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When WC's Collaborate with Athletics: The CAMSA Program at Francis Marion University

Lindsey Banister and Meredith Reynolds

In the past few years, the Francis Marion University Writing Center, an academic resource available to all FMU students, has seen a rise in its international student population. This increase is due in large part to the university's recruitment of student-athletes from other countries. The demands of their athletic and academic schedules and the added stress of negotiating academic English as a second language can put these students at a disadvantage. Furthermore, FMU currently lacks academic services that are specifically designed to support the needs of international students as well as student-athletes. Consequently, many professors send these students to the writing center for help. In an effort to support these students, we created the Communication Assistance for Multilingual Student-Athletes (CAMSA), which is designed to provide composition and ELL support for multilingual student-athletes. While piloting this program, we simultaneously assessed the program's design, methods, and enrollment practices as well as students' satisfaction with the program—in part because neither of us claim expertise in multilingual writing instruction—via the collection of data through pre-program and post-program writing samples, written surveys, and oral interviews.

Written *in medias res*, this article discusses and reflects on the implementation, design, methods, and students' perceptions of the CAMSA program. A goal of this article is to provide insight to the complex socio-geographical settings of small, rural, comprehensive universities, such as Francis Marion, that often do not have a large population of either multilingual writers or student-athletes and how writing centers can play a significant role in supporting these students'

educations. We first provide an overview of writing centers' complicated relationships both with multilingual composition instruction and university athletics. We then briefly contextualize FMU, our university's athletics, and our center's history. Next, we turn to account for and reflect on the politics that went into the creation and implementation of this study as to the program. Lastly, we offer avenues of inquiry for directors to interrogate so as to augment scholarship on and conversations about the relationship between writing centers and athletes, especially at rural comprehensive universities such as FMU.

Multilingual Students and Composition Practices

Scholarship in the past twenty years has advanced our knowledge and praxis of working with multilingual writers in the writing center. Seminal work by authors like Muriel Harris and Tony Silva (1993), Terese Thonus (1993), and Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth's edited essay collection (2004/2009) identify the particular needs of multilingual writers as well as how the writing center is uniquely positioned to help these students succeed. Additional theoretical examination and practical advice to administrators and tutors can be found in two more recent texts—Ben Rafoth's 2015 *Multilingual Writers and Writing Centers* and Bruce and Rafoth's 2016 edited collection: *Tutoring Second Language Writers*. Multilingual writers are not a homogeneous group. As defined by Ilona Leki (2009), they include undergraduate international students coming from countries that prepared them to varying degrees to study in English, who are strong students usually well-versed in the rules of English grammar but struggle with western academic rhetorical expectations; graduate international students, already accomplished in their home countries, having earned at least one degree, who, while also well-versed in English grammar, may struggle with the rhetorical expectations of their chosen field of study; and Generation 1.5 students, who earned high school degrees in the United States and are often orally proficient in English but may struggle with English grammar rules and academic rhetorical expectations. As a result, there is no single strategy or method tutors can employ to help these students; therefore, many writing centers develop individualized tutoring strategies based upon the specific population of their school or university.

In response, researchers have examined how writing centers are often caught between expectations from professors and its own philosophies.

When professors (or universities) take a hardline assimilationist approach, they promote “linear, thesis-statement and topic-sentence-driven, error-free, and idiomatic academic English as soon as possible. The goal is to smoothly blend or melt into the desired discourse communities” (Severino 187). Writing centers can unwillingly become participants in this Othering or isolating of multilingual writers instead of welcoming them. Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, Celeste Del Russo, and Elizabeth Leahy (2016) examine how negative framing, both informal through tutor comments and formalized through writing center mission statements, essentially dissuades L2 writers from seeking help from the writing center. Tutors can also fall into this approach when they either open a session with a flat denial to work on grammar or, during a session, default to simply correcting an L2 writer's sentence-level errors whether or not the writer explicitly identifies LOCs as a concern. Professors or writing centers that follow the separatist approach as defined by Severino believe “cultures, languages, and dialects in contact should be able to exist almost independently—unaffected, untainted by mainstream cultures, languages, and dialects” (p. 185). This approach puts the power in the hands of multilingual writers, who decide how much they want to conform to western academic English standards. However, this stance may do a disservice to multilingual writers by not preparing them adequately for a less forgiving future instructor or employer.

The accommodationist approach is what Severino defines as the compromise between the former stances (188) and is the one most writing centers either formally or informally employ with multilingual writers. Using this approach, writing centers can continue practicing nondirective, collaborative writing help while utilizing more directive techniques when necessary, thus pushing back against “mainstreaming” expectations. As Jessica Williams notes in her 2004 study, “non-directive tutoring led to almost absurdly circuitous interactions”; therefore, “Perhaps the best alternative to either asking or telling is showing and explaining” (195). Lucie Moussu (2013) advises writing centers to “explain to [ELL writers] why they may receive more feedback on content than on form in the writing centre. Careful explanations can help students understand that their language skills must improve if they are to meet their professors' expectations and that feedback on form alone is not useful” (62). Bobbi Olson (2013) asserts writing centers should be “helping multilingual writers draw from their different discourses and make active decisions about utilizing various

features from them.” Therefore, tutorials should ideally move between both HOCs and LOCs, helping writers not only improve the organization of their papers but also their vocabulary through “a lexical grammar approach that combines instruction with grammar with vocabulary” because, “in order to discuss writing at the rhetorical level, the writer must have the language to be able to do so” (Min, 2016).

However, employing the accommodationist approach and meeting the actual needs of ELL students during writing center appointments requires a willingness of writing centers to perhaps go against their own established mission statements, pairing more directive lexical and grammatical discussion with more non-directive techniques for higher-order concerns. Lori Salem’s award-winning 2016 *Writing Center Journal* article examines which students were more likely to use Temple University’s Writing Center, and her findings startled her: “The choice to use the writing center is raced, classed, gendered and shaped by linguistic hierarchies” (161). In fact, “among students who have low SAT-V scores and who are non-native speakers of English, 60% came to the writing center. This is the group with the highest rate of writing center usage, and it is the only subgroup where a majority of students visited the center” (158). The help this group requires, however, is often labeled as “remedial”—more directive grammatical or later-order instruction. As a result, writing centers working with ELL students struggle with reconciling their philosophical identities with the actual needs of their students, and ELL and other non-privileged users may not be having those needs fully met.

Research has found, perhaps not surprisingly, that shifting between HOCs and LOCs is beneficial for both ELL students and native English-speaking (NES) students. As Grant Eckstein (2018) found in his study, while his NES respondents identified organization as their main concern, grammar tied with three other areas (formatting, style, idea expression) in second place; ELL learners placed grammar concerns in first place, with organization second (21). Joseph Cheattle’s study (2017) of 800 post-tutorial surveys from both native English speakers and ELL students showed “there are more similarities than differences between ELL students and NES students” in terms of what both sets of writers wanted to work on during their tutorials and what they actually worked on; while grammar was identified as ELL students’ number one concern, other higher-order concerns such as whether they met the requirements

of the assignment and whether their organization was logical were addressed, as well.

Furthermore, tutors already shift between directive and non-directive tutoring as needed during tutorials, both for NES and ELL students. In Eckstein's (2019) study, he expected his findings to match his expectations regarding directiveness in tutorials—that tutors would be more directive with Gen 1.5 and L2 writers than L1 writers—but found “that tutors may be providing directive tutorials to all three groups of learners without discriminating based on students’ needs and backgrounds” (71). This directiveness, furthermore, is now being accepted as necessary for marginalized groups, in which ELL learners are included. Ultimately, the researchers of this study agree that its university’s ELL learners have unique, specialized needs; therefore, in their development of the CAMSA program, they paired those needs and expectations with NCAA requirements to pilot a program tailored specifically for them.

College Athletics, NCAA Policy, and Student-Athletes

Often, university athletic programs have their own academic services. NCAA policy separates support for financial and academic resources for student-athletes, and for Division I athletics, especially, a rhetoric of compliance grounds the policy (Rifenburg, “Supporting” 64+). Such a rhetoric can severely curtail tutorial practices and strategies, according to Michael Rifenburg in “Fleshing Out the Uniqueness of Student-Athlete Writing Centers.” In his response to Alanna Bitzel’s article “Supporting Student-Athletes,” he notes:

My staff and I...cater only to student-athletes and work from non-directive, non- evaluative writing center pedagogies while adhering to strict NCAA academic compliance mandates, which, for example disallow a tutor writing on a student-athlete’s paper or collaboratively brainstorming and requires all writing-tutoring sessions to occur in a pre-designated space with clear staff oversight.

As a result, student-athlete academic services have grown “alongside yet distinct from the general academic mission of American higher education” (Rifenburg, “Supporting,” 64). Thus, many Division I

athletic departments have their own Writing Centers, which are not necessarily logistically, academically, and pedagogically connected to the Writing Center(s) available for the larger campus community. For example, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Oklahoma, both NCAA Division I schools, have student-athlete-only writing centers. In their back-and-forth 2012-2013 columns in *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, Bitzel and Rifenburg discuss and debate the unique challenges directors, tutors, and student-athletes constantly negotiate in these student-athlete-only centers where NCAA compliance policy undergirds their practices. Bitzel's goal is to "disavow notions that...writing tutors are doing more than they should for our student athletes" ("Writing Centers"), while Rifenburg stresses that "tutoring methods cannot mimic what occurs in a traditional campus writing center" due to NCAA mandates ("Fleshing Out"). To that end, the directors and administrators of these centers often have different aims for their centers than those that serve the large campus community: "our goal at the Center [UT Austin] is not to attract a larger clientele or to address writing in the larger community; we exist to respond to the needs of a particular population" (Bitzel, "Supporting"). On the one hand, this segregation can lead to the balkanization of these students, which disconnects them from the academic environment/culture the larger student body experiences (Rifenburg, "Supporting," 64-65). On the other hand, student-athletes at these big name universities, whose names and faces appear frequently in the media, may view these centers as a space of refuge "to get away from the public's attention and focus on their studies" (Bitzel, "Supporting").

Rifenburg and Bitzel aptly stress the way NCAA policy impinges upon the academic services offered to Division I student-athletes. Both highlight the fact that student-athletes are a unique part of the student population on any campus (Bitzel, "Supporting"; Rifenburg, "Fleshing Out") but, despite their uniqueness, there is limited scholarship on the relationship between writing centers and student-athletes. Indeed, Rifenburg observes that "A thin slice of scholarship focuses on the nexus of athletics and rhetoric and literacy, but I have yet to come across a source devoted to writing centers and student-athletes" ("Fleshing Out"). Similarly, Bitzel demonstrates that writing center directors working with student-athletes are uniquely positioned to address this dearth of scholarship and "should look for ways to leverage this advantage in service to research" ("Writing Centers"). In creating the CAMSA

program and researching best practices, we more specifically found a gap in the literature on student-athletes at the Division II and III levels as well as on the juxtaposition between multilingualism, athletics, and writing centers. Thus, much like the scholars we have discussed here, we advocate for further scholarship on these relationships and practices even as we contribute to ongoing discussions about multilingual students, student-athletes, and writing centers.

Francis Marion University, the Athletic Department, and the Writing Center

Francis Marion University is a rural public comprehensive university located in Florence, SC, and was first established as a college in 1970. Its main mission is to serve the people of the region and the state, with 96% of its students being SC residents (“About FMU”), and more than 40% of the 2018-2019 freshman class being first generation college students (“First Generation Fund: Francis Marion University,” para. 1). Enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year was 3,984 students (“Francis Marion University Enrollment Up 5.2 Percent,” para. 2). Additionally, the university is ranked as an NCAA Division II school, with seven different sports offered for both men and women. FMU’s athletics operates with a small athletic staff; specifically, it has a single NCAA Compliance Officer rather than an entire office dedicated to monitoring such issues. While this means that the level of NCAA oversight is less than at large Division I universities, it also means less money funnels back into the university for student-athlete academic support or the university at large. Athletes who attend our university are not aiming to become professional athletes; rather, they are here to compete at the collegiate level while obtaining a strong education.

The international students who choose to attend FMU enter the university through one of two tracks: as transfer students through the study abroad program or via matriculation through the regular admissions process. As internal institutional data shows, between 2013 and 2018, the percentage of international undergraduate students has remained steady, accounting for 1.5-1.8% of total university undergraduates, roughly 50-65 students per year.⁵ Students who enter

⁵ International graduate students have fluctuated between 1-5 between 2013-2018, or .3-1.5% of total enrollment.

FMU through study abroad are students from international universities that FMU has partnered with as exchange hosts. Students from FMU travel abroad for a semester, and students from participating universities abroad come to FMU for a semester. These students automatically become members of the FMU Honors College, and their entrance into the university is facilitated by the Director of International Programs and Director of the Honors Program.

Degree-seeking international students enter FMU through the regular admissions process. These students must meet the university's admission requirements to be eligible for admission, and admission is not guaranteed. Many international athletes enter the FMU through this second pathway. Similar to the high school recruiting process where scouts observe athletes and recruit them to their university's sport program, international recruiting scouts partner with various international high schools and offer students opportunities to earn American college educations as well as opportunities to continue to play their sports. Given FMU's rural location, university size, and status as a Division II school, options to recruit top American athletes are limited. Thus, the university regularly recruits international athletes to play at Francis Marion. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, there has been a recent incline in the number of international student-athletes due to the university granting permission to the Athletic department to increase the sizes of their teams as well as create secondary teams. With the increase in team size, international recruiting has also increased and thus so has the population of international, multilingual student-athletes on campus. While the culture and relationship between athletics and academics at Francis Marion University is quite collaborative and supportive of student-athletes (Hartzler), the international student-athletes have struggled to meet the demands of rigorous athletic schedules and classes in another language. As a result, they voluntarily show up at the writing center for assistance or their coaches send them to us.

The FMU Writing Center and its operating budget became part of the newly established Center for Academic Success and Advisement during the 2016-2017 school year. The tutoring staff is composed of a yearly average of twenty-five undergraduate students from various majors and a yearly average of four English department faculty members. The Center as campus-wide resource is well attended, with over 25% of the

student body having at least one tutorial during the 2018-2019 school year. The Center has an overwhelmingly positive reputation from students, staff, and university administration. Because of the writing center's popularity as a student resource and our student-athletes' desire to maintain their academics and athletic scholarships, these students regularly use the center. Seeing a need to augment training so our tutors felt more prepared to assist our multilingual student population as well as provide ELL composition and communication support to these students, we created the CAMSA program with the support of the Athletic Department.

The Creation of CAMSA

Communication Assistance for Multilingual Student-Athletes (CAMSA) is modeled after our center's Write on Target program. The FMU Writing Center established Write on Target (WOT) to support students in entry-level English composition courses. In this program, experienced student tutors are paired with students in these English courses for weekly 45-minute appointments to work primarily on their composition assignments. Similarly, in CAMSA, international student-athletes are paired with experienced tutors, and they meet once a week for 45 minutes to work on writing assignments, reading and vocabulary, and conversational English. To ensure that the program complied with NCAA mandates before we piloted it, we met with FMU's Athletic Director, Compliance Officer, and coaches to seek institutional support as well as reviewed the 2018-2019 NCAA manual for Division II athletics, which presents a single principle for academics:

Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be maintained as a vital component of the educational program, and student-athletes shall be an integral part of the student body. The admission, academic standing and academic progress of student-athletes shall be consistent with the policies and standards adopted by the institution for the student body in general. ("2.5 Principle of Sound Academic Standards," 4)

NCAA's compliance rhetoric, as observed by Rifenburg in his 2016 study, "places responsibility of academic policy creation, implementation, and enforcement on individual institutions through the vague construction of this principle," which does not change across

Division I, II, or III manuals nor has its wording changed across time (“Supporting,” 63). Thus, as we created the CAMSA program, the compliance officer determined that this program and FMU’s Writing Center tutorial practices complied with NCAA policies. Unlike the experiences of Rifenburg and Bitzel, our procedures and goals were not curtailed by NCAA mandates due both to its vague policy and, we suspect, to the school’s Division II status and rural geographic location. Additionally, in our interview with Murray Hartzler, FMU’s Athletic Director, he commended various department chairs and coaches for working together to “create an environment of academic success” for student-athletes. Hartzler observed that he, coaches, and the departments on campus work together to ensure that student-athletes stay on course to graduate in four years. Separate student-athlete-only academic services do not exist due to the university’s Division II status and its small percentage of athletes in comparison to the total student body (Hartzler). Instead, each coach, Hartzler explains, is in charge of helping their student-athletes balance academic and athletic responsibilities. As a result, some coaches have team-designated study halls that rotate locations based on classroom availability on campus while others have regular individual meetings with their athletes to check in on the state of their academics (Hartzler).

Given the collaborative relationship between our athletic and academic departments, garnering support for CAMSA was a relatively simple process. Hartzler and coaches endorsed the program by requiring—an important difference to the voluntary WOT program—new, incoming international student athletes and returning international student athletes with GPAs lower than 3.0 and English course grades lower than a C to be enrolled in the program. Additionally, given our lack of expertise with ELL instruction and the importance of evaluating best practices, we assessed CAMSA’s effectiveness during its first pilot year; we collected data from students through writing samples, written surveys, and oral interviews at multiple intervals throughout the fall and spring semester.

The Initial Implementation Plan

Much of the preliminary work behind developing the CAMSA program occurred during FMU’s second summer session. The Director stayed in regular contact with the Athletic Director and a member of the Enrollment office to develop a spreadsheet of international athletes and

winnowed our list to eligible individuals. Notably, these students come to us via uneven and inconsistent pathways. That is, some of these students are freshmen newly arrived from their home countries; others have lived in different English-speaking countries and/or the United States for 2-4 years to attend high school and some college; other students are bilingual and working on their Master's degrees. Given these different paths, we received different types and levels of information about each student from admissions: some have TOEFL scores, some are exempt from TOEFL, some have SAT scores, some only have high school transcripts, some have high school and college transcripts, and some have a combination.

Using this information, or lack thereof, along with a written assessment that we had planned to administer – FMU does not require international students to submit a writing sample for admission, so we developed a timed writing prompt – we then assessed who we would place into the program and who we would not. To be clear, as writing center administrators and composition scholars, we believe that all students, no matter their English language proficiency and fluency, benefit from writing tutorial assistance, as this is a significant and invaluable component of the writing process. But the FMU Writing Center, while an administratively well-supported and popular student resource on campus, is limited in budget, tutor numbers, physical space, and time. Unfortunately, then, we cannot provide tutorial assistance to all student-athletes. CAMSA, therefore, is solely designed to offer writing assistance to international ELL student-athletes who struggle with writing at the American collegiate level to the extent that they would struggle to pass their lower-division composition courses.

Exempting some students from the program is necessary due to our limited resources. We exempted students using a triangulation of the following data: students whose first language is English, students with TOEFL scores above 90, students with SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) section scores above 480/500 (“Benchmarks”), students exempt from TOEFL (because of the amount of time spent living and attending school in an English-speaking country), and students whose writing samples demonstrated understanding of American collegiate level academic writing codes. From CAMSA’s inception, we acknowledge that 1) we are not experts in ELL writing instruction; 2) standardized tests, such as TOEFL and SATs, are

problematic and often do not accurately reflect students' academic abilities; 3) our initial methodology for placing the students into the program was flawed; and 4) this program is imperfect and in continual development so as to best support and adapt to our students' needs. When internationality met intersectionality, we failed to consider the intersections of these ELL students' subject positions, which can both positively and negatively affect their English language acquisition practices and experiences. Thus, our initial decision to exempt a student from the program because they were from an English-speaking country was misguided. Accounting for this, and working with our Athletic Director to help him understand the tension between internationality and intersectionality, we have restructured the program and how students select into it, which we will address in the final sections of this article.

After a working list of potential student-athletes was developed, we collaborated with the Athletic Department to meet with these students (who moved onto campus a week before the regular student population). Our plan was to introduce the CAMSA program to them and obtain a writing sample, which we intended to use in conjunction with the data collected above to establish our final roster of CAMSA students. Then, using the student-athletes' academic and athletic schedules, we would pair the CAMSA enrollees with senior tutors in our writing center for weekly 45-minute appointments. The week before the Writing Center opened for the fall semester, we would explain the CAMSA program to the selected tutors, review ELL tutoring strategies they had been trained to use when they were initially hired, and provide them with resources that they could use during tutorials. CAMSA tutorials would then begin the same week as WOT tutorials, during the writing center's third week of operations.

The Actual Implementation

Due to communication lag time with coaches and the Athletic Director at the start of the semester, we were unable to meet with the athletes before school started to introduce them to the Writing Center and the academic services it offers or to explain the purpose of CAMSA and the reasons for their enrollment in the program. As a result, the Athletic Director, who follows a top-down approach when communicating with athletes, provided them with this information, couching it in NCAA compliance mandates, which we later learned was framed solely in terms

of ‘required attendance’ and being ‘benched’ if they did not attend their appointments. Understandably, the CAMSA students communicated their resentment toward the forced nature of the program and were confused as to why they were placed in the program in the first place. Additionally, many of them did not understand what a writing center was and what services it offered. In response to this confusion, and amidst the hectic schedules that accompany the start of any academic year, we scrambled to collect writing samples, assuage anxieties, meet with students to offer clarity, and ascertain who should be enrolled in the program. Unsurprisingly and understandably, the resulting fourteen CAMSA enrollees, who we scheduled and paired with our writing center senior tutors during the second week of classes, reluctantly participated at minimal levels in their appointments, initially. However, despite their preliminary dislike of the program, many of them began to actively participate in their sessions in part because of the success they saw in their classes and in part due to the support of their tutor.⁶

Halfway through the academic year, we asked our CAMSA students to fill out a brief, anonymous online survey evaluating their experiences in the program. Using the Likert Scale, we asked students to rate their experiences based on statements such as “I feel more confident about my academic writing skills because of the CAMSA program”; “My tutor was effective”; “I’d recommend CAMSA to other students”; and “I will use the writing center again for other assignments.” That said, only seven of the fourteen students filled out the survey, so these responses are not comprehensive. Furthermore, based on the chaotic start of the program and the students’ rough (and somewhat misrepresented) introduction to it, we did not expect positive results. Much to our surprise six of the seven students rated their experience as neutral or strongly positive for each question, which was a significant change from their attitudes at the

⁶ As the pilot semester progressed, students started becoming more proactive in their weekly appointments, working with their tutors through the brainstorming, drafting, and revising processes of their projects. Therefore, by the end of the semester, more had taken advantage of what Severino and Prim (2016) define as a writing center’s “vital role”: “tak[ing] full advantage of a complete writing process of multiple drafts and multiple revisions, including editing, in multiple sittings” (p. 176). This proactive involvement carried into the spring semester.

start of the program. At the end of the semester, we also met with our CAMSA tutors as a group to reflect on their experiences. Similar to their tutees, they communicated a sense of stress at the start of the semester but ultimately felt that both the students and they benefited from these sessions.⁷

CAMSA Restructured: Future Goals for the Program and FMU Students

Using the anecdotal information we gathered from our tutors and CAMSA students, initial data (via surveys, writing samples, and interviews) we collected, recommendations from the reviewers of this article, and solicited advice from colleagues specializing in ELL composition, we significantly revised the CAMSA program in terms of the enrollment process and in terms of the guidelines about how the program will be introduced to students, both of which the Athletic Department agreed to follow. The program is now entirely voluntary, and students can choose to participate and/or opt out of the program at any time; we are in the process of developing a survey modeled off of directed self-placements where students indicate their perceived level of need and interest in the program, and we will follow up with interested students to enroll them in CAMSA. As administrators of the writing center, we now control the framing of and discussions with student-athletes about the program to make clear that the program's goal is to demystify American university academic writing codes. We will continue to provide a larger assortment of resources for athletes/tutors to use in the semester; we will have regular meetings with the student-athletes in CAMSA throughout the semester in efforts to be proactive rather than reactive; and we will maintain our current tutor-training

⁷ Bromley, Northway, and Schonberg note that tutor anxiety about working with L2 students is very real and that "student-tutors may believe that working with L2 students is harder than working with L1 students because of handed-down practice (Thompson et al. 79) and assumptions of one-way learning. This anxiety may also add to tutors' fears about tutors' own limited knowledge about the English language; when engaging with students on a topic like grammar, tutors' anxieties may move to the foreground." Our tutors' anxiety levels at this program's implementation were much higher than when we debriefed at the end of our pilot semester, and most of our pilot CAMSA tutors enthusiastically volunteered to participate in CAMSA again.

regimen, which includes ELL training for tutors every semester to educate and reinforce knowledge. We saw more overall positive responses to our CAMSA program in its second year, both from the international student-athletes and tutors. In casual conversations with members of FMU's Athletic Department, they have communicated the desire and need to expand the program to include *all* freshman student-athletes. Such positive feedback suggests that collaboration and student-outreach have been successful. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on university athletics and international travel, the program is paused for the Fall 2020 semester; however, this delay has enabled us to seek advice from experts in ELL education to further restructure the program.

As we mentioned at the start of this article, we are writing, in the midst of this pilot, our evaluation of its design, methods, and our revisions to the program. Our goals and purpose in writing *in medias res* are three-fold: 1) we share our experience to offer practical guidance (on what to do and not to do) when creating writing center programs for underrepresented and under-supported students at universities with similar social-geographic contexts; 2) we strive to raise awareness about the unique academic situations both student-athletes and international student-athletes find themselves in and how writing centers can support these students; and 3) we stress the need for further research and scholarship on writing centers and student-athletes. Important questions to consider in this work are: As directors, how can we better prepare our tutors for the growing number of one-to-one conferences with multilingual-student-athletes and student-athletes who will come to our writing centers in the future? How can we help tutors demystify academic writing codes for multilingual students visiting the center? As our student population changes and we become aware of underrepresented students in need of writing support, how might tutoring practices and writing centers change and adapt, especially at rural, comprehensive universities? How can we work with faculty and coaches to help student-athletes and international student-athletes succeed? What can writing centers at the various NCAA Division I, II, and III levels learn from each other about tutoring practices and community goals so as to enhance students' writing experiences? Through the complicated creation and implementation of the CAMSA program, we have come to understand the immense need for additional scholarship on the relationships writing centers have with student-athletes and multilingual

student-athletes. We would advocate for further research on the best practices and effective programs to support these students.

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