included "The uninterrupted time and the lunch provided where I don't need to take time away from my productivity to prepare lunch" (August 2017, Respondent #2CQ). Another noted,

> For me—it is a combination of the food being prepared and the ability to work in a quiet space. It provides a tremendously unique opportunity to truly focus and be productive. I have attended many times now and I will continue to return as I find it so useful for my productivity. (April 2017, Respondent #870)

The institutionally-supported nature of the retreat helped *legitimize time and space* to write. Participants were given permission to focus solely on writing. "Permission" contrasts with the obligation of writing. That the institution validated the protected time and space for this activity was noted by many respondents. One respondent noted,

> The time and the space [is important], but really it's the culture that makes it effective. The writing retreats are something that I and certain colleagues I have discussed with use as bookmarks in the production of research. I earmark a project to work on. "This one is important, and I haven't gotten a chance to bite into it...ok I'll commit to working on it at Willistead." But what creates this sense is really the culture of sitting in silence among colleagues with like-minded intention. The writing process in academia is mostly a solitary affair. The writing retreats create a buzz or sense of excitement about work that needs to be done. Colleagues remind each other that retreats are coming up, and this creates a culture that reminds me a bit of the study groups I had during graduate school. There is also something about the location. But it isn't as simple as sitting in a grand old house. I think it's

actually the awareness that the University of Windsor has chosen to invest in creating this space; that the administration sees research as not just in terms of grants and publications but also in terms of the "process" that is required. I usually don't tend to be easily influenced by the setting, but there is something special as well as different in working in that space. The culture is among peers but it is also an awareness that the University has invested in and understands that THIS is how quality thinking and writing is actually accomplished. (August 2016, Respondent #757)

Academics must disengage from other tasks in order to write, which, according to Murray, (2013) raises fundamental questions about the place of writing in academic work. The organizational investment in the retreat allows writers to disengage from other competing activities and prioritize writing.

Accomplished or Learned

In addition to asking participants which aspects of the retreat were most useful, the evaluations asked participants what they learned or accomplished. Some respondents shared diverse lessons related to their scholarship or writing practice, such as learning about funding opportunities for their research, or learning more about what helps them to write better. For example, one respondent noted, "I submitted my paper, learned more about [Canadian Institute of Health Research] grants (including the different funding streams and tips for applying—all very useful!)" (August 2018, Respondent #ByK). Another wrote, "I learned to meditate (excellent event!) and discussed a bit about grant options and funding. I learned and exchanged with colleagues about stresses of writing and research" (August 2016, Respondent #2). Seventy percent of respondents said that they were productive, offering comments such as "I got more done in 2 days than I would have accomplished in 2 weeks if I was in the office, no secret, it is the same every time I come!" (August 2018, Respondent #11). As Figure 1 shows, the open-ended responses mainly addressed the theme of increased *productivity* or producing writing outputs.

When describing their productivity, respondents often mentioned the type of writing they worked on. We collected details about their writing projects in a separate evaluation question. Many worked on more than one project. Fifty-six percent reported working on journal articles, 24% on grant proposals, 18% on conference papers or presentations, and 13% on book chapters. Forty-four percent reported working on other tasks which included a long list of activities that we categorized as research (e.g., peer review, progress reports), scholarship (e.g., book proposals or short stories), teaching (e.g., course development and preparation, thesis review), and administration (e.g., sabbatical applications).

While there are grant deadlines throughout the year, autumn is when most major competitions have their deadlines. Academic conference season in North America is in the spring. Figure 2 shows that at April retreats, more respondents are working on conference presentations than during the August retreats, whereas during August retreats, respondents are often working on grant proposals. At the end of the April 2016 retreat, one respondent reported:

I got notes toward a new short story, I worked with a colleague on edits on an article that has been accepted with revisions (and that was started at a retreat last year), and I worked on a project funded by a grant I'd drafted at a previous retreat. I also had conversations with a colleague about a course we're teaching and a grant we're submitting. Also, remarkably, on the afternoon of [the first day] I drafted a conference proposal and got feedback from my co-presenter. At 8:50 AM on the [second day], I submitted the proposal (using my phone as an internet hotspot!). By 9:10, our proposal had been accepted and by 9:30, I received a copy of the program with our names on it. (Respondent #757)

Responses confirmed what was found by Murray and Newton (2009), that writing is central to the retreat, while at work, writing is just one of many competing demands and is often seen as peripheral to teaching.
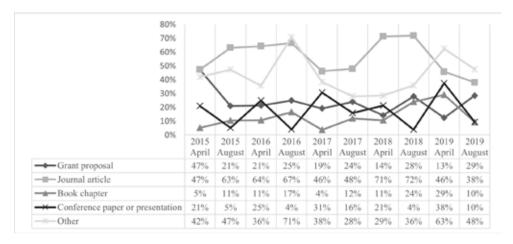
	2015 April	2015 August	2016 April	2016 August	2017 April	2017 August	2018 April	2018 August	2019 April	2019 August
Grant proposal	47%	21%	21%	25%	19%	24%	14%	28%	13%	29%
Journal article	47%	63%	64%	67%	46%	48%	71%	72%	46%	38%
Book chapter	5%	11%	11%	17%	4%	12%	11%	24%	29%	10%
Conference paper or presentation	21%	5%	25%	4%	31%	16%	21%	4%	38%	10%
Other	42%	47%	36%	71%	38%	28%	29%	36%	63%	48%

Figure 2. What respondents worked on across writing retreats, 2015-2019.

Long-Term Benefits

The last group of responses analyzed was the responses to a question, "Have you noticed any long-term benefits of the retreats?" Respondents who had previously participated in at least one retreat could choose more than one answer from several options, and they could also add comments of their own in another field. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the responses. Figure 3 organizes the selected responses according to theme. Again, the theme of increased productivity stands out: 66% of respondents chose "I rely on the retreats to move my writing projects forward" and/or "I count on the retreats to plan my research/courses."

Table 3. Breakdown of Responses to "Have You Noticed any Long-Term Benefits?", 2015-2019

	No. of responses
Not yet	11
I rely on the retreats to help me move my writing projects forward	122
I count on the retreats to help me plan my research program or courses	81
Connections made at a retreat led to a new working relationship	44
A workshop changed my writing or teaching practice	20
My retreat experience has reshaped how I write in other environments	33
I feel that I am part of a writing community[a]	10
Other	19

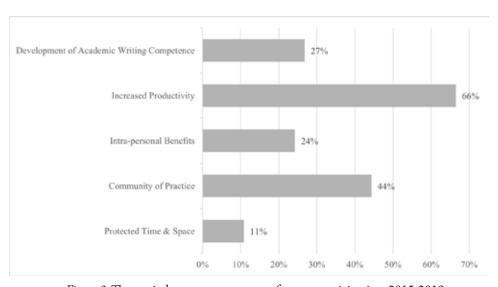[a]Note: The August 2019 evaluation was the first to provide this answer option.

Figure 3. Themes in long-term outcomes of retreat participation, 2015-2019.

Responses related to the theme of *community of practice* are noteworthy. These include "A workshop changed my writing practice," "Connections made at a retreat led to a new working relationship," and "I feel I am part of a writing community." Some respondents reflected on the answers they had selected and wrote remarks that indicate the retreats had helped develop the sense of connectedness—of shared vision or purpose—that characterizes the community of practice. For example, a respondent from the August 2019 retreat stated:

This may sound odd, but the retreats allow me to connect with others and feel a part of a community. Plus, I'm always tremendously productive. In the end the retreats truly change my attitude in a positive way about my work by providing a supportive atmosphere I do not always feel present elsewhere. (Respondent #OOl)

Similarly, an April 2016 respondent reported how co-writing with others was energizing:

Thank you! This is a brilliant project. The environment, the enthusiasm, and those present gave us a sense that our writing was highly valued. It was an overall refreshing feeling. I particularly enjoyed being among my colleagues at work. The enthusiastic rata tat tat of the neighbouring laptops was invigorating. (Respondent #648)

Over time, some respondents developed new working relationships with others they met at the retreats. An August 2019 respondent reported, "I made a lot of headway on a journal article, analyzed some data for another journal article, and discussed a grant application. I also met a colleague who could be a possible future collaborator" (Respondent #3CD). In addition, an April 2019 respondent noted, "I've traded notes across disciplines with colleagues about the research process and have been invited to review a colleague's work" (Respondent #3ku). Comments such as these suggest that the retreats are developing a writing community that extends between events.

Finally, responses indicate that the retreats have had long-term intra-personal benefits, a theme that corresponds to "My retreat experience has reshaped how I write in other environments." This reshaping of the writing process includes increased motivation and an awareness of personal enablers and barriers to writing. Explanatory comments tell us that some respondents developed awareness of their most productive writing environment and their need for breaks. For one respondent, the guided meditation was motivation to continue their own practice: "[I] need to reinstate quiet time for reflection in the morning to help keep me energized and focused (thanks to two guided meditations)" (August 2016, Respondent #755). Another noted "Being separated from regular life (phone, other communication). Being with, and seeing others also engaged in writing reminded [me of] my own need to focus on my writing projects" (April 2018, Respondent #7). An August 2018 respondent observed, "I usually need a space outside of both home and office (where student and admin duties crop up), [plus] I'm freed up from everyday mundane work, so I try to replicate this in my writing/thinking schedule" (Respondent #1go). Another respondent from April 2019 wrote, "I dedicate other off campus days in a peaceful environment to focus on deep work" (Respondent #2Bn). A few participants have told us that they replicate the retreat structure on their own so that they can continue the progress they made. The findings related to long-term benefits suggest that the retreats create a sense of community that not only motivates writing within the event itself, but also have a positive ripple effect of enabling participants to write in other places.

Discussion: Benefits Perceived by Retreat Participants

Between 2015-2020, the biannual writing retreat hosted at Willistead Manor by the Office of Research and Innovation Services from the University of Windsor attracted 335 participants

from across offices and academic units. The purpose of our study is to identify the benefits of retreats perceived by faculty and staff who attended one or more of the 10 retreats and completed post-retreat evaluations (n = 252). The key finding is that the retreats are helping to develop a community of writing practice. The community of practice enables participants to be more productive during and beyond the retreats and reshapes how they write—and with whom they write—in other spaces.

From Wenger and colleagues (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger & Traynor, 2015), we learned that a *community* of practice is characterized by the sense of community or connectedness that develops as members engage in shared activities. We analyzed our findings by looking at them through the lens of community. Eighty-three percent of respondents suggested that the most useful aspect of the retreats was the *protected time and space* of Willistead Manor, which helped promote focus by safeguarding the shared activity of quiet academic writing from external distractions. Moreover, in response to what they found most useful about retreats, one-quarter of respondents (24%) wrote expressions of appreciation for the organizational investment in the retreats, noting that "The retreats help remind me and other faculty that the University of Windsor values the actual process needed to write up research" (April 2016, Respondent #2). This reminds us of the observation of Macleod, Steckley and Murray (2012), whose retreat participants "saw a relationship between financial support for the retreat and the value [the university] attached to the activity of writing for publication" (p. 669). Finally, when responding to the question about the most useful aspects of the retreat, 37% described the sense of connectedness ("synergy," "camaraderie") that they experienced at the retreats. This connectedness was realized through writing alongside others, through the shared vision or purpose of academic writing. Also contributing to the sense of community were receiving *collegial support* or help with their writing from peers, and *social interaction* over lunches or during yoga. In sum, respondents suggest that their writing is facilitated by both the support and the setting of the retreat—by the people who sponsor and facilitate the retreats, by the people who attend, and by the quiet sanctuary of the off-campus location in which the writing and other shared activities occur.

In addition to developing a sense of community and connectedness, another feature of Wenger's community of practice framework is the development of the members' shared *practice*. For the retreats under study, the shared practice is that of academic writing, which includes the journal articles, grant proposals, and other academic texts on which respondents worked. We analyzed findings through the lens of strengthened writing practice and productivity. When describing what they accomplished or learned during the retreat, the majority (70%) of respondents described what they had produced. Similarly, when asked about the long-term benefits of retreats, most (66%) reported that they rely on retreats to move their writing projects forward. The finding of increased productivity during retreats is consistent with our literature review (see Table 1). In terms of strengthening writing practice, one-quarter of respondents who attended more than one retreat (24%) indicated that retreats had intra-personal benefits, namely that retreat workshops had changed their writing or teaching practice, and/or reshaped how they wrote in other environments (such as seeking out spaces where one can be "'alone in a crowd'—I

get a lot of work done this way" [April 2019, Respondent #ymy]). Moreover, one-fifth of respondents reported that they count on retreats to plan their research or teaching programs (22%). Taken together, findings related to enhanced writing practice suggest that retreats are helping participants to be more productive by providing biannual blocks of time during which participants can plan and significantly advance their writing and by helping them to learn new practices for sustaining their writing between retreats.

Evidence that the retreats are influencing the development of a community of practice includes the fact that one-third of respondents who had attended one or more retreats reported new *collaborations* with other retreat participants. Some examples of which we are aware include the legal scholar who uses and researches mindfulness after attending the retreat meditations led by a psychology researcher; the nursing researcher who joined a human kinetics thesis committee; the legal scholar who collaborated on a political science grant application after overhearing the grant writers and research office staff discuss the proposal in the retreat talking space; the psychology researcher who joined a social work grant application after co-facilitating a retreat workshop with the applicant (Wiebe, 2018); and a retreat workshop that was born during the retreat-lunch conversation of an education researcher, librarian, and research office staff. The development of new and interdisciplinary collaborations may be partly because our retreats, unlike most in the literature review, are not discipline- or department-specific; accordingly, participants may be more likely to meet people they have never met or collaborated with.

Noone and Young (2019) found something similar in their retreats that crossed not disciplinary lines, but organizational ones. In their study of ongoing annual residential writing retreats for nursing faculty and other clinicians from multiple universities and clinical settings, 80.7% of survey respondents agreed that networking was among the strongest elements (p. 67). Similarly, Winters, Wiebe, and Saudelli (2019) observed that connections developed during an ongoing retreat series for education researchers from different universities in Ontario, Canada, led retreat participants to collaborate on writing projects post-retreat (including the authors' own book chapter). Likewise, our findings suggest that our retreat series is creating a supportive community that reaches beyond the off-campus retreat venue.

We observe that the community of writing practice developed through and by our retreats overlaps with other writer communities. Our retreat series finds its roots in long-running annual retreats initiated by the Faculty of Education at Brock University in St. Catharine's, Ontario, Canada, and now co-hosted with the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. We are also aware of several retreat series for different audiences that were inspired by our event, including retreats for local teachers and school board administrators, early-career researchers, faculty, and alternative academics (PhDs in non-tenure track positions). Our retreats are part of a larger retreat culture emerging at the University of Windsor, within which several staff and faculty have co-authored research or recommendations for retreats held for mid-career faculty at a single university (Bornais & Andrews, 2020), for retreats held by and for education faculty from different universities (McGinn et al., 2019; Winters et al., 2019), and for retreats held by research administrators for faculty within a single department or across a university (Wiebe & Covanti, 2019).

Limitations

Consistent with the literature review, our study is qualitative. Only one question included a Likert scale ("Overall rating of retreat"), and it was consistently scored 5 out of 5, or Excellent, by respondents. Evaluations did not ask respondents to self-identity by gender, race, or other factors, so the study cannot suggest whether retreats were more or less beneficial to equity-deserving groups including women and racialized faculty. Another limitation is that some respondents completed several retreat evaluations over the period under study, but we are unable to track changes in individual perceptions over time. Moreover, while many respondents worked on grant proposals during retreats, our evaluations do not track the number of related grant successes, which is of particular interest to research offices considering their own retreats. Finally, in our study, the self-reporting of increased productivity is based on participant perception. The study provides no measures of publication or grant success rates before retreats and afterwards.

Practical Implications: Recommendations for Future Retreats

Our retreat model differs from most in the literature review in that it is interdisciplinary rather than discipline-specific, and the program is flexible, rather than structured with mandatory peer-review, workshops, or other activities. This is a deliberate programmatic choice that evolved from feedback after our inaugural retreats in 2012. However, this program evaluation provides a lesson for refining our retreat model. During the April 2015 and August 2016 retreats, sub-groups of grant writers benefitted from tailored workshops and individual consultations that brought them together and helped move their proposals forward. These respondents were particularly generous with feedback about the usefulness of available writing support. From their responses, we note that customizing retreat supports for writing projects on which most participants are working—rather than tempting them with workshops that interrupt their momentum—helps participants to maintain their focus. This finding is consistent with McGinn et al. (2019), who observe of their annual residential retreats that "Over the years, participant feedback has led to fewer workshops and more independent writing time" (p. 141).

Our findings tell us that most faculty work on journal articles during the retreats, with many working on conference presentations during the retreats in April, and many on grant proposals during the retreats in August. Knowledge of these patterns can help us select workshop topics that are immediately relevant to most participants, and to have appropriate experts available to those working on articles, such as senior writers and journal editors. With these adjustments, our retreat model may help strengthen writing competence without losing the emphasis on quiet writing time so valued by participants.

The recognition that writing support at retreats should be immediate and specific helps us better understand our experience of two spin-off retreat series. Between January 2017 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, we offered a one-Friday-a-month retreat series on the University of Windsor's downtown campus to help retreat participants sustain their writing momentum between the biannual events. Moreover, between September and December 2019, we offered a monthly retreat series for early-career researchers working on Insight Development

Grant applications for submission to SSHRC. Each SSHRC retreat began with a workshop, after which participants wrote or revised the sections of the application reviewed during the workshop and received immediate feedback from their peers and retreat facilitators. We observed that the first "write what you want" retreat attracted mostly different people from the biannual off-campus retreats for whom they were created, but that the retreats were not as well attended as the off-campus ones. However, the series appeared to gain momentum when we began promoting them as a means of working with research office staff on proposals toward coming SSHRC deadlines. The second retreat series on the SSHRC Insight Development Grant application was well attended by early-career faculty who appreciated and seemed energized by being with others at the same career stage, and by the opportunity to work on their own grant applications in a piecemeal fashion and to receive immediate support. Our observations of these two day-away retreat series—one flexible in format and one structured—convince us that the support offered during writing retreats is most effective when directly related to participants' immediate writing tasks. Customizing the workshops and available expertise at our biannual retreats could strengthen participant perception of the usefulness of those mentorship activities and help to develop the writing competencies that characterize an effective community of practice.

Directions for Future Research

Some researchers suggest that retreats are beneficial for faculty who find it especially difficult to prioritize writing, including early-career faculty, who face many new and competing challenges (Kent et al., 2017); and faculty who have extra hidden workloads, such as women, who are more likely than men to be kept off the tenure track by young children and to work in adjunct positions (Swaggerty at al., 2011). Retreats like ours are free of charge, removing the barrier of cost from participants who may be affiliated with universities in adjunct and other alternative academic positions, and who may not have access to funds from their department to support their attendance. Accordingly, future research could include intersectional analyses to explore whether retreats are an equity and inclusion initiative that can be championed by research offices. Researchers could analyze whether intersections among multiple identities of participants (e.g., gender, race, age, precarious academic employment) make retreats particularly beneficial for equity-deserving groups. This research would employ statistical measures that are largely missing from qualitative studies like our own and in our literature review. Moreover, we agree with Eardley, Banister and Fletcher (2020) that while "writing retreats have been shown to enhance productivity, their potential as well-being interventions has received less attention" (p. 183). Studying the impact of retreats on reducing writing-related anxiety is an opportunity for research in an academic environment that has become even more challenging during the era of COVID-19. The pandemic interrupted the biannual retreat series that forms the focus of this study. That pause created space for us to conduct this program evaluation and to recognize that virtual retreats, like the ones through which we co-wrote this article, are another possibility for implementation and research.

Conclusion

Our results represent the first known peer-reviewed journal article of an academic writing retreat series hosted by a research office or at a Canadian university. The retreats under study are unique from many in our literature review in that they are hosted by a research office rather than an academic unit; long-running rather than a single event; offered to an interdisciplinary audience rather than a single department or group; and flexible rather than structured in format. Our literature review suggests that the primary benefits of retreats include the protected time and space afforded by retreats; the development of a sense of community as demonstrated by the shared purpose, social interaction, and collegial support of retreat participants; the intrapersonal benefit of increased motivation to write due to retreats; and increased writing productivity during retreats. The literature also confirms the necessity of sustaining that productivity through organizational investment in follow-up support such as campus-based writing days (Eardley et al., 2020) or ongoing mentoring (Kornhaber et al., 2016). These themes are consistent with our findings.

Our flexible, non-residential, interdisciplinary retreat series offers the same benefits to participants as the structured, residential, discipline-specific writing retreats in the literature. The overarching benefit of our retreat series, however, lies in its development of a supportive community of writing practice that extends back to campus. Return participants report their retreat experience has reshaped the ways that they write in non-retreat settings, with some even creating retreats of their own. Moreover, return participants say they are collaborating on projects with others met at retreats. Findings suggest that we can retain the flexible structure so valued by participants as well as support them in strengthening their writing skills by customizing workshops and expert support to relate directly to the writing projects in which most participants are engaged. The research contributes a Canadian example to a growing body of evidence that suggests retreats can effectively help academic writers prioritize the task of writing over other conflicting demands. A unique contribution of this study is that it provides a flexible, interdisciplinary, cost-effective, day-away alternative to the discipline-specific, structured, and residential retreats common to the literature.

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Appendix 1: Sample Retreat Itinerary and Evaluation

Writing Retreat at Willistead

Willstead Manor, 1899 Niagara St @ Kildare Rd, Windsor

Natasha Wiebe & Nicole Noel, ORIS

How it works	
To bring	(1) Snacks, (2) laptop with extension cord, (3) jacket in case of chill, (4) any resources you need to write (no WiFi = fewer distractions), (5) yoga mat for Tuesday, if desired.
Flexible schedule	Arrive as early as 8:00; write as late as 4:30. If you wish, explore the grounds, discuss your writing with a colleague, or join a workshop (no registration required).
Experts available	Natasha Wiebe and Nicole Noel from ORIS for grant writers; Pierre Boulos from CTL for curriculum planners and those writing about the scholarship of teaching and learning.
Venue	Quiet space: Gallery, please mute devices. Talking spaces: Grounds and foyer, and dining room when not in use for workshops. Parking free.
Refreshments	Coffee, tea, water, and juice all day. Lunch provided.

Tuesday, April 23, 2019		
8:00 – 4:30	Quiet writing — Choose your own start and end times	Gallery
8:00 – 8:45		Dining room
8:45 – 9:15	Guided meditation for writers – Carlin Miller*	Dining room
9:15 – 11:00		Dining room
11:00 – 12:00	SSHRC budgets – Brent Lee with Natasha Wiebe	Dining room
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	Dining room
1:15 – 1:45	Yoga for writer bodies – Steve Karamatos, some mats available*	Meet in foyer
1:45 – 4:30		Dining room

Wednesday, April 24, 2019		
8:00 – 4:30	Quiet writing	Gallery
8:00 – 8:45		Dining room
8:45 – 9:15	Guided meditation for writers – Carlin Miller*	Dining room
9:15 – 12:00		Dining room
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	Dining room
1:15 – 2:15	Strategies for sustaining writing practice – Susan Holloway & Heidi Jacobs* (Pre-workshop survey to complete by April 22 noon)	Dining room
2:15 – 4:30	Complete your retreat evaluation – see reverse	Dining room

*Workshops optional. No registration required; just walk in!

Retreat Evaluation

Also available online

1. Day(s) you attended: __ April 23, 2019   __ April 24, 2019

2. What you worked on: __ grant proposal   __ journal article
    __ book chapter   __ conference presentation
    __ other (please specify):

3. What was the most useful or effective feature?

4. What did you accomplish or learn?

5. Overall rating of retreat:

Poor				Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

6. What would make future retreats at Willistead more valuable?

For return participants:

7. How many retreats at Willistead have you attended in the past? Estimate: __ of 15 total.

8. Have you noticed any long-term benefits of the retreats?
    __ Not yet
    __ I rely on the retreats to help me move my writing projects forward
    __ I count on the retreats to help me plan my research program or courses
    __ Connections made at a retreat led to a new working relationship (please explain):
    __ A workshop changed my writing or teaching practice (please explain):
    __ My retreat experience has reshaped how I write in other environments (please explain):
    __ Other (please specify):

9. Would you be interested in occasional writing retreats at the Green Bean Coffee Bar (near the parking garage on main campus)?

10. Is there anything you wish to add?

Appendix 2: Workshops Offered During Retreats, 2015-2019

April 2015

    1. Orientation for newcomers

    2. Meditation: Set your intention for retreat

    3. Open access & academic publishing

    4. Writing policy briefs

    5. Writing methodology: Meeting of the Grant-Writing Group

    6. Mentoring student researchers: The training plan

August 2015

    1. Qigong: Don't forget to breathe...and smile

    2. Making your research meaningful for policy makers

    3. Mary Walker: The lady of Willistead Manor

April 2016

    1. Meditation: Set your intention for retreat

    2. Orientation for newcomers

    3. Community research opportunities for your grad students & postdocs

    4. Talking circle: Reviewing your retreat goals

    5. Relax your brain: Yoga sequence

August 2016

    1. Meditation: Set your intention for retreat

    2. Orientation for newcomers

    3. Relax your brain: Yoga sequence

    4. Last-minute syllabi writing

    5. Collaborating with community & international partners

    6. Talking circle: Review your retreat goals

    7. The SSHRC Review Committee: An Insider Perspective

    8. Knowledge Mobilization Plans: For NSERC & Other Researchers

April 2017

    1. Meditation: Set intention for retreat

    2. Collaborating with community & international partners

    3. Health research: Is this for SSHRC or CIHR?

    4. Relax your brain: Yoga

    5. Dialogue on research & issues in Aboriginal communities

August 2017

    1. Meditation: Set intention for retreat

    2. Relax your brain: Yoga

    3. Inside the SSHRC review committee

    4. Rum Runners Tour of Willistead

    5. Meditation: Review your retreat goals

    6. Pain-free data management planning

April 2018

    1. Meditation: Set intention for retreat

    2. Relax your brain: Yoga

    3. Research outcomes 101

    4. Surviving/thriving as early-career researchers

    5. Early Research Awards: Information session

    6. Meditation: Review your retreat goals

    7. Less time, stronger proposals: Writing REB and grant applications concurrently

August 2018

    1. Planning your research program in the social sciences & humanities

    2. Breaking into & succeeding with CIHR

    3. Relax your brain: Yoga

    4. Decolonizing & Indigenizing your teaching & research

April 2019

    1. Guided meditation for writers

    2. SSHRC budgets

    3. Yoga for writer bodies

    4. Guided meditation for writers

    5. Strategies for sustaining your writing practice

August 2019

    1. Relax your brain: Yoga