



*Weber State University  
Academic Support Centers and Programs  
Tutoring  
Program Review Report  
June 20, 2011*

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Dear Reader:

The Academic Support Centers and Programs (ASC) at Weber State University have been evolving since 1972 when they first provided services in the basement of Stewart Hall. Weber State University's commitment to providing various learning assistance services to students with diverse learning needs has kept pace with the institution's increased enrollment.

This External Review committee used the *Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education* (CAS) outline that was provided by the Student Affairs Division to guide its comments and recommendations. The report is written in an adapted format of the SWOT analysis. Instead of providing the viewers of the report with a list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, we have opted to provide a list of Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities. Since we, as program review members, understand that the primary purpose of the report is to address challenges in which to improve current services, we want to let the staff of the ASC know that we made a decision to limit the number of strengths in order to focus on program improvements.

We would like to thank all of the people who contributed their many hours and expertise in writing the extensive report (184 pages) and who answered questions and provided additional information during the review committee's visit to campus. We were all very impressed with the professionalism, cooperation, and honesty that we received from the staff and students. We understand that a program review can be perceived as intimidating by its participants, so we are grateful for the sincerity that was afforded us during our 2-day campus visit.

Although we were sorry we were not able to talk with students/tutees who use the services, we do feel we have enough information to make some valuable recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and provide you with our insights. We have spent many hours beyond the initial review discussing our recommendations and addressing the best format and presentation of our ideas so they are beneficial and productive. We hope you will find it useful and inspiring as you make changes to certain areas with the intention of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of all your services. We know you are all remarkable individuals who care about the academic and personal development of all students. The faculty, administration, staff and students are indeed lucky to have you.

Respectfully,

Robert Fudge, Associate Professor, Philosophy- Weber State University

Brooke Kelly, Director, Developmental English- Weber State University

Karin E. Winnard (Chair), Tutorial Coordinator (LARC)- San José State University

## **Unit, Mission, Goals, and Outcomes**

The mission, goals, and proposed outcomes of the Academic Support Centers (ASC) at Weber State University support the goals of the Student Affairs mission statement and the mission statement of the broader university. The mission, goals, and outcomes of the tutorial programs within the Centers focus on the success of students as well as the professional development of tutors and staff.

### **Strengths:**

- Mission, goals and outcomes of the ASC corroborate the university's goals.
- Mission statement encourages students to become "independent learners" by utilizing these programs.
- The ASC goals focus on four fundamental ideas vital to the academic and personal development of students at WSU.

### **Challenges:**

- Tutorial program goals lack strong and consistent assessment data that accurately reflect and measure the impact of their services.
- As a Student Affairs Program, the ASC goals are not consistently student-oriented. Only one goal is student-centered with the other three goals focused on broader issues.
- There is a lack of clarification as to how students "connect to the campus community." How students will advance socially, culturally, and civically by using the ASC services is also unclear.
- The goals, overall, need to be tailored to Weber State University. The NADE guidelines that were used were not customized/adapted to WSU's ASC.

### **Opportunities:**

- Rewrite the ASC goals to align with and include the intent of the Student Affairs mission statement. For example, *provide trained tutorial services to students who request assistance in the development of their skills and strategies necessary to becoming independent learners.*
- Create goals that provide measurable outcomes so funding requests can be supported with credible data.
- Include learning objectives found later in the report directly under each goal to further direction of program assessment with specific measurable strategies.

## **Programs and Services**

The ASC offers students tutorial services for a variety of disciplines and subjects. These tutorial programs support the academic and personal development of students by providing professional staff and trained peer tutors who effectively outreach to the campus community. The ASC professional staff is intelligent, caring, flexible and clearly committed to student success.

### **Strengths:**

- The Tracker software program in the HUB is efficient.

- The rotating mathematics comic strip placed on each table in the Solutions Space is creative and is a good start to a welcoming learning space.
- Students are referred to other campus programs/services by staff when appropriate.
- The scaffolding technique that is used in all the tutorial programs clearly provides students with the opportunity to develop effective learning strategies.
- Student self-efficacy and self-confidence is the primary focus of the tutorial programs.
- ASC programs publicize their services effectively.
- Inter and intra departmental collaboration and communication is apparent throughout all the ASC programs.
- The Early Alert Referral System (EARS) clearly supports student success and retention.
- Tutorial programs are committed to continual CRLA training and certification.
- Tutors receive some ESOL training.

### **Challenges:**

- Lack of visible signage discouraging cell phone (texting and talking) usage in tutoring areas.
- Ability to monitor students in the Solutions Space is poor.
- Tutor training lacks fundamental core training principles, and training is inconsistent between programs.
- The title “Solutions Space” does not accurately represent the services provided to students.
- The title “Developmental English Learning Center” discourages students from using these important services unless required to do so by their instructors.
- The purpose of the Early Alert Referral System (EARS) is to “help students improve their grades,” but it is unclear how this improvement will be or is achieved.
- The Theoretical Foundation for tutoring conflicts with the Theoretical Foundation for Supplemental Instruction regarding the efficacy of individual and collaborative tutoring.
- The paper scheduling system for tutees is outdated and energy and cost inefficient.
- Scheduling appointments for the entire semester creates unnecessary challenges for tutees, tutors and tutorial program supervisors. This action is also in *direct* contradiction to encouraging students to become “independent learners.”
- The tutors who work in the Math HUB lack training in using effective scaffolding techniques during high usage time periods.
- Tutorial programs services were reported not to be predominantly used by under-prepared and unprepared students.
- It was reported that tutors often show their tutees how to complete a problem when there are time constraints (especially in the math labs).
- Small group tutoring is not as encouraged as individual tutoring, despite research demonstrating its greater efficacy.
- Tutors’ attendance at training sessions is not mandatory. Tutors are allowed to miss up to three sessions. Such policies suggest training is not a priority or as important as implied in the unit report.

### **Opportunities:**

- Create more workable space in the HUB by removing some computers and work stations.

- Use Tracker Software in the Solutions Space and Math Hub.
- Develop policies and post signs on walls or on tables in multiple and visible areas that state “No Food, No Drink, No Cell Phones (No Texting)” in all tutoring areas. Be sure to monitor this and ask students to step outside of the learning area if they want to engage in any of the above activities.
- Incorporate the Solutions Space into the HUB and rename that space so it reflects a collective math tutoring service.
- Relocate Math Coordinator’s office so it is centrally located in the renamed math space.
- Model skills and strategies used to solve problems, understand course concepts, or write a paper during both “unreasonable” (5-10 minutes) and more reasonable (30-60 minute) period. Showing how to write a paragraph or solve a problem does not allow tutors to use appropriate probing techniques (used to assess the tutee’s level of understanding) in their tutorial sessions. Using the Socratic Method of Questioning, having students demonstrate to their tutors how they solve mathematical and word problems by using a step-by-step approach and having tutees work with their tutors to learn how to reorganize their papers are just a few key strategies to building the skills and confidence of students using tutorial assistance.
- Allow tutees to register for tutoring up to 2 weeks in advance to promote independent learning and shift responsibility and accountability back to the student. Allowing students to sign up for tutoring for the entire semester can encourage dependency rather than independent learning, which is one of the unit’s primary goals.
- Focus on improving student meta-cognitive skills and self-esteem through utilizing tutoring services as opposed to publicizing services to EARS eligible students to improve their grades.
- Suggest developmental students attend appointment tutoring rather than drop-in tutoring, the latter being used more effectively for students who already have a satisfactory meta-cognitive foundation.
- Students are responsible for knowing their course assignments and requirements. Writing Center tutors are to minimize collaboration with faculty only in regards to assignments and course requirements with the intent of having their tutees become accountable for this action. The Writing Center supervisor can work with faculty in this capacity, provided tutees have the same opportunity.
- Purchase Accutrack, Tutor Track, Grades 1<sup>st</sup> or some other scheduling program immediately. If you are not ready to do so, visually post tutors’ hours on a discipline-specific schedule (e.g., Math, Biology, Foreign Languages = 3 separate schedules) where incoming students can view them. Students then select the designated hour and tutor they wish to see. Implementing new software will save program invaluable time and resources.
- Require tutor-training attendance. Tutors must attend ALL training sessions to be eligible for CRLA certification. Failure to do so can affect the work that tutors do with students, and shortcuts in a tutee’s learning can take place.
- Revise and update tutor training material so it is consistent for ALL tutors.
- Publicize and promote centers by attending events where targeted populations are present (e.g., athletic, multi-cultural, transfer student, social, community service, leadership, etc.). Visibility of supervisors and/or peer tutors is key to presenting an invitation to students to come in and use ASC services.

- Develop an advisory board for both the Ogden and Davis campuses to provide feedback on the changes, ideas, and possible implementation of this review committee's report. The board would be comprised of a maximum of 8 faculty and staff members and 2 students. The goal would be to dissolve the board within 2 years.

### **Leadership and Staffing**

The Tutorial Programs at Weber State University currently employ 125 student and professional staff members. The Program Review members were impressed with the staff's commitment to WSU students, enthusiasm for the field, receptivity to sharing and listening to new ideas, congeniality, and sincere interest in their own professional development as it enhances their respective programs and services.

#### **Strengths:**

- The tutorial programs demonstrate a clear commitment and dedication to professional, staff and student collaboration.
- The content of tutor training is satisfactory and effective.
- Collaboration among all program members is apparent and direct.
- The tutorial program staff are open and receptive to new ideas.
- Strong communication is apparent between staff members throughout the program.
- The majority of tutorial program staff possesses a positive attitude and exhibits a high level of professionalism.
- Tutor training is CRLA certified.
- Professional development for staff is encouraged and funded.
- The CRLA tutor training utilizes multiple trainers.
- Tutoring supervisors perform multiple tutor observations throughout the semester.

#### **Challenges:**

- It is not always clear which administrator to go to or procedure to follow for specific types and levels of program challenges.
- The Davis Campus lacks adequate staffing.
- The tutorial programs universally lack payroll management assistance.
- The responsibilities of the Ogden Campus Director are significantly greater in comparison to the responsibilities of the Davis Campus Director.
- The pay structure for "appointment only" tutors is not equitable to salaries for drop-in tutors.
- The hiring process for tutors between programs is inconsistent.
- Tutors report varying levels of satisfaction with training modules.
- Drop-in tutoring is understaffed and currently runs as a "quick fix" system, thereby reinforcing poorly developed meta-cognitive strategies (e.g., time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.).
- The Math HUB is staffed by both faculty members and peer tutors. Tutors can feel intimidated by the presence of faculty who do not receive the same tutor training.
- The ratio of tutoring supervisors to tutors who may have questions or concerns is unbalanced in the Math HUB.

- There is no requirement regarding the minimum number of paid hours tutors must work per week, which results in administrative inefficiency and a higher attrition rate of tutors.
- The ASC tutoring programs lack policies, parameters, requirements and procedures that all staff are willing or able to adhere to.
- Staff meetings are scheduled inconsistently and on an “as needed” basis.
- Tutor Award Certificates are awarded throughout the semester.
- Job descriptions for each professional staff position are missing from the report submitted to this review committee.

### **Opportunities:**

- Designate a specific individual to oversee consistent tutor training in order to improve quality, consistency and tutor satisfaction.
- Employ student assistants to complete scheduling, administrative paperwork, tracking, etc.
- Hire a full-time 40-hour per week student staff member to answer the phone and assist with appointment scheduling and clerical tasks at the Davis campus.
- Adopt a 3.0GPA overall or a 3.0GPA for the last 2 semesters prior to tutoring requirement for applicants.
- Delegate administrative paperwork to appropriate professional staff. Assign payroll tasks *for all* centers to a receptionist or part-time administrative assistant.
- Hire tutors to work a minimum of 6 hours/week and then pay them a minimum of 6 hours each week whether or not they have a student scheduled for tutoring. (Note: Tutors can be reading training materials when they are scheduled to work but do not have a tutee.)
- Increase tutors’ hours beyond the requisite 6 hours/week, as necessary.
- Add a training section on tutoring and codependency that is used as a guide to support revised policies, specific tutoring strategies and approaches, and to empower both tutors and staff.
- Have the tutor coordinators meet with the Ogden Campus Director every 2 weeks. Constant collaboration promotes awareness between all the sites and the respective supervisors. Meetings will also encourage brain-storming and problem-solving, which will improve and promote learning assistance services.
- Align the responsibilities of the Ogden Campus Director with those of the Davis Campus Director. The Ogden Campus Director’s position needs to be refocused on learning assistance, which would not include overseeing the proctoring of exams or testing services. Testing can be considered a stand-alone program on a campus of this size.
- Reorganize tutoring responsibilities in the Math Hub. It is strongly recommended that faculty do not tutor in the Math Hub. If faculty must provide assistance, it is recommended that they are not scheduled to work at the same time as tutors. Faculty are to be perceived only as providing instructional assistance and tutors tutorial assistance.
- Revamp the practice of “drop-in tutoring” in the Math Hub. When tutors feel pressured to give a hint, validate a student’s answer, or show a student how to complete a problem due to time constraints, the tutor is modeling the teaching of material (and perhaps being perceived as an instructional assistant- see above bullet) rather than tutoring the content.
- Hold one CRLA certification event at the end of the semester celebratory event. This is a great setting to recognize this level of achievement and is much more cost efficient.

- Provide actual job descriptions for each professional staff position.

### **Financial Resources and Budget**

Tutors' salaries were raised above the minimum wage in 2009, and the E & G account pays for the wages and benefits of all the ASC and programs staff as well as operating costs of the programs. Clearly, the Student Affairs Division is committed to the operation of these learning assistance programs.

#### **Strengths:**

- Economic and Growth funding indicates adequate support of the tutorial programs (and supplemental instruction).
- Tutors' salaries are above the minimum wage.
- The tutorial programs are the beneficiaries of multiple funding sources.
- Developmental students pay an additional fee that supports the tutorial programs specifically designated to them.

#### **Challenges:**

- Tutorial program expenses are not clearly itemized, and, therefore, each budget line item is not clearly accounted for or represented in this report.
- Unclear if professional staff salaries are commensurate with responsibilities.
- It is difficult to determine how cost effective each separate program is when the following data was not available for easy comparison:
  - The salaries of all the tutors alongside the number of tutors.
  - The number of hours each tutor is scheduled to tutor vs. actually tutored.
  - The total number of sessions (appointments/drop-ins) tutored.
  - The total amount of time spent tutoring.
  - The total number of students (non-duplicate count) using each program AND a non-duplicate count using ALL the programs.
- Only a fraction of the developmental fee is given to the programs it is designated to fund.
- Cost per student has almost doubled from 2006/2007 to 2009/2010 while the number of students and number of sessions provided *overall* has decreased. (Note: More time and analysis would need to be done to really see which programs were providing the most quality and quantity services for the least amount of money as compared to those who were not.)
- Presentation of financial data in this part of the report and in the Appendices H and I were not easily compared to facilitate simple analysis by the Review Team.

#### **Opportunities:**

- Purchase AccuTrack, TutorTrack, or Grades First software programs to ensure more time and cost efficient scheduling of tutors and tracking of statistical data.
- Require tutors to complete all national certification requirements in order to better ensure the delivery of effective and consistent tutorial services. Once this is implemented, there is a good argument that these peer service providers should earn a higher hourly wage since they are trained and nationally certified by CRLA.



- Tutors are responsible for paying their local conference registration and expenses if FLSA insists that they be paid for their entire time at a conference.
- Discontinue the free use of copiers in the Writing Center and any of the other tutorial programs. It is the responsibility of the tutees and not the Center to come to sessions prepared with a paper copy of their written work. Again, this is modeling responsibility and accountability on the part of the students. Students without printed papers are to go to a designated place on campus to print out their paper prior to the start of the session (or if there is a printer in the Center, to charge the student 10 cents per page... no exceptions).
- Present the budget pages as individual reports for every program rather than present them as a lump sum. Also overlay Appendices H and I with this information to provide reviewers with a more accurate and clear picture of how and where money is being allocated.
- The cheapest run program is not necessarily the best program; similarly, the most expensive program is not necessarily the worst. This type of data is collected to look at how funds are being allocated and if these monies are being used efficiently/effectively.

### **Facilities, Equipment, and Technology**

The Developmental English Learning Center/Writing Center space is a good example of what a tutorial assistance program can look like in terms of a safe and inviting student-centered learning environment. Location, accessibility, and up to date equipment/technology of any program on campus is key as it suggests institutional commitment and the importance of the program's services

#### **Strengths:**

- Developmental English Learning Center/Writing Center provides a welcoming physical environment for students and the campus community.
- Facilities, equipment, and technology are ADA compliant.

#### **Challenges:**

- The tutorial programs lack a software program for scheduling tutors, collecting necessary statistical data, and tying in with the university's institutional research data. The current program practices are neither cost efficient nor effective.
- The physical environment, furniture, square footage, resources, and location of the tutorial program spaces are not equitable or sensible. The ATC tutoring center space on the main campus is woefully inadequate. The reception desk is not front and center, and it seems that tutoring takes place in a hallway with lots of distractions as staff and other students brush by the tables. Also, the tutoring space in the Social Science building is in the basement and dismal.
- The Foreign Languages department is housed in Elizabeth Hall, yet foreign languages tutoring takes place in the basement of Social Sciences.
- The swipe card system at Davis Campus does not track student usage properly.
- The location of the Davis Campus' tutor supervisor's office is located in an unproductive area.

**Opportunities:**

- Purchase AccuTrack, TutorTrack, or Grades First software programs to ensure more time and cost efficient scheduling of tutors and tracking of statistical data (already mentioned).
- Move the reception area in the ATC to the space in between both entry doors.
- Create a waiting area for students/tutees to be met by their tutors.
- Invite tutors, tutees and staff to rename the Solutions Space and Developmental English Writing Center to reflect the empowerment and achievement of students in these spaces.
- Expand the ATC space so all tutors can work in the same location.
- Relocate foreign languages tutoring to Elizabeth Hall next to the academic department.
- Update the furniture for the Social Sciences tutoring areas and the Solutions Space.
- Provide staff training to better assist students to use the swipe card system correctly.
- Relocate ALL tutorial services on each campus to one centralized location and preferably on the first floor (not the basement) for easy access.

**Legal and Ethical Responsibilities**

The Academics Support Centers and Programs are committed to being compliant with legal and ethical standards set forth by the Student Affairs Division and Weber State University.

**Strengths:**

- Policies and Procedures manual is written.
- Clearly tied to university Policies and Procedures Manual 10.1.
- All tutors receive training in this area by the Executive Director of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action.

**Challenges:**

- Tutors currently exchange personal email and phone numbers with tutees.
- The policy regarding the dating of a tutee by a tutor is unclear.
- The policy regarding alcohol usage lacks specificity regarding consequences.
- Sexual orientation is not included under Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace policy.

**Opportunities:**

- Update the Policies and Procedures Manual so all staff are able and willing to abide by these guidelines.
- Revise the policy regarding alcohol usage. For instance, the policy must address the after-effects of ingesting alcohol the night prior to tutoring. It is also suggested this policy address such issue as smoke from cigarettes, strong cologne or perfume, etc.
- Include sexual orientation under section II, item D on the Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace policy.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

The Academic Services Centers and Programs show a strong commitment to implementing measures that provide viable student learning outcomes. This data is to be used to assess what works, what is not working, and what changes need to be instituted. Such information is

necessary in order for each program to provide the highest quality of services required to assist the rest of the institution in its mission to retain, educate, and graduate Weber State University students.

### **Strengths:**

- Staff is receptive to feedback and is willing to make reasonable changes.
- Observations of tutors occur 3 times each semester.
- Forms are used in tutee evaluations (includes rubric concept).
- Forms are used in tutor evaluation of training.
- Feedback is received from tutors regarding revising tutor training.
- Tutors are satisfied with training.
- Developmental math students who were tutored persisted at WSU at a higher rate than students who did not seek tutoring.
- StudentVoice online survey program is effective.

### **Challenges:**

- Pre and post-test assessments of tutor knowledge include questions that do not demonstrate tutor development.
- Core Program and Service Oriented Outcomes are weak. Outcomes cannot simply say “increase percentage” or “improve ... performance of students.” Be specific.
- Cannot claim that one visit to the tutoring center has an effect on a student’s grade.
- Unclear that student satisfaction was based on a service other than working on completing a student’s homework assignment.
- Report contradicts level of tutor satisfaction as not meeting its goal and then meeting its goal.
- Providing quality services that are also assessed to target the following groups: athletes, veterans, non-traditional and transfer students)
- Tutee satisfaction surveys suggest that tutors are providing explanations AND encouraging tutees to answer their own questions.
- The number of students (unduplicated count) and the number of visits *per* student is not tracked.
- There are inconsistencies in data collection between programs.
- There are some grammatical errors on the ASCP Tutoring Program Evaluation form.
- The table concerning the MATH 1050 Pass Rate is unclear. “Students tutored at least once” is inclusive with those “Students who were tutored more than once”, yet the former number is smaller than the latter.
- Although there was a tremendous amount of information provided in the Appendices of the report for this section, it was very time consuming and cumbersome to read at points.

### **Opportunities:**

- Test tutor knowledge using pre-test questions that are answered correctly at most 50% of the time Also make sure all multiple choice answers are serious choices; revise those that are not (example p.105 #8 choice D).
- Use specific goals that are measurable, such as what percent of the students in developmental courses will receive tutoring?

- Clarify the indicators for demonstrating improvement in the academic performance of students tutored in developmental courses.
- Track students who pass Developmental English and Mathematics through the next 1-2 years comparing the extent of usage/non-usage of tutoring services by students in relation to the Incomplete, Withdraw, and Failure rates.
- Compare the percent increase of student usage or visit usage to WSU enrollment data.
- Use the non-duplicate count of students when presenting program usage data.
- Provide plausible or known explanations as to why increases or decreases in student usage of each program took place.
- Implement Accutrack or a similar software package in the ASC that can access data from your university-wide software system.
- Create a separate review committee (internal) to focus on program assessment and make sure that there is compliance between all supervisors to provide accurate and consistent data.
- Rewrite all the items on the “Review by Supervisor” sheet as statements rather than questions.
- Be consistent in using “I” statements throughout the Assessment of Tutor Skill Development sheet.
- Tutoring is tailored to each particular discipline, which is why assessment between programs may vary. However, using the Socratic Method of Questioning to guide students through problem-solving questions, concept confusion, etc. is the basis of all tutoring. If the program’s goal is independent learning, as opposed to achieving higher grades and persistence, then create a system to measure it.
- Use 360 degree evaluations for all professional staff.
- Brief summaries of the key conclusions contained in each table or between tables are recommended.
- Several years ago, the field of learning assistance was challenged by a national accreditation committee to develop new assessment tools and instruments that actually measure the effectiveness of these program services. Although there were numerous measures and data that were already being used, the committee concluded that as a field, we were missing the mark and needed to do better. The challenge is still in progress. There is not one instrument that will assess all the benefits that Weber State University’s tutorial programs provide to their students and the campus community, but a compilation of a few measures/data, will "speak volumes" to a Center's effectiveness.