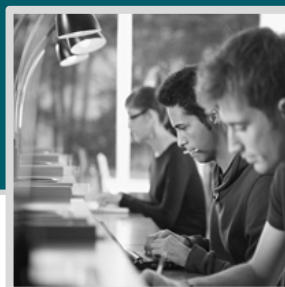
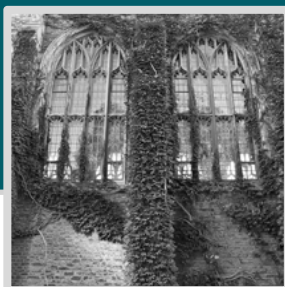


# Academic Tutoring in Comprehensive Universities

September 2014



In the following report, Hanover Research examines effective practices for the organization and administration of tutoring services, focusing on comprehensive universities. Drawing upon research literature and the examples of specific institutions, the report touches upon issues such as the location of tutoring programs on campus, staffing, campus outreach, and various issues in the delivery of tutoring services.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

Most college campuses offer academic tutoring services to some degree, often through a learning assistance center that may offer a range of related services.<sup>1</sup> Learning assistance centers and the academic tutoring services they provide play an important role in supporting student success, and have been associated with positive student outcomes, such as improved grades and retention rates.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past several decades, learning assistance has emerged as a distinct element of higher education, with increasing attention paid to the effective organization and administration of these services.<sup>3</sup> However, learning assistance centers and related units continue to develop as colleges and universities seek to leverage best practices for integrating these functions into the institution.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the major issues facing learning assistance centers and tutoring services include:<sup>5</sup>

- **Organization:** Learning assistance functions may or may not be housed in a centralized office on campus, and may encompass a more or less broad scope of services, from study skills to writing and math assistance to content-specific tutoring. Regardless, it is important that learning assistance be integrated with the rest of the institution and have support from the central administration.
- **Staffing:** A “trained and caring staff” is critical for providing learning assistance, and tutoring staff may include peers as well as professionals.<sup>6</sup> Training and professional

<sup>1</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” *Research for Educational Reform*. December 2004. p. 39. <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/15455953/managing-tutoring-aspects-learning-assistance-center>

<sup>2</sup> [1] Bettinger, E. “Student Supports: Developmental Education and Other Academic Programs.” *The Future of Children*. Spring 2013. pp. 101, 103-104. [http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/23\\_01\\_05.pdf](http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/23_01_05.pdf)

[2] Hendriksen, S. et al. “Assessing Academic Support: The Effects of Tutoring on Student Learning Outcomes.” *Journal of College Reading and Learning*. Spring 2005. pp. 60-61. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ689654>

[3] Perin, D. “Remediation Beyond Developmental Education: The Use of Learning Assistance Centers to Increase Academic Preparedness in Community Colleges.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. August 2004. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ682240>

<sup>3</sup> Arendale, D. “Mainstreamed Academic Assistance and Enrichment for All Students: The Historical Origins of Learning Assistance Centers.” *Research for Educational Reform*. December 2004. pp. 13-17. <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~arend011/HistoryLAC.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> D’Adamo-Weinstein, L. “Best Practices in Learning Center Management.” NCLCA Institute. July 2010. Slides 2, 9-10. <http://nclcainstitute2010.pbworks.com/f/LDW+-+Best+Practices+in+Managing+Your+Learning+Center+Effectively.pptx>

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise cited, bulleted points draw upon: Landsberger, J. “Learning by Design: An Interview with Frank Christ.” *TechTrends*. Sept./Oct. 2007. p. 6. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-007-0060-6>

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, W. and Arendale, D. “Peer Educators in Learning Assistance Programs: Best Practices for New Programs.” *New Directions for Student Services*. Spring 2011. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ921046>

development are also critical, and various forms of certification for tutoring staff can be used to ensure program quality.<sup>7</sup>

- **Outreach:** Whether students are referred by faculty or “self-referred,” the availability of tutoring services should be communicated effectively through “ongoing publicity and public relations activities.”
- **Delivery:** Learning assistance may be delivered in various forms, whether to groups or to individuals, in-person by appointment or walk-in, or through the use of technology such as online tutoring. Each of these forms of delivery has drawbacks and advantages that must be considered when implementing these services.

This report examines effective practices in these areas, based on research literature and the experience of individual institutions, with a focus on mid-sized, comprehensive universities. An accompanying spreadsheet details basic characteristics about the programs reviewed for this report.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Tutoring services may be more effectively delivered through a centralized administrative unit.** Bowling Green State University, for instance, has seen improvements in the accessibility, efficiency, and accountability of its tutoring services after consolidating the writing center, study skills tutoring, and math tutoring in a single “Learning Commons.” Several other institutions reviewed for this report have taken similar steps in recent years. Experts suggest that, at a minimum, there should be some coordination between various learning assistance services such as the writing center, math tutoring, and tutoring in other subjects.
- **The placement of tutoring services in a central campus location can increase access and visibility.** The campus library, in particular, has been chosen by multiple institutions reviewed for this report as an optimal location for tutoring services because of its academic environment, high student traffic, and proximity to learning resources. Central Washington University, Bowling Green State University, and Western Washington University, for instance, have all seen increased utilization since placing tutoring services in the library.
- **Most colleges and universities use peer tutors to provide tutoring services.** The use of peer tutors is “common throughout the academy,” and is found at most of the institutions reviewed for this report. Many institutions use formal training programs, such as College Reading and Learning Association tutor certification training, to ensure the quality of tutoring provided by student employees.
- **Tutoring programs should strive for high visibility on campus.** Outreach initiatives ensure that faculty and other campus constituents, as well as students, are aware of

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<sup>7</sup> Calderwood, B. “Learning Center Issues, Then and Now: An Interview with Frank Christ.” *Journal of Developmental Education*. Spring 2009. p. 26. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ868670>

- the range of tutoring services available and can refer students to them as appropriate.
- **Tutoring can be effective in a drop-in or appointment-based setting.** Some institutions encourage students to participate in regular, recurring tutoring sessions, which is the traditional model and is recognized as effective in improving student learning. However, evidence suggests that drop-in, or walk-in, tutoring can also support student learning. Most of the institutions reviewed for this report offer both types of scheduling.
  - **Online tutoring is growing in prevalence.** Online tutoring can take various forms, from the use of remote technologies (e.g., Skype) to conduct tutoring sessions to the use of third-party providers such as eTutoring.org or Tutor.com. A number of the institutions reviewed for this report offer online tutoring, but the practice is not universal.

# ISSUES IN ACADEMIC TUTORING

## ORGANIZATION OF TUTORING SERVICES

The organization of learning assistance services varies from institution to institution. These functions may come under the purview of academic affairs, student affairs, or some other division, such as enrollment management. At least one researcher suggests that “the most effective and strategic location for learning assistance” is “at the crossroads” of academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management.<sup>8</sup> However, Frank Christ, a leading authority on learning assistance,<sup>9</sup> has suggested that placement of these services under academic affairs is more natural and helps to develop faculty awareness of “what the learning assistance center [does] as an academic support service.”<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most pressing question of organization is whether tutoring services will be centralized in a single office or distributed across multiple units. Both centralized and decentralized models of learning assistance can be found in higher education institutions,<sup>11</sup> and this pattern is evident among the institutions reviewed for this report. A number of these institutions operate independent units for academic skills, writing or math assistance, or content tutoring, while others gather these functions into a single center.

*Many institutions are choosing to consolidate tutoring services in a single administrative unit, or at least to place them in a single, common location.*

Some evidence suggests that the centralized model is more effective than the decentralized one. In the related context of developmental education, for instance, research has established that the organization of “all [remedial] courses and services . . . under a single administrative unit with its own director” leads to better student outcomes than offering these services through individual academic departments.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, a study comparing the practices of tutors working in a centralized learning assistance center with those of tutors working for individual departments found that the former generally employed more effective tutoring strategies.<sup>13</sup> Frank Christ suggests that, even if “separate centers” are maintained for different types of tutoring, such as “science, math, writing, and individual course assistance,” some centralized organization should be imposed on these units by

<sup>8</sup> Arendale, D. “Access at the Crossroads: Learning Assistance in Higher Education.” ASHE Higher Education Report. 2010. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ887078>

<sup>9</sup> “Frank L. Christ, Advocate of Learning Assistance, Dies at 89.” *Chronicle of Higher Education*. January 21, 2013. <http://chronicle.com/article/Frank-L-Christ-Advocate-of/136739/>

<sup>10</sup> Landsberger, J. “Learning by Design: An Interview with Frank Christ.” Op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Arendale, D. “Access at the Crossroads.” Op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Boylan, H. et al. “Program Components and Their Relationship to Student Performance.” *Journal of Developmental Education*. Spring 1997. p. 3. <http://ncde.appstate.edu/files/Program%20Components.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Bailey, G. “Tutoring Strategies: A Case Study Comparing Learning Center Tutors and Academic Department Tutors.” University of North Carolina-Greensboro. 2010. pp. 2-3, 179, 184-185. [http://www.crla.net/ittpc/resources/Bailey\\_Geoff/Bailey\\_Geoffrey\\_dissertation\\_4-7-10.pdf](http://www.crla.net/ittpc/resources/Bailey_Geoff/Bailey_Geoffrey_dissertation_4-7-10.pdf)

linking them “to [the campus learning center] and to each other through [a roundtable] or to a similar campus structure that would promote communication on a scheduled basis.”<sup>14</sup>

Several of the institutions reviewed for this report have moved toward a more centralized model of tutoring services in recent years, including Bowling Green State University, Central Washington University, and Saginaw Valley State University.

Bowling Green State University provides an example of an institution that has recently moved to consolidate its learning assistance services in a centralized hub. In 2009, as part of a broader strategic planning process, the University undertook a review of its tutoring services, which at the time “consisted of three units . . . each with separate organizational and operational structures,” including a writing center, a study skills center, and a math and statistics tutoring center. All three were overseen by an assistant vice president under the vice president for enrollment management.<sup>15</sup> Driven by several considerations, the University elected to consolidate these units in a single entity, the Learning Commons, with a single director who would report to the vice president for enrollment management. These considerations included:<sup>16</sup>

- **Accessibility:** The separate learning centers “were in separate locations . . . all lacking a psycho-social environment that encouraged engagement.” By moving these services to one location, Bowling Green State sought to create a “single, accessible location for one-stop support and supplemental intervention.”
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Consolidation would allow for more efficient management and a “less-cost-per-student model,” both by reducing overhead and creating economies of scale, but also by allowing for unified planning to meet challenges such as increased service demands.
- **Accountability:** Finally, a centralized organization would allow for consistent tracking of student usage and outcomes, versus the fragmented approaches of the independent units, which used “variable measures and methodologies.”

For instance, cost-savings were achieved through the elimination of several positions as the old tutoring centers were consolidated and former employees either took early retirement or moved to new positions within the University. In turn, these savings allowed for an expansion of services, as funds were “internally reallocated” to create positions for a full-time director and a tutor coordinator, who would “expand the number and variety of subjects offered.”<sup>17</sup> This “subject-area tutoring” essentially constitutes a fourth function that exists alongside the three original services of study skills, writing, and math support.<sup>18</sup> To improve accountability, Bowling Green State’s new Learning Commons addresses “one of the problems with having decentralized tutoring centers,” namely the “lack of consistent,

<sup>14</sup> Landsberger, J. “Learning by Design: An Interview with Frank Christ.” Op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. August 31, 2012. p. 2.  
<http://www2.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/HLC/HLCQualityInitReport.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

accurate, and appropriate data.”<sup>19</sup> As part of the reorganization, the University purchased Accudemia, a “web-based academic center management system” that tracks student visits and other metrics.<sup>20</sup> The software allows Bowling Green State to see, for instance, how many upperclassmen use the tutoring services; which majors account for the most students seeking tutoring; and whether students with high GPAs use the services in addition to those who are struggling. Ultimately, the University should be able to “pre-allocate personnel in anticipation of projected demands for future semesters.”<sup>21</sup>

### *USING THE LIBRARY AS A SITE FOR TUTORING SERVICES*

In order to improve the accessibility of its learning assistance services, Bowling Green State also took a step that appears to have become increasingly common in recent years, namely placing tutoring and related services in the library. Hosting academic tutoring in the library is a common approach,<sup>22</sup> and while not all of the institutions reviewed for this report follow this practice, a considerable number do, including multiple institutions that have recently relocated tutoring to the library as part of broader reorganization, such as:

- **Bridgewater State University:** At Bridgewater State, the Academic Achievement Center, which hosts multiple support services, including tutoring, is housed in “9,000 square feet on the ground floor of the library.” This space was established in 2001 to replace a more fragmented arrangement that “provid[ed] little opportunity for collaboration and discussion between the personnel who provided the services.”<sup>23</sup>
- **Central Washington University:** In early 2013, Central Washington University relocated its writing center, math center, and tutoring program to a common location in the first floor of the main library in order to provide “comprehensive academic support services . . . in one location.”<sup>24</sup> Now known as the Learning Commons,<sup>25</sup> the Central Washington programs have seen an increase in utilization since moving to the library, at least partly because of their increased “visibility and easier access.”<sup>26</sup>
- **Saginaw Valley State University:** Saginaw Valley State created its current Center for Academic Achievement in 2012, “when separate tutoring services were consolidated

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> “Accudemia – Academic Center Management in the Cloud.” Engineerica. <http://www.engineerica.com/accudemia>

<sup>21</sup> “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. Op. cit., pp. 6-10.

<sup>22</sup> Landsberger, J. “Learning by Design: An Interview with Frank Christ.” Op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Bukowiecki, E. et al. “A Center for Academic Achievement: How Innovative Collaborations Between Faculty and Learning Center Administrators Build Model Credit-Bearing, First-Year Courses with Embedded Support for At-Risk Students.” *International Journal of Learning*. 2008. pp. 65-66.

[http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=elem\\_ed\\_fac](http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=elem_ed_fac)

<sup>24</sup> “CWU Provides Better Access to Student Support Programs.” Central Washington University. January 4, 2013.

<http://www.cwu.edu/cwu-provides-better-access-student-support-programs>

<sup>25</sup> “Welcome to the Learning Commons.” Central Washington University. <http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/>

<sup>26</sup> “Services and Activities Fee Committee – Minutes.” Central Washington University. April 9, 2014. p. 2.

<https://www.cwu.edu/services-activities/sites/cts.cwu.edu/services-activities/files/S%26A%20Minutes%20April%2009,%202014.pdf>



into one physical location in the main campus library.”<sup>27</sup> Prior to this move, the tutoring services had been “spread out across campus in distinct centers, which was confusing to students”; consolidation in the library was expected to “improve access.”<sup>28</sup> The University Writing Center continues to operate independently of the other tutoring services,<sup>29</sup> but was also relocated to the main library, “making this building a center of student learning support.”<sup>30</sup>

- **Western Washington University:** In 2011, Western Washington created a Learning Commons in the main campus library,<sup>31</sup> which “brings together resources and programs to advance teaching and learning,” including the Tutoring Center and the Writing Center.<sup>32</sup> Although these units remain administratively independent,<sup>33</sup> the “more visible location” in the library contributed to “an increase of over 35 percent in the number of drop-in tutoring visits” in the first two years.<sup>34</sup> Usage has continued to increase since then.<sup>35</sup>

Bowling Green State followed a model similar to these institutions. The new, consolidated Learning Commons unit was housed on the first floor of the main library, to “encourage increased activity in a space on campus with a strong academic climate.”<sup>36</sup> It was hoped that the location of the Learning Commons in the library would promote “an increase in traffic” to the library, as well as “increased use of the Learning Commons by students who visit the library.” This decision appears to have been successful; in its first year of hosting the Learning Commons, the library gate count increased by 23 percent.<sup>37</sup> To facilitate the sharing of space by the two units, the Learning Commons and the library drafted a memorandum of understanding, outlining agreements on how patrons would use the respective spaces, how materials and other resources would be shared, and other administrative issues.<sup>38</sup>

## STAFFING OF TUTORING SERVICES

Most institutions use some combination of peer tutors and professional staff to provide learning assistance services. However, the frontline tutors in most cases are likely to be

<sup>27</sup> “A Self-Study Report.” Saginaw Valley State University. 2013. p. 91.

<http://www.svsu.edu/media/hlc/pdfs/CorSVSUSelfStudyFINAL021014.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> See “The Writing Center at Zahnow Library.” Saginaw Valley State University. <http://www.svsu.edu/writingcenter/>

<sup>30</sup> “A Self-Study Report.” Saginaw Valley State University. *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>31</sup> “Strategic Planning Matrix: 2013-2015 Resource Plan.” Western Washington University. p. 2.

<http://www.wvu.edu/upb/Prov12/linkstaff%20and%20infrastructure.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> “Learning Commons.” Western Washington University. [http://library.wvu.edu/learning\\_commons](http://library.wvu.edu/learning_commons)

<sup>33</sup> See [1] “Western Libraries Organizational Chart.” Western Washington University. February 27, 2014.

[https://www.library.wvu.edu/sites/library.wvu.edu/files/lib\\_org\\_chart\\_current.pdf](https://www.library.wvu.edu/sites/library.wvu.edu/files/lib_org_chart_current.pdf)

[2] “Academic and Career Development Services.” Western Washington University. <http://www.wvu.edu/acds/>

<sup>34</sup> “Strategic Planning Matrix: 2013-2015 Resource Plan.” Western Washington University. *Op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> “Budget Proposal Narrative – Division: Enrollment and Student Services.” Western Washington University. January

10, 2014. p. 4. <http://www.wvu.edu/upb/1517DP/ESS/studentssuccess/StudentsuccessTOPOST.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

students, whether undergraduates or graduate assistants.<sup>39</sup> Saginaw Valley State University, for instance, uses some professional tutors and “select faculty members” to provide tutoring,<sup>40</sup> but “most tutoring . . . is delivered through the model – common throughout the academy – of peer-tutoring.”<sup>41</sup>

Despite this reliance on peers to serve as tutors, some number of professional staff are “essential,” both to coordinate services and to oversee the student staff, including the provision of “ongoing mentoring and development” for the peer tutors themselves.<sup>42</sup>

*Most academic tutoring is likely to be performed by other students, whether fellow undergraduates or graduate assistants.*

As Saginaw Valley State, for instance, professional faculty and staff run the tutoring and writing centers and “hire, train, evaluate, and provide development opportunities for qualified student tutors.”<sup>43</sup>

### *SELECTING AND TRAINING PEER TUTORS*

The selection of peer tutors follows a fairly similar pattern at most institutions. The typical procedure is to advertise openings for tutors and ask students to complete a basic application; referrals from faculty may be also be solicited. One of the main qualifications is often completion (with a grade of B or higher) of the course for which the student will be tutoring. Applicants may also be interviewed or asked to conduct a mock tutoring session.<sup>44</sup> The tutor application form for Saginaw Valley State University, reproduced in Figure 1, shows a characteristic example of such requirements.

For peer tutors, some form of training is necessary, as these students are “neither professional educators nor student development specialists.”<sup>45</sup> Most of the institutions reviewed for this report require tutors to undergo training.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps the most widely recognized peer tutor training program is the College Reading and Learning Association’s (CRLA) International Tutor Training Program Certification, which has been in place since 1989 and is “widely used across the country to set professional standards and to verify college tutoring program credentials.”<sup>47</sup> The CRLA grants certification to programs, rather than individuals;<sup>48</sup> in turn, a certified program can train individual tutors and certify them at

<sup>39</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> “A Self-Study Report.” Saginaw Valley State University. Op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> Wilson, W. and Arendale, D. “Peer Educators in Learning Assistance Programs: Best Practices for New Programs.” *New Directions for Student Services*. Spring 2011. pp. 43, 46. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ921046>

<sup>43</sup> “A Self-Study Report.” Saginaw Valley State University. Op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>44</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, W. and Arendale, D. “Peer Educators in Learning Assistance Programs.” Op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> E.g., “Tutoring Training Program.” Montclair State University. <http://www.montclair.edu/student-development-campus-life/center-academic-development-assessment/tutoring/training-program/>

<sup>47</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> “International Tutor Training Program Certification.” College Reading and Learning Association. <http://www.crla.net/ittpc/index.htm>

three levels: Level 1 (Regular Tutor); Level 2 (Advanced Tutor); or Level 3 (Master Tutor).<sup>49</sup>

CRLA tutor certification is relatively common among the institutions reviewed for this report, such as Rowan University,<sup>50</sup> South Dakota State University,<sup>51</sup> and Central Connecticut State University.<sup>52</sup> Typically, programs require their tutors to attain Level 1 certification, and may offer Level 2 or Level 3 certification as an option for those who wish to pursue it.<sup>53</sup> Not all programs carry the higher levels of certification, however; of the more than 1,000 U.S. programs with Level 1 certification, just 348 carry Levels 2 and 3 as well.<sup>54</sup>

### *SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION*

Various models exist for structuring peer tutoring, but “the largest of the national postsecondary peer learning models” is supplemental instruction.<sup>55</sup> Supplemental instruction is used by many of the institutions reviewed for this report, including Eastern Illinois University,<sup>56</sup> Florida Gulf Coast University,<sup>57</sup> or Montclair State University,<sup>58</sup> among others.

This model, developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, uses peer tutors to lead regular review sessions for students in “historically difficult” courses.<sup>59</sup> As one description puts it, supplemental instruction “does not identify high-risk students, but rather identifies high-risk courses,” such as those with high rates of low grades (e.g., D, F) or withdrawal.<sup>60</sup> The peer tutors, or “SI leaders,” are selected from among those who have previously performed well in the course. These tutors participate in the course again, this time as “model students” who attend all class sessions, take notes, and then meet with current students in “regularly-scheduled, informal review sessions [to] compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>49</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions.” College Reading and Learning Association. <http://www.crla.net/ittpc/faqs.htm>

<sup>50</sup> “Certification & Qualifications.” Rowan University. <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/asc/tutoring/qualifications/>

<sup>51</sup> “Tutor Certification.” South Dakota State University. <https://www.sdstate.edu/gs/students/tutoring/tutors/upload/Certification-Information-2.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> “Tutoring Center Report – Academic Year 2012/2013.” Central Connecticut State University. p. 1. [http://web.ccsu.edu/tlc/about/files/Tutoring\\_Center\\_Report\\_YE12-13.pdf](http://web.ccsu.edu/tlc/about/files/Tutoring_Center_Report_YE12-13.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> E.g., [1] Reikowski, E. “Freshly Re-Accredited Tutoring Center Offers Academic Aid to Students.” Oakland University. November 21, 2012. [http://www.oakland.edu/view\\_news.aspx?nid=9412&archived=1](http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?nid=9412&archived=1)

[2] “CRLA Certification.” Buffalo State College. <http://eop.buffalostate.edu/crla-certification>

<sup>54</sup> “Current CRLA ITTPC-Certified Tutor Training Programs.” College Reading and Learning Association. [http://www.crla.net/ittpc/current\\_certifications.htm](http://www.crla.net/ittpc/current_certifications.htm)

<sup>55</sup> Wilson, W. and Arendale, D. “Peer Educators in Learning Assistance Programs.” Op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>56</sup> “Supplemental Instruction Program.” Eastern Illinois University. <http://www.eiu.edu/business/supplementalinstruction.php>

<sup>57</sup> “Supplemental Instruction.” Florida Gulf Coast University. <http://www.fgcu.edu/CAA/si.html>

<sup>58</sup> “Supplemental Instruction.” Montclair State University. <http://www.montclair.edu/student-development-campus-life/center-academic-development-assessment/academic-development/supplemental-instruction/>

<sup>59</sup> “Overview of Supplemental Instruction.” University of Missouri-Kansas City. <http://www.umkc.edu/ASM/si/overview.shtml>

<sup>60</sup> “Welcome to Supplemental Instruction.” Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. <http://www.siue.edu/is/si/index.shtml>

<sup>61</sup> “Overview of Supplemental Instruction.” University of Missouri-Kansas City. Op. cit.

Although supplemental instruction “faced criticism [in the 1990s] for limited evidence that it worked with all students, rather than just highly motivated ones,”<sup>62</sup> a recently published meta-analysis confirmed that supplemental instruction is “correlated with higher mean grades, lower failure and withdrawal rates, and higher retention and graduation rates.”<sup>63</sup>

**Figure 1: Sample Tutor Application, Saginaw Valley State University**

**SVSU Center for Academic Achievement Tutor Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle tutoring area(s) of interest/skill:

Accounting	History
Anthropology	Math
Biology	Physics
Chemistry	Political Science
Communication	Psychology
Economics	Sociology

1. For one of the courses you have taken from the list above, please provide the course name and number, instructor’s name, grade earned, and a brief description of one favorite assignment, activity, or project.
2. Please describe any experiences/activities that have prepared you to tutor other students. This might include classes in education, past tutorial work, or work with students for whom English is a second language, etc.
3. Given that it takes more than strong academic abilities to be an effective tutor, describe the central qualities you believe you would bring to this position.
4. Please list two references who are familiar with your academic ability and/or your general character. Include full name, contact information/phone number/email address.
5. Can you provide evidence of a GPA of 3.25 or higher?
6. Subject area classes taken

Class	Grade	Teacher (optional)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Note: A mock tutoring session will be scheduled as part of the application/interview process.

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Saginaw Valley State University<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Sparks, S. “Report Roundup – ‘On the Effectiveness of Supplemental Instruction.’” *Education Week*. July 9, 2014. <http://www.edweek.com/ew/articles/2014/07/09/36report-4.h33.html>

<sup>63</sup> Dawson, P. et al. “On the Effectiveness of Supplemental Instruction.” *Review of Educational Research*. June 19, 2014. <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/06/19/0034654314540007.abstract>

<sup>64</sup> Adapted from: “Apply to be a Tutor.” Saginaw Valley State University. <http://www.svsu.edu/tutor/tutoremploymentapplication/>

## OUTREACH FOR TUTORING SERVICES

Tutoring services may be advertised to the campus community in a number of ways. At most of the institutions reviewed for this report, the expectation appears to be that students should be informed of the services available to them but will ultimately “self-refer” themselves for tutoring if they feel they need it. However, it is not uncommon for institutions to provide channels by which faculty, advisors, or other officials may refer students for tutoring services.<sup>65</sup>

As part of the creation of its Learning Commons unit, Bowling Green State University took a deliberate, comprehensive approach to informing the community about these services. Thus, one of the responsibilities of the director position created to oversee the new, unified Learning Commons is to “promote new services to other campus constituents.” The director has worked with various constituents to raise awareness of the center’s services, including faculty, academic advisors, and student services, among many others. Specific initiatives have included:

- **First-year student awareness:** One of “the most powerful and meaningful collaborations” for the Learning Commons has been its participation in programs for first-year students. The Learning Commons is advertised during student orientation sessions, and its space is opened to colleges so that they can conduct advising and registration sessions before classes start. These steps familiarize students with the Learning Commons and the library, so that they are “well-equipped to begin . . . their academic careers at BGSU.”<sup>66</sup>
- **Supporting at-risk students:** The Learning Commons works with the Office of Advising Services, which supports undecided students, to “promote services and track attendance” of students in the University’s program for at-risk students. Similarly, when Student Financial Aid notifies students that they are not making satisfactory academic progress and thus are at risk of losing federal financial aid, it now includes a referral to the Learning Commons for academic support.<sup>67</sup>
- **Collaborating with faculty:** With the creation of the Learning Commons, a faculty advisory board was formed, composed of faculty from each of the colleges. The board members “provide feedback” on existing services, “suggest new initiatives to help meet the academic support needs . . . of the departments,” and “serve as liaisons between the Learning Commons and the rest of the University community.”<sup>68</sup> At the individual level, a new academic alert system (successNet)

<sup>65</sup> E.g., “Referral Form for Student Tutorial Service.” Buffalo State College.  
[http://academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/sites/academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/asc\\_refer.pdf](http://academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/sites/academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/asc_refer.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. Op. cit., pp. 18-19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

implemented in fall 2012 allows faculty and advisors to refer students to the Learning Commons or recommend specific services.<sup>69</sup>

Various other initiatives also serve to increase awareness among students of the Learning Commons and its services. The Admissions Office, for instance, now includes the Learning Commons on admissions tours, so that incoming students and their families become familiar with its services. The center also worked with Greek Life to provide space for fraternity and sorority “chapter study hours.” Usage tracking showed that over one-third of the Greek students who used the Learning Commons in its first year began coming after attending a study hour at the center.<sup>70</sup>

## DELIVERY OF TUTORING SERVICES

Johanna Dvorak, a recognized expert in the field of learning assistance,<sup>71</sup> has suggested that the “most important” question for a tutoring center may be “deciding what types of services to offer.” These types of decisions might include individual versus group tutoring, scheduling arrangements, or whether to use online tutoring as well as face-to-face.<sup>72</sup> The following subsections consider these issues briefly in turn.

### *INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TUTORING*

Both individual and group tutoring have advantages and disadvantages. As Dvorak points out, “some students may be shy about a group setting or want the undivided attention of their tutor,” but group tutoring offers its own advantages (beyond cost-effectiveness), as students can learn from other tutees as well as the tutor.<sup>73</sup>

Among the institutions reviewed for this report, most offer individual tutoring, and many offer group tutoring as well. Only a few limit tutoring to the group format, such as Florida Gulf Coast University, which offers “drop-in tutoring in only a group setting.”<sup>74</sup> Oakland University similarly limits tutoring in certain fields, such as math, science, and business, to “walk-in groups,” but offers individual tutoring for some subjects, such as foreign languages.<sup>75</sup> Other institutions appear to focus largely on individual tutoring.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>69</sup> [1] “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. Op. cit., p. 20.

[2] “Completion Plan.” Bowling Green State University. April 18, 2014. p. 8.

<http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/provost/documents/resources/college-completion-04-18-2014.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> “HLC Quality Initiative Report: A Learning Commons.” Bowling Green State University. Op. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>71</sup> “NCLCA Lifetime Achievement Award Winner 2011 – Johanna Dvorak.” National College Learning Center Association. [http://www.nclca.org/johanna\\_dvorak.html](http://www.nclca.org/johanna_dvorak.html)

<sup>72</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> “Instructional Support Tutoring Lab.” Florida Gulf Coast University. <http://www.fgcu.edu/CAA/tutoring.html>

<sup>75</sup> “Peer Tutoring.” Oakland University. <http://www.oakland.edu/tutoring/peer>

<sup>76</sup> E.g., “Center for Academic Achievement at Zahnow Library.” Saginaw Valley State University. <http://www.svsu.edu/tutor/>

### SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS

Tutoring may be arranged by appointment or may be made available through a drop-in, or walk-in, service.<sup>77</sup> Among the institutions reviewed for this report, a typical practice is to provide a schedule of times when tutors for specific subjects will be available, and to allow students to either make an appointment during those times<sup>78</sup> or to walk in.<sup>79</sup> As an example, a schedule for a selection of courses for which tutoring is available from Southern Illinois University Edwards is shown below.

Some institutions may need to ration tutoring services, depending on available resources and student demand. At South Dakota State University, for instance, students have unlimited access to supplemental instruction and “walk-in review sessions,” but are limited to one hour of scheduled, individual tutoring per week, in up to two classes.<sup>80</sup> Montana State University provides drop-in tutoring for free, but asks students to pay \$2 for an individual appointment.<sup>81</sup> However, no other institution reviewed for this report charges students for tutoring services.

**Figure 2: Walk-In Tutoring Schedules, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville\***

CLASS	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.
Math 112	1:00 - 5:00	--	1:00 - 2:00	--	12:00 - 2:00
Stat 107	1:00 - 4:00	--	10:30 - 12:30 1:00 - 4:00	3:30 - 5:00	9:00 - 1:00
Chem 113	9:00 - 1:00 2:00 - 7:00	9:00 - 2:00 3:00 - 8:00	9:00 - 2:00 4:00 - 8:00	9:00 - 5:00	9:00 - 2:00
Bio 111	9:00 - 1:00 2:00 - 5:00	10:00 - 2:00 3:00 - 8:00	9:00 - 5:00	11:00 - 5:00	9:00 - 2:00
Acct 200	5:00 - 7:00	11:00 - 5:00	--	--	--
Econ 111	--	--	10:30 - 12:30	3:30 - 5:00	11:00 - 1:00

Source: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville<sup>82</sup>

\* Example schedule only – not all courses listed.

Beyond questions of logistics or resource allocation, the scheduling of tutoring sessions can also reflect different pedagogical approaches. The traditional conception of tutoring appears to be that of a “one-on-one [arrangement] where a single tutor meets regularly

<sup>77</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., “Professional Tutoring Schedule – Spring 2014.” Buffalo State College. [http://academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/sites/academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/Spring%202014%20Tutoring%20Schedule\\_Options%20Across%20Campus%20021014.pdf](http://academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/sites/academicsupport.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/Spring%202014%20Tutoring%20Schedule_Options%20Across%20Campus%20021014.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> E.g., “Drop-In Tutoring Schedule for Fall 2014.” Rowan University. <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/asc/tutoring/schedule/>

<sup>80</sup> “Wintrade Tutoring Program.” South Dakota State University. <http://www.sdstate.edu/gs/students/tutoring/>

<sup>81</sup> “SmartyCats Tutoring.” Montana State University. <http://www.montana.edu/success/tutoring/tutoring.php>

<sup>82</sup> [1] “Math Resource Area.” Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. <http://www.siu.edu/is/math/index.shtml>  
[2] “Schedule of Science Tutoring.” Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. [http://www.siu.edu/is/math/biol\\_chem\\_physics\\_tutoring.shtml](http://www.siu.edu/is/math/biol_chem_physics_tutoring.shtml)

[3] “Schedule of Economics & Accounting Tutoring.” Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. [http://www.siu.edu/is/math/acct\\_econ\\_tutoring.shtml](http://www.siu.edu/is/math/acct_econ_tutoring.shtml)



with a single student to improve the learning and understanding of the student.” Researchers have found “considerable evidence” for the effectiveness of this type of tutoring,<sup>83</sup> and the policies of more than one institution reviewed for this report reflect a preference for engaging students in this type of arrangement.

Montana State University, for instance, charges \$2 per session but only sells tutoring passes in \$10 increments, effectively requiring students to attend at least five sessions. It further encourages students to use these five sessions for a single course, noting that “studies show that students who attend 5 or more sessions improve academic performance significantly.”<sup>84</sup> At Central Washington University, tutoring sessions are held for 50 minutes, twice a week, and participants “are required to attend regularly.” Those who cannot “commit to meeting regularly twice a week, every week” are encouraged to seek out other options, such as supplemental instruction.<sup>85</sup>

*Regular, repetitive tutoring sessions have long been known to be effective, but evidence suggests “drop-in” tutoring may help students as well.*

However, some research suggests that drop-in tutoring, sometimes derided as “homework help,”<sup>86</sup> can be just as effective in aiding student learning as more structured arrangements. At Western Washington University, the tutoring center is structured as a “study area where tutors are available and freely circulate among students as they have questions,” which the

University describes as “drop-in tutoring.”<sup>87</sup> A study of student outcomes at Western Washington found that freshmen who visited the center just once during the year “were still more likely to persist than students who did not visit the [center].” In addition, students who visited the center more than 10 times per quarter were more likely to be in good academic standing and had higher cumulative GPAs than students who did not visit the center.<sup>88</sup>

### ONLINE TUTORING

Online tutoring has been a presence in higher education for at least a decade.<sup>89</sup> Such services can be a “logical companion” for online or distance courses, but may also provide a more convenient option for traditional students who do not have time to arrange a face-to-face meeting with a tutor.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Cooper, E. “Tutoring Center Effectiveness: The Effect of Drop-In Tutoring.” *Journal of College Reading and Learning*. Spring 2010. p. 21. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ887303>

<sup>84</sup> “SmartyCats Q&As for Students.” Montana State University. p. 2. [http://www.montana.edu/success/tutoring/resources/Student\\_FAQs\\_for\\_SmartyCats.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/success/tutoring/resources/Student_FAQs_for_SmartyCats.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> “Tutoring FAQ.” Central Washington University. <http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/tutoring-faq>

<sup>86</sup> Cooper, E. “Tutoring Center Effectiveness.” Op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> [1] Cooper, E. “Tutoring Center Effectiveness.” Op. cit., p. 22.

[2] “Tutoring Center Services.” Western Washington University. <http://www.wvu.edu/tutoring/services.shtml>

<sup>88</sup> Cooper, E. “Tutoring Center Effectiveness.” Op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> Dvorak, J. “Managing Tutoring Aspects of the Learning Assistance Center.” Op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>90</sup> Mazer, C. “Best Practices in Online Tutoring.” Tutor.com. March 28, 2014. p. 3. <http://www.tutor.com/press/press-releases-2014/20140328>



The effectiveness of online tutoring is not as well established as that of in-person tutoring,<sup>91</sup> but research has found that students tend to be pleased with the format.<sup>92</sup> A recent qualitative study commissioned by the third-party provider Tutor.com found that online tutors tend to use similar methods as in-person tutors, suggesting that “good practices in tutoring transcend the medium,” and that online tutoring has as much potential for effectiveness as traditional tutoring.<sup>93</sup>

Among the institutions reviewed for this report, online tutoring is used in varying degrees. Offerings range from relatively simple arrangements, such as the use of Skype or Blackboard to conduct remote tutoring sessions, as at Illinois State University or Pace University,<sup>94</sup> to the use of third-party providers of online tutoring, as Youngstown State University or Central Connecticut State University, which use eTutoring.org to provide online tutoring in math, science, and writing.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> E.g., Offenholley, K. “Online Tutoring Research Study for Remedial Algebra.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. March 19, 2014.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10668926.2013.803941?journalCode=ucjc20#preview>

<sup>93</sup> Mazer, C. “Best Practices in Online Tutoring.” Op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> [1] “Writing Assistance.” Illinois State University. <http://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/tutoring/writing/>

[2] “Online Tutoring.” Pace University. <http://www.pace.edu/center-academic-excellence/tutoring-center/pleasantville-campus/online-tutoring>

<sup>95</sup> [1] “Free Online Tutoring.” Youngstown State University.

[http://web.yosu.edu/gen/ysu\\_generated\\_bin/documents/basic\\_module/S14\\_YSU\\_eTutoring\\_flyer.pdf](http://web.yosu.edu/gen/ysu_generated_bin/documents/basic_module/S14_YSU_eTutoring_flyer.pdf)

[2] “Welcome to eTutoring.” Central Connecticut State University. <http://web.ccsu.edu/tlc/tutoring/eTutoring.asp>

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