The purpose of these funds is to: Develop a University Writing Center

To develop a Writing Program that will serve the student community and faculty as a whole at Montana State, an active and supported Writing Center that is capable of responding to a wide variety of writing needs across campus is critical.

Though a Writing Center at Montana State currently exists, it requires a significant overhaul in order to bring it up to national standards. This restructuring includes:

- hiring a professional tenure-track director;
- creating a program for training and supporting the professional development of tutors;
- building a new space amenable to creating a cohesive staff and an open workplace;
- a classroom-sized computer lab; and
- an IT person capable of developing and maintaining an active Writing Center website.

The Return On Investment from these expenditures will be:

1. Because success in writing is vitally important to student success, both at MSU and beyond, increases in retention would be an expected outcome.

2. A University Writing Center will become a centerpiece for recruitment, as students (and their parents) recognized the availability of such support services and skill-building at MSU.

3. Significant cost savings via the elimination of duplication of services, as various colleges and/or departments attempt to provide writing support to their students by “re-creating” what already exists.
MSU Writing Center – Questions & Answers

Two key components of this proposal are a tenure track director and an IT person. A third component is a classroom sized computer lab.

Questions are:

1. How will the positions be sustained past the first year of funding?
   (Linda Karell) It’s likely the Dean or Provost would have to approve an additional line. However, and as I indicated on the proposal, there are enough other writing services on campus that those monies, along with potential revenue from increased retention (and perhaps recruitment, if we did this well), could potentially be directed at these positions.

2. Has the classroom space already been identified?
   (Linda Karell) Not specifically, although there was an indication that space for the Writing Center would be allocated within the President’s TLC.

There are a couple of components of this proposal that could be OTO.

3. Create the training program or
   (Linda Karell) Without appropriate leadership (the TT director), I believe it would be a mistake to embark on developing a training program. We simply need the professional skill and expertise of someone who has training in this area.

4. Building the office space (are these worth doing if we don’t have a good answer to questions 1 and 2 above?)
   (Linda Karell) Physical space would be an excellent investment in any time frame. The current Writing Center location is extremely small, and the tutoring area is awkward (as well as small) and separate from the receptionist/appointment area. We have no dedicated classroom, so that would be an extremely useful investment (and would immediately be in high demand).

The proposal mentions that there could be savings in other departments as services are eliminated. There doesn’t seem to be a consensus among the Deans on the workgroup that eliminating these services (specialized writing centers) is desirable. So a final question is

5. Would this MSU Writing Center replace existing College/Department writing centers and if the answer is yes, is there agreement to do that?
   (Linda Karell) Yes; no, for reasons I noted above. Nonetheless, this is the “holistic, far reaching” sort of idea UPBAC was looking for.