

Learning Center Program Review
Fall 2007

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Introduction

The Roy A. Knapp Learning Center at Antelope Valley College (AVC) is comprised of seven program and service areas that provide a wide variety of individual and group instructional activities for students as well as academic classes. The service areas are Academic Skills Center, ESL Study Center, General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Center, Math Center and Math-related classes, Reading Center, and Writing Center. Other service areas in the Learning Center are Computer/Media Check-Out and DSS High-Tech Center, the latter not part of the Instructional Resources and Extended Services Division (IR/ES) but serves students in tandem with Learning Center programs. Student referrals to inter-related programs are central to Learning Center daily operations.

The Learning Center, as part of IR/ES under the Office of Academic Affairs, has a comprehensive mission statement created by its faculty and staff three years ago which reflects the mission of the AVC campus as a whole in terms of student success and student-centered learning:

The mission of the Learning Center is to support classroom instruction by providing assistance to students with a variety of services aimed to promote their success in college. These services include:

- **Instructor-led workshops and one-on-one sessions**
- **Individual and small group tutoring by trained peers**
- **Supplemental instruction**
- **Access to computers and online programs.**

All of these services are designed to reinforce course content and to emphasize good study habits. Learning Center instructors and staff members are committed to providing a friendly, nurturing, and stimulating environment that encourages our diverse population of students to become independent, lifelong learners.

The overall goal of Learning Center programs and services is to build student confidence, knowledge, and skills useful in current and future academic venues and to aid with readiness for application to other venues such as career/vocation, community, and personal. This year, “Lab” in the title of a given program area was changed to “Center” to match the complexity of learning assistance. Nationwide, the instructional discipline is moving from using the former because it has clinical connotations and suggests the student is “ill” and needs “remedies.” The Math Lab then became the Math Center, the Reading Lab the Reading Center, etc. In addition, labs tend to focus on the individual while the nature of a learning center is collaborative. Learning and skill building takes place with the help of instructors, classified staff, tutors, mentors, and peers.

The field of learning assistance is now recognized as an academic discipline. It has a growing body of research and literature, several national and international professional associations as well as several juried journals. Although faculty members come to the discipline from many different backgrounds, Masters level, Education Specialist (above the Master's) and Doctor of Education degrees are available in this field, usually as an option in an Education or Developmental Education degree. Both the faculty and the classified paraprofessionals in the Learning Center stay current in the field by reading, researching, and contributing to the literature and attending conferences (see Appendix for the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education Learning Assistance Standards).

The programs of the AVC Learning Center are based upon “best practices” in learning assistance according to experts Dr. Hunter R. Boylan and Dr. Martha Maxwell, pioneers in the field as well as Dr. Frank Christ and Dr. Rick A. Sheets, who maintain the Learning Support

Centers in Higher Education (LSCHE) Web site containing a wealth of research articles and resources. AVC's Learning Center is considered a state-wide model for learning assistance with colleagues from other colleges making visits to it each year. Also, accolades were given to it in the last two accreditation visits by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Core AVC Learning Assistance Center (LAC) credit course offerings focus on tutor training, and Learning Center tutors and are encouraged to enroll in them to not only improve their skills and abilities but to receive international tutor certification and consistent pay raises. The courses also appeal to private and K-12 tutors. Other LAC credit courses are vocational skill-building courses in math for nursing students. In the past year, full-time faculty members have developed new skill-building courses (developing study skills, critical thinking for nurses, managing writing anxiety) all of which will be processed through AP&P next year. Non-credit LAC courses focus on strategies for the personal and academic success of individual students via tutoring by trained peers and faculty-led workshops and individual learning plans.

In addition to services for students, Learning Center faculty members provide AVC full and part-time instructors and directors of categorically-funded and other campus programs with direct classroom or program assistance (student orientations, lectures, team-teaching) and with advice related to curriculum (written assignments, computer resources) and pedagogy (active learning and teaching strategies).

The Learning Center has a total of 15,412 square feet of physical space, with 10,720 square feet housing 88 computers for student use. Technical support for computer software is available; however, *as enrollment grows, so does the need for accommodating student learning needs*. Space or the lack of it, therefore, is a major consideration in the Learning Center. Students seeking tutoring and other services now find their needs thwarted by noise and other distractions, tight spaces, and uncomfortable settings for large groups. Learning Center faculty and staff acknowledge that the need for flexible hours of operation and distance education courses exists as does the offering of services such as online tutoring and workshops, formerly considered non-traditional, but now standard at many community colleges.

Learning Center full-time faculty provide leadership campus-wide and beyond. The Math Learning Specialist was AVC's Scholar-in-Residence for 2006-2007, led conference break-out sessions for the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), served as regional representative for the Association of College Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA), instructed Faculty Academy classes, and presents many Flex events each year. The Academic Skills Specialist, a former AVC Scholar-in-Residence and Academic Senate President, currently co-chairs the AVC Enrollment Management Committee, instructed Faculty Academy classes, spearheads new programs such as ICAN and Ushindi, represents AVC at the California Community Colleges System Office state-level meetings, and is a past president of ACTLA. The Writing Center Learning Specialist was the coordinator of AVC's learning communities, co-chairs the Basic Skills Committee, leads many Flex events, and currently serves as a board member and region representative for ACTLA. All serve on various campus committees (Academic Senate, Strategic Planning and Budget Council, Matriculation, Basic Skills, Student Success and Equity, Flex, Latino Advisory, etc.), present at major international conferences, and write grants to improve Learning Center services to students.

Classified staff members also provide leadership. The Reading Tutorial Specialist has been a presenter at national conferences, wrote a major portion of the current Title V grant, and served as a consultant for Santa Monica College and as a board member for ACTLA. The Math Tutorial Specialist participates on various campus committees and task forces, has written grant

proposals, and presents at AVC student worker conferences. Other team leaders include the General Tutoring/SI Tutorial Specialist, Computer Technician, Clerical III, and the Writing Tutorial Specialist. The latter four, hired during 2007, immediately prepared to launch a learning center at the Palmdale campus in Fall 2007, illustrating leadership abilities.

Goals are paramount to the success of programs and services. It is not enough for the Learning Center to only evaluate programs and services in terms of AVC's **Educational Master Plan**. There is the **Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS)** that governs developmental education for which learning assistance programs provide critical instruction, services, materials, and resources. Also, the **Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges Initiative** outlines key characteristics for learning assistance programs "important for the students' ability to successfully move through their courses of study" (see Appendix). Basic skills as defined by the Initiative include learning and study skills. The transition of students from basic skills curriculum to transfer or vocational programs is a primary AVC concern as evidenced by the creation of new programs to aid progress. *This program review document, therefore, reflects goals/distinctions of all of the entities above as well as aspects of the already-established Learning Center ten-year vision and values for teaching and learning.*

Learning Center faculty and staff have experienced their share of managerial shifts (four deans in the past five years) which for employees less able to adapt readily to change can lead to turmoil and confusion; however, because of the very nature of learning assistance, cooperation and collaboration controls AVC's Learning Center programs, services, and operations. As a team, Learning Center employees are dedicated in terms of their vision for students: to improve motivation, acquisition, retention, and performance, components of *metacognition*, thinking behavior that moves students to not only meet basic-level academic expectations, but to apply learned skills to their own lives. Dedication aside, *an informed administrator, one who understands the principles of tutoring and learning assistance, is vital to the ongoing success of the AVC Learning Center's programs and services.*

Survey Results

An evaluative survey of Learning Center programs, services, equipment, marketing, and personnel was administered to AVC students and employees from May 9 to June 1 both online via *surveymonkey.com* and in hard copy form. A total of 308 students and 70 employees responded to questions measured quantitatively as well as to questions that encouraged qualitative, open-ended responses. Results, overall, are favorable but may indicate a lesser awareness of program components by the sheer number of "not applicable/no opportunity to observe" ratings as well as little or few short answer responses. Quantitative survey results appear below. Open-ended responses, a summary of which is located in the Appendix, will also be addressed below and in sections of this document.

Learning Center Survey Results (Student Survey) 2007

Gender	Count	Percent
Male	72	23.4%
Female	236	76.6%
Total	308	100%

Age	Count	Percent
17 or younger	23	7.4%
18-20	64	20.5%
21-24	52	16.7%

25-30	45	14.4%	
31-39	44	14.1%	
40-49	49	15.7%	
50-59	30	9.6%	
60+	5	1.6%	
Total	312	100%	
Enrollment Status		Count	Percent
Full-time	153	48.4%	
Part-time	163	51.6%	
Total	316	100%	

Which centers have you visited in the Learning Center?	Count	Percent
Academic Skills Center	32	10.1%
Writing Center	107	33.8%
Reading Center	43	13.6%
General Tutoring Center	101	31.9%
Computer and Media Checkout	127	40.1%
Math Center	135	42.6%
ESL Study Center	13	4.1%
Supplemental Instruction	84	26.5%

Learning Center Survey Results (Employee Survey) 2007

Employment Status	Count	Percent
Member, Board of Trustees	0	0.0%
Full-time Faculty	41	58.6%
Part-time Faculty	7	10.0%
Classified	16	22.9%
Administrator	4	5.7%
Short-term Hourly	2	2.9%
Total	70	100%

Which centers have you referred students to in the Learning Center?	Count	Percent
Academic Skills Center	28	40%
Writing Center	41	59%
Reading Center	18	26%
General Tutoring Center	42	60%
Computer and Media Checkout	18	26%
Math Center	39	56%
ESL Study Center	11	16%
Supplemental Instruction	24	34%

*N/A not included in rating average

Student Survey Questions (percentage)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Rating Average
4 The services offered in the Learning Center meet my learning needs.	39.9%	46.6%	3.5%	1.3%	8.6%	1.63
5 The computer labs in the Learning Center adequately meet my learning needs.	31.5%	42.1%	4.5%	1.3%	20.6%	1.69
6 The equipment and instructional materials in the Learning Center meet my learning needs.	32.3%	44.1%	5.8%	1.0%	16.9%	1.70

7	Learning Center workshops meet my educational needs.	30.8%	35.9%	3.2%	1.6%	28.5%	1.66
8	Learning Center faculty and staff are helpful and courteous.	47.3%	37.7%	4.8%	1.3%	8.9%	1.56
9	There is adequate publicity about the Learning Center and its services on campus.	26.4%	40.8%	19.9%	5.5%	7.4%	2.05
10	The Learning Center has helped me understand how I learn.	25.8%	37.4%	10.6%	1.9%	24.2%	1.85
11	Learning Assistance Center course offerings meet the educational needs of students.	31.1%	30.8%	3.5%	0.6%	34.0%	1.60
12	Learning Assistance Center course offerings are relevant and up-to-date.	25.3%	38.6%	4.9%	0.6%	30.5%	1.72
13	Learning Assistance Center courses adequately prepare students for their future careers or occupations.	21.2%	39.2%	6.2%	1.0%	32.4%	1.81
14	Scheduling of Learning Assistance Center classes meets the needs of students.	27.6%	35.1%	8.1%	1.3%	27.9%	1.77

*N/A not included in rating average

Employee Survey Questions (percentage)		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Rating Average
3	The services offered in the Learning Center meet the learning needs of students.	42.9%	42.9%	0.0%	1.4%	12.9%	1.54
4	The computer labs in the Learning Center adequately meet the learning needs of students.	26.1%	34.8%	4.3%	0.0%	34.8%	1.67
5	The equipment and instructional materials in the Learning Center meet the learning needs of students.	27.9%	33.8%	2.9%	0.0%	35.3%	1.61
6	Learning Center workshops meet the educational needs of students.	37.1%	32.9%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	1.47
7	Learning Center faculty and staff are helpful and courteous.	59.4%	26.1%	2.9%	0.0%	11.6%	1.36
8	There is adequate publicity about the Learning Center and its services on campus.	20.6%	36.8%	25.0%	14.7%	2.9%	2.35
9	The Learning Center has helped students understand how they learn.	36.2%	33.3%	1.4%	1.4%	27.5%	1.56
10	Learning Assistance Center course offerings meet the educational needs of students.	35.7%	24.3%	2.9%	1.4%	35.7%	1.53
11	Learning Assistance Center course offerings are relevant and up-to-date.	31.9%	26.1%	4.3%	1.4%	36.2%	1.61
12	Learning Assistance Center courses adequately prepare students for their future careers or occupations.	29.0%	26.1%	2.9%	1.4%	40.6%	1.61
13	Scheduling of Learning Assistance Center classes meets the needs of students.	17.6%	29.4%	5.9%	4.4%	42.6%	1.95

*N/A not included in rating average.

The statement receiving the most favorable response was *Learning faculty and staff are helpful and courteous*, receiving a 1.56 from students and a 1.36 from employees. The second highest rating was in response to *Learning Assistance Center course offerings meet the educational needs of students*. Students scored this question a 1.6 whereas employees scored it a 1.53. Also scoring high with both students and employees were *Services in the Learning Center meet the learning needs of students* and *Learning Center workshops meet the needs of students*. Every item surveyed was scored highly between “strongly agree” and “agree”. Among the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses, for both students and employees, only one was moderately high: *There is adequate publicity about the Learning Center and its services on campus*. Despite efforts to promote and publicize services each term, some students state they have never heard of the existence of the Learning Center on campus. Clearly, this issue needs

to be addressed with a more systematic approach in place to garner awareness of programs and services.

One question in the open-ended section of each survey is “What role do you think the Learning Center currently serves on campus?” This was asked to assess understanding of the role and purpose of learning centers in general. Although few students who took the survey articulated every point made in the AVC Learning Center’s mission statement, which is not unlike those of other colleges, the responses were fairly consistent despite some blanks. Roles included individual and group tutoring, assisting students with their class material, providing extra help, making resources available, access to computers, quiet study, etc. Student success was a factor, though independent, lifelong learning was less mentioned. Employee answers to this question were more pointed, less vague in terms of tutoring and learning assistance. In either case, our purpose and the gist of what we do is recognized by the campus community. One glaring omission in the questionnaire is a statement about the Learning Center Web site which has a full presence online with instructional materials and links to pertinent resources for students. Feedback about the site is important for the promotion of Learning Center programs and services and will be included in future surveys.

Usage Overview

This data was taken from the Learning Center database. As indicated, the number of visits and unique students per term are generally high, particularly in the areas of computer/media utilization and math.

Learning Center Total Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	19825 / 3964	4452 / 1327	21725 / 3799	1595 / 520
2004	20981 / 3896	3852 / 1075	20639 / 4151	1300 / 491
2005	23503 / 3918	3658 / 1069	20223 / 3539	1580 / 549
2006	20472 / 4123	4887 / 1382	20682 / 3885	N/A
2007		3876 / 1189	16313 / 3169	1495 / 459

Computer and Media Check-Out Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	11896 / 2232	2844 / 832	12684 / 1992	971 / 341
2004	13411 / 2125	2548 / 659	10618 / 2050	884 / 342
2005	12948 / 2020	2232 / 635	12625 / 1856	1190 / 376
2006	10263 / 2026	2524 / 720	10516 / 1832	N/A
2007		1848 / 596	10243 / 1813	890 / 279

DSS High Tech Center

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	90 / 26	13 / 3	75 / 18	1 / 1
2004	113 / 23	9 / 4	76 / 24	5 / 2
2005	31 / 11	1 / 1	98 / 17	5 / 2
2006	36 / 9	20 / 7	19 / 6	N/A
2007		3 / 3	60 / 10	0 / 0

Academic Skills Center Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	202 / 83	20 / 16	0 / 0	0 / 0
2004	19 / 12	4 / 4	221 / 147	7 / 6
2005	62 / 41	24 / 14	76 / 63	22 / 17
2006	92 / 61	6 / 6	76 / 48	N/A
2007		0 / 0	25 / 19	12 / 9

ESL Center Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
2004	167 / 45	6 / 4	175 / 41	0 / 0
2005	443 / 83	32 / 13	484 / 75	0 / 0
2006	506 / 83	58 / 12	613 / 96	N/A
2007		27 / 17	715 / 102	17 / 14

Math Center Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	3087 / 672	962 / 257	2856 / 580	331 / 82
2004	3765 / 714	1028 / 259	4180 / 759	348 / 105
2005	4387 / 777	830 / 216	3722 / 670	290 / 109
2006	4626 / 821	1291 / 286	4470 / 755	N/A
2007		1006 / 259	5290 / 768	414 / 93

Reading Center Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	1602 / 121	5 / 5	820 / 111	6 / 6
2004	405 / 87	3 / 2	1631 / 81	12 / 2
2005	2443 / 158	65 / 13	199 / 56	17 / 10
2006	649 / 133	25 / 17	1060 / 203	N/A
2007		13 / 10	647 / 127	0 / 0

General Tutoring Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	1480 / 357	254 / 69	1909 / 325	198 / 56
2004	1189 / 194	55 / 20	1225 / 333	24 / 18
2005	1029 / 162	131 / 31	1195 / 173	7 / 2
2006	1478 / 225	188 / 59	1198 / 180	N/A
2007		100 / 45	596 / 97	31 / 13

Supplemental Instruction Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	586 / 152	93 / 31	2222 / 345	87 / 33

2004	975 / 253	1 / 1	1548 / 333	0 / 0
2005	1110 / 253	110 / 29	979 / 239	2 / 2
2006	1273 / 270	462 / 120	1388 / 348	N/A
2007		517 / 114	564 / 185	56 / 18

Writing Center Utilization

Year	(Total Visits per Term / Unique Students per Term)			
	Fall	Summer	Spring	Intersession
2003	882 / 321	261 / 114	1159 / 428	3 / 1
2004	937 / 443	198 / 122	965 / 383	20 / 16
2005	1050 / 413	233 / 117	845 / 390	47 / 31
2006	1549 / 495	313 / 155	1342 / 417	N/A
2007		362 / 145	1277 / 374	75 / 33

All centers within the Learning Center use various attempts to make clear to students that seeking help is not an indication of weakness itself but an opportunity to improve weaker skills. For some students, it may be more socially acceptable to accept that they have weak math skills but not to admit weaknesses in reading and writing fundamentals. Clearly, Learning Center personnel must address what some students perceive to be the stigma of self-referral or referral by their instructors to its programs and services; therefore, *developing stronger methods for faculty referrals of students is a major goal.*

Curriculum

Introduction

Learning Assistance Center (LAC) courses can be classified three ways:

Transfer Tutor Training	Credit Instructional Support	Non-credit Instructional Support
LAC 100	LAC 098	LAC 900
LAC 200	LAC 099	LAC 901
LAC 299*	Courses in progress/development	
Courses in progress/development		

*currently waiting for AP&P approval

Note: The Math Learning Specialist developed Math 020 (Managing Math Anxiety) and Math 021 (Math Study Strategy) for the Math, Science, and Engineering Division, and each semester teaches the courses as part of her load.

All LAC courses (existing, revised, or to be processed through AP&P) meet more than one area in the AVC mission statement, particularly in the areas of transfer, job preparation, basic skills, and personal enrichment/professional development courses, as well as student support services such as tutoring and learning assistance instruction. The courses are consistent with the Educational Master Plan in terms of meeting the learning needs of students through interventions that impact retention and persistence, opportunities for active learning, access to new technology, activities that target particular student populations, certification of tutors, etc. Most LAC courses are instructed on the Lancaster campus, although a Learning Center presence was established for Fall 2007 in Palmdale with the offering of LAC 900 and 901 on site. Three faculty learning specialists spent one day each at the Palmdale facility. A schedule

of Palmdale tutoring sessions (for writing and math) and workshop topics appeared on the Learning Center Web site along with the Lancaster workshop schedule and hard copies available for students at both campuses. Although few students have taken full advantage of these services, services continue to be offered two days per week during the Spring 2008 term at the Palmdale site because AVC is committed to offering the same services to students regardless of location. *It is imperative, however, that Learning Center faculty and staff develop and systematically carry out a plan to promote LAC 900 and 901 services at the Palmdale Learning Center.*

Enrollment in LAC transfer courses at the Lancaster campus has traditionally suffered because the instructors have limited time to offer sections. The courses, offered as part of the full-time faculty load, are inserted in the schedule of classes as work schedules permit. *Often these times are not convenient to both tutors and community members.* Before Fall 2007, there were only three full time faculty and one adjunct faculty member, an Academic Skills Learning Specialist. This fall semester, adjuncts have been hired with basic skills funding for ESL, Reading, Academic Skills, and Math. *Adjuncts must receive training to teach these courses so more class sections offered at times more convenient to students can be offered in the future.*

Online courses have not been offered as yet, though discussions are taking place among faculty to offer LAC 100 in such a format, providing students with another option to complete the course AND to receive CRLA certification. *CRLA guidelines for distance tutor training courses must be evaluated before faculty can submit a Distance Education (DE) form for this purpose.* Also, online tutoring via LAC 900 and learning assistance via LAC 901 have not yet been offered. Title 5 regulations govern these two non-credit courses for the collection of State apportionment requiring a *process for their offering that meets both online students' needs and State requirements, one that faculty must develop.* The recent awarding of a Senate grant to the Writing Center Learning Specialist to evaluate electronic methods used at other colleges and universities to offer tutoring through "virtual" means will aid in the development of a process for offering writing tutoring online at AVC and can lead to other content-area tutoring opportunities. *A Distance Education (DE) form will be submitted to AP&P for LAC 900 and 901 once processes for online tutoring and instruction are finalized.*

LAC courses have been offered for many years, yet the high number of "N/A" responses to the statements about LAC courses in both surveys, students and employees, may indicate a general lack of awareness of these courses. In the open-ended responses, student suggestions for course offerings were for the most part missing. Employee suggestions included "study skills and habits" prevalent in all Learning Center courses but given more of a focus in a course recently developed in response to these suggestions (LAC 065, "Developing Study Skills"). *Learning Center faculty must commit to working more closely with other student services (for instance, Counseling, Career Center, Transfer Center, Job Placement) and instructional support services (STAR, EOPS, DSS) to help promote campus-wide awareness of LAC courses in terms of how they benefit students.* Transfer courses can provide students jobs in the community as tutors. Credit courses can help students develop skills that enable them to meet the requirements of other programs such as nursing. Non-credit courses can help students apply subject content and study habits beyond the classroom and the college.

Student workers are involved in planning and evaluating Learning Center services linked to LAC 900 on a regular basis. Each year, a conference is held primarily for training, but also as an opportunity for faculty and staff to receive input on the effectiveness of tutoring policies, procedures, and strategies from the students' perspectives. In addition, regular training sessions are held by each center at least monthly to evaluate tutoring strategies and

instructional materials. *Learning Center meetings, important for faculty and staff to discuss ways to better serve students, need to be scheduled more often in the future.*

The three full-time faculty learning specialists are, for the most part, overextended in terms of their job duties, making it difficult to attend more than one or two conferences a year to glean many innovative instructional strategies to apply in LAC classrooms; however, many are practiced such as the AVID method, active learning strategies, classroom assessment techniques (CATS), the use of multi-media to teach to different learning styles, etc. This semester, with the addition of adjunct learning specialists, some of the work load can be turned over to them to teach workshops, to assess deficiencies (in academic skills, ESL, math, reading, and writing) in order to create individual student learning plans, etc. Full-time instructors can then have more time to devote to improving their instruction, creating and improving curriculum, and addressing curriculum concerns which should be addressed in meetings together at least once a month. Classified staff members, all very knowledgeable about the components of tutoring and learning assistance, support faculty efforts by providing orientations to students and other faculty and by suggesting new ways of providing assistance to students.

Plan of action:

- *Develop an Associate's degree in tutoring and learning assistance.*
- *Develop and carry out a systematic plan for promoting LAC 900 and 901 at the Palmdale Learning Center.*
- *Eliminate barriers for better student access to LAC transfer courses at the Lancaster campus.*
 1. *Train adjuncts to teach LAC transfer courses.*
 2. *Offer more class sections and schedule classes at convenient times for students.*
- *Evaluate CRLA guidelines for distant tutor training courses; follow-up with DE form for LAC 100.*
- *Develop processes for the offering of LAC distance tutoring and instruction; follow-up with DE forms for LAC 900 and 901.*
- *Promote full understanding campus-wide as to the benefits of LAC courses.*
- *Schedule Learning Center meetings for faculty and staff more often.*
- *Provide opportunity for improvement of instructional strategies and for creating/improving curriculum; schedule once a month full-time faculty meetings to address curriculum concerns.*

Transfer Courses

Introduction

Transfer LAC courses focus on tutor training and are vital to Learning Center programs. Well-trained tutors aid tutees in terms of subject knowledge and skills, but most importantly, assess the needs of tutees appropriate to differences in learning modalities, study habits and behaviors, academic levels and abilities, learning and physical disabilities, as well as cultures and second (English) language needs. Although AVC students benefit from trained and experienced tutors, the overall goal of tutor training courses is to transfer tutoring skills to any tutoring venue—university, college, K-12, community, private, and the workplace. The courses themselves “are transferable as electives to the California State University system but are not worth articulating,” according to AVC’s Articulation Officer, “since they do not lead to a major.” Learning Center faculty plan to present to AP&P a request to add LAC 200 to Category E in the “General Education Requirements for the CSU System” to entice students, particularly Learning Center tutors, to choose it from among other courses in that category. *All of the transfer tutor training courses will become part of the vocational certificate for tutoring when it is developed.* Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are in place and measured by course methods of evaluation.

The courses do not currently lead to an Associate's degree in tutoring and learning assistance, though this goal is listed in the IR/ES section of the Educational Master Plan. Transfer Learning Assistance Center (LAC) courses support existing associate degree and/or certificate programs as electives and meet general education specifications, although they are not assigned to a particular category.

The courses focus on tutoring strategies, so it is imperative that Learning Center faculty remain current in the field of learning assistance to share with students innovative practices. They do this by attending conferences when possible and interacting with learning assistance colleagues at ACTLA and CRLA regional meetings and conferences. Course curriculum addresses diversity and multicultural perspectives as they relate to tutoring and creates an outlet for students to communicate issues and concerns during role playing activities, journal writing, and class discussions.

In any given AVC school year, Learning Center tutors complete tutor training courses instructed by Learning Center faculty. Pay raises are tied to successful course completion. For some tutors, an incentive to work at AVC may be to develop sufficient skills to better assist peers to become successful students while another may be to receive a tutor certificate from CRLA, an international organization, useful for applying to university-level tutoring programs upon transferring. The Learning Center can continue to state in its literature that nearly all of its tutors have certificates. The pay structure of tutors will be higher beginning January 1, 2008, but low end salaries of AVC tutors, still lower than those in K-12, means some tutors do leave. *The issue of losing tutors to K-12 because of low tutoring salaries must be resolved to eliminate competition in the race to retain AVC tutors for assisting AVC students.*

Tutors in the community who complete certification requirements can claim status as professional tutors, giving them more credibility in their tutoring venue; yet, despite the offering of AVC tutor training courses each semester, very few tutors who work in community settings or run their own private tutoring businesses enroll. A year ago, LAC 100, Introduction to Tutoring, was changed, expanded to three units, and offered in the evening to encourage community members to partake in the opportunity to expand their skills and abilities as well as to receive certification. Flyers were sent to local high schools and were distributed at various events to also encourage parents to enroll, yet the majority of students were employed by AVC. *Marketing efforts must improve.* Suggestions include the design and distribution of a tutor training program brochure, faculty visits to schools and community tutoring centers, and the hosting of a tutoring conference to encompass tutor training needs in all venues. The benefits to AVC include not only increasing the numbers of potential tutors enrolled in AVC tutor training courses, but also the number of potential students tutored by trained and experienced tutors in AVC and community venues who enroll in college courses with more knowledge and better skills and study habits.

Additional tutor training courses, currently in progress, include LAC 299, *Master Tutoring*; LAC 101, *Cross-Age Tutoring* and LAC 102, *Tutoring the Adult Learner*. The courses will address the specific needs of children, teenagers, and adults. The Learning Center responded to requests by K-12 administrators last school year for AVID tutor training (Advancement Via Individual Determination, Los Angeles County Office of Education), offering such training under LAC 100 (independent study) on an as needed basis. The Academic Skills Learning Specialist received AVID instructor training and is a proponent of this program. As a result, a Learning Center partnership with local schools has been formed with several AVC tutors and interested

persons participating in AVID training held at AVC with the aim of providing them employment in the community.

Plan of action:

- *Ask AP&P for approval to add LAC 200 to CSU Area E.*
- *Develop a vocational certificate in tutoring to include all LAC transfer tutoring courses.*
- *Continue to address the issue of low AVC tutoring salaries in comparison with K-12 and private tutoring venues.*
- *Develop a marketing plan for LAC tutor training courses.*

LAC 100, Introduction to Tutoring, 3 units

LAC 200, Advanced Tutoring, 3 units

These courses are designed to prepare students to work as professional tutors or to work in any field of education. Both are electives for the AVC Education program's Instructional Aide Certificate. Both courses were revised from one to three units through AP&P last year because there was no longer a need for individual lab activities. A group setting for reading and discussing material, making oral presentations, role playing, etc. takes place much more conveniently now, allowing more time per week in class. Students gain knowledge and skills from extended lectures and by regular classroom interaction with peers. LAC 100 and 200 class sessions generally take place in LC 104 and 114 which contain up-to-date computer technology for presentation purposes for both the instructor and students.

LAC 100 and 200 are transferable to the CSU system as electives. LAC 100 can be considered vocational in nature because students learn basic principles of tutoring that can be adapted to any work setting. These settings not only include AVC, K-12 schools, and learning centers in the community, but also vocational settings in which managerial and employee training is needed. Also, because of its tie to CRLA requirements, LAC 100 curriculum complies with industry standards and meets State Title 5 guidelines for apportionment (see Compliance section). Course requisites are accurate for LAC 100, for students not at these advisory levels are at a disadvantage because reading and writing assignments are central to methods of evaluation. LAC 100 is a prerequisite for LAC 200.

The course outlines of record, recently revised and updated, are followed diligently. Though CRLA certification is an option, not a course requirement, most students who complete the courses successfully ("C" or higher) and work a total of 25 hours as a tutor each term the courses are offered will receive certification. This compels course instructors to insure that the outline of record is not only followed, but is substantial for individual students. For instance, a student who misses a class meeting must confer with the instructor beyond class time to discuss and receive not only make-up work, but also missed instruction if he/she opts for certification. In addition, group activities tied to a particular topic are often repeated to accommodate the student who misses a class. For these reasons, attending class regularly is emphasized by instructors and encouraged by peers.

Because curriculum for both courses is tied to CRLA requirements, the courses are currently offered face-to-face rather than online. CRLA does not award certification to tutor training courses offered solely online. *Hybrid LAC 100 and 200 courses need to be developed to meet the needs of students who prefer the online component, yet such courses would still require face-to-face involvement.* Learning Center faculty members can re-design the courses without changing the curriculum by using Blackboard for instruction via lecture and synchronous class discussion while holding face-to-face class meetings for group activities both at the Lancaster and Palmdale campuses to accommodate students.

LAC 100 focuses on basic training for the tutor—ethics and principles, the special needs of individuals, communication strategies, group tutoring, etc. Student evaluations rate highly course instruction and content, yet some students observe that there are too many handouts. Recently, a change in textbooks was made to one more comprehensive, eliminating the need for unnecessary supplements. Online instructional materials also supplement course material. Another observation by students is that there are many homework and written assignments, yet there are just enough assigned weekly as approved by AP&P to meet the rigors of a three unit transfer course. The course is offered each semester one night per week. In addition, it has been offered during shorter terms (intersession, summer) as independent study especially to accommodate Learning Center tutors who cannot take the course full-term. Students have reasonable access, but offering more than one course section each term at different times and providing a distance education option would likely promote higher enrollment. Technology such as Dragon Dictate is available should students request the instructor's use of it, *though faculty who teach the course need training on how to use this program.*

LAC 200 emphasizes group communication in an educational setting using learning theories for the tutoring process by defining learning styles and characteristics of adult cognitive development, probing questions, extending awareness of cultural differences, using learning inventories, and developing knowledge of learning resources. The course is advisable for anybody willing to pursue a teaching career or another educational path. The course is offered one afternoon per week, *but students in the LAC 100 night class have asked that LAC 200 be offered at night as well, an accommodation that could possibly be made in the future.* Technology such as Dragon Dictate is also available for this course. No textbook is assigned for LAC 200; handouts have been provided to students, but in the future, *a booklet of instructional information, now in the process of being developed, will be utilized.* This booklet will also aid those students going on to the Master Tutor class. Students enrolled in Spring 2007 showed high interest for the covered material by indicating a desire to be recipients of the Master Tutor certificate. These students also evaluated extremely positive the class content, methods of instruction (especially the mediated learning environment with role playing), individual PowerPoint presentations, and multiple interactions that helped to introduce them to different learning theories applied for different situations and tutees. Each student developed an original application of a specific tutoring/learning theory that was evaluated by their peers in a public presentation setting.

Certificate recipients for both LAC 100 and 200 often become members of professional organizations related to tutoring, attend conferences, and engage in continuing dialogue with others in the field. A year ago, three ESL tutors became members of the Association for the Tutoring Profession (ATP) by taking an online training course, funding for which was provided by an AVC Foundation grant written by the Writing Center Learning Specialist. Last spring, basic skills funding allowed eight tutors to attend the ACTLA conference in Long Beach, and as new members of the organization, they are included in a Listserv that addresses tutoring issues, keeping them abreast of issues and concerns related to their field as well as giving them an opportunity to join the discussion. More than ten tutors attended an ACTLA regional meeting held at AVC last year, a few accompanied staff to one at Cuesta College last spring, and some plan to attend the next region meeting in Spring 2008 at Santa Barbara City College. Two writing tutors recently accompanied the Writing Center Learning Specialist to a SoCal Writing Centers Association meeting in October to discuss plans for a writing tutor conference for which they are proposing a topic to present. Unless categorical or district funds are available for professional development, *Learning Center faculty must continue to request basic skills funds and to write grant proposals that will allow tutors to attend conferences and special training*

events. All AVC students will ultimately benefit from receiving tutoring from tutors who receive systematic tutor training, a tenet of the Basic Skills Initiative D-10 effective practice.

Plan of action:

- *Develop hybrid LAC 100 and 200 classes.*
- *Offer LAC 200 as a night class.*
- *Train faculty in the use of Dragon Dictate.*
- *Finish an instructional booklet for LAC 200.*
- *Continue to request basic skills funds and to write grant proposals for tutor professional development.*

LAC 299 –Master Tutoring (subject to AP&P approval), 3 units

This course has many of the components described above in the LAC 100 and 200 section in terms of purpose (tutor training), transferability to CSU, CRLA certification (successful course completion and 25 working hours of tutoring), vocational aspects; and state/federal funding guidelines; however, the course outline of record has not yet been approved by AP&P. Formerly, the curriculum was offered by the full-time Academic Skills Learning Specialist and Math Learning Specialist as in-house instruction with only a few students participating in its study and achieving certification. Once approved, it is expected that students who completed LAC 100 and 200 (the latter the course prerequisite) will go on to enroll in LAC 299 to add breadth to their profession as mentors to less experienced tutors as LAC 299 is designed to prepare professional tutors to mentor, supervise, and/or train other tutors in tutorial programs as well as to utilize intervention strategies for at-risk students.

In order to encourage a diverse, multicultural cross section of students who take the course, former students who completed LAC 200 can be polled as to their interest in enrolling. Course scheduling can also be determined with a poll. Because the master tutor class is not approved yet by AP&P, students can receive their certification through the certified CRLA curricula if they follow up all the recommendations of this certification program and complete and present publicly a project regarding an objective of the tutorial program. Significant numbers of students received their Master Tutor certificate through this program that formerly took place by invitation.

Plan of action:

- *Follow-up with AP&P processing and ultimate approval.*
- *Take a poll of students who have completed LAC 200.*

LAC 101—Cross-Age Tutoring (in development), 1 unit

LAC 102—Tutoring the Adult Learner (in development), 1 unit

These courses will be part of a vocational certificate in tutoring. The first has been developed to meet the needs of those students pursuing employment as tutors for K-12 either in proprietary schools like Sylvan or Mathnasium, domestic education (home schooling), volunteers (America Reads or America Counts), and in public educational settings (para educators, AVID tutors). The second will apply to tutoring in adult venues such as literacy and adult education programs, and colleges and universities. LAC 101 meets the requirements of AVID, and both courses will be presented to AP&P as both a face to face and a hybrid distance class in order to give potential students more access to the course.

Plan of action:

- *Learning Center faculty will review final drafts of these courses.*
- *Follow-up with AP&P processing and ultimate approval.*

Credit Instructional Support courses

Introduction

These courses support other programs, but not for the awarding of the associate degree and certificate program of achievement; therefore, they are not articulated with local high schools. They were created as a result of partnerships formed with other disciplines such as English, Mathematics, and Nursing. The first two are part of the Mathematics discipline but are taught by the Math Learning Specialist, and so are listed here (Note: AP&P is no longer allowing for cross-referencing of courses). All existing courses are offered at least once each semester; however, to accommodate the learning needs of nursing students, the Math Learning Specialist has added as many as four late start or short-term LAC 098 and 099 classes per school year. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are measured by course methods of evaluation in relation to course objectives.

Math 020, Managing Math Anxiety, 0.5 units

Math 021, Math Study Strategy, 0.5 units

These courses are offered for Credit/No Credit only. The first is designed to provide students with skills to reduce math frustration, to recognize math anxiety, to develop coping strategies, and to become aware of personal learning style preferences for math. The second assists students in improving their math study skills and develop appropriate math study strategies for various math classes. Typically, the courses are not homogenous regarding students' math levels and skills; therefore, the instructor develops materials according to students' individual needs. Instructional booklets were edited recently and undergo revisions as needed. For better success, that is, to provide more time to course content, *the Math, Science, and Engineering Division should consider seeking AP&P approval to change the courses to one unit of credit each*. The courses are typically scheduled as short-term, over eight weeks, and can be taken one after another by students over the full term.

Students evaluate these classes very positively because they help them cope with math anxiety, understand different strategies that help them to analyze their strengths and weaknesses in the field of mathematics, and help them succeed in future math classes. Students learn skills and strategies to understand, solve, and evaluate math concepts, to better manage their math study time, to avoid test anxiety, and increase their success, retention and persistence. The delivery of the class content is frequently done by PowerPoint presentations. Students inventory their skills and study behaviors as well as their learning styles, learning skills, and learning environment preferences using different computer software. Students also watch video tapes to learn about self-confidence and study skills.

LAC 098, Math for Nursing, 1 unit

LAC 099, Dosage Calculation, 0.5 units

These courses are also offered for Credit/No Credit only and are scheduled each semester. *Both meet the requirement of basic skills courses for vocations*. As math is an important component of the nursing profession, a growing demand by students for math support services have been met by the creation of the first course which enables them to apply basic mathematical concepts to job situations and to prepare them to pass the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS). The second focuses on problem-solving techniques in drug calculations for all age groups. The awarding of a Vocational and Technical Educational Act (VTEA) grant made it possible to aid in the development of LAC 098 course materials, for instance, a student booklet developed (and recently edited) by the Math Learning Specialist and specific math for nursing software purchased for computers in the Math Center. Students also have access to handouts on the Math Center Web site.

Both courses have advisories in place that have been reviewed as part of the revision/update process last year. The only recommendation for change was to LAC 099 from one-half to one unit. The courses are not articulated with high schools as they are considered lower-level basic skills courses central to the AVC nursing program.

A very strong interaction exists between the Math Learning Specialist and nursing faculty and students. The Allied Health Division strongly recommends students take LAC classes for nursing, and the courses' content and methods of delivery are discussed periodically with the Allied Health faculty. Math Center faculty and staff work diligently with nursing faculty to prepare students for LAC 099, *which needs to become a requirement for the nursing program*. With the help of the Allied Health Division, students in the Math Center have access to different devices used in medication administration. Students can also access specific software for dimensional analysis. A booklet used for the class was developed by the Math Learning Specialist; handouts and video clips on the Web as well as hard copies for handouts are available in the Math Center. Tutors were trained (through the VTEA Grant) to tutor nursing students for both LAC 098 and LAC 099, many of whom have asked for more class time to learn course material, for the latter in particular; therefore, *a proposal to extend LAC 099 to one unit will be made to AP&P*.

Because many students take the Math for Nursing class prior their TEAS exam, the class content was recently modified to include specific math concepts (such as graphing equations and inequalities, statistical and geometry concepts, etc.) required in the TEAS exam. Because of the strong relationship with instructors, students enjoy taking these classes, often asking for help outside class, receiving help while enrolled in nursing courses beyond the lower level, and expressing gratitude when they are awarded their nursing licenses. There are many written testimonies of this kind of evaluation/appreciation. Some also want to be able to take LAC 098 and 099 more than once for better reinforcement of learned skills.

Plan of action:

- *Begin a dialogue about making LAC 099 a requirement for the nursing program.*
- *Seek AP&P approval to change LAC 099 to one unit.*

Courses to be presented to AP&P during 2007-2008

All are offered for credit, but are not applicable to the Associate degree and certificate program.

LAC 065, Developing Academic Skills, 2 units

A version of this course (ENGL 065) was previously offered as a mini-course through the Language Arts Department, which has discontinued it. It has now been completely rewritten as a LAC course. As a developmental level course, it will not compete with the Human Development courses which are transfer level. The skills stressed are thinking critically, listening skills, textbook reading and marking, note taking and making, time management and study planning, learning styles, memory techniques, test anxiety, and test taking.

LAC 120, Managing Writing Anxiety, 2 units

This course was created by the Writing Center Learning Specialist in partnership with the English Composition Coordinator. Since 2002, a mini-version of the course content has been offered as a workshop for LAC 901. Because students have asked for the course and often indicate their purpose to be "writing anxiety" when seeking tutoring (LAC 900) in the Writing Center, their needs will be met. The course will focus on coping strategies but will also include identification of important essay elements and the application of stages of the composition process to different writing situations. The course benefits all students, and particularly those

who must cope with timed writing (class or State exams such as TEAS). *Potential students will be polled as to their preferences regarding class scheduling.*

LAC 130, Essential Academic Skills for Pre-Nursing, 0.5 units

LAC 131, Critical Thinking and Study Skills for Nursing, 1 unit

Just as LAC 098 and LAC 099 target nursing students, so do LAC 130 and 131. LAC 130 is designed to assist students preparing to take the TEAS for admission into the registered nursing program and introduces them to study habits necessary for success. LAC 131 is designed to assist students who have been admitted into the registered nursing program or preparing for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for RNs and introduces them to study habits and test taking techniques necessary for success. Drafts of these courses have been reviewed by the nursing faculty who are supportive of the addition of these courses to the Learning Center offerings.

Plan of action for LAC 065, 120, 130, 131:

- *Learning Center faculty will review final drafts of these courses.*
- *Follow-up with AP&P processing and ultimate approval.*
- *Poll students as to their preferences for class scheduling.*

Other courses being considered for development under this category include the following:

- **Learning Skills Software**
- **Technical Writing Strategies**
- **Math for Vocations** (electrician, welder, automotive, air conditioning and ventilation, etc.) With the recent awarding of a VTEA grant, a booklet for math for vocational classes is in the process of development. Also, on the Math Center Web page, there are many handouts for applying math concepts in vocational classes. The Math Center provides a crucial role in AVC's vocational education programs both through its curricular and tutorial services. It also partners with the Technical Education Division. The Math Center has received VTEA grant funding multiple times throughout this review period which has funded tutoring for these students and the purchase of instructional materials and equipment used by vocational and nursing students.

These courses are targeted to be under development for the 2008-2009 school year.

Note: The Learning Center does not provide vocational programs or courses per se, but courses can lead to vocational pursuits as explained in the course description section for transfer tutor training.

Non-credit instructional support courses

Introduction

Learning Assistance Center non-credit courses support classroom instruction by focusing on the student's ability to improve learning and study skills. The courses do not appear on the student's transcript, and positive attendance data is collected. A syllabus is provided to each student who enrolls, and assessment of student learning outcomes takes place. Currently, both courses, LAC 900 and 901, are offered in the areas of general tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI), math, and writing and ESL. Only LAC 901 is offered for academic skills and reading. Just as with transfer, vocational, and other courses, the goal of Learning Center faculty is to offer LAC courses for Palmdale and online students. During Fall 2007, three faculty members have spent one day each at the Palmdale campus teaching LAC 900 through tutoring activities as well as teaching LAC 901 workshops and meeting with students individually to prepare individual learning plans. These activities will continue in Palmdale during Spring 2008.

Student referrals by counselors and instructors are received via forms they complete for the appropriate individual center within the Learning Center, made available to them in the mailroom or through some other method. Some English instructors, however, are reluctant to use the referral forms the Writing Center provides as some students tend to feel stigmatized by being referred for help. The Early Alert program also receives referrals, and/or individuals contact the learning specialists directly via Email, telephone, or in person. Currently, the issue of letting students self-refer is being discussed statewide as some view language in Title 5 guidelines to be in need of change. Faculty learning specialists, as instructors of LAC 900 and 901, can refer students to their own courses, according to information given to the full-time Academic Skills Learning Specialist at a CCC System's meeting of the Basic Skills and ESL Committee (now the Credit and Non Credit Basic Skills, ESL, and Supplemental Instruction Committee under the leadership of Juan Cruz.). This issue is further discussed in the Compliance section below. Student learning outcomes are measured for LAC 900 and 901 by all centers within the Learning Center by various means, though an attempt at uniformity is currently being made. SLOs will be discussed in more detail in that section.

No course requisites are in place for these non-credit courses, nor are they articulated with high schools. LAC 900 was recently revised and is being processed through AP&P.

LAC 900, Supervised Tutoring, 0 units

Introduction

Upon instructor or counselor referral, students receive tutoring in a designated subject area in the Learning Center. Tutorial sessions typically focus on not only course content of the subject tutored but also the study skills necessary to be successful in college. Careful consideration is given to recordkeeping as courses in this designation are governed by Title 5 guidelines. Currently, this course is offered on site only in Lancaster and Palmdale. *Eventually, when a distance education process is established, tutoring can be offered either online via Blackboard, via telephone or teleconferencing, or by Email or some other non face-to-face option.*

Peer tutoring has been well documented in many developmental circles (Hunter Boylan, Pat Cross, et al.) as indicative of student success. Not only are strategies related to content offered by the tutor, but also those related to study skills. The goal of tutoring is to lead to independent thinking and learning. Tutoring can be conducted individually or in groups or at computer stations via computer assisted instruction (CAI). LAC 900 serves as one of the main activities of any individual learning plan (ILP) developed for a student by learning specialists.

According to the AVC Director of Institutional Research, *enrollment in a Learning Center course is highly correlated to student success, retention, and persistence.* A recent student persistence discriminant final model from Fall 2004 to Fall 2006 claims that among the nine variables that predict student **persistence**, "attending one or more Learning Center courses during the term increases the probability that a student will return in the spring." The LAC courses pinpointed were 900 and 901. The director also predicts that "a current study of indicators of student **success** among AVC students will show that LAC 900 and LAC 901 are among them." *The first model and the second when confirmed should be promoted to the campus community as evidence of the benefits of tutoring and learning assistance.*

Each area within the Learning Center supports the educational needs of students with tutoring assistance. Tutors are involved with planning and evaluating student support and development services via yearly AVC student worker conferences and regular monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly meetings with tutorial specialists and learning specialists. All centers within the Learning Center create and maintain a campus climate that serves and supports its diverse student population

as well as systematically evaluates its services as a basis for improvement via twice a semester surveys and LAC 900 tutoring reports that measure a student's achievement of course objectives relative to SLOs. A description and evaluation of each center's tutoring services follow below.

Every center within the Learning Center, with the exception of the Math Center, reports tutoring and usage (non-tutoring) data separately as well as places weekly time limits for tutoring. For instance, the maximum amount of hours per week that a student can be tutored in the General Tutoring Center is three while in the Writing Center one hour is allowed. Time limits encourage independent thinking and learning, one of the tenets of tutoring. Statewide discussions emerged during Fall 2007 among members of ACTLA regarding the definitions of supervision and what qualifies for claiming apportionment. *In seeking continued compliance with State regulations, Learning Center faculty and staff will engage in further discussions concerning language in Title 5 guidelines regarding tutoring courses such as LAC 900.*

Plan of action:

- Offer LAC 900 via distance education.
- Promote the benefits of LAC 900 and 901 with persistence and success evidence.
- Engage in discussions regarding State guidelines for tutoring courses.

Academic Skills Center

The Center does not currently offer LAC 900, as tutors are not assigned to it. Study skills tutors were funded through the Basic Skills Initiative, but there currently is no space for tutoring sessions to take place. When the space issue has been addressed by the college administration, tutors will be hired to tutor study skills as long as funding is available. The Early Alert program, described in the LAC 901 section below, operates from this center and currently depends upon referrals to other centers for students' needs for academic skills tutoring. To insure this focus, the addition of academic skills tutors to the program would greatly benefit AVC students in general as would peers to mentor Early Alert students. State apportionment could then be collected for LAC 900.

Plan of action:

- Address the need for academic skills tutors and peer mentors for Early Alert students.

General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction

The General Tutoring program offers tutorial services to students through one-on-one or group tutoring sessions for selected classes to full or part-time students who have Associated Students Organization (ASO) cards or are eligible for the EOPS or DSS programs (Note: ASO provides funding for tutoring.) Tutoring, conducted by trained peer tutors, assists students with course content as well as study and learning skills. During the tutorial session, the tutor reinforces course content with the student and helps him/her identify his/her:

- study skills deficiencies
- learning modality preferences
- motivation, knowledge acquisition, retention, and performance
- study improvement plan
- specific new study strategies
- progress in the ability to study independently

By implementing and demonstrating study skills in a tutorial, the students become independent, active learners. The tutoring sessions take place under the supervision of the General Tutoring/SI tutorial specialist with the Academic Skills learning specialist as LAC 900 instructor.

All tutoring sessions are by appointment only. Students can receive a maximum of three hours of tutoring per week: two hours in one subject and one hour in a second subject.

The following table illustrates the number of student visits to the General Tutoring area during 2000 through 2007. "Total tutor visits" corresponds to the students who attend tutoring sessions. The title "Total usage visits" corresponds to students who come in for quiet study to the General Tutoring area and check-out instructional material for study purposes

General Tutoring Usage Report

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Tutor Visits	85	51	1340	1877	1335	2075	2327	955
Total Tutor Hours	89.27	65.69	1616.95	2225.26	1333.41	2135.89	2659.11	1041.98
Total Usage Visits	216	519	522	1512	1076	149	345	453
Total Usage Hours	303.48	747.1	592.58	1514.56	1039.25	161.38	1339.11	426.15
Total Visits	301	570	1822	3389	2414	2224	2672	1408
Total Hours	392.76	812.81	2209.5	3739.86	2372.65	2297.29	3998.21	1468.13

General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction programs will be expanded to serve students in Lancaster if space is found, in Palmdale, and online once this process is established. One problem is recruiting tutors. Currently, the majority of the students who apply for tutoring positions are referred by faculty or through the Job Placement Center; however, once the students apply they are discouraged by the pay scale. The starting salary for an AVC tutor is below the salary wage that other tutoring centers pay in the Antelope Valley, particularly those in K-12. The starting salary for an AVID tutor, for instance, is \$10.00 an hour. With higher wages in other tutoring centers, many students do not apply for a tutoring position in the General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction programs, clearly a disadvantage for the students at Antelope Valley College. A pay scale increase to go into effect January 1 will be helpful in recruiting tutors, but competition with K-12 is still an issue.

Plan of Action:

- *Work with administrators to increase tutor salaries in order to recruit students to apply for tutoring positions.*
- *Advertise in the Antelope Valley College Examiner to reach a large pool of applicants.*

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a program that focuses on historically-difficult courses, not at-risk students. A historically-difficult course is one which 1/3 or more of the students earn grades of D, F, or withdraw. The emphasis in SI is on helping students acquire and refine the learning skills essential to master course content. SI sessions are available to all students enrolled in the course and are attended on a voluntary basis. SI sessions are led by peer student leaders specially trained to help students become independent learners. The SI Leader (tutor) attends class to maintain current knowledge of the class and enhances the study sessions by tutoring study skills to help the students succeed in the course. Overall, students who participate in SI benefit considerably. *National SI statistics show that students who attend SI sessions earn one letter grade higher as opposed to those who do not attend.*

The following is the Antelope Valley College General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Service Evaluation Results, for Spring 2005 thru Spring 2007:

Section I: Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction

Question	Yes %	No %	Not Applicable
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			%
• Has tutoring prevented you from dropping a class?	59	23	18
• Has tutoring helped you improve your class grade?	82	4	14
• Has tutoring helped prepare you to advance to a higher-level class?	54	23	23
• Has tutoring helped improve your study habits?	89	3	8
• Has tutoring helped increase your self-confidence?	75	12	13
• Has tutoring helped reduce your test anxiety?	75	14	11
• Has tutoring helped your understanding of course content?	95	1	4
• Were you overall satisfied with our services?	96	2	2

Results Analysis

Most of the reviews of services were positive. Almost all of the students benefited from tutoring (both SI and general tutoring). If a student did not choose an answer, or chose more than one, it was modified to reflect the “not applicable” choice. Overall, 96% of students were satisfied, 2% were unsatisfied, and 2% indicated that the service did not apply to them.

Strengths:

The General Tutoring program has several strengths, which have been identified by students’ comments. Students are becoming more confident, increasing their good study habits, and understanding course content. The General Tutoring department’s results are in line with the mission of the Learning Center, as well as general tutorial goals. General Tutoring is stimulating independent learning, reinforcing course content knowledge, and reinforcing good study habits.

Weaknesses:

A larger percentage of “no’s” were marked in the areas of course persistence (making sure students do not drop), reduction in test anxiety, and advancement to higher-level courses. Although these weaknesses will be discussed with tutors, several variables may have influenced responses for these sections of the questionnaire. For instance, an answer of “no” indicates that tutoring has not assisted with keeping students from dropping probably because they have not dropped or have not considered dropping a course. Also, many students indicated that it was too early to tell if they would advance to a higher level course or not.

Plan of Action:

- *Weaknesses will be accounted for by means of tutor training in the area of test anxiety reduction. A training module on test anxiety will help tutors work with students who are affected by test anxiety. Part of the training would include having a Learning Specialist work along with the tutors to identify testing strategies that will help manage test anxiety.*
- *Tutors will refer students to the Academic Skills Center to meet with a Learning Specialist to go over these strategies on a one-to-one basis or refer students to workshops offered during the semester. In addition, students who drop LAC 900 will also be referred to the Academic Skills Center to assess the reasons why they are dropping supervised tutoring.*

Other weaknesses identified, such as persistence, are difficult to account for and overcome, as students may drop on their own accord or have chosen a response of “no” in this area because

they have not dropped the course, which is why they have indicated tutoring has not made a difference for them in this area. Still, this will be discussed with tutors so that they are aware of the matter. Another difficulty with this area is that tutoring cannot compensate for or guarantee a specific educational improvement with regards to grades or attendance. Overall, current standings show that general tutoring and SI share success in assisting students in their target areas of need.

Math Center

The Learning Center provides drop-in math tutoring for all Antelope Valley College students. With well-trained, instructor-recommended tutors available every weekday and on Saturdays, the Math Center leads the campus in providing additional support and resources for students enrolled in math and math-related courses including, but not limited to, vocational, nursing, science, engineering, and computer science courses. By partnering with faculty in several divisions, the Math Center stays abreast of changes in curriculum and student population and trains its tutors to meet the changing needs of today's AVC students.

Math Center Visits

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer	Intersession
2002	2625	N/A	N/A	N/A
2003	3087	2856	906	331
2004	3765	3721	1028	348
2005	4387	3722	830	290
2006	4373	4411	1290	N/A
2007		5051	1006	414

Term	Unique students
Fall 2002	686
Intersession 2003	82
Spring 2003	580
Summer 2003	257
Fall 2003	672
Intersession 2004	105
Spring 2004	759
Summer 2004	259
Fall 2004	714
Intersession 2005	109
Spring 2005	670
Summer 2005	216
Fall 2005	777
Spring 2006	570
Summer 2006	285
Fall 2006	821
Intersession 2007	93
Spring 2007	768
Summer 2007	259

Individual tutoring is delivered on a drop-in tutoring basis for all math classes and math related classes (math concepts for physics, chemistry, microbiology, astronomy, geography, accounting, etc.) as well as for different vocational classes with emphasis on nursing students. In a mediated learning environment, tutors follow the tutorial cycle, develop metacognitive skills

by reinforcing previously learned concepts, and deliver the tutorial session using Bloom's taxonomy, Chickering's vectors, and Skinner's positive reinforcements. A short tutor report follows each session, one that describes data based on the learning objectives established by the LAC 900 syllabus, assuring evidence of student learning outcomes. *The development of new instruments of measuring the student's learning outcomes is in process.* Also, the Math Center offers computer and media assisted tutoring, a variety of math software, Math Editor, and instructional videos.

Each student is asked to denote the purpose(s) of their visit to the Math Center when visiting the first time each term. As indicated in the table below, *tutoring* and studying in an instructional environment consistently are cited as primary reasons students use the Math Center.

Purpose(s) for visit	Spring 2006	Summer 2006	Fall 2006	Intersession 2007	Spring 2007
Student is enrolled in Math 099:	15.2%	14.5%	18.4%	31.9%	15.4%
To work with a tutor:	48.4%	56.0%	46.2%	32.7%	40.6%
To attend a homework clinic:	10.0%	7.1%	7.1%	5.3%	9.0%
To use text and video resources:	20.4%	18.7%	14.3%	16.8%	17.0%
To use a computer:	15.9%	13.7%	20.9%	14.2%	21.8%
To use a quiet study area:	38.1%	33.6%	26.5%	31.9%	31.0%

In addition, students are asked if they have dropped their current math course or earned a "D" or "F" in a prior semester. Between 70% and 80% of students who use Math Center resources and receive tutoring are re-taking their current math course for at least the second time due to withdrawal or not passing the course.

	Spring 2006	Summer 2006	Fall 2006	Intersession 2007	Spring 2007
Students who report having received a grade of D, F, or Withdraw in the math course in which they are currently enrolled:	77.3%	75.9%	78.0%	73.5%	75.8%

Student-reported data collected at student in-take each semester indicates that, generally speaking, 25% of students enroll in Math Center tutoring early in their class. Another 25-30% of students have no idea regarding their success level in their math course. The data also reveals that of the students who know their current grade at the time they enroll in tutoring, a high majority is passing their math course with a grade of "C" or better.

Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know	Class just started	Total
Spring 2006	14.0%	13.0%	10.0%	3.6%	2.1%	23.4%	32.0%	100.0%
Summer 2006	12.9%	14.5%	13.3%	2.5%	1.2%	25.3%	24.1%	100.0%
Fall 2006	12.4%	9.8%	10.9%	2.6%	1.1%	29.3%	26.3%	100.0%
Intersession 2007	16.8%	18.6%	8.0%	1.8%	0.0%	24.8%	25.7%	100.0%
Spring 2007	13.6%	10.7%	12.2%	4.8%	1.6%	30.3%	21.0%	100.0%

With a state-wide and campus initiative toward basic skills in full swing, the Math Center has stepped up its efforts and tutoring services for basic skills math students. According to the Office of Institutional Research, between Fall 2005 and Spring 2007, approximately 25% of students enrolled in basic skills math classes utilized the Math Center at some point during these terms.

With additional funding for tutoring, tutor training, and promotional materials, the Math Center has developed a plan to increase group tutoring offerings for these students and has increased mandated professional development for all of its tutors. During the 2007-2008 school year, the Math Center expects an influx of basic skills students and is prepared to offer them tutoring.

The largest hurdles faced by the Math Center are tracking SLOs, receiving adequate funding, and lack of space for support staff and equipment storage. Despite these obstacles, the Math Center has witnessed increased student usage and satisfaction. Still, if these concerns are not addressed by college administration, the Center's present quality of service to students will taper off significantly.

Each semester, the Math Center distributes a survey to students who utilize the center requesting that they rate the quality of assistance and service received. The following is the most recent survey results and exemplifies the typical responses gleaned over the past several years.

Math Lab Services Evaluation Spring 2007

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Does not apply</u>	<u>Total</u>
Has math tutoring helped prevent you from dropping a class?	62 (71%)	5(6%)	20(23%)	67
Has math tutoring helped you improve your grade in a class?	69(79%)	4(5%)	14(16%)	67
Has math tutoring helped prepare you to advance to a higher-level class?	58(67%)	10(5%)	19(22%)	67
Has math tutoring helped increase your self-confidence?	66(76%)	8(9%)	13(15%)	67
Has math tutoring helped reduce Your math anxiety?	58(67%)	12(14%)	17(19%)	67
Have Math Lab services and resources (software, online sources, videotapes, handouts etc.) helped you improve your math skills?	50(57%)	5(6%)	28(33%)	63

Plan of Action:

- *Follow-up with the development of new instruments to measure SLOs.*
- *Continue to address issues of funding and space.*

Reading Center

The Reading Center offers cross-curricular reading tutoring and tutoring for the developmental reading sequence in one-on-one or group tutoring formats. Tutoring began to be offered in 1998, but had no budget attached to it despite yearly budget requests to the Dean of Language Arts. Because the center had no budget, there was a limited pool of students who could be tutors, those who either had Federal Work Study or CalWORKS Work Study money available to them. The Reading Center became an official part of the IRES division when reorganization occurred in 2006, at which time it was allocated a portion of monies gained from the Basic Skills one time money.

Currently, although the Reading Center offers tutoring to individuals and groups in the Learning Center, *it does not collect State apportionment for LAC 900*. An adjunct reading learning specialist (RLS) was hired for Fall 2007, but apportionment would only be able to be collected during the hours she is on duty, which is not enough to collect apportionment for every hour the Reading Center provides tutoring. It is imperative, therefore, that *a request for a full-time RLS be made to the college administration so that funding for Reading Center tutoring can be collected from the State*. More about the Reading Center appears in the LAC 901 section and another entitled "Services not linked to courses."

Plan of action:

- *Request funding of a full-time reading learning specialist position so that program needs can be better met.*

Writing Center and ESL Study Center

A Writing Center Campus Advisory Committee, with the Writing Center Learning Specialist (WCLS) as chair, was formed in Fall 2002 comprised of faculty across disciplines. The committee created a Writing Center mission statement:

The mission of the Writing Center is to provide a supportive learning environment where all Antelope Valley College students have the opportunity to improve their writing skills and to become independent, successful learners.

Policies were established related to tutoring:

1. The focus is on the writing process, not the student's product (essay). The former focuses on teaching strategies within the process of writing that a student can use to build his/her skill level. The latter emphasizes raising student essays to an acceptable level by correcting mistakes.
2. Independent learning is encouraged. Tutors, for instance, do not tell students what to write, nor do they edit or proofread students' work. Instead, tutors use Socratic questioning and listening methods to help students think for themselves. All Writing Center services include advice on how to develop writing *and* study skills.
3. The Writing Center creates a friendly and open environment where students do not feel threatened to share their writing with others and where they can receive encouragement and understanding.

Students can receive per week one hour of tutoring (30 minutes each session) by trained peers for written assignments in the Writing Center. In some cases, particularly for special needs students (deaf, learning disabled, at-risk, etc.) more time can be allotted, but in general one hour of tutoring is enough to focus on the major elements in the paper (thesis, paragraphs, organization). Often students want more time, usually for the purpose of having tutors edit and proofread their papers. The issue is product versus process (#1 above). Tutors never write on tutees' papers as do instructors (#2 above). Peer tutoring is an equal relationship; the tutors respect tutees' rights to be authorities of their own work. If the tutor were to write on a tutee's paper, then he/she becomes the authority, and an unequal relationship is developed. Tutors are NOT instructors; they do not teach by lecturing and presenting NEW material. Instead, they take what the tutee already has learned about a topic and use listening and questioning strategies to elicit understanding of the material. *A dialogue with English instructors about these policies is slated to occur in Spring 2008. A Flex proposal on what tutoring is and is not will be completed for the 2008-2009 school year to inform instructors campus-wide about tutoring.*

Tutors often use instructional resources in their sessions with tutees such as computer software and online resources to illustrate a writing concept or rule of grammar and punctuation. Tutors may sometimes conduct tutoring sessions with a tutee at a computer with the paper on the

screen. Additionally, computer assisted instruction (CAI) is available for basics such as formatting papers, accessing the Internet, and using computer software. A whiteboard, available on a wall for use by tutors and tutees, provides a visual means for making conceptual connections. *A file cabinet houses writing handbooks and handouts, most of which meet federal copyright guidelines, though a review of the file is in order. Also, handouts need to be designed by the WCLS as PDF files to be available online on the Writing Center Web site.* A bookcase accessible to students contains textbooks and other books of use to tutees during tutoring sessions or quiet study. *A computer, located in a small multi-purpose room in the Writing Center, is very old and needs to be replaced.* Once an adjunct WCLS is hired, he/she will occupy that room and will need easy access to the Learning Center database, MyAVC for Banner, etc.

Space, limited in the Writing Center, consists of three round tables for tutoring sessions and five computers, all in close proximity. *Another round table needs to be purchased soon in anticipation of Spring 2008 high enrollment.* Also, to date, work space for the Writing Tutorial Specialist (WTS) is shared with a desk assistant, an arrangement that can be confining. *Another call for rearrangement of this space must be followed up with the Facilities Department.* Tutors and/or the WCLS hold small group sessions for students who have a shared interest in a specific topic and are enrolled in the same classes or in the same program such as STAR, GED, Developmental English, etc. but are at a disadvantage as to space if it is not available.

Writing Center Usage

Semester	Total Tutor Visits	Total Tutor Hours	Total Non-Tutoring Visits	Total Non-Tutoring Hours	Total Usage Visits	Total Usage Hours	Number of Individual Students
Spring 2003	736	358	14	22.9	750	380.91	498
Fall 2003	542	362.78	0	0	542	362.78	321
Spring 2004	466	228.97	0	0	466	298.97	383
Fall 2004	445	205.03	184	276.8	629	481.8	443
Spring 2005	494	247.58	107	113.73	601	381.31	390
Fall 2005	467	229.64	393	422.53	860	652.2	413
Spring 2006	402	198.53	653	785.46	1055	983.95	417
Fall 2006	414	223.46	694	800.64	1108	1024.15	495
Spring 2007	504	275.34	676	950.74	1180	1226.1	442
Fall 2007	556	312.01	841	980.45	1397	1292.53	447

Writing Center usage has seen an increase over the last few semesters. The direct comparison between Fall semesters show that, in light of the current semester, 2007 numbers have already exceeded 2006 attendance. The emphasis in the Writing Center usage is mainly on tutoring. Students can choose between making an appointment for a tutoring session or they can drop in during tutoring hours. Most students prefer to use the drop in option. While this practice makes tutoring more readily accessed by students, it frequently becomes problematic when too many students come in at once or one of the two tutors on duty is unavailable. *With basic skills funding, adding more tutors during peak hours could resolve this issue. An appeal to English faculty to refer potential tutors to the Writing Center has been made.*

A yearly newsletter, on a small scale and sent online to AVC faculty and staff, is produced by the WCLS featuring the writing of both ESL and writing tutors as well as photographs and

information about their achievements. It was suggested over a year ago that *the Learning Center as a whole create a newsletter that highlights news about each center within it.* This type of promotion could be another method of increasing campus awareness about its services.

ESL Study Center

At present, the ESL Study Center (ESL SC) operates under the direction of the Writing Center due to the fact that there is no full-time ESL learning specialist assigned to it, *another request that must be forwarded to the college administration.* A Verizon grant written by the ESL Coordinator and the WCLS enabled the center to establish a viable presence in the Learning Center, Room LC 104, which was furnished with desks and chairs, file cabinets and bookcases, as well as a computer presentation station for instructional purposes. Two years ago, a committee comprised of the WCLS, ESL Coordinator, and an ESL tutor met with a facilitator to develop a vision statement for the ESL Study Center. Recently, an adjunct ESL learning specialist was hired with basic skills funds to perform duties such as train tutors in conjunction with the writing tutorial specialist, supervise tutoring (LAC 900), and conduct workshops and develop individual learning plans for students (LAC 901).

Computers awarded by the Verizon grant and loaded with ESL software are located directly across from the Writing Center front desk. Hispanic ESL students benefit from having a desk assistant in close proximity who speaks both English and Spanish to answer basic questions. ESL tutors provide CAI when necessary at these computers. Their location is not currently convenient for this tutoring, though it does allow for the tracking of services and sometimes needed communication between the Writing Center desk assistants and ESL students. Once full-time staffing is available for the ESL SC, *space for computers closer to the ESL Study Center should be a Learning Center priority.*

ESL Study Center Usage

Semester	Total Tutor Visits	Total Tutor Hours	Total Non-Tutoring Visits	Total Non-Tutoring Hours	Total Usage Visits	Total Usage Hours	Number of Individual Students
Spring 2004	175	236.57	0	0	175	236.57	41
Fall 2004	167	194.91	0	0	167	194.91	45
Spring 2005	354	399.18	63	107.14	417	506.32	75
Fall 2005	195	220.11	248	279.84	443	499.92	83
Spring 2006	115	107.63	498	735.42	613	843.06	58
Fall 2006	83	67.67	423	590.60	506	658.25	83
Spring 2007	218	169.65	497	718.04	715	887.68	102
Fall 2007	173	148.71	793	923.99	966	1072.71	126

The ESL Study Center has seen a strong growth in usage, especially in the areas of tutoring and computer use. The greater part of the usage hours are made up of the time ESL students spend at the ESL computers. The students mainly use the software that accompanies their ESL courses and other software helping them to advance their English studies. Lately, students have also begun using the ESL computers more often for online ESL course work. The rising number of ESL students using these and other ESL services limits space within the Writing Center. ESL students who wish to sit down for quiet study should be encouraged to do so in the ESL Study Center where study tables are available for that purpose and tutors and the Learning Specialist available to help them if they need it.

Antelope Valley College Writing Center and ESL Study Center Service Evaluation Results

Section I: Tutoring

Question	Yes %	No %	Not Applicable %
1. Has tutoring prevented you from dropping a class?	76	6	18
2. Has tutoring helped you improve your class grade?	76	7	17
3. Has tutoring helped prepare you to advance to a higher-level class?	73	4	23
4. Has tutoring helped increase your self-confidence?	90	5	5
5. Has tutoring helped reduce your writing anxiety?	82	6	12

Results analysis:

Overall, “yes” responses are high (79% average). Writing and ESL tutoring is obviously of benefit to students whether or not they attended one or more tutoring sessions.

Strengths

Tutees benefit from the fact that ESL and writing tutors are, for the most part, strong writers themselves, come highly recommended by English professors, and exhibit all of the attributes of a tutor that lead to successful relationships with tutees, particularly subject matter knowledge, patience, and empathy. All are well-trained to work within a diverse, multicultural work environment.

Weaknesses

Whereas only 6% (average) were unsatisfied with tutoring, 15% (average) indicated the service did not apply to them, though for some, perhaps, the questions asked were not of particular meaning or even of interest.

What changes to make

The survey above is an evaluation of the service of tutoring, not indicative of SLOs identified for each student enrolled in LAC 900. Tutors need to be made aware of survey results, perhaps as they relate to their own sessions with tutees. Tutors can also be part of the discussion about which questions to ask on the evaluation instrument.

Plan of action:

- *Participate in the Spring 2008 dialogue with English instructors about issues raised regarding tutoring.*
- *Review handouts for copyright compliance; convert/create handouts as PDFs.*
- *Request a new computer for LC 107 to replace the older model currently available.*
- *Follow-up on rearrangement of work station space for the Writing Tutorial Specialist.*
- *Request basic skills funding to hire more tutors during peak hours.*
- *Encourage the creation of a Learning Center newsletter.*
- *Request funding for a full-time ESL learning specialist so that program needs can be better met.*
- *Move ESL computers close to ESL SC if space re-configuration allows.*
- *Request additional funding for more Writing Center and ESL tutors for both Lancaster and Palmdale sites.*
- *Involve tutors in a discussion of survey results and revisions.*

Palmdale Site

In Fall 2007, tutoring began to be offered at the Palmdale site under the supervision of three learning specialists who worked one day each at that location. Student attendance is below:

Total tutor visits: 71
Total tutor hours: 33.42
Unique students: 41

More needs to be done to advertise this service in order to increase the number of visits and, ultimately, help students to succeed.

Plan of action:

- *Develop a strategy to promote the Learning Center in Palmdale.*

LAC 901, Supervised Learning Assistance, 0 units

Introduction

Students meet with faculty learning specialists for individualized assessment of student learning and academic needs, assistance with skill improvement, and the co-creation of an individual learning plan for ongoing improvement to include tutoring, workshops, referrals to other centers within the Learning Center, CAI, Web-based and self-paced materials, and follow-up sessions with the students to insure completion of assigned activities. Intervention, especially early in the semester by faculty learning specialists, is a key factor in student persistence and is a potential one for their success, according the Office of Instructional Research (see LAC 900 introduction above). Small group instruction is also given via workshops on various topics that also include study strategy information. Classroom instruction can also be requested by instructors to have a learning specialist teach in-class workshops during class sessions, though State apportionment via LAC 901 is not collected in these cases. The course has been extended to the Palmdale site for all of the above and *will be offered through distance education once a mode of delivery is established.*

Student learning outcomes have been developed for this course and are currently in place, measured for the most part by various means. The Writing Center Learning Specialist and the ESL Learning Specialist, for instance, use a pre test to measure students' knowledge before instruction takes place, and then a post test to determine understanding. Workshops through the Academic Skills Center (ASC) also use a pre and post test; however, most students meet with faculty in the ASC to create an Individual Learning Improvement Plan (ILIP). The ASC uses several kinds of assessment instruments in order to assist the students in the development of these plans. Faculty members record progress during each visit.

Students are referred to the center in several ways: instructor or counselor referral, program referral (example, STAR, DSS, EOPS, etc), Early Alert, Financial Aid Appeals Committee, Probation or Dismissal committee, dean referral (usually as a result of a student question or concern), tutor referral, or referral from another Learning Center program. Students also refer each other to the service or come in as a response to the Learning Center brochure or to attend a workshop.

Plan of action:

- *Establish a distance education mode of delivery for LAC 901.*

Early Alert Program

With the Early Alert program in place, learning specialists have been meeting often each semester with students individually, increasing ILP FTE growth, *though data on the success of*

the program is still being collected and analyzed. The data will be added after Fall 2007 grades are submitted by instructors. Each semester, despite reminders of the availability of this program, only a few faculty members take advantage of the opportunity to refer their students to the Learning Center using the Early Alert notification form on the AVC intranet which can be easily completed by providing student information (name, AVC identification number (ID), address, and telephone number) and indicating the problem areas pertinent to each (low test scores, lacks study skills, reading and/or writing problems, etc.). This information is sent to Learning Center personnel depending upon the problems selected. *The addition of adjunct learning specialists in reading and ESL requires notification be sent to them as well.*

Early alert interventions should be made earlier in a given term rather than later. Help from peer mentors can have an impact on student retention and persistence. A peer hired for the program is available to mentor students, though more mentors are needed because potentially Early Alert can involve many students in a given school year, especially if interventions occur sooner. *A clerical position for data entry and maintenance of files needs to be made permanent. Promotion of the program needs to increase, and along with that, the hiring of an adjunct writing specialist to take some of the overload.*

Plan of action:

- *Complete the collection and analysis of the success of the Early Alert program.*
- *Request peer mentors and a permanent clerical position for the program.*
- *Promote the Early Alert program to increase counselor and instructor referrals.*
- *Add reading and ESL learning specialist Early Alert notification to insure follow-up.*
- *Advertise workshops and ILPs to a greater extent at the Palmdale site.*
- *Hire an adjunct writing center learning specialist to participate in this program.*

Academic Skills Center

The Academic Skills Center has three faculty—one full-time and two adjunct. The Academic Skills Center also employs one peer mentor and is seeking to hire an additional peer mentor and study skill tutors to work with student motivation, retention, and success. *This is a new service and has not yet been evaluated.* Students are referred by instructors and counselors in the variety of ways described in the introduction to LAC 901.

The learning specialists in the Academic Skills Center use formal and informal diagnostics to identify each student's individual learning and cognitive styles, analyze the student's study behaviors strengths or weaknesses, assist the student in the creation of an individual learning improvement plan, provide instruction and learning materials (videos, handouts, reference tools) to remediate study skills deficiencies, and referral to other persons, programs, and services. The Academic Skills Center also provides workshops on various study skills topics including time management, developing test taking skills, managing stress, etc.

The Academic Skills Center is the first referral for the Early Alert system and is responsible for making the first contact with the student, doing the initial assessments, and managing the data. It also is a part of the intervention for students reaching their Basic Skills limit as well as students on Financial Aid or Academic Probation. The Academic Skills Center has strong links with the classroom faculty, counselors, the Financial Aid office, and the Athletic department. Faculty also use the Academic Skills Center as a resource for suggestions on presenting course materials or revising assessment instruments to meet the needs of various learning and cognitive styles. They also will seek out the assistance of the academic skills learning specialists about concerns they have over specific students.

On many campuses, the Academic Skills Center and the Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD) Center are combined. At AVC, the Reading Center acts as both the RAD Center and the support service for the developmental reading classes. *The joining of the current Academic Skills Center and the RAD portion of the Reading Center into one unit might serve students well and is worth investigating.*

LAC 901 Academic Skills Center unique students count is as follows:

Semester	Unique Students
Fall 2003	82
Spring 2004	126
Fall 2004	25
Spring 2005	74
Fall 2005	40
Spring 2006	44
Fall 2006	64
Spring 2007	57
Fall 2007	134

Plan of action:

- *Expand the Academic Skills Center into a full center parallel to the other programs in the Learning Center*
- *Find an additional room or rooms to be used by the study skills tutors and peer mentors.*
- *Hire an Early Alert, Basic Skills Clerk or an Academic Skills Tutorial Specialist*
- *Evaluate the efficacy of the Early Alert Program.*
- *Follow-up with evaluation of peer mentor service.*
- *Investigate the possibility of combining with the RAD program*

Math Center

The Math Center has two faculty—one full-time and one adjunct—who meet with students individually or in groups. Students are referred by instructors and counselors in the variety of ways described in the introduction to LAC 901. In the Math Center students coming for individual appointments do computer based or paper-pencil based pre and post diagnostics, skill inventories, time scheduling, self-evaluations, etc. Individual appointments are for diagnosing and improving different math strategies: reading and annotating correct the math text book, editing math notes, strategies for doing homework, editing math folders, critical self-evaluations of previous tests, as well as understanding that math is cumulative and sequential to connect different math concepts through critical thinking. With nursing and different vocational classes, students analyze case studies. The Math Learning Specialist advises students in correlation with their learning modality, learning environment preference, previous math background etc. for enrolling in math classes in terms of sequence, type, and length such as lecture type classes, self-paced individualized math classes, A and B classes, on line classes, etc.

Many workshops are held each semester including those for math study skills and specific math topics as well as workshops for student populations: vocational classes (ex: electricians, air conditioning and ventilation, automotive, etc.), nursing students (math topics and TEAS), STAR, and GED. The full-time Math Learning Specialist devotes much time to developing study material via Web handouts, many of the latter with audio capacity that reinforces the learning

process. For instance, as a guest instructor, packages of math strategies for different vocational classes were created and presented during lectures for different vocational classes. Specific math workshops for targeted vocational classes connect math strategies with the specific work task. Other vocational learning resources include videos and, *in process of development, a Weblibliography of learning resources*. The Math Learning Specialist provides pre-scheduled workshops regarding strategies for content review, test taking strategies, managing math anxiety, strategies for math translation, strategies for solving word problems, understanding and applying math concepts, etc.

At the request of students or faculty, workshops (some Fast Track) are offered on different topics such as reviewing for tests and special topics that apply to math related classes, etc. The Math Learning Specialist offers pre-scheduled workshops for the STAR program, GED orientation, different Human Developmental classes, different vocational classes, SOAR classes, student orientations, etc. The Math Learning Specialist and the Math Tutorial Specialist periodically visit math classes to promote the Math Center mission and services. Both also provide ongoing training for incoming and existent tutors regarding tutorial theories, as well as math content training. *More new workshop resource material needs to be developed.*

Student attendance at Math workshops and individual learning plan meetings are available below:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Visits</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>	<u>Unique Students</u>
Spring 2004	118	141.18	78
Summer 2004	32	28.5	16
Fall 2004	35	32.73	30
Intersession 2005	1	1	1
Spring 2005	151	194	92
Summer 2005	22	23.5	20
Fall 2005	195	327.59	100
Spring 2006	226	280.67	139
Summer 2006	30	37.75	18
Fall 2006	235	317.5	119
Intersession 2007	14	25	7
Spring 2007	224	315.75	131
Summer 2007	82	93.46	38
Fall 2007	278	344	163

Plan of action:

- *Continue to develop a Weblibliography of learning resources.*
- *Develop new workshop resource material.*

Reading Center

In the Fall of 2007, basic skills funding enabled the Reading Center to hire an adjunct learning specialist to whom students are referred by instructors across the curriculum via Early Alert and referrals from the Writing, Math, or General Tutoring Centers in the Learning Center. Some students initiate visits. There are several methods and steps followed to identify the educational support services needed by each student, including setting outcomes for each session, instructor observations, reading assessments, and analytical reading inventories. The students are involved with identification of SLOs for the session and evaluation of the session via a student survey. The Reading Learning Specialist (RLS) takes into account the emotional

development of students as well as their reading and academic skills development, and cognitive growth.

The RLS facilitates learning by giving students opportunities to practice skills, but before they can work on their own or with a tutor, direct instruction is provided for reading strategies and skills needed. Each session begins with setting goals. During the session, the RLS teaches the strategy, models for the students, and provides feedback in order for them to develop awareness of their learning and progress. At the end of the session, the student and the RLS reflect on progress made. The RLS created three forms to help gather the student information and assessment data: Student Profile, Analytical Reading Inventory, and Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). The Student Profile is used to gather information about a student's reading practices and academic needs. The Analytical Reading Inventory form is used to record reading assessment data and the instructor's observations, to inform instruction, and to communicate the student's educational and/or tutoring needs. The RLS and the Reading Tutorial Specialist then work together identifying how tutoring can best help the individual student, considering the students' metacognitive development. Other referrals for services can be made, depending on the students' needs, to other service areas in the Learning Center, such as Writing, Academic Skills, or Math, or outside the Learning Center to areas such as Financial Aid, Counseling, and Academic Advisors.

Saturday workshops have been well received. The RLS offers reading comprehension workshops and reading fluency workshops on Saturdays covering reading comprehension strategies and skills. In addition, reading fluency workshops are offered on Mondays. Small groups Phonics instruction has also been well received and is included in the fluency workshops, as needed.

Concerns of the RLS are the following:

- *Reading tutors should receive reading instruction and some training from the Reading Specialist in order to ascertain that reading instruction and reading tutoring are aligned.*
- *At times it seems that the RLS and the Tutorial Specialist are not working together sufficiently to serve the students well due to the adjunct status (and limited hours) of the RLS. Planning time needs to be put aside in order for communication to be clearer between the RLS and the Tutorial Specialist.*
- *More students can benefit from reading instruction. Students have commented on several occasions that the help they are getting from the RLS is extremely helpful, that more students would benefit from assistance and instruction, but that not too many students know about her availability. More advertisement is needed, including a sign with her name, contact information, and services offered.*
- *A larger, permanent workspace is needed. The Reading Center needs a work room/office assigned to it on a regular basis. At present, the RLS uses the office of a Language Arts instructor which gives privacy but is too small and has no table for the Reading Specialist and a student to work together.*
- *Additional instructional materials are needed such as reading matter for small group discussions, Analytical Reading Inventories for student use during the assessment process, and Phonics essentials for lower reading groups.*
- *More systematic methods for Reading Center program evaluation need to be put in place, including defined timelines.*

Plan of action:

- *RLS to provide some instruction and training for reading tutors.*
- *Plan time for communication between RLS and RTS.*

- *Promote the services of the RLS via more advertisement.*
- *Follow-up with assigning space in the Learning Center for RLS meetings with students.*
- *Purchase additional instructional materials.*
- *Develop a systematic method for evaluation of the Reading Center program.*

Writing Center

Students are referred to the Writing Center Learning Specialist (WCLS) by instructors and counselors in the variety of ways described in the introduction to LAC 901. The WCLS meets with students individually to plan strategies or actions that are agreed upon for strengthening students' writing skills which become part of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The plan typically includes a learning styles assessment, a diagnostic writing and/or grammar test, supervised tutoring, writing and study skills workshops, computer assisted instruction (CAI), instructional videos, and referrals to other centers such as Reading and Academic Skills, etc. Other items included in students' ILP files include samples of their writing and records of completed coursework. Follow-up meetings with the WCLS insure student participation and progress.

When the Early Alert program referrals state the student has "writing problems," he/she is immediately contacted by the WCLS to arrange a meeting. Typically, within a given number of referrals, *less than one third actually make contact. For various reasons, students decline to return phone calls, or the information in Banner is incorrect.* Once a meeting is arranged, a file is created that contains a copy of the student's academic record, the copy of the Early Alert referral, and any other information forwarded by the student's instructor. An initial meeting is held in which the WCLS views the student's written assignments to assess problem areas, provides instruction and referrals to resources about the particular problems, creates the ILP with the student, arranges for a follow-up session typically 2-3 weeks later, orients the student to the Learning Center, and makes a copy of the ILP for the student and any centers to which referrals have been made. The instructor making the referral is apprised of what transpired between the WCLS and the student; subsequent sessions with him/her are also summarized and sent to the instructor. In the future, *the WCLS will work more closely with Early Alert personnel to insure that initial student contacts are not duplicated.*

This scenario is similar to what is experienced for referrals NOT made through the Early Alert programs. Some English instructors prefer to telephone or come by to see the WCLS, often accompanied by the student they are referring. Some students self initiate visits when close to dropping a class and recognizing they need help. Often, students who are near the limit for basic skills courses (college catalog, page 23) will make the attempt to see the WCLS at their counselor's urging. Students are also referred to the WCLS by the Vice President of Student Services. The students have committed acts of plagiarism and part of their penalty is to attend writing workshops on citing sources properly, watch a video entitled *Plagiarism: It's a Crime*, and meet with the WCLS to discuss what they have learned. An ILP, developed for these activities, usually does not require follow-up as the student is often sufficiently contrite and promises never to commit plagiarism again.

The WCLS conducts workshops held each week during a given term on a variety of writing topics such as writing anxiety, basic essay writing, style and format, editing and proofreading, writing the research paper, and documenting sources. Every attempt is made to schedule workshops at convenient times for students, considering night students, in particular; however, although workshops are advertised campus-wide, Fall 2007 averaged less than five each. *A student survey can be sent to students to poll their choices for workshop topics and scheduling hours.* The WCLS also teaches workshops for the STAR program once a month, the promotion

for which handled by STAR personnel. Generally, less than five students attend. Last summer, in cooperation with the Nursing program, workshops that targeted grammar components of the TEAS exam were offered, however, only two students attended. Workshops, like any other class setting, are a commitment of time and participation which may be too much for some students already overloaded with coursework. *With the hiring of an adjunct WCLS*, workshops might be able to be offered at times more convenient for students. Workshop attendance and meeting for ILPs are indicated below:

Term	Visits	Contact Hours	Unique Students
Spring 2004	499	509.5	164
Summer 2004	50	50	32
Fall 2004	308	320.25	147
Intersession 2005	5	5	5
Spring 2005	244	254.5	143
Summer 2005	42	41.5	29
Fall 2005	190	189.25	102
Intersession 2006	0	0	0
Spring 2006	287	278	131
Summer 2006	56	56	46
Fall 2006	441	439	137
Intersession 2007	0	0	0
Spring 2007	438	435.92	136
Summer 2007	48	45.5	32
Fall 2007	110	102.75	62

Totals above from Spring 2004 to Summer 2007 reflect a combination of Writing Center and ESL Study Center activity. The total for Fall 2007 is for the Writing Center only. Fewer workshops were offered this term at the Lancaster campus because time spent in Lancaster was reduced (to provide coverage by the WCLS in Palmdale) and new responsibilities were added to her workload. *The hiring of an adjunct WCLS would allow more workshops to be scheduled and more meetings with Early Alert students to occur.*

Plan of action:

- *Address the lack of response to Early Alert contact attempts.*
- *Coordinate Early Alert student contacts with Academic Skills Center.*
- *Poll students regarding choice of workshop topics and scheduling hours.*
- *Hire an adjunct writing learning specialist to take some of the load.*

ESL Study Center

Students are referred to the ESL Study Center by instructors and some of the other variety of ways included in the introduction to LAC 901, including referrals from other Learning Center areas. The ESL students also self-initiate visits, but usually only after exposure to classroom visits by the ESL Learning Specialist (ESL LS) and/or “word-of-mouth” among other ESL students. The ESL LS meets with students individually to plan strategies or actions that are agreed upon for strengthening students’ English language skills, including all four language areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The ILP includes the most prevalent difficulty or difficulties as identified by students through their classroom success or the lack thereof, and also student-perceived success within their daily lives involving communication and acculturation. The ESL Learning Specialist must consider the pedagogy of the AVC ESL program as well as mandates and guidance from the California TESOL (CATESOL) association

when considering SLOs. Working closely with the ESL coordinator and attendance at CATESOL conferences is vital to providing consistent and innovative instruction.

The ILP also includes a record of current classes being taken by students, their first language and any other language influences, as well as their future goals and existing motivation. Attitude toward language learning and culture are recorded by noting frustrations and disappointments during subsequent sessions between the student and ESL LS and ESL tutors. Samples of student reading and writing are collected if available, and at minimum, the ESL LS reflects upon troublesome or nonexistent language skills during the initial session. Referrals can be made for supervised tutoring, ESL workshops, CAI, and instructional videos. Referrals to Academic Skills and the school psychologist may also be included to help the student gain study skills, time management, etc. and to help with the psychosocial adjustment that immigrants must deal with positively in order to succeed.

A Progress Review date is scheduled within the semester in order to guide student participation and progress. *The ILP should include a learning styles assessment specifically for ESL students. Also, more emphasis should be placed on increased language input if necessary, to include listening workshops and a list of daily and weekly authentic listening activities for practice; therefore, the ESL LS should consider the addition of a workshop specifically for listening activities and practice. If a CASAS assessment test was taken, the results should be recorded within the ILP. In addition, The ESL LS also must become more knowledgeable of the available resources to ESL students within the Reading Center so that specified and specialized reading assistance can be offered if needed.*

Early Alert students receive a personal phone call from the ESL LS within forty-eight hours, along with an ESL Study Center handout mailed to the address on file. The handout is notated with a handwritten note stating that the ESL LS hopes to see them soon. None of the Early Alert students responded to voicemails or mailings in Fall 2007. In the future, *the ESL LS will notify the referring instructors of contact attempts and non-response and will work more closely with Early Alert personnel to insure that initial student contacts are not duplicated.*

For Fall 2007, the number of visits for workshops and meetings for ILPs totaled 222 (total hours 164 and total unique students 45).

Plan of action:

- *Include a learning styles assessment in the ILP; record CASAS assessment results.*
- *Add a workshop specifically for listening activities and practice.*
- *Become more familiar with Reading Center resources.*
- *Coordinate initial Early Alert student contacts with Academic Skills Center.*

Palmdale site

During Fall 2007, two full-time and one adjunct learning specialist worked at the Palmdale site one day a week. Workshops and meetings held to conduct and carry out individual learning plans were held. The number of total student visits was 49 (total hours 50 and unique students 28). *More needs to be done to advertise this service in order to increase the number of visits and, ultimately, help students to succeed.*

Plan of action:

- *Develop a strategy to promote the Learning Center in Palmdale.*

Services not linked to curriculum

Note: Usage for all centers within the Learning Center is reported on pages 8-10.

Introduction

Some services in the Learning Center are not part of a course, and therefore, are to be designated as “non-tutoring.” This would apply to checking in for computers, checking-out and viewing instructional videos, utilizing resources such as handouts or books, and studying quietly within a particular center. All services within the Learning Center support the educational needs of students and involve them in evaluating these services via surveys and, in the case of Learning Center student employees, meeting with them in training sessions to discuss service needs. Diverse student populations utilize Learning Center services. For instance, instructors from various disciplines schedule tours and/or class sessions for use of computer software in the Computer and Media Check-Out area. DSS students access the High Tech Center within the Learning Center to use equipment that meets their special needs. ESL students have access to seven computers opposite the Writing Center front desk, all loaded with software purchased especially for their English acquisition needs. A systematic evaluation occurs, for the most part, in each center twice per regular semester to measure student satisfaction with the services described above.

Computer and Media Check-Out

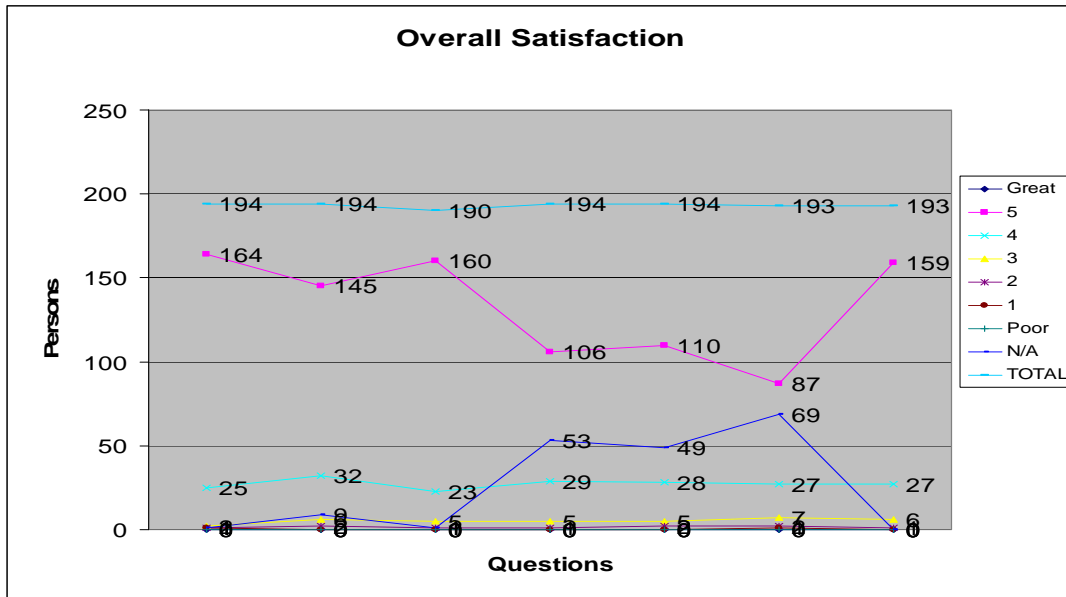
The Computer and Media Check-Out desk offers learning tools to assist students, thus increasing their success in all academic endeavors. It also provides instructional videos, audio equipment, and supplemental books, assigns students to computer station as well as technical support. A student survey was conducted by the Computer and Media Check-Out desk during Spring 2007 with results below. Of 200 replies, an overwhelming 195 rated “Great” when it comes to providing efficient and friendly customer service. Two rated services as average, and a remaining two felt services were poor. Out of these same 200 students, 189 felt that working computers and printers were made accessible while only ten felt the equipment was not made accessible and needed improvement. Overall, 193 students felt very satisfied with their visit to the Learning Center’s Computer and Media Check-out area. Statements such as the one noted below reflects student opinion:

“I come here all the time to do my school work, and everyone is just great!”

Student	We have provided you with efficient and friendly customer service	We have provided accurate and appropriate information to direct you when looking for assistance	We have provided you with access to working computers and printers	We have made software that accompanies textbooks available to you at the request of instructors, licensing permitting	When available, we have provided for bringing in classes for tours, orientations, software training, and computer use for instruction.	We have provided you with access to working videos and VCRs	Overall, were you satisfied with your visit
Great	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	164	145	160	106	110	87	159
4	25	32	23	29	28	27	27
3	2	6	5	5	5	7	6
2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N/A	1	9	1	53	49	69	0

TOTAL	194	194	190	194	194	193	193
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Only one faculty and two staff members completed the survey. Not enough information was collected in order to form any opinion other than the lack of participation on the part of faculty and staff.



The Computer and Media Check-Out staff strives to provide adequate distribution of resources to enable students with tools required for the success of their coursework. This service is accomplished by *providing proper training to all desk assistants made available in the future through mandatory meetings* in which the student worker staff is exposed to the many computer programs that are unique to the Learning Center. Training also includes topics such as proper telephone etiquette, demonstration of the variety of resources available through MyAVC (this is particularly important for first-time visiting students), the use of Blackboard, burning/saving onto a CD, Email as a means of saving information, and functions of MS Word such as formatting. Although the Learning Center Computer and Media Check-Out desk has recently acquired twenty-two new computers from the Health Sciences Division, *another area that can be improved is the replacement of the fourteen remaining floor computers with new ones*. Also, the *printers for the Learning Center's pay-printer station desperately need to be replaced with new, high-volume laser printers*.

In accordance with other student service areas on campus, the Computer and Media Check-Out personnel will soon be developing student learning outcomes *beginning with a review of those of the Instructional Media Center's (IMC) and progressing to the development of a pilot program to survey and document student learning*.

Plan of action:

- Hold mandatory training sessions with student workers.
- Replace computers and printers.
- Review IMC's SLOs and develop a pilot program.

General Tutoring

In addition to tutoring, the General Tutoring Center also offers students a "quiet area" for studying, but the majority utilizes this service to review instructional materials such as objects, microscopes, and textbooks. With the increase of enrolled students at AVC, the General

Tutoring area must expand to accommodate more students beyond the five tables that are being used both for tutoring and quiet study. *Space available for ten more tables would more adequately meet the needs of students for tutoring and quiet study.*

Survey Results, Spring 2007: Additional Services

Question	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	%	%	%
• Were you treated in a professional, friendly manner and given appropriate referrals to other resources?	92	3	5
• Were you satisfied with the quiet study area?	90	5	5
• Were you overall satisfied with our services?	96	2	2

Results Analysis

Most of the reviews of services were positive. Almost all of the students benefited from tutoring (both SI and general tutoring). If a student did not choose an answer, or chose more than one, it was modified to reflect the “not applicable” choice. Overall, 96% of students were satisfied, 2% were unsatisfied, and 2% indicated that the service did not apply to them.

Plan of action:

- *Address the issue of lack of space for General Tutoring services.*

Math Center

The Math Center has seen steady growth in its usage – nearly doubling its fall and spring visits in the past four years. New handouts and up-to-date books and DVDs are made available to students for use in the Learning Center. According to self-reported data, each term approximately 50% of students who utilize the Math Center are first-time users according to data collected between spring 2006 and spring 2007.

TERM:	Spring 2006	Summer 2006	Fall 2006	Intersession 2007	Spring 2007
FIRST TIME USER:	47.8%	49.0%	55.8%	27.4%	48.5%

The Math Center supports Math 099 (an individualized, self-paced program) and provides space for the filing and storage of students’ individual folders and tests for 32 units, resource material, etc. The Math Center also accommodates the program by developing a computerized data base for recording, archiving, and retrieving individual data for positive student attendance. Tutors are specially trained to work with students through this program and to help to maintain the computerized data base. An area that houses carrels provides space for Math 099 student testing. The Math Learning Specialist is the instructor of record for students’ grades.

Reading Center

The Reading Center, like most centers within the Learning Center, serves a diverse student population, including students with learning disabilities, students of varying socio-economic backgrounds, students who are succeeding in school, students who are about to fail or are failing the semester, and students from different ethnic backgrounds with varying degrees of English ability. Currently, State apportionment is not being sought for reading tutoring (see “Reading Center” under LAC 900 above).

The center has a full classroom of computers used by the developmental reading classes each day. Students not enrolled in the developmental sequence can also use the available software when classes are not using the center’s computers. Students can also attend workshops

conducted by the Reading Learning Specialist (RLS) on reading and comprehension strategies and skills across the curriculum and/or conducted by the Reading Tutorial Specialist (RTS) on study strategies in general or strategies designed specifically for a discipline such as history or nursing. Over the last few years, the RTS has worked extensively with nursing students, helping them to develop critical reading and study skills. For instance, recently the RTS helped to develop materials for nursing students preparing to take the TEAS exam and to assist nursing students to remediate in the areas of reading deficiency. The RTS also conducts in-class workshops on textbook reading and note-taking.

Reading Center usage has been steadily increasing over the last six years, but there is little room to grow. The center has only two tables available for tutoring to take place. Because of budgetary and space limitations, the maximum number of tutees that can be seen in a given week is small. With a budget of \$3200 per semester, and tutors receiving a raise as of January 1, 2008 the number of tutoring hours per week that can be offered is twenty-five. If the budget increases and the program grows, the problem of space will become even more of an issue. In 2001, the center was seeing an average of eighty students a week outside of class for both tutoring and computer assisted instruction (CAI). In Fall of 2007, the center was seeing an average of eighty students a week outside of class and up to 350 a week as a part of the CAI in reading courses. Because all reading classes meet in the Reading Center for CAI, in Spring 2008, should all of the reading course sections fill, the center can expect to see 400 students a week.

Only twenty-one surveys were returned, all of which were from the developmental reading sequence.

READ 097	READ 099	Passing	Failing	Visited the Reading Center	Visited other centers in the LC	Have not visited any other centers in the LC
12	9	20	0	9	12	8

Some of the open-ended questions yielded responses such as:

Question: If you have been to tutoring in the Reading Center, please tell us about your experience.

“It has been a great experience and has taught me much.” “It was good” “It helps” “It was wonderful, people were so nice.” “They show me how to read more” “They were helpful and helped me pass my class”

Question: If you have not been to tutoring in the Reading Center, please tell us why.

“I have not made the effort to come” “never got around to it” “Because right now I don’t really need it. Probably when I go to Read 099” “I haven’t needed the tutoring sessions” “not enough time” “I don’t feel I need it. And then you guys label us people as retarded and we’re not.” “My grades are good and I don’t have much spare time.” “I just haven’t been.”

The overall results of the survey indicate that many students did not feel they needed tutoring, but also that some students feared being labeled as “retarded” if they went for reading tutoring. Clearly, *a concerted marketing strategy is necessary to help students, faculty and staff understand the purpose of the reading center and to cultivate a culture where students feel comfortable seeking assistance.*

In Fall of 2007, the center began to offer study groups for developmental reading classes modeled after Supplemental Instruction (SI) hoping that this model will help to cultivate a culture

of acceptance and make it easier, and more comfortable, for these students to seek assistance. In addition, *the tutor report is being re-written in a more approachable format* for those students with below college level reading skills and reading difficulties, as many students seemed to find the forms in their previous format difficult to navigate. All tutors will have a new rubric, developed by the RTS, to evaluate student performance and to increase the accuracy of the data. A survey designed by a reading faculty member has been administered to students in the developmental reading sequence and to other students utilizing center services. The survey will give Reading Center personnel a good picture of each individual student including how supportive their families are of their educational goals and what they find to be obstacles to their success. This survey will also help Reading Center personnel anticipate and respond to student needs. The Reading Center is also working closely with the Early Alert program and the Basic Skills Committee. Connecting students to Academic Skills mentors should increase student engagement, comfort, and success.

The center is also in need of a new database to record student contacts. The data collected from the current database does not easily report usable information. A database is needed that can report the various purposes for which students come to the Reading Center, so that more targeted improvements can be made. *The center also needs to expand to the Palmdale campus.*

Plan of action:

- *Create a marketing plan to attract faculty and staff to Reading Center services.*
- *Clearly separate reading across the disciplines tutoring and developmental reading tutoring, as they have very different needs for training.*
- *Create new tutor training modules focused on various study reading strategies, and strategies for developmental readers. Include training by the RLS on how to identify reading skill deficiencies in a tutorial and when to refer to the RLS.*
- *Ask for new computers for computer assisted instruction.*
- *Explore the possibility of acquiring a new database.*
- *Hire and train tutors for the Palmdale campus.*

Writing Center and ESL Study Center

Non-tutoring student usage involves quiet study at one of the tables, computer use, and the viewing of instructional videos. ESL students, in particular, prefer the Writing Center for quiet study, probably due to the close proximity of ESL computers; however, these students may not be aware of the availability of space in the ESL Study Center (ESL SC) for this purpose. As indicated elsewhere in this document, *ESL computers need to be located in or next to the ESL SC.* As enrollment increases, *the need for more space is created in the Writing Center.* Currently, many students utilize the computers for writing assignments and drills to test their knowledge, for receiving computer assistance from tutors for drafts or revisions, or for using unfamiliar software.

Computers are also used by students to access the Writing Center Web site which has a full presence online with many features such as contact information, desk and tutorial hours, a newsletter, and many resources such as handouts, PowerPoint presentations, Helpful Links, and sample papers. A variety of hard-copy handouts is also available to students on any given topic pertaining to writing and some can be downloaded from the Writing Center Web site; however, handouts need to be converted or newly created as PDFs. Sample papers for English, history, psychology, business, etc. are available for viewing at the Library Reference Desk. The file used to be maintained and updated regularly when it was housed in the Writing Center, but *a call to instructors for more model AVC essays is necessary at this point.* Students do have access, of course, to papers formatted in various styles on the Writing Center Web site.

In addition, students who utilize the Writing Center always have access to writing handbooks, dictionaries, thesauruses, and textbooks with specific information on elements of writing. New instructional videos, purchased recently, can be viewed on a TV/DVD/video unit acquired two years ago with an AVC Foundation grant. *A Writing Center brochure that highlights all of the above could help promote these services.*

The ESL Study Center (ESL SC) also has most of what is described above, though a Web site has yet to be produced. Like the Writing Center, *a brochure could go a long way in promoting services* although the ESL SC is also advertised in the current AVC ESL program brochure, available in both English and Spanish. Making students aware of the ESL SC is now and must continue to be an integral part of the duties of the ESL learning specialist (ESL LS) who currently works with the ESL coordinator and ESL classroom instructors to promote the ESL SC. This is done through short classroom visits and handouts providing the center's information and hours. *As the ESL Learning Center program expands, developmental English classes such as ENGL 095 and 097 should be included in the classroom visits by the ESL LS, as well as a focused outreach to speakers of American Sign Language.*

Writing Center and ESL Study Center Evaluation of Other Services

Question	Yes %	No %	Not Applicable %
• Have you found the computer software helpful?	63	5	32
• Have you found the handouts helpful?	80	0	20
• Have you found the instructional videos helpful?	28	6	66
• Have you found the online materials (including Writing Center Web site) helpful?	40	8	52
• Have you found the sample papers helpful?	62	1	37
• Would you encourage other students to use Writing/ESL Study Center services?	100	0	0

Results Analysis

The results indicate that a high number of students have probably not used Writing Center/ESL Study services such as computer software, instructional videos, online materials, and the sample paper file (currently housed in the Library). Obviously, *more of a marketing effort must be made to advertise these services.*

Strengths:

All of the students responding to the survey would encourage other students to use services. The survey also confirmed that students who seek handouts are satisfied with this service.

Weaknesses:

With the wealth of information on the Writing Center Web site, it is a surprise that students who responded probably have not accessed it. *Tutors will receive more training to demonstrate the site to tutees during tutoring sessions to remind them that they can work independently by viewing helpful material and by engaging in exercises that tests their knowledge of a given writing topic.*

What Changes To Make:

Advertise services of the Writing Center and ESL Study Center systematically to ensure student interest and participation. Engage faculty in the promotion of such to aid their students in the development of skills that will contribute to their success at course completion. Encourage faculty to request classroom visits by the WCLS, ESL LS, and/or tutors to promote programs and services.

Plan of action:

- *Locate ESL computers next to the ESL Study Center if space and wiring permits.*
- *Address the issue of lack of space in the Writing Center.*
- *Promote the need for instructors to send sample papers for the library file.*
- *Develop a Writing Center and ESL Study Center brochure to advertise services.*
- *Market the availability of computer software, videos, online materials, and sample papers.*
- *Train tutors to demonstrate access to online materials in tutoring sessions as often as possible.*
- *Advertise services systematically with the aid of all AVC faculty; encourage classroom visits to promote programs and services.*

Student Learning Outcomes

Introduction

An IR/ES division goal of the Educational Master Plan is to develop at least one division level student learning outcome (SLO) that is tied meaningfully to one or more of AVC's institution-wide SLOs. While Learning Center personnel identified values for teaching and learning, they have not participated in dialogue with the rest of the division to create a division level SLO due to the fact that the division is currently split with departments under different deans. *With the unification of all entities under IR/ES and a new dean, this goal can be met in the future.*

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) have been identified and are clearly articulated for all existing LAC courses (see Appendix), but not those still under development. SLOs are used in the assessment of course effectiveness and are measured each term. Student evaluations are an integral part of the assessment of all LAC courses and programs in terms of effectiveness.

For LAC credit courses, measurements include those listed in the course outlines of record under methods of evaluation. A successful grade ("C" or higher OR "Credit" where applicable) indicates the achievement of course objectives and SLOs. Nearly every student successfully completes LAC 100 and 200, probably due to the desire to be awarded a CRLA certificate. LAC 100, vocational in nature, prepares students for tutoring at AVC and in the community. Students who complete LAC 098 and 099, also vocational, may or may not be placed in the AVC nursing program and may go elsewhere. Job placement data has not been part of the assessment of these courses. *Faculty will consult the Office of Institutional Research to determine if numerical data can be retrieved and analyzed.*

Student learning outcomes are measured for LAC 900 in all centers within the Learning Center by various means, though an attempt at uniformity is currently being made. Measurements generally are taken from tutoring reports, inventories, and other sources. SLOs for LAC 900 are summarized as follows:

1. Outcome -The student/tutee will understand his/her learning style preference and be able to adapt his/her studying accordingly. *Measurement* – The student/tutee completes a learning styles inventory, the results are reviewed by the tutor, and the tutor and the tutee develop study behaviors that fit the individual student's learning style preferences.
2. Outcome – the student/tutee will become a more independent learner (internal locus of control and metacognitive understanding). *Measurement* – pre/post assessment based upon a rubric and evaluated on a Likert scale.
3. Outcome – The student/tutee will improve his/ her metacognitive abilities: a) motivation for learning, b) acquisition of course material, c) retention of course material, d) performance on assessments. *Measurement* – tutor reports.

SLOs for LAC 901 can be summarized for workshops as raising skill levels and metacognitive abilities, working independently, and collaborating with others. Measurements include pre and post tests, analysis of study behaviors, referral to services, etc. SLOs for LAC 901 individual learning plans (student conferences) relate to raising skill levels and metacognitive abilities, working independently, and goal setting. Measurements include those above as well as monitoring of progress which can include attendance data, input from students' instructors, GPA and grade reports, etc. While LAC 901 measurements are being utilized by all centers within the Learning Center, final results have not been collected by the Office of Institutional Research. *Learning Specialists will need to work closely with the Instructional Research director and staff to refine instruments for measurement of SLOs and to analyze the data in final form (chart, graph, etc.).*

SLOs have yet to be developed for the measurement of non-tutoring activities conducted in the Computer and Media Check-Out area and centers that offer quiet study, computer use, and viewing of instructional videos. *Models of SLOs for such activities will be sought from AVC's Instructional Media Center as well as student services at other colleges considered non-tutoring in nature. SLOs can then be developed by Learning Center faculty and staff to be tested in a given term during the next school year.*

Plan of action:

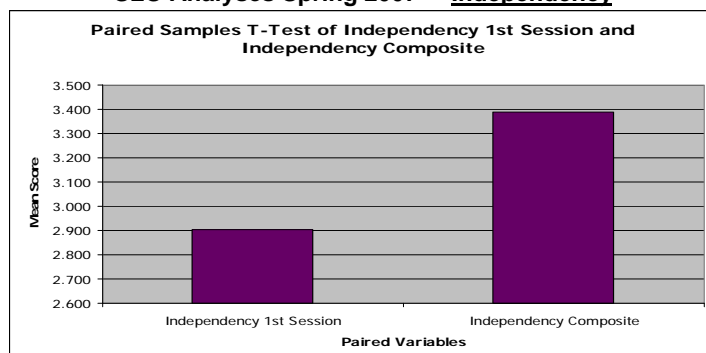
- Consult with the Office of Institutional Research regarding job placement data for LAC 100, LAC 098, and LAC 099
- Work closely with the Office of Institutional Research for LAC 901 SLOs data reporting.
- Create SLOs for non-tutoring student services to implement next school year.

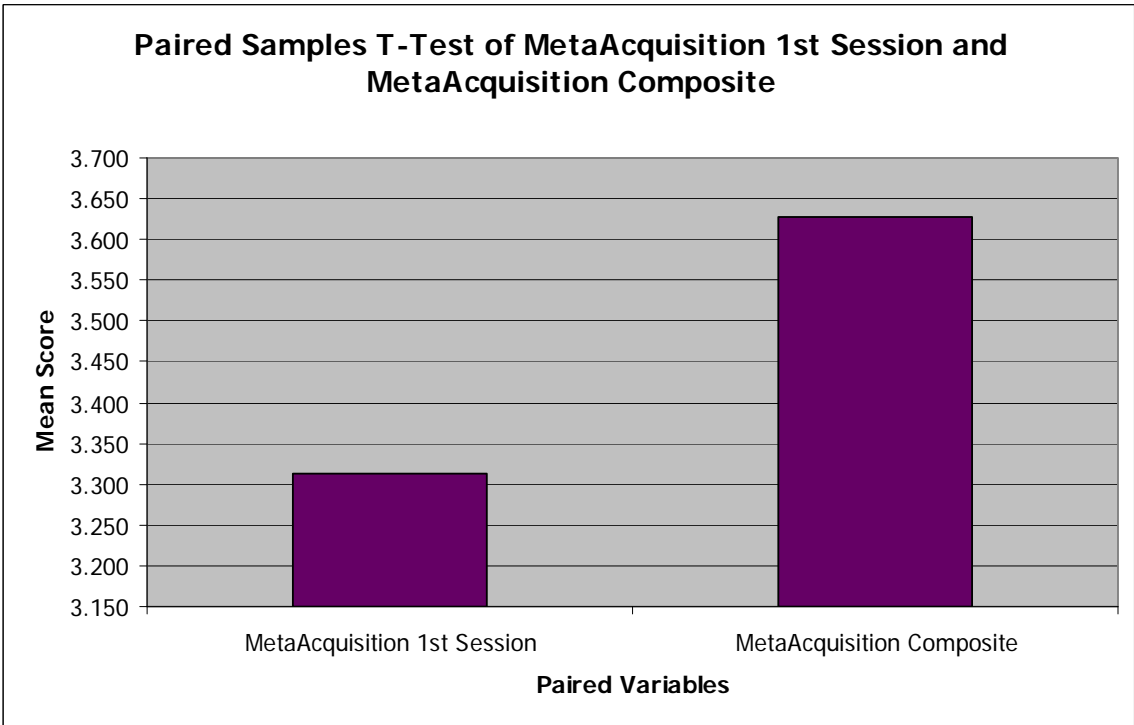
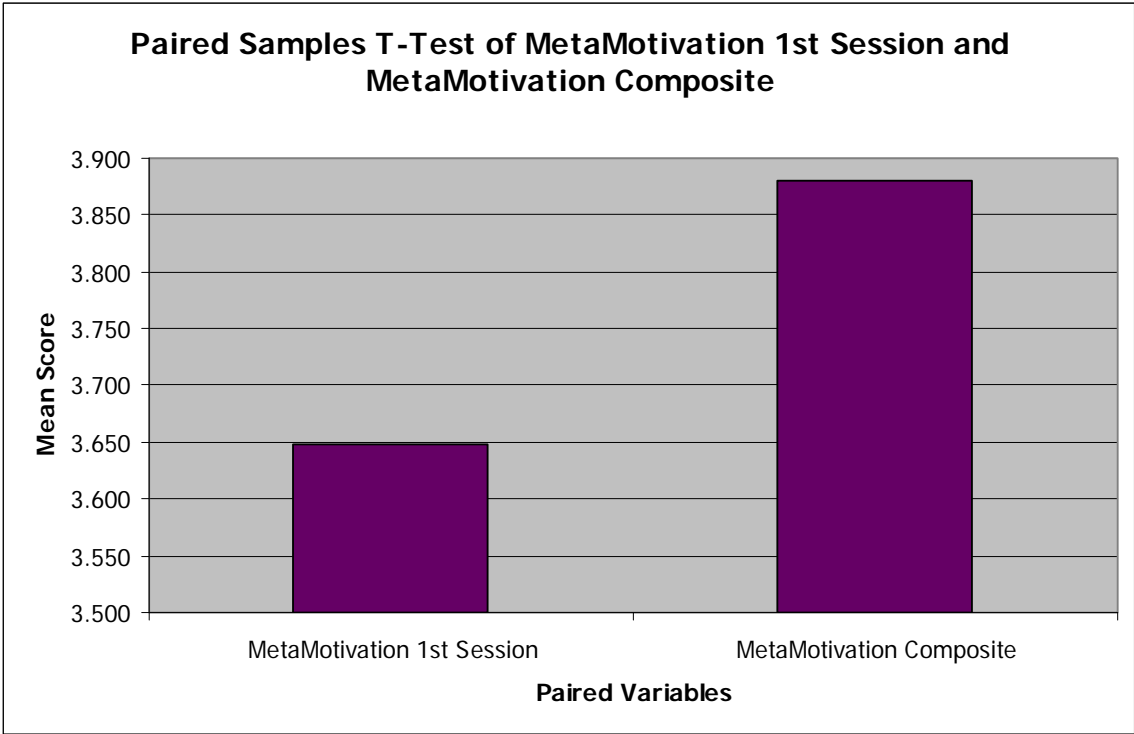
General Tutoring Center and Supplemental Instruction (SI)

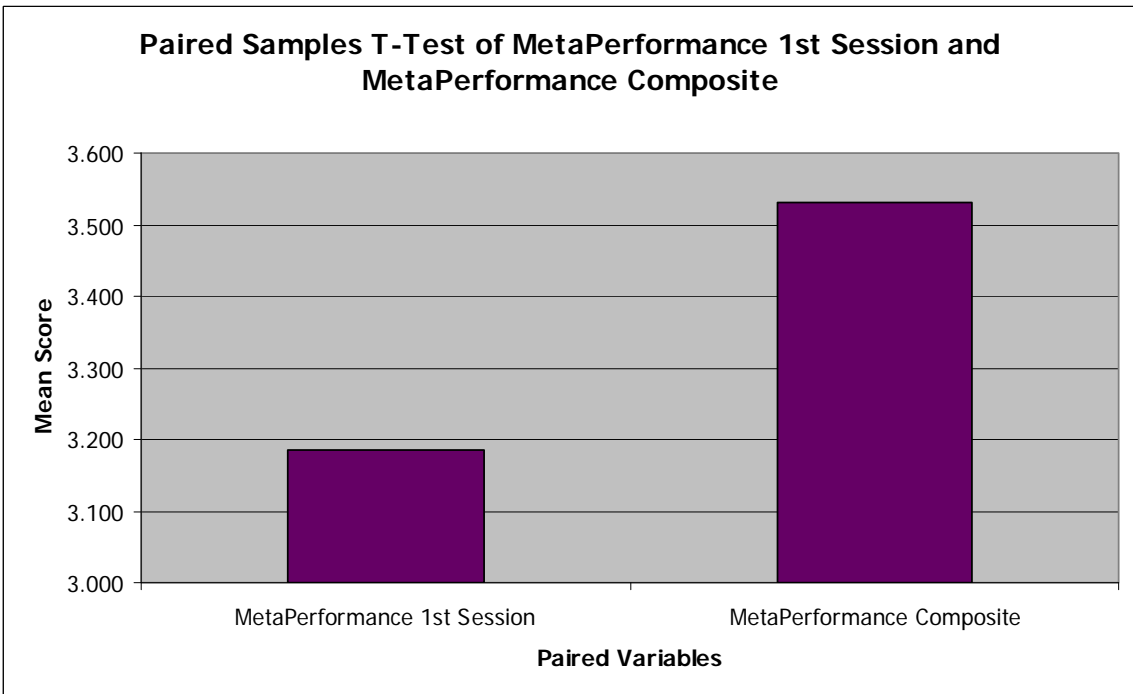
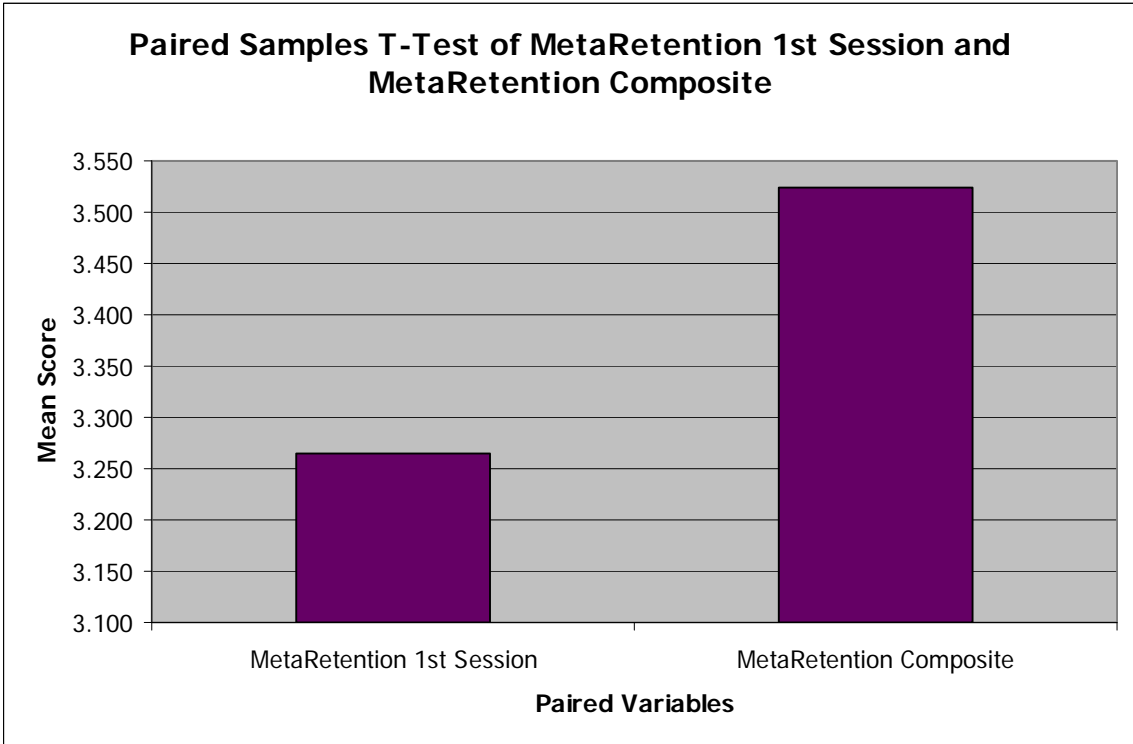
The Academic Skills Learning Specialist and the SI/General Tutorial Learning Specialist have successfully measured LAC 900 student learning outcomes for several semesters for General Tutoring (GT). A pilot instrument was developed the summer of 2006 and revised the fall of 2006. Using pre and post data, results show a statistically significant improvement in metacognition for students using General Tutoring. Areas of measurement include tutee learning style, tutee independence (internal locus of control), motivation, acquisition of knowledge, retention of knowledge, and student performance.

Personnel above developed the data collection and research methodology, and the Director of Institutional Research evaluated the methodology. The following charts show sample pre/post results of the SLOs data collection. The first score is from the initial tutorial visit, and the second score is a composite of the last two visits to ameliorate the possible interaction with stress during the final tutorial nearing final exams. The data collected by the GT program was sent to Institutional Research which analyzed the data and concluded that the results were significant. Information also appears in the appendix.

SLO Analyses Spring 2007 – Independency







In addition to data for SLOs, the General Tutoring and SI program collects data on student retention, success, and persistence. A sample of that data can be found in the Appendix.

The Supplemental Instruction program gathers detailed data on student outcomes comparing those who participated in SI and those who do not participate. The results from Spring 1999 thru Spring 2007 indicate the success of the program and a significant difference in final grades and drop rates between the students who participated and those who did not. In the summer of 2005, however, the success rate for SI participants was less than non-SI participants.

Term	SI Participation Status	SI Participation # / Percent	Number of SI courses	Percent ABC	Percent DFW	Final Course Grade
Spring '99	SI	248 (16%)	21 (46 sections)	83%	17%	2.80
	Non-SI	1337 (84%)		56%	44%	2.25
Sum. '99	SI	120 (21%)	17 (20 sections)	83%	17%	2.76
	Non-SI	457 (79%)		54%	46%	2.46
Fall. '99	SI	276 (12%)	30 (53 sections)	73%	27%	2.62
	Non-SI	2090 (88%)		46%	54%	2.02
Spring '00	SI	295 (16%)	29 (50 sections)	74%	26%	2.48
	Non-SI	1567 (84%)		48%	52%	1.97
Summer'00	SI	145 (24%)	16 (18 sections)	82%	18%	2.76
	Non-SI	452 (76%)		60%	40%	2.10
Fall'00	SI	332 (17%)	31 (48 sections)	72%	28%	2.49
	Non-SI	1594 (83%)		51%	49%	2.04
Spring '01	SI	293 (15%)	33 (50 sections)	80%	20%	2.71
	Non-SI	1639 (85%)		55%	45%	2.08
Summer'01	SI	149 (23%)	19 (23 sections)	76%	24%	2.55
	Non-SI	497 (77%)		60%	40%	2.20
Fall'01	SI	297 (16%)	30 (45 sections)	77%	23%	2.75
	Non-SI	1511 (84%)		47%	53%	1.97
Spring '02	SI	379 (18%)	33 (53 sections)	77%	23%	2.86
	Non-SI	1720 (82%)		54%	46%	2.08
Summer '02	SI	133 (26%)	13 (16 sections)	86%	14%	2.85
	Non-SI	377 (74%)		69%	31%	2.42
Fall'02	SI	416 (19%)	29 (52 sections)	78%	22%	2.70
	Non-SI	1227 (81%)		58%	42%	2.18
Spring'03	SI	218 (16%)	18 (36 sections)	76%	24%	2.64
	Non-SI	1133 (84%)		62%	38%	2.25
Summer'03	SI	14 (16%)	2 (2 sections)	79%	21%	2.69
	Non-SI	71 (84%)		65%	35%	2.62
Fall'03	SI	67 (13%)	9 (11 sections)	66%	34%	2.40
	Non-SI	435 (87%)		56%	44%	1.85
Spring '04	SI	133 (10%)	17 (33 sections)	79%	21%	2.66
	Non-SI	1227 (90%)		60%	40%	2.17
Summer '04	SI	1 (1%)	1 (2 sections)	0%	100%	1.00
	Non-SI	67 (99%)		57%	43%	1.89
Fall'04	SI	110 (9%)	14 (34 sections)	79%	21%	2.91
	Non-SI	1145 (91%)		55%	45%	2.16
Spring'05	SI	84 (9.3%)	15 (48 sections)	76%	24%	2.59
	Non-SI	819 (91%)		63%	37%	2.40
Summer'05	SI	6 (12%)	2 (4 sections)	67%	33%	3.00
	Non-SI	44 (88%)		84%	16%	2.87
Fall'05	SI	52 (7%)	21 (39 sections)	52%	25%	2.49
	Non-SI	677 (93%)		56%	45%	2.13
Fall'06	SI	96 (10%)	18 (34 sections)	76%	24%	2.60
	Non-SI	923 (90%)		62%	38%	2.30
Spring'07	SI	124 (12%)	18 (37 sections)	78%	22%	2.47
	Non-SI	905 (88%)		62%	38%	2.23

In past years, there has been a decrease of offerings for Supplemental Instruction due to budget cuts and lack of space to hold SI sessions. For example, in Spring 2001, SI offered 104 sessions a week compared to Spring 2006 where only fifty-seven sessions were offered. *The decline in the amount of SI sessions offered has dramatically been affected by the lack of space in the Learning Center.* Room LC104, the ESL Study Center, was previously used for SI and is now only available for brief periods. The Supplemental Instruction program has lost 50% (4) of its other tutoring rooms to offices now being occupied by faculty members from the Language Arts Department. An additional space, created by partitions to provide room for some SI tutorials, eliminated a few computer stations and the use of an overhead data projector. Due to the shortage of space, fewer SI sessions are offered during a semester, a concern addressed in the surveys by both students and faculty.

Comments from survey addressing a plea for more offering for SI sessions:

“Offer additional SI sessions for subjects.”

“If there were more work rooms, the supplemental Instruction could be more accommodating...”

“If there were more work areas, the Center could be more accommodating as far as schedules.

Currently there are only three work areas and a couple of rooms available for use for Supplemental Instruction.”

Plan of action:

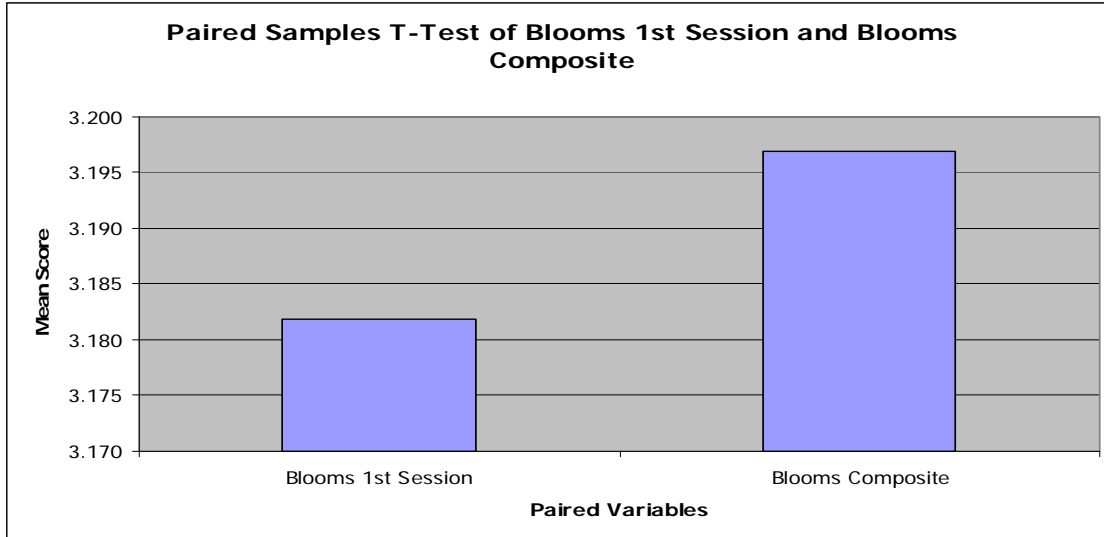
- *Address issue of a low budget and lack of space for SI.*
- *Provide tutoring and SI online. Staff is working closely with the technical trainer who can assist in implementing online tutoring through Blackboard. The tutoring/SI will be offered in asynchronous or synchronous mode for individuals or groups. A request to add an online component to LAC 900, however, needs to be submitted to AP&P.*

Math Center

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the Math Center have been defined for several years. In July 2005, the Learning Center hired a Math Tutorial Specialist (formerly a frozen position for ten years) who has partnered with the Math Learning Specialist. During Summer 2007, personnel worked closely with the Office of Institutional Research to evaluate the Math Center’s SLOs assessment instruments in terms of refinement, data collection procedures, and database functions. All are congruent with the LAC 900 course outline of record (COR) and include an in-take survey, tutorial reports, and measures of retention, success, and persistence in math courses. Some have been refined during this program review period and have been implemented for use during Fall 2007 and to be continued beyond.

Due to the lack of a functional Institutional Research program in the early stages of development, the Math Center’s instruments had little review until the writing of this document. As such, quantifiable Math Center SLO data is minimal for this program review period; however, as the Math Center tables and charts in the appendix reveal, the usable data does indicate a small improvement in increased student independence and a similar increase in metacognitive ability among the data sample’s participants.

While usable data from the tutor reports was limited for this program review, a T-Test performed on the tutor-reported level of cognitive/academic growth exhibited in the session showed a modest level of increase in the assessed sample of 0.918. Considering that there are six levels in Bloom’s Taxonomy, an increase of 0.918 reveals that Math Center tutors provide a credible service.



Plan of action:

- Continue to refine assessment instruments.

Reading Center

The Reading Center collects SLOs with the same mechanism as General Tutoring; however, the number of tutorials with this new measurement system was limited, and data may have been skewed due to the low reading level of developmental students (some below fourth grade) when completing forms and other documents. For this reason, *a new way to track SLOs for developmental reading tutoring is being created, and data will be tabulated by the Office of Institutional Research when a better sample can be provided by Reading Center personnel.*

Plan of action:

- Continue to create a tracking method for SLOs.
- Work with the Office of Institutional Research for charting results.

Writing Center and ESL Study Center

Both centers follow the same process as articulated in the General Tutoring section. The tutor completes a metacognition report to measure the tutee’s ability to think critically about the topic, to be motivated for learning, to acquire tools to aid understanding of course content, to retain skills learned for college success, and to perform successfully in college. In addition to this report, another is completed describing the tutoring session in terms of its purpose, goals set by the tutee, tutor and tutor interaction, and the outcome. Both reports are kept on file should an issue or conflict arise concerning what the tutee reported to his/her instructor about the session and what the tutor recorded. The Writing Tutorial Specialist monitors the completion of these reports and trains new tutors to record data correctly and to write concise but thorough accounts of what transpired during their tutoring sessions. Analyses were performed on data collected from the Writing Center/ESL Tutor Report Supplement:

What metacognitive behaviors did the tutee work on today?

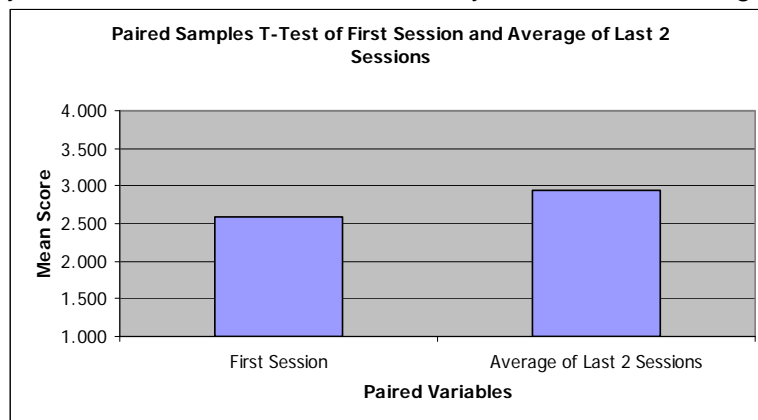
Metacognitive Behavior	Number of Sessions	Times Metacognitive Behavior was worked on	Percent
Motivation	1735	1072	62%
Acquisition	1735	1244	72%

Retention	1735	652	38%
Performance	1735	448	26%

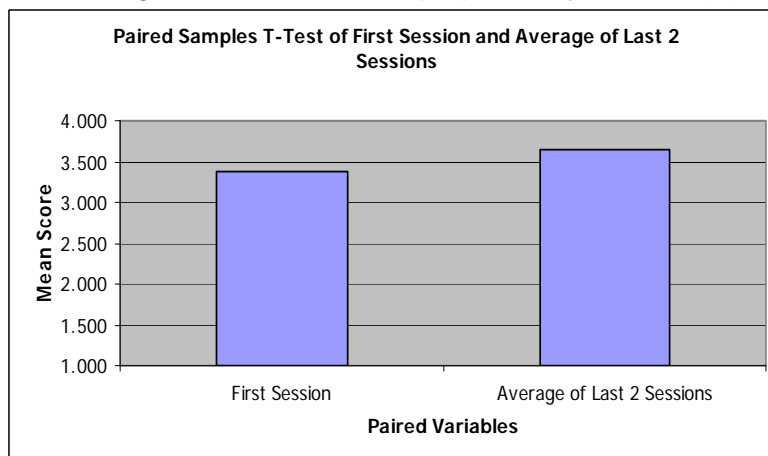
Although many students exhibit the motivation to set goals and the willingness to acquire new tools for aiding understanding of subject content, percentages for retention of skills learned and the ability to perform (locating errors in their work, etc.) indicate lower metacognitive behaviors in these areas due, perhaps, to an error in the way these behaviors were formerly rated by tutors (by checking or not checking a box, yes or no). The supplemental tutor report has subsequently been changed to reflect a scale of one through five from which the tutor can rate “poor” to “no change” to “improvement made” in each area. Results, therefore, are likely to show improvement for Fall 2007 and beyond.

Other charts developed by the Office of Institutional Research indicate success in terms of learning and study behaviors:

How well do you feel the tutee has learned what you worked on during this session?



*The difference between First Session and Average of Last 2 Sessions **is** significant. Is the tutee starting to exhibit this/these proper study behavior(s) as habit?*



*The difference between First Session and Average of Last 2 Sessions **is** significant.*

PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Faculty and Staff Requirements

For the past few years, the only center within the Learning Center to employ part-time faculty members was the Academic Skills Center. The Academic Skills Learning Specialist (ASLS) had been assigned release time to serve as the president of the Academic Senate, prompting the

need for such faculty. After her service, one part-time faculty member remained, yet new programs such as Early Alert, Summer Bridge, SOAR, etc. were developed, adding to the workload of the three full-time learning specialists in terms of the increased need for workshops and individual learning plans for students. This Fall, funding from the Basic Skills Initiative has provided part-time faculty in the areas of reading, ESL, math, and academic skills. To date, an adjunct writing center learning specialist has not been hired despite advertisements for the position; also, likely candidates are quickly hired by the Language Arts Division to teach English composition courses.

As new programs are developed to combat the problems of student persistence, success, and retention, *the full-time learning specialists become overextended*. Since students come first, time is devoted to their instruction first. There is little time leftover to refine one's craft, i.e. to conduct research in one's field, to attend more than one or two conferences a year to share ideas with colleagues, to test new teaching methods and improve others, and to refine processes in place for providing services to students. Program evaluation and revision receives proper attention in some areas; for example, the Math Center undergoes consistent re-evaluation and modification to keep up with the needs of students and campus community, but while all centers strive for consistency and modification each term, these components might not occur systematically due to lack of personnel. For example, tutorial specialists are an integral part of the process of program evaluation and revision, yet for the entire Spring 2007 semester, the Writing Center operated without one. In addition, because employees are extremely busy, Learning Center faculty and staff meetings, held at least bi-monthly over a year ago, are not scheduled as often, compromising communication among personnel. Along with this, little time is available for full-time faculty to partake in more than a very few campus and outreach activities.

Quality instruction is not always consistent with student needs and goals of the programs. The Basic Skills Initiative, for example, mandates that community colleges address the need for basic skills, citing a high percentage of students below college level, yet *a full-time reading learning specialist and ESL learning specialist have not been hired at AVC nor has an adjunct Writing Center Learning Specialist*. The number of ESL class offerings is increasing to meet student demand. Planning and administration of Learning Center resources must recognize that TESL pedagogy lends itself to a somewhat different individual assistance approach as the needs of ESL students differ dramatically from a native speaker (editing suggestions and grammar instruction coupled with the Socratic questioning methods). Metacognitive advancement and independence of students are the same goals as in other Learning Center disciplines; however, ESL improvements must include ALL language areas (reading, listening, speaking, and writing), *making the eventual separation of the Writing and ESL Centers as well as the hiring of a full-time ESL learning specialist major priorities*.

As the full-time learning specialists struggle to keep up with increasing enrollment, announcements are made that funding may not be available in the future to continue to hire the adjuncts currently employed. Learning Center programs and services will most certainly be affected if that were to occur. *A best case scenario would be that reading and ESL full-time learning specialists are employed as well as an adjunct writing center learning specialist and an adjunct for the Palmdale site (to free full-time faculty currently working one day a week there), with funding continuing for existing adjunct positions*.

Currently, *there are not adequate support staff members to meet Learning Center program needs*. All of the positions below are paramount to increasing student needs:

- A Clerical III position for the night shift (Mondays through Thursdays) and Saturdays is needed at the Lancaster campus to meet the demand of student supervision, especially as enrollment increases. In addition, due to the extended hours of Learning Center operations and high clerical demands of data collection for SLOs and curriculum development by faculty, a Clerical III would prove a great asset, providing evening and weekend coverage and removing the tremendous clerical responsibilities still resting on faculty and staff.
- With the development of the Learning Center for the Palmdale site, a tutorial specialist position should be in place within the next three years to supervise all the functions of a tutoring center. The burden should not be placed on faculty who report there once a week to perform this task which is why support of this nature is in dire need.
- A Basic Skills/Early Alert Clerk should be hired to perform tasks related to following the mandates of the Basic Skills initiative as well as meeting the demands of AVC faculty who are referring students to the Learning Center in increasing numbers via the Early Alert program.
- A tutorial specialist for the Academic Skills Center will need to be hired once tutoring is available in that area.
- A tutorial specialist for the ESL Study Center will also need to be hired once a full-time ESL learning specialist is hired.
- A part-time lab technician should be available to provide computer assistance to personnel and students as well as to conduct orientations during evening hours.
- A Clerical III for the Math Center for evening and weekend hours

During this program review period, the Math Center finally received funding to fill the long vacant position of Math Tutorial Specialist (MTS). This badly needed position freed the Math Learning Specialist the extraordinary burden of supervising day-to-day operations of the center, performing all clerical duties and coordinating the center while carrying a full-time teaching load. Even with the addition of the MTS, however, high clerical demand for data collection of SLOs and data entry of attendance for full hours of operation, including Palmdale, require a Clerical III position dedicated to the Math Center and in addition to Computer and Media Check-out support staff. This position would prove a great asset to the Math Center by providing evening and weekend coverage and removing tremendous clerical responsibilities of faculty and staff.

Faculty and Staff Development

Learning Center faculty and staff participate in staff development activities whenever possible, though not too often, for programs and services need constant attention: students must be served in a timely fashion and receive suitable instruction, tutoring, etc., and student workers must be supervised. Also, State apportionment under Title 5 can only be collected for LAC 900 and 901 when a learning specialist is on duty, making it difficult at times for full-time faculty to attend conferences together.

Nearly all full-time Learning Center faculty and staff are members of the Association of Colleges for Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA) and attend its conferences once per year as well as region meetings (to date held at AVC, Cuesta College, and in March 2008 at Santa Barbara City College), presenting material and exchanging information with colleagues. In addition, the full-time learning specialists are members of the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and have attended its conferences as well as California chapter meetings of the organization. The Academic Skills Learning Specialist (ASLS) attends Basic Skills conferences and others at the State level. The Writing Center Learning Specialist (WCLS) attends conferences of the SoCal Writing Centers Association, the English Council of California Two-

Year Colleges, and was a presenter at the Conference on College Composition and Communication with members of the Language Arts faculty.

Other staff development opportunities include taking online courses from the Association for the Tutoring Profession (ATP). The ASLS completed four courses as a student and has been an instructor for three. The WCLS completed two ATP online courses and applied for and received an AVC Foundation grant that allowed three ESL tutors to take one of the courses. Many of the courses provide training for faculty in teaching students how to learn, learning theories, and activities for students, especially at-risk and special populations. In addition, the ASLS has completed all the coursework for an Ed.D in Developmental Education and will be taking her qualifying exam the summer of 2008. She is currently working on a journal article for the Journal of Developmental Education on the topic of field dependent nursing students and success in the nursing program. She is also certified as an AVID (Advancement Through Individual Determination) tutor trainer.

All Learning Center classified staff members hold higher degrees and receive training. The Reading Tutorial Specialist holds a BA and will complete a MA next spring. In addition, she completed five graduate courses in reading with topics ranging from reading methodology and literacy development to reading strategies for the content areas. The Math Tutorial Specialist, a CRLA Master Tutor, completed his BA degree recently and has also completed campus EEO training, serving regularly as the EEO representative on AVC hiring committees. In winter 2005, he completed a graduate level grant writing course at UCLA. The General Tutoring/SI Tutorial Specialist holds a BA and completed LAC 100 last spring. All three attended the ACTLA conference and region meetings. The new Writing Tutorial Specialist holds two BAs and a MA and will accompany AVC writing tutors to the SoCal Writing Centers' Tutor Conference next spring. The Clerical III will complete a BA in the near future as will the Computer Technician who has received computer training certifications.

Learning Center student workers

All centers within the Learning Center are committed to providing professionally trained staff that can meet the needs of the students. When tutors are hired to work in the Learning Center, they receive training whether or not they enroll in LAC 100 or 200. Generally, ten hours of initial training is provided a new tutor which is conducted by each center's tutorial specialist and learning specialist. Formerly, this ten hours of initial training, with 25 hours of paid or volunteer tutoring, qualified a tutor for CRLA certification; however, Learning Center faculty made the decision to keep certification tied to LAC curriculum for consistency of training, and therefore, qualification for pay raises.

The Math Center recently implemented an increasingly effective and growing professional development program for its student worker/tutor staff. The essential role that tutors play in the operation of the Math Center and the services students receives requires continued attention and funding in order that Antelope Valley College's students receive competent learning assistance. Due to a recent influx of one-time money through VTEA and Basic Skills, Math Center tutors will receive additional training to work with the high volume of basic skills and vocational students that frequent the Center.

Ongoing training sessions for each center within the Learning Center take place throughout the year. Writing and ESL tutors, for example, meet twice a month on Fridays with the learning and tutorial specialists to engage in discussions, presentations, and role playing. Often, guest instructors from Language Arts are invited to participate in order to discuss their writing assignments with tutors. The General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Tutorial Specialist

provides on-going training throughout the semester to promote knowledge of tutorial theory in order for tutors to assist the tutees. In addition to the CRLA certified LAC 100 and 200 courses taught by the faculty, the Math Tutorial Specialist developed a tutor clinic program that provides on-going formal and on-the-job training for Math Center tutors after their initial tutor training. This effort has yielded a team environment and increased tutor competency.

A CRLA certification awards ceremony occurs in latter spring of a given school year and highlights the achievements of tutors. A program is created, dignitaries invited, speeches given, and after certificates are handed out, refreshments are served. Learning Center faculty and staff feel strongly that this is our chance to show appreciation to tutors for their efforts not only to tutor AVC students, but to strive to improve their knowledge and tutoring skills. Most tutors are interested in self-improvement, and when funds became available in Spring 2007, an invitation went out to attend a national tutoring conference last April; eight tutors eagerly accepted. The Association for Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA) is a professional organization, and AVC was well-represented at the conference with faculty, staff, and tutors. *Funding must be made available for the ongoing participation of tutors at ACTLA's annual conferences.*

All Learning Center student workers attend once or twice a year AVC "conferences" just for them for which an agenda of activities is created by faculty and staff—presentations by guest speakers, break-out sessions, etc. Participants complete an evaluation so that Learning Center faculty and staff can determine what kinds of activities to include in future conferences. Future training will focus on tutoring online and via video conferencing and video-based Supplemental Instruction for which cameras were purchased last year. One problem that will need attention is giving tutors and SI leaders access to Blackboard as there is currently no process in place for this.

Evaluations

Learning Center full-time faculty members occasionally serve on faculty hiring committees and tenure committees campus-wide, but are less involved in the hiring and evaluation of faculty within their own area, perhaps because there have been many changes of leadership within the division. The hiring process of adjunct faculty has not been consistent, and most new adjuncts have not yet been evaluated. Full-time faculty do not, for instance, observe new faculty or even provide mentoring as part of a formal process, though the latter occurs as necessary. With the advent of a new dean of instructional resources, hopefully one who will commit to years of service, *Learning Center faculty look forward to a process in place for involvement in the hiring and evaluation of adjuncts.* In the past year, Learning Center full-time classified staff members served on classified hiring committees for which two existing positions were filled and a new position created and filled.

Learning Center full-time faculty members are sometimes asked by instructors outside the division to evaluate their teaching strategies and class assignments. The Writing Center Learning Specialist, for instance, reviews written assignments for instructors and suggests changes for clarity and better results. Last year, in partnership with three Language Arts instructors, Flex activities were offered by her on designing writing assignments and choosing formats. Learning specialists meet with different faculty to improve learning support for classes when suggestions and requests are made.

Despite the many changes of leadership, evaluations of Learning Center personnel have been completed on-time and have followed a systematic approach. The Writing Center Learning Specialist completed the tenure process successfully in 2006 and is slated to be evaluated in 2009. The two other full-time learning specialists are evaluated every three years. The

permanent classified staff members in the Learning Center are evaluated regularly per their union contract. Although four deans have evaluated faculty and staff within five and one-half years, evaluation processes have been consistent in terms of assessment of effectiveness and encouragement to improve. Despite these managerial shifts, Learning Center faculty and staff productivity continues to be maintained by all; however, as noted above, as the number of students increase and the need for new programs to assist them become more urgent, stresses in the workload can have their effects.

Student workers are evaluated at least once each semester, sometimes twice (mid-semester and end of semester). An evaluation form is used for this purpose, the front page addressing factors such as knowledge and quality of work, productivity and dependability, initiative, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, and professionalism. On the reverse, space to write comments about a tutoring session is made available with appropriate questions to guide the supervisor's observation of such. Both sides of the form are used for evaluating tutors, and only the first side for evaluating desk assistants. If they so desire, student workers can make comments of their own pertaining to the evaluation on a separate sheet of paper attached to it.

Reclassification of tutorial specialists

Learning Center faculty and staff believe the campus reclassification of 2006 inaccurately captured the role and responsibilities of the tutorial specialists, and, therefore, misclassified, misnamed, and demoted the position on the classified salary schedule. Though the scale used by the reclassification consultant served well as a measurement for a number of the classified positions, it does not adequately measure certain factors around which the Tutorial Specialist classification revolves—student learning. The scale measures such job functions and responsibilities as contacts outside of the campus (and their purpose and frequency), physical and visual effort, working conditions, decision-making, amount of daily supervision received and supervisory responsibility exercised. While a tutorial specialist's primary responsibility is to supervise student workers, including peer tutors, this vital and demanding responsibility cannot be taken into account by the scale utilized. Though the scale measures the purpose and frequency of contacts outside of the campus, there is nothing that measures contacts with current students and involvement in their academic success. The scale also does not have a measurement which takes into account the amount of content area knowledge needed for these positions. The education level and level of experience needed for the class were not considered in the appeals process even though they were considered by the consultant/committee in the final appraisal of the job description and salary placement. Learning Center tutorial specialists appealed five factors of their grading, yet since education and experience could not be appealed, only three of those factors were considered. The result of the appeal was no change in the minimum qualifications, accuracy of job function, nor appropriate placement on the salary schedule, resulting in a significant reduction in monthly salary despite support from the entire Learning Center staff and faculty, two deans assigned to the Learning Center during the reclassification period, and the Vice President of Student Services.

On other campuses, positions with the same duties and responsibilities as those of the Learning Center's tutorial specialists are coordinator positions, and more often than not, require a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or higher in a field related to the assignment. A recent position hired in the Math, Science, and Engineering Division at Antelope Valley College further exemplifies the disparity and the lack of acceptance of a tutorial specialist as a paraprofessional, a position that requires a completed undergraduate degree or higher and serves a supervisory and coordinator function. Before 1998, tutorial specialists were classified as "Lab Technicians." The reclassification of 1998 changed the position to that of "Tutorial

Specialist” and placed it on the salary schedule in alignment with other positions on campus and within the State’s community college system. In 2007, a former Math Lab Technician job description (pre-1998 reclassification) was advertised in a job announcement and the position filled in the Math, Science, and Engineering Division. While the Learning Center tutorial specialists not only perform all of the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Math Lab Technician classification and also are required to perform many additional responsibilities on a much larger scale, *the Math Lab Technician was placed above the tutorial specialist classification on the salary schedule.*

In addition, the responsibilities listed on the tutorial specialist job description and the faculty learning specialist job description duties cause frequent confusion and, at times, conflict regarding roles and responsibilities. The inaccurate Tutorial Specialist job description has led to instances of either near-termination or contributed to the resignation of several classified members within the Learning Center. In addition, incomparable pay and the result of the 2006 reclassification study did, in fact, lead to a loss of 50% of the tutorial specialists during the Fall 2006 semester.

During the Fall 2007 term, the interim Learning Center dean requested at a staff meeting that the tutorial specialists work collaboratively and review their job description, minimum qualifications, and areas of responsibilities in order to clarify the roles of the staff members in the positions and to ensure that the job description accurately reflects the reality of the position on campus. As a plan of action, tutorial specialists are completing this review during Fall 2007 proposing appropriate minimum qualifications, accurate language that reflects the reality of the responsibilities of the position, and a title for the class which clearly states the coordinating and academic nature of the position.

Plan of action:

Faculty and staff requirements (from above)

- *Address the issue of overextended workloads of full-time faculty.*
- *Propose the hiring of full-time learning specialists (reading, ESL) and the separation of the ESL Study Center from the Writing Center.*
- *Seek adjunct learning specialists for the Writing Center and Palmdale Learning Center.*
- *Request support staff positions to meet program needs.*

Faculty and staff development

- *As learning specialists and support staff positions are approved and hiring completed, partake in more opportunities to receive professional development such as conferences, online courses, meetings with colleagues from other colleges, etc.*

Learning Center student workers

- *Find funding opportunities for tutors to participate in ACTLA conferences.*

Evaluations

- *With the new dean of instructional resources, develop a process for the hiring and evaluating of adjuncts.*
- *Reclassification of tutorial specialists: Review job description, minimum qualifications, and responsibilities.*

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Introduction

A learning center on most campuses is considered a classroom as LAC courses are offered for services such as tutoring, workshops, and individual learning plans. Instruction takes place just

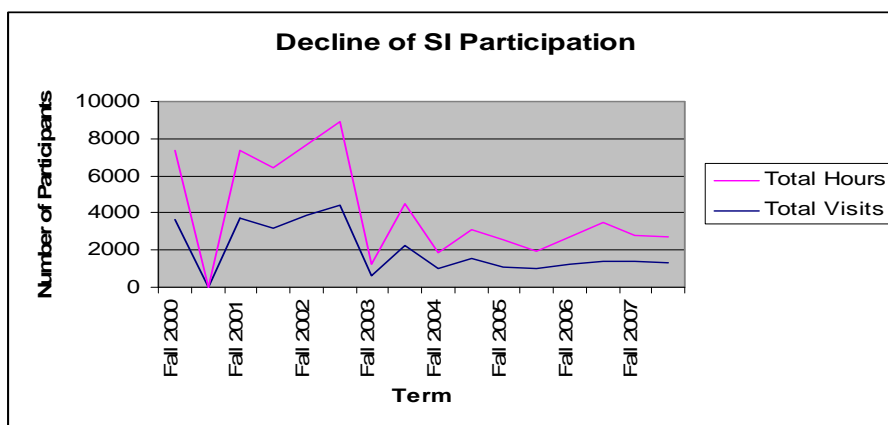
as it does in a regular classroom setting designated for a particular discipline, only in this case, the discipline is learning assistance; hence, Learning Assistance Center courses are designated “LAC.” Faculty from other disciplines and students do not always associate the Learning Center with the classroom, yet there are probably more active teaching and learning strategies, methods, and opportunities taking place within its four walls than anywhere on campus.

Furniture and equipment in the Learning Center tends to be old. Modernization has only occurred recently in room LC 104 with the awarding of a Verizon grant for new furniture and purchased for ease of use/movability (light-weight desks and chairs with wheels) and comfort (small sofa seating and chairs with adequate cushioning). Most tables and chairs in the Learning Center are stationary, not always easy to move around, and sometimes in the way of others when students take it upon themselves to move them.

Space concerns

Instructional areas within AVC’s Learning Center facility are not appropriate for effective teaching and learning. To be effective, space must be adequate for seating students, access to the space must be free of obstructions, distractions must be kept to a minimum, and equipment must be in place and functioning. Space in the Learning Center must also be earmarked for Learning Center courses and services and not be parceled out to other disciplines either permanently or temporarily, for the instructional and comfort needs of Learning Center students are ever as great as those who receive instruction in regular classrooms. All of the programs and services within AVC’s Learning Center are compromised by lack of space which affects students most of all.

Supplemental Instruction has especially suffered from lack of space. The classroom space allotted to LAC 900 for Supplemental Instruction, reallocated for office use, has been reduced to such an extent that enrollment has been cut in half. The following chart illustrates the decline of SI participants because of lack of space:



Frequently, classrooms 113 and 114 within the Learning Center are unavailable for instructional purposes as they are considered Language Arts classrooms for teaching English composition and ESL. Other disciplines use these classrooms as well, making it difficult for Learning Center activities such as workshops and group tutoring/SI to be held in them. Because high numbers of students utilize services in the Math Center at any given time, there is not always enough space for workshops and other activities. Limiting Learning Center space often makes it difficult to not only offer more services, but to maintain current ones.

Functional support space for all centers within the Learning Center is lacking. Additional workspace has not been provided with the hiring of new classified employees such as the Math Tutorial Specialist and the new Writing Tutorial Specialist (WTS). For example, a request to

AVC's Facilities Department was made last spring to create a front desk work station for the new WTS who was hired in August. She is still sharing cramped space with a desk assistant since August 2007 despite repeated follow-up calls to Facilities. Little storage space is available in the Learning Center as well. Although employees have access to the Learning Center employees' shared high traffic workroom, storage is unsecured. ALL centers within the Learning Center require more storage space.

Although Math Center facilities provide adequate space for tutoring in terms of current usage, it, like other centers within the Learning Center, will be hard pressed to accommodate a projected growth of 23,000 students. Currently, the Math Center can accommodate a minimum of fifty students at any given time, but when the Learning Center employs a marketing strategy during the next school year, Math Center personnel expects to experience a sharp increase in student utilization. At such time, the center could easily be overwhelmed, creating more peak times than experienced now. When the General Tutoring Center experiences high attendance during the day, all of the tables are utilized for hour long tutoring sessions, sometimes making access to room LC 104, the ESL Study Center, difficult with chairs, tables, and students' backpacks on the floor in the way. The Writing Center and Reading Center are currently reduced to three tables and two tables respectively due to lack of space in the Learning Center. There is a need for multiple services to co-exist simultaneously on the Learning Center floor and to be accessible.

The Academic Skills Center (ASC) operates out of the office of the Academic Skills Learning Specialist, space shared by three faculty members and a peer mentor to meet with and offer support to Early Alert and at-risk students. The office is also used as workshop space. A clerk who sits at a desk outside the office must share the office telephone by physically moving it out the door to her desk in order to use it for contacting students to make appointments. Also, there is no space for more peer mentors and the addition of study skills tutors since table space outside the office is assigned to Supplemental Instruction for which space is already limited (see above). Former rooms for tutoring near the Academic Skills Center are assigned to Language Arts faculty, also making it impossible to offer full services like other centers within the Learning Center. The Academic Skills Center, like all centers, needs dedicated space for workshops, study skills tutoring, the peer mentor program, storage, additional faculty, and the Basic Skills/Early Alert clerk. Virtually all of these operations are housed in the Academic Skills Learning Specialist's office and the hallway outside!

When ESL instruction and tutoring are not taking place in LC 104, the ESL Study Center, the room is used for multi-purposes such as workshops, tutor training sessions, Supplemental Instruction, group tutoring, Learning Center faculty and staff meetings, etc. Scheduling for these activities takes place around the needs of ESL students. Currently, this is the only large room in the building designated for the Learning Center, yet its maximum capacity is fourteen. *When full-time ESL faculty and staff are eventually assigned to it, no room will be available for the purposes above, making lack of space an even greater issue.*

On many campuses statewide, Learning Centers house the First Year Experience program as well as the Honors program. These programs would be welcome in the Learning Center if space could be made. *A modular unit dedicated to the Learning Center with room for these programs as well as tutoring and workshops could be the answer.*

As the Palmdale campus develops, space needs to be provided for a Learning Center. Currently, a classroom is designated for this purpose, one shared with Language Arts, but in order to build viability at the site and to encourage student attendance, the Learning Center should have its own space, preferably a stand alone building on the future Palmdale campus, and be open during the times students are available to attend. They can be polled, of course, to

determine the best days and times to receive services, but access to them for only two or three days a week currently is limiting. *To encourage participation, the Learning Center presence already started should continue and be expanded to include adjunct faculty, more tutors, classified staff (see Personnel section above), and increased hours.*

Equipment concerns

Despite the addition of a Kurzweil 3000 to assist students with reading and hearing text, instructional equipment is less than adequate for effective learning and not at all for effective teaching. Although the Computer and Media Check-Out Center houses most of the equipment in the Learning Center, some is available within centers for **use by students**:

- The Academic Skills Center has two computers for learning styles testing.
- The Computer and Media Check-Out Center has a total of thirty-six computers, twenty-two of which are new computers with LCD monitors that were purchased and given to the Learning Center by the Health Sciences Division, deployed for the Fall 2007. The center also houses two DSS computers, each with a scanner, and one closed circuit television system for sight impaired students to view documents. It also has one (old) stand-alone 3 ½ inch floppy disk scanner nearly obsolete due to the fact that most computers manufactured today do not have floppy disk drives. The center also supports a pay-print station system that uses two (very old) Apple printers and one (very old) computer.
- The DSS High Tech Center has four computers, one scanner, and one closed circuit television system for sight-impaired students to view documents.
- The ESL Study Center has six computers purchased two years ago from a Verizon grant and many ESL tutorial programs.
- The Math Center has four computers available for students to use for classroom instruction (Educo) and math tutorial software. It also has five small screen televisions with DVD/VHS combination players and one large screen, all-in-one television with a DVD/VHS player.
- The Writing Center has five computers purchased from a federal Title V grant four years ago and primarily used by students for drafting and revising written assignments and accessing information on the Writing Center Web site and the Internet. One large screen, all-in-one television with a DVD/VHS player is also available as is a whiteboard to illustrate concepts.
- The Reading Center has twenty-eight (old) computers and one DSS computer with a scanner.

At present, the Learning Center is home to the most obsolete computers and printers on campus. With the exception of the new twenty-two computers deployed for Fall 2007, the Learning Center's equipment as a whole will soon need to be replaced as will the printers. *New student computers and printers for the main computer floor, the Math Center, and the Reading Center are sorely needed to improve student access to faster, reliable technology.*

Up until the Fall 2007 semester, students were using the most current technology in the Learning Center. New computers and monitors for faculty and staff were requested and finally provided, making it easier to prepare documents and use online programs such as MyAVC and Banner. Most centers within the Learning Center use a database developed by a former employee. The database is easy to use for data entry but has its limitations for reporting purposes. *Learning Center faculty and staff strongly agree that a new database complete with maintenance contract would adapt to technology needs of SLOs assessment and usage*

reporting to a much higher degree. The Director of Institutional Technology might be consulted to aid in the search and, once funding is secured, the implementation of such.

Equipment for faculty and staff use includes computers and monitors, office equipment such as filing and storage cabinets, whiteboards, etc. The only presentation station is housed in LC 104 and is connected to a ceiling projector that is accessed by a switch for viewing a computer screen, DVD/VHS instructional video, or document. (Another fairly new presentation station is found in LC 114, but as that room is not always available, it is seldom used by Learning Center faculty and staff.) Teaching to different learning modalities, especially, can be accomplished in LC 104 via visual viewing of information, auditory equipment housed in the storage cabinet, and whiteboards both on the walls and in electronic form on the computer for student active engagement. *Students with tactile/kinesthetic learning styles could especially benefit from a set of wireless laptop computers housed in LC 104 for workshops and other group sessions.* Outside this room, despite three projectors mounted on the ceiling of the Learning Center, screen access is a problem since there are panels and other equipment that hinder their use and block viewing. *Presentation stations are not available for these projectors; components must be brought in and plugged so as to not to impede access around them. Clearly, a better use of space needs to be designed for the Learning Center as a whole.* Also, sound amelioration and monitoring of cell phone usage, always a major consideration in terms of fewer distractions while teaching and learning activities take place, should be considered in the design.

Other equipment needs includes telephones for the Academic Skills Center and ESL Study Center, and the following for all areas in the Learning Center: additional data plugs for computers, additional study carrels, signage, bulletin boards, Smart boards, equipment to facilitate online tutoring, and filing and storage cabinets. Instructional equipment needs include computer software, headphones, and a Tegrity cart.

Plans for improvement, replacement, or repair

Plans to improve, replace or repair instructional equipment are of the highest priority. One particular area of concern is that Microsoft will not be supporting its XP operating system by the year 2010; therefore, the college will have to deploy another computer operating system, most likely Microsoft Vista. When Microsoft Vista or another next generation operating system is deployed, the majority of the educational and tutorial software in use at the Learning Center will not be compatible. Vista will not be able to run on some of the computers available in the Learning Center, specifically fourteen computers on the main floor of the Computer and Media Check-out Center and the twenty-eight computers in the Reading Center. *Regardless of whether Vista is implemented or not, the computers are in dire need of replacement.* All academic divisions that utilize the Learning Center as a learning tool to supplement class work need to address these concerns.

Due to the lack of computer skills by a vast majority of the students served, approximately 70% to 80% of the Lab Technician's time is spent assisting with basic computer/keyboarding issues. *It must be stressed by entities across campus that new and returning students must enroll in a basic computer or keyboarding class so that when coursework requires computer use, the student can be self-sufficient. There is also a need to hire a permanent part-time Lab Technician to provide adequate assistance during the evening hours.* Several attempts have been made to hire a Lab Technician assistant through the Work Study or CalWORKs funding programs, but efforts have not succeeded. While there are qualified individuals in our hiring pool, a lack of District funds does not permit their hiring. A second Lab Technician is needed now that the Palmdale Learning Center is in operation.

Safety of facilities and equipment

Because no remodeling in terms of modernization has taken place during this program review period, the Learning Center facility and its equipment cannot be considered reasonable and adequate in terms of safety. One area deemed unsafe is the main computer floor where masses of electrical wires under the tables that host the student computers can easily get caught on a student's foot and cause bodily injury and damage to the equipment. *The wires need to be contained in some kind of protective container, and/or the uninterruptible power supplies need to be mounted under the tables to protect the safety of all students and preserve the equipment for maximum durability.*

Another area of concern is that some of the computers are set high on table tops above students heads. *These computers are on an unstable table top that can potentially topple down during any shaking motion such as an earthquake.* These computers need to be put on a lower table, but in order to do so, two of the tables need to be replaced with bigger ones, or the CRT monitors need to be replaced with LCD monitors. Also, *the white boards located near Learning Center entrances used for advertising workshops are not secured and frequently fall, blown over by the wind.* In the past, the Learning Center has requested that the Facilities Department secure these white boards but our request was not honored. This safety hazard still remains.

A foul odor has been detected in the east side of the Learning Center building. Some staff members perceive this odor to come from some kind of rodent in the ventilation system while others believe it to be sewer related. Mouse traps have been placed within the building, but they are missing when maintenance crews come to check on them. Rodent droppings have also been found in two faculty member's offices. As of the writing of this program review, little has been done to address this problem.

Finally, *an issue that affects all students and staff is overcrowding.* When math classes are held in the vicinity of room LC 104 and tutoring sessions are in progress, the cramped conditions students are forced to work in create a hazard, especially when stepping over backpacks on the floor just to get from one side of the Learning Center to another. Students who require the assistance of wheelchairs or canes have even more difficulty with limited room in which to move about. In the case of a true emergency where students, faculty, and staff should need to vacate or evacuate the building, to do so without injury would be extremely difficult.

Summary

The Learning Center cannot expand its programs and services, and, therefore, help students to improve retention, persistence, and success rates unless it has the space and updated equipment to do so. In order for the Learning Center to operate to full capacity in the short term, former tutoring rooms, workshop areas, storage areas, and offices need to be restored to Learning Center faculty, staff, and, most importantly, students and tutors, to greatly improve the productivity of all. The Educational Master plan speaks to this need, and although the completion of a campus High Tech Learning Center, a long-term solution (eight to ten years) is planned, current conditions call for addressing space utilization needs, exploring the portions of the center that have been shared with or given to divisions outside of the Instructional Resources and Extended Services (IRES) division. By partnering with other divisions to find locations where other departments can serve students closer to their respective programs, the Learning Center will be able to utilize the space within its own building.

Last spring, Learning Center faculty and staff were asked to contribute ideas to the design of the Learning Center in the future AVC High Tech Center (see appendix). A rudimentary list of

space and equipment needs was submitted, but as the administration begins to develop building and space utilization plans for the High Tech Center, Learning Center faculty and staff request the hiring of a consultant, Dr. William G. White, internationally known as an expert in Learning Center design. This consultant would also be effective in the design of the Palmdale Learning Center. *Faculty and staff will expect to be included in the planning for both facilities.*

With housing in the High Tech Center, the implication is that “high tech” equipment and instructional materials and resources will be utilized by students across the curriculum, not just those enrolled in basic skills courses. Equipment upgrades and new purchases are anticipated by Learning Center faculty and staff as are administrative solicitations for recommendations of instructional learning tools such as Plato and other software programs. Two software programs loaded on all Learning Center computers include ZoomText, a magnifier reader, and JAWS, for hearing text. In addition, voice-over Internet protocol (VOIP) as is currently used with the new ShoreTel telephone system might be considered as a distance education tutoring and instructional tool. Faculty will need to also investigate the use of streaming services to enhance instructional materials.

Plan of action:

Space concerns

- *Address requirements for more workshop, office, and storage space within all areas of the Learning Center.*
- *Ask for a modular unit to house Learning Center services currently compromised by lack of space.*
- *Ask for non-shared Learning Center space at the Palmdale site.*
- *Be involved in planning for the Learning Center in the new High Tech Center.*

Equipment concerns

- *Replace student computers and printers for the main computer floor, Math Center, and Reading Center.*
- *Replace the current Learning Center database to one more adaptable to new technology.*
- *Purchase presentation stations to be connected to projectors currently mounted on the ceiling in the Learning Center.*
- *Ask for funding for wireless laptop computers to be used for workshops and group sessions in LC 104.*
- *Ask for funding for other equipment needs.*

Improvement, replacement, repair

- *Replace Learning Center computers with ones adaptable to a new operating system.*
- *Promote the need for students to learn basic keyboarding.*
- *Hire a part-time lab technician for the night shift.*

Safety of facility and equipment

- *The problem of masses of wires under the computer tables needs to be addressed.*
- *Address the need to move computers from unstable table tops.*
- *Ask Facilities (again) to secure whiteboards near entrances.*
- *Address the issue of overcrowding, making access difficult.*

Summary

- *Faculty and staff will expect to be included in planning for the High Tech Center and the Palmdale Learning Center.*
- *Add VOIP and streaming services to LAC instruction.*

FISCAL SUPPORT

Introduction

During this entire review period, Learning Center faculty and staff members have not received a copy of the budget, so it has been continually uncertain from year to year as to whether or not the Learning Center has an ample, stable budget that allows for growth of services. Personnel virtually operate in the dark, forwarding purchase requests to deans (four in five and one half years) and hoping for a solution to the mystery of how much funding is available, how much has been spent to date, etc. Purchase requests that have been assigned budget account codes have been changed at higher administrative levels without notifying requesters. Budget planning does not take place. When deans are informed by higher administrators that monies are available for spending, they notify Learning Center personnel of the urgency for purchase requisitions. Work must be temporarily halted to comply with these proclamations. No systematic budget process is in place that involves Learning Center personnel.

Operational budget

Despite operating under mysterious fiscal circumstances, Learning Center personnel always attempt to use resources effectively to support programs and services. Funding is required for operations of programs and services to include salaries for the employment of student workers, including training; purchases of instructional equipment, materials, and supplies; purchases of office equipment and supplies; purchases of furniture when new personnel are hired, etc. As student enrollment increases each year, having enough funding to meet student needs and expectations is a typical worry which is why, during this review period, Learning Center faculty and staff have participated in several grant proposals and were awarded some funding as a result:

- Title V - Summer Bridge, tutorial support services, computers and printer for the Writing Center/ESL Study Center
- VTEA – Math Center tutorial support
- ESL Verizon – furniture and equipment for ESL Study Center
- Early College High School – support services for workshops and tutoring in all areas
- Basic Skills – Basic skills clerk, tutorial and adjunct faculty support in all areas
- AVC Foundation – instructional supplies (Reading Center), equipment (Writing Center), tutor training (ESL Study Center)
- AVC Senate grant – research to develop online writing tutoring.

In addition, the Learning Center receives CalWORKs funding for tutoring and desk support and Associated Student Organization funding for tutoring. Also, close collaboration with programs such as STAR, EOPS, and Work Experience lends to shared funding. *Despite funding from grants and other program sources, Learning Center personnel must ask for and continue to rely upon district funding as a major part of its operational budget.*

Learning Center personnel have struggled within the budgetary allowances of the last three years, but a surge in student attendance, anticipated in the future, will make it difficult to maintain the high quality of academic programs and services expected by faculty, staff, and students campus wide. Extending Learning Center hours to later in the evenings or 24/7 to meet increased enrollment will be impossible without more funds. *Learning Center personnel will need to continually apply for grants, for without additional grant funds, the Math Center, for instance, would be required to reduce its services and cease to offer the same level of support services required to a growing campus. Math Center faculty and staff request that additional district funds be made available for tutoring students on both the Lancaster and Palmdale campuses. An increase of funding for additional tutors and tutor pay raises is needed in all centers within the Learning Center at both sites. Retaining qualified tutors is a constant challenge due to the ability of tutors to become trained here and leave their Learning Center employment to earn a higher rate of pay (often \$5-10 per hour more) than the current college's*

student pay scale and Learning Center budget allows. *Recently, a slight increase in tutors' salaries was approved, but the increase is still not equitable or higher than that of the K-12 sector.*

The Math Center primarily operates on district funding and grants monies from Title V, VTEA, and Basic Skills funds which have been utilized to their fullest potential by ensuring that funds are most effectively serving as many students as possible. In addition, the Math Center commits funds to tutor training, regular staff meetings, and professional development to ensure that the Math Center tutors are trained to meet the needs of students. During Fall 2007, a proposal to offer individual one-on-one tutoring by appointment for financial aid probationary and appeals students was made to the Basic Skills Committee. As a present baseline, 25-35% of students enrolled in the math basic skills course sequence utilized tutoring at the Math Center. The increased effort of the campus to provide support, retention, success, and persistence for these students requires additional funding for tutorial services. The following tables provide a detailed analysis from Institutional Research regarding the present status and distribution of AVC students regarding this need:

Math Center Basic Skills Fund Justification

MATH Course Frequency

Term	020	021	050	050A	050B	070	070A	070B	080	Total
Fall 2005	6	6	92	7	5	117	25	6	5	269
Spring 2006	4	6	84	1	3	65	15	15	3	196
Summer 2006	0	0	31	0	0	36	0	0	0	67
Fall 2006	7	7	108	11	0	75	11	9	2	230
Intersession 2007	0	0	6	0	0	17	0	0	0	23
Spring 2007	8	8	61	7	5	71	14	9	4	187

MATH Course Percentage

Term	020	021	050	050A	050B	070	070A	070B	080	Total
Fall 2005	2.2	2.2	34.2	2.6	1.9	43.5	9.3	2.2	1.9	100.0
Spring 2006	2.0	3.1	42.9	0.5	1.5	33.2	7.7	7.7	1.5	100.0
Summer 2006	0.0	0.0	46.3	0.0	0.0	53.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Fall 2006	3.0	3.0	47.0	4.8	0.0	32.6	4.8	3.9	0.9	100.0
Intersession 2007	0.0	0.0	26.1	0.0	0.0	73.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Spring 2007	4.3	4.3	32.6	3.7	2.7	38.0	7.5	4.8	2.1	100.0

Term	All Students who took a Basic Skills MATH Course During Term	Total Students that Used the Math Center During Term	Math Center Basic Skills Tutee Total for Term	Percent of Math Center Students enrolled in Basic Skills	Percent of Basic Skills MATH students who got help at the Math Center
Fall 2005	745	777	269	34.6%	36.1%
Spring 2006	697	755	196	26%	28.1%
Summer 2006	283	286	67	23.4%	23.7%
Fall 2006	767	821	230	28%	30.0%
Intersession 2007	92	93	23	24.7%	25.0%
Spring 07	716	769	187	24.3%	26.1%

As with the Math Center, other centers within the Learning Center require Basic Skills funding to continue to offer services to basic skills students: peer tutoring at the Lancaster and Palmdale campuses as well as online; Supplemental Instruction; tutor training; adjuncts to teach workshops and individual sessions; computer software such as Plato; technical support; and publications to promote all of the above, components of the Basic Skills Initiative for learning assistance. All of the centers submitted a basic skills budget request last spring and received approval, but because the dean resigned after one semester, little action was taken during the summer transition period to another dean. In the fall, tutors and adjuncts were hired and have been paid with basic skills monies which alone do not meet the needs of programs. The Reading Center, for instance, has a limited basic skills budget (\$7200 for the entire academic year) and no district funds. Also, a budget request for money for Supplemental Instruction for Reading was submitted to the Basic Skills committee by the reading tutorial specialist, the dean, and a reading faculty member as well as a request for travel funds to visit colleagues at other colleges regarding strategies for recruiting students to seek reading tutoring and other services, but these requests have not yet received approval by the AVC Basic Skills Committee.

The Writing Center and ESL Study Center require bilingual (Spanish-English) desk assistants to assist non-native English speakers enrolled in developmental writing and ESL courses. The desk assistants provide translation services to all areas within the Learning Center and are trained to provide help for basic software applications on computers in both the Writing Center and ESL Study Center. These positions are currently funded by Title V; *however, if future funding for these desk assistants as well as tutors is not secured, basic skills students would not receive vital assistance.*

In light of all of the above, anticipated funding is only adequate if it allows for growth and the development of revised and new programs (Summer Bridge, Palmdale services, Supplemental Instruction for Reading, etc.); salary raises for tutors and other student workers; purchase of instructional supplies such as videos, for instance, to replace old, outdated ones; new equipment; modernization of areas within the Learning Center, especially those considered safety hazards, etc.

A facility needed in the future not now provided is a modular unit to allow maintenance and expansion of Learning Center services such as tutoring and workshops as well as to house programs such as First Year Experience and Honors. Personnel needed in the future and not now available include all those outlined in the Personnel section of this document (in brief, faculty both full-time and adjunct; classified support staff to include tutorial specialists, clerks, and a lab technician; student mentors and tutors for the Academic Skills Center). Equipment that will be needed in the future include computers, printers, and office equipment to replace older models; presentation stations for existing ceiling-mounted projectors, study carrels for quiet study; technology for online tutoring, etc. (see Facilities and Equipment section above). Facility needs for the future High Tech Center are clearly outlined in the Appendix.

Learning Center goals always focus on students, so use of capital outlay funds for programs and services for students are consistent with and relate to goals listed in AVC's Educational Master Plan.

Plan of action:

- *With the hiring of a new IR/ES dean, emphasize the need to develop a systematic budget process for the Learning Center.*
- *Continue to ask for district funding as well as to apply for grants to assist with funding for programs and services.*

- *Seek raises for tutors that are equitable or higher than the K-12 sector.*
- *Continue to ask for basic skills monies to insure programs and services meet the mandates of the Basic Skills initiative.*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PROGRAM AWARENESS

Introduction

Communication, collaboration, and consultation with students, academic and student service campus units, and community members are central to the operations of the Learning Center. Every week in a given term, faculty and staff members promote programs and services to campus and community entities via different channels: orientations, meetings both on and off campus, visits to classrooms and offices, Flex events, AVC outreach events, workshops, presentations, individual and group consultations, conferences, publications (schedules, newsletters, brochures), group Emails, memberships on campus committees and community organizations, CRLA worksite observations, interviews, referrals, and special program activities for Summer Bridge, ICAN, SOAR, STAR, EOPS, AVID, etc.

Educational links to the community

Faculty and staff educational links to the community include the following:

- articulation with high schools
- on-campus high school orientations
- on-campus meetings with high school counselors
- AVID training – The full-time Academic Skills Learning Specialist (ASLS), a certified as an AVID tutor trainer, has trained tutors for the local high schools.
- SOAR program – The ASLS, along with a Math instructor, participated in two statewide Early College High Schools conferences sponsored by the California Community College Foundation concerning the development of SOAR High School. She also serves on the AV SOAR High School site council.
- memberships in and alliances with community organizations – The Writing Center Learning Specialist (WCLS) is a founding member of AV Word (formerly AV Literacy Coalition), participated in three community literacy festivals, has been a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and formed an alliance with the Palmdale Literacy Program as a presenter at the Southern California Library Literacy Network conference in 2005.
- memberships in national organizations such as ACTLA (faculty and staff), CRLA (full-time learning specialists), ATP (ASLS), American Association of University Women (WCLS) which supports Tech Trek, a program for local junior high girls to attend space camp.
- links to private and public tutoring venues as a result of CRLA worksite observations – (LAC 100 and 200 faculty)
- ICAN (College Access Network) program, establishing relationships with local high schools, junior high school students and their parents – The ASLS is the Activities Director. Programs within ICAN include Summer Bridge, the Skills for Scholars, and the Academic Academy. The concept of the iCAN program, created and developed by the Reading Tutorial Specialist and the former General Tutoring Tutorial Specialist, became an important component of the Title V grant. The full-time Math Learning Specialist (MLS) teaches workshops for the program.
- projects – The MLS mentors and judges high school senior projects.
- workshops – The MLS presented a workshop for the Child Center in Palmdale. The WCLS and the ESL Learning Specialist (ELS) have co-presented workshops with AVC's

ESL Coordinator at conferences of the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) held at local area schools.

- Math Odyssey (for junior high students) – This event is held in the Learning Center and is supported by faculty and staff.

Educational links to campus entities

Faculty and staff links to campus entities include the following:

- individual consultations with content area faculty on active learning, learning styles, assessment tools, and other concerns about student learning needs, including early alert interventions
- classroom presentations on topics related to area of specialization
- Early Alert interventions – for students referred to Learning Center programs and services by faculty; individual learning plans developed by Learning Center faculty by area of specialization, and referrals made to other centers within the Learning Center.
- alliances with student services (STAR, EOPS, outreach, etc.) – The WCLS and MLS regularly present workshops for STAR students and have participated in outreach event planning for AVC Open House and Cinco de Mayo as well as Welcome Back and Night at Poncitlan Square events. The MLS also served on AVC's 75th Anniversary conference committee.
- alliance with Corporate and Community Education – The MLS regularly teaches CBEST math workshops and developed a booklet for such.
- AVC's women's conference – The MLS presented break-out sessions.
- Guest speaker and participation in campus ceremonies – The MLS was a guest speaker at last year's scholarship awards and Honors students' awards ceremonies, was grand marshal at the AVC graduation ceremony, was a presenter at AVC's 75th Anniversary conference, and participated in the nursing graduation ceremony.
- workshops for Summer Bridge
- IRES division meetings and attendance at other division meetings
- program review for other divisions – The MLS participates in the evaluation of the Math/Science/Engineering division. The ASLS will participate in program review for Enrollment Services.
- program activities of other divisions – The MLS engages in final test development for different math classes and math reviews and the evaluation of math textbooks. She also provides materials for Math Field Day and other contests and participates on the Math 102 committee.
- bilingual services – Writing Center student desk assistants provide translation (Spanish-English) for anyone needing such on campus.
- access to academic resources (Web site, handouts, videos, textbooks, etc.) for students and faculty
- tenure committees – all full-time faculty serve on one or more tenure review committees. The ASLS also has served on four peer evaluation teams.
- publications (brochures, newsletters) announcing programs and services, available in the Learning Center and distributed at events.
- committee memberships – faculty and staff serve on various committees such as Basic Skills, Student Success and Equity, Matriculation, Assessment, and Flex. The ASLS is the representative at-large for the Academic Senate. She serves on the Strategic Planning and Budget Council as did the Reading Tutorial Specialist until recently. The WCLS serves on the Latino Advisory Committee.
- advisory committee – The WCLS chairs the Writing Center Campus Advisory Committee which suggests direction for programs and services.

Although relationships exist with academic faculty and Student Services personnel in the many ways described above, *stronger methods for referrals to Learning Center programs and services need to be instituted.* For instance, although Learning Center faculty and staff make efforts to inform students of its activities and to facilitate student participation in them, reliance on the AVC community to get the word out is still very much a given. *One way to promote programs and services is to form a Learning Center Campus Advisory Committee comprised of Learning Center faculty and staff as well as representatives across disciplines and Student Services.* While this has been suggested at a Learning Center meeting in the past, more discussion needs to take place as Math Center faculty and staff, already working closely with math instructors in the center, serving on committees with them, and attending math division meetings, consider this less of a priority; however, faculty and staff in other centers within the Learning Center do for the purpose of not only promoting programs and services, but improving communication across *all* disciplines. This possibility can be explored once a new dean is hired.

Other methods to promote LAC courses and workshops include advertisements in the class schedule, announcements on MyAVC with weekly reminders in its calendar of events, and press releases with the cooperation of the Director of Public Relations. Obviously, from the results of the student survey, informing students of Learning Center programs and services must be a priority.

The Writing Center Campus Advisory Committee, formed in 2002, meets regularly once each semester. Its purpose is to consider the on-campus presence of the Writing Center, how it is or should be perceived; to understand its functions in terms of services to students; to assess its services to determine the need for modification; to advise the WCLS of the learning needs of students in specific areas; and to offer strategies for meeting the writing needs of all students. The Writing Center Learning Specialist (WCLS) is the chair, and members include two English instructors, a history instructor, a counselor, the DSS learning specialist, the ESL coordinator, a librarian, a Business instructor, and a GED instructor. An instructor from the Math, Science, and Engineering division will be asked to join the committee in time for the meeting next semester. This committee not only considers existing programs and services, but suggests new ones such as online tutoring. The WCLS and a member of this committee will visit other college campuses in January to meet with colleagues regarding electronic writing tutoring services in place and will consider and recommend options for AVC.

Plan of action:

- *Engage in discussions to create a Learning Center Campus Advisory Committee.*
- *Promote Learning Center programs and services more systematically.*

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS

Introduction

According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education (CAS), “Learning assistance programs provide student-centered instruction and services for developing skills, strategies, and behaviors that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes that improve learning outcomes. By helping students achieve their learning potential and succeed academically, learning assistance programs significantly influence student retention” (CAS Standards Contextual Statement: “The Role of Learning Assistance Programs). AVC’s Learning Center performs these vital functions daily, providing academic and vocational support to students. High ratings in both the student and employee surveys corroborate that the learning needs of students are met. One overriding fact for this exists: Learning Center faculty and staff continually strive to make instructional programs and services meet criteria established

by CAS, Title 5 guidelines for California Community Colleges, and the recent Basic Skills Initiative.

State and Federal guidelines pertinent to the division

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)

Last year, at a region meeting of ACTLA hosted by AVC, the full-time Academic Skills Learning Specialist presented a rubric for the evaluation of learning assistance programs using criteria established by CAS. The rubric basically summarized components of each standard and guideline outlined in *The CAS Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education* published in 1997 and published on the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) Web page (see appendix). Rubric ratings ranged from “excellent or good” to “average” to “poor or unacceptable.”

Learning Center personnel had no problem rating certain areas “excellent” in terms of CAS standards such as mission statement, student outcomes, modes of delivery, and leadership. The Learning Center developed a comprehensive mission statement as well as student learning outcomes defined and measurable for each LAC course. Modes of delivery are unquestionably varied; *options for offering distance education for tutoring will be addressed in Spring 2008*. Faculty and staff are leaders on campus and in the community. Ratings of “good” or “average” applied to professional development and campus relations, with some centers within the Learning Center, particularly the Math Center, rating the latter “excellent.” Data collection was identified as “average” with the lower end of the rating scale resources, budget, and staffing, the latter in terms of being insufficient to meet current needs.

Data collection in the Learning Center is, for the most part, more quantitative than qualitative and could be used more efficiently for research and program improvement. For example, *more research needs to be conducted to develop adequate measurements for usage (non-tutoring) data reporting and SLOs for such*. Resources are insufficient in terms of equipment that has not been updated and facilities that are insufficient in terms of space to meet instructional and research needs. *It is desired, for instance, to have a research office housed in the Learning Center with resources such as books, periodicals, videos, etc. in the field of tutoring and learning assistance accessible to all personnel*; however, lack of space prevents this. The budget is inadequate, mostly because faculty and staff have little or no control of it. Lastly, staffing is insufficient to meet current student needs as described in the personnel section of this document.

The AVC Learning Center, then, has all the essential criteria of a quality program by CAS standards, but may not reflect additional desirable characteristics defined by CAS guidelines. *All of the “plans for action” reflected in this program review document, when achieved, will insure “excellent” ratings in the areas above that currently need improvement.*

Plan of action:

- *Explore options for offering distance education for tutoring for Spring 2008.*
- *Conduct research to develop adequate measurements for usage (non-tutoring) data reporting and SLOs for such.*
- *Explore the possibility of housing a research office with resources such as books, periodicals, videos, etc. in the field of tutoring and learning assistance.*

California Community Colleges Supplemental Learning Assistance and Tutoring Regulations and Guidelines (Title 5 Regulations)

The AVC Learning Center complies with Title 5 Guidelines covered under the regulations described below:

58168, Tutoring - Education Code defines tutoring as a “method of instruction” that uses a student tutor who has either taken the course he or she is tutoring and completed it successfully OR who has demonstrated skill in that area. For example, a student who received an A in English 101 would be able to tutor a student who was enrolled in English 097 because the student tutor had demonstrated a success in the skill, even if the tutor had never taken English 097. Tutors in the Math, Writing, and Reading Centers must demonstrate a level of proficiency in the academic skill; tutors in General Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction must have successfully completed the course for which they tutor. Furthermore, the tutor must receive at least ten hours of specific training in tutoring methodology. The faculty member who is associated with the various tutorial centers acts as the instructor of the course through which the tutor facilitates the learning of the tutee, using the tutorial as the “method of instruction.” (See Sections 66700, 70901, Education Code, State of California).

58170, Apportionment for Tutoring – The AVC Learning Center meticulously follows the guidelines necessary to collect apportionment (positive attendance) for tutoring which has the following requirements (See Sections 70901 and 84500, Education Code, State of California):

1. All tutoring must be conducted through the Learning Center.
2. Tutoring is supervised at all times by a faculty member who meets the minimum qualifications prescribed by the Disciplines list (Section 53415).
3. All tutors have successfully completed tutor training including supervised practice tutoring and role play.
4. All tutees have “knowingly enrolled” in a non credit course which is under the Taxonomy of Programs number 4930.09 entitled “Supervised Tutoring.” This is LAC 900.
5. Students enroll in LAC 900 through unrestricted registration procedures after referral by a counselor, an instructor, or a learning specialist.
6. All attendance data is accurately entered into the Learning Center database which is monitored for correctness by the tutorial specialists and the learning specialists with the help of the computer technician.
7. Tutors are paid for their work, but do not receive academic credit for it.
8. The Learning Center does not report positive attendance for any services that are being paid for by state categorical funds.

The Learning Center does not report positive attendance for tutor training under this section. Tutors receive payment for training. The credit courses, LAC 100 and 200, are not covered under this section.

One challenge is that Title 5 does not allow for students to self refer to tutoring. Students must be referred by a faculty member. Since there are instructors associated with each Supervised Tutoring CRN, the instructor/learning specialist reviews the applications for tutoring and approves admission into the course. This issue is of concern to the community college learning centers throughout California as being counter to the philosophy of learning assistance, since it is part of their mission to help students to be aware of their learning needs and take action. This section of the Education Code was developed in the 1980s to guard against abuses in the collection of positive attendance. The Association for Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA), a professional organization, is in communication with a delegate from the CCC System’s office about these concerns.

Currently, the Learning Center is not collecting apportionment for tutoring via distance education; however, *the Title 5 Guidelines do allow the collection of apportionment for tutoring via distance under the following conditions:*

- 1) The tutor and the tutee are using online or other “real time” technologies (webcams, video conferencing) synchronously.
- 2) Either the tutor or the tutee must be physically present in the Learning Center during the tutorial.
- 3) If neither the tutor nor the tutee is present in the Learning Center, the supervisor must monitor the communication.
- 4) There must be a system in place to monitor and document positive attendance hours.
- 5) The supervisor must be able to document, for audit purposes, that the interaction in the tutorial was monitored.

Plan of action:

- *Work with ACTLA and the Systems Office to change Title 5 to allow students to self refer for tutoring.*
- *Develop distance tutorial services that comply with Title 5 guidelines for apportionment.*

Basic Skills Initiative for California Community Colleges

A point made in a booklet produced by the Academic Senate for CCCs about this initiative is that “students who enter college with better preparation for college-level studies are no less in need of effective instructional methodologies than the students entering with less developed skills, which emphasizes the philosophy that all learning is developmental” (8). There is a heavy emphasis on basic skills instruction and tutoring in the Learning Center, oftentimes regardless of which courses students are enrolled in, developmental or transfer. More students are seeking services having repeated basic skills courses over and over. Upon reaching a thirty unit limit of such courses, they cannot take classes at AVC and must start anew at another college. *A better referral system between the Counseling Office and the Learning Center needs to be in place to “catch” these students earlier rather than later to put them immediately on the path of skill building in math, reading, writing, and ESL integrated skills.*

A section (D-10) of the report entitled *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in the California Community Colleges* applies to learning centers. AVC’s Learning Center has complied with the first tenet of changing the designation “lab” to “center.” All centers within the Learning Center have complied, but *the Learning Center brochure must be modified to reflect this change.* Nearly all of the services listed in the document are currently being provided (see Appendix). Study skill building is already a central component to all LAC courses, but when LAC 065 (Developing Study Skills) is approved by AP&P next year, the Learning Center will be in full compliance. Cameras have been purchased for video-based Supplemental Instruction (VSI), another component of the Initiative, to be introduced to tutors in training sessions as soon as Spring 2008. VSI is a program that allows students to learn course material and develop their learning skills at a slower pace. Instructors record their lectures on video tape, and students are shown the video by a trained tutor who uses the taped lectures to regulate the flow of information to students, giving them time to think about course content. Another component of the Basic Skills Initiative is *full institutional support which will be complete with the hiring of an informed IR/ES dean in the areas of tutoring and learning assistance.*

Plan of action:

- *Meet with counselors to develop a better basic skills limit referral system.*
- *Modify the Learning Center brochure to reflect changes from “lab” to “center.”*
- *Send LAC 065 to AP&P.*

- *Train tutors to use VSI.*
- *Continue to ask for basic skills funding for tutors and adjunct learning specialists.*

Other State and Federal Guidelines

Copyright laws must be followed for copying of handouts and other instructional materials. Writing Center handouts, for instance, are being reviewed for fair use privileges, and new ones have been and will be designed for workshops and tutoring sessions. The Writing Center Learning Specialist works closely with AVC librarians to ensure compliance.

State nursing grants impose certain conditions. The Learning Center, for instance, provides tutorials for nursing students and assessment of such is carried out systematically. LAC vocational courses for nurses are in place and are evaluated by students each semester.

Five VTEA grants were awarded to the Math Center which answers to the requirements of the Carl Perkins Act of 1998 providing skills through new vocational and technical courses, workshops, and learning resource materials.

CONCLUSION

In March of 2007, Learning Center faculty and staff created a “Ten-Year Vision” for its programs and services (see Appendix). A few of its components are currently in place:

- Learning Center in Palmdale – for the offering of tutoring and faculty services such as workshops and individual learning plans (although space is shared in the current building, services are being offered; when a new campus is built, the vision is for a stand alone building).
- Additional faculty for workshops and student appointments – adjuncts were hired for this purpose in the areas of reading, ESL, academic skills, and math; for full coverage, a writing center adjunct learning specialist needs to be hired.

Some activities are in progress to be offered next year:

- Full compliment of study skills courses (including for nursing) – one study skills course plus two for nursing and a writing anxiety course will be forwarded to AP&P in the spring.
- Online tutoring – the possibility of online writing tutoring to be explored/researched with the aid of a Senate grant.

Many other items on this list will require the efforts of a dean for Instructional Resources and Extended Services (IRES) who understands tutoring and learning assistance. He/she can work with faculty, for instance, to fulfill needs for faculty training and to seek funding for additional faculty both full and part time to teach new classes. Space utilization must be a priority of this dean in order for an increasing high number of students to receive new services as well as continued high quality existing services, including tutorial services that rely on technology to be offered as diverse learning experiences. Another priority of this dean should be technology improvements and modernization of Learning Center space, equipment, instructional resources, and furniture. An informed learning assistance dean can also inspire faculty to develop new courses and mentoring programs that can become State models. The development of a Learning Center in Palmdale with adequate staffing, equipment, space, and funding also needs the attention of such a dean.

The future success of students who utilize Learning Services requires a dean qualified to do all of the above as well as to be a visionary, like Learning Center faculty and staff, not satisfied with the status quo. Personnel will be happy to discover with this new dean what can be done differently, efficiently, and most importantly, collaboratively to help students learn “to motivate

themselves, to understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, to negotiate the academic and social system, to adapt effective and efficient methods of processing information, and to alter previously established attitudes about their own potential and their sense of self-worth” (rpt. in D.10, *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*; see Appendix). The AVC Learning Center program as a whole is a comprehensive one designed for student success in college, career, and life in general.

Summary of Action Plans/Recommendations

Plans of action have been included in every section of this document. While the continued success of the Learning Center program relies on addressing all of the items identified in each plan, the following list prioritizes important areas of concern:

1. Hiring a dean for Instructional Resources/Extended Services with an understanding of tutoring and learning assistance; involving Learning Center full-time faculty in the hiring process.
2. Hiring faculty (full-time ESL Learning Specialist, full-time Reading Learning Specialist, adjunct learning specialists for all areas, especially writing); involving Learning Center full-time faculty in the hiring process.
3. Addition of space for programs and services to not only continue to offer the same level of services, but to expand; a stand-alone Palmdale Learning Center to offer a full array of services.
4. Funding available at current levels and beyond as programs and services increase in size and scope; a systematic budget process in place.
5. Faster, reliable technology for meeting the needs of today’s students; equipment that meets program needs; safety issues addressed immediately.
6. Publicity concerning Learning Center programs and services; stronger methods for AVC faculty referrals.
7. Hiring support staff to meet Learning Center program and service needs; reclassification of tutorial specialists.
8. AP&P approval of new LAC courses to offer more tutor training options and to prepare students for academic coursework; distance education tutoring and LAC course offerings.
9. Professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and tutors to meet the needs of AVC students in terms of program and service delivery methods, basic skills, study improvement, technology, etc.
10. Continuing to monitor compliance with federal and state regulations; acquiring a new database for SLOs assessment and usage reporting.

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APPENDIX