

**This Center Brought to You by [insert logo
here]: Writing Center Administration in the
Corporate University**

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2018 Thomas R. Watson Conference

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Corporatizing the Center:

What are the trends?

- Priority given to a customer service / corporate-based model of interacting with students across campus
- Pressure to find corporate partners to enhance funding for university programs and services
- Introduction of online tutoring companies on campuses to supplement or replace on-campus options

Customer Service



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All SWOSU employees are strongly encouraged to attend one of the two workshops. Please mark your calendar.

College Customer Service Workshop: Embracing the NEW Campus Service Environment

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Select One Time

8:30-11:30 a.m.

1:15-4:15 p.m.

Pioneer Cellular Event Center Skyview Suite



Andy Master's 2018 goal is simple: Bring "World Class Customer Service" to as many college campuses as possible! With widespread budget cuts and drops in state funding, colleges across the country are more dependent than ever on tuition revenue and increased enrollment for survival. Therefore, it's never been more important for the student (*the customer*) to enjoy their campus experience so they return the following semester, and tell other students (*other customers*) about their experience.

This important program illustrates how to apply proven customer service principles at all levels of staff, faculty and administration--without sacrificing academic integrity. Importantly, concepts include all "internal" and "external" customers which every department on campus serves. Andy also shares success stories from colleges across the country who have embraced this "student as customer" philosophy, decreasing customer frustration and dissatisfaction, while enhancing a positive "word-of-mouth" reputation within the community. In this era of social media, texting, and college online review sites--customer service has NEVER been more important in the history of higher education.

Andy Masters, MA, CSP is an award-winning author and international speaker who has presented educational success and professional development programs for staff, faculty and students at over 250+ U.S. Colleges and Universities. Andy has written 5 books and earned 4 degrees, including achieving Distinguished Graduate honors at Webster University, earning an M.A.-HR Development, and an M.A.-Marketing. Andy has been featured on many national media outlets, including LifeTime Television, PBS, Leadership Excellence magazine, and Investor's Business Daily. Andy has earned the prestigious "CSP" award/designation of the National Speakers Association (NSA), the highest international recognition for professional speakers.

Corporate Partnerships

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- SWOSU Tomorrow's is Southwestern's society for generous partners who choose to remember the university in their estate planning.
- Your charitable gift will provide vital support for our projects, activities and goals
- You can enjoy immediate or deferred tax benefits for you and your family
- Your contribution will influence the well-being of others far into the future

SWOSU™ TOMORROWS



ABOUT BEQUESTS

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Private Tutoring Companies

The screenshot displays the Upswing.io website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://upswing.io>. The website's navigation bar includes the Upswing logo, links for Solutions, Learn More, and Contact Us, and buttons for Sign Up and Login. The main content area features a large heading, "Improve Student Success at Your College Today," followed by the text "Online tutoring. Academic advising. Student mentoring. We're on a mission to end attrition." Below this text are two buttons: "Watch Video" and "Start Today." The bottom of the page is divided into three columns, each representing a service: AdviseUp, TutorUp, and AskUp. Each column contains a brief description of the service and a play button icon. A "Chat with us!" button is located in the bottom right corner.

Dashboard x Edit x Student Engagement & Custom x Increase Student Retention in C x

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Improve Student Success at Your College Today

Online tutoring. Academic advising. Student mentoring.
We're on a mission to end attrition.

Watch Video Start Today

AdviseUp

Allow your advisors to connect with students to schedule and complete virtual advising sessions.

TutorUp

Connect your tutors or leverage the Upswing network of coaches to help students excel academically.

AskUp

Connect your students and tutors with asynchronous online tutoring through the virtual learning center.

Chat with us!

What do on-campus student academic support services look like in this culture?

- A focus on customer service can be a good thing in some respects... BUT how does the idea that “the customer is always right” come into play when we use this language?
- It can be useful to quantify the work we do, but what about the focus on the bottom line?
- What does a writing center administrator’s job look like on a campus that prioritizes this approach?
- How can we make this approach work for us in our roles on college campuses?
- In other words, how can we leverage our rhetorical knowledge while also critiquing the drawbacks of this approach?

Possible Rhetorical Positions

- Writing center administrator as researcher / teacher
- Writing center administrator as organizer or activist
- Writing center administrator as entrepreneur

Research/Teacher Writing Center Work

- Referencing recent research in the field
- Sharing this research with stakeholders
- Adapting tutoring & administrative approaches
- Conducting both qualitative and quantitative studies in our centers

Many administrators are doing this already...

But...

"Despite the good intentions of those who make them, these calls for RAD ["replicable, aggregable, and data-supported"] research inevitably devalue the professional backgrounds of writing center workers and the work that writing center workers do...**They experience disenfranchisement from colleagues who attempt to create insides and outsides of what counts as disciplinary knowledge and hence as the discipline**" (Naydan).

Organizer or Activist Writing Center Work

"[W]riting center practitioners are well positioned by way of the attention that they inherently pay to language to *reconstitute* their identities: to re-envision themselves and their colleagues as poised to engage in activist rhetoric and live lives as academic activists...they can **counter dominant narratives of education and professionalism and recast both education and professionalism as always already activist enterprises**" (Naydan).

Organizer or Activist Writing Center Work

- "[B]oth organizers and writing consultants aim to create conditions in which others take the lead" (Naydan).
- "By employing a rhetoric of labor activism and thereby addressing labor issues in more robust ways, writing centers and the organizations that represent them can work to revitalize shared governance and academic freedom, which are currently threatened by corporatizing forces. They can influence emergent institutional and professional histories" (Naydan).

Entrepreneurial Writing Center Work

"Entrepreneurship is about many things: innovation, independence, the desire to create something new in the world and see it thrive. It is also about money. It feels taboo to write that, and even as I write this I feel guilty or worried that I will come across as greedy. Still, I also know that so much of the work that we do as Writing Center professionals is being strategic in how we gather and use our resources...**what is a Writing Center if not a small business?** " ([Flora-Nakoski](#))

Entrepreneurial Writing Center Work

"Being an entrepreneur makes it possible for me to be an effective Writing Center Director. Upon first meeting me, several of my peer tutors were nervous that I was going to make everything 'too corporate and soulless.' What they have, I hope, come to realize is that learning the lessons of entrepreneurship and business don't make us less authentic or genuine...business tools are a mirror, and I know that what they see in that reflection will be anything but corporate " ([Flora-Nakoski](#)).

What's the "mangle of entanglements" here (Picekring via Sheridan)?

- Our choices as administrators have material and political consequences on college campuses.
- The things we don't do or say have just as much (if not more) of an impact as what we choose to say or do in our positions.
- We are already complicit in a corporate university culture, and despite the "customer service" language currently in use on many campuses, that corporate climate cannot be student centered (Gordon).
- Is it possible to combine elements of all three rhetorical positions (researcher/teacher, organizer/activist, entrepreneur) and other positions? What might that look like? Ethical entrepreneurship?

What's missing?



However [complicated](#) that term may be (Danner)...

Long-Term Information Gathering Goals

- Survey of Writing Center administrators
- Survey(s) of students & faculty
- Possible interviews with willing administrators
- Research completed with little interference from corporate interests...

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