Overlap of Similar Services on Campus

CATS Academics and the SALT Center offer resources but they are only available to selected sub-populations of students (athletes and students with learning challenges). The Math department offers tutoring but the hours that these services are available vary across days, courses, and hours within each day. The Math and Science Tutoring Resource (MASTR) offers group tutoring in common math and science courses as well as in Spanish and two INDV courses but hours of operation are evenings only (5:30 – 9:30pm Sunday through Thursday). The University Learning Center (ULC) also offers students access to a Private Tutor Index where they can find the names and contact information of tutors who charge various rates for hourly sessions. There are also tutoring and academic support services available within the Writing Center @ Bear Down Gym and within selected academic departments and colleges.

Anticipated Impact:

We know that undergraduate students at UA are using the range of tutoring and academic support services across campus but unfortunately we do not have comprehensive data from all the units delivering these services. However, we do have the following data on the number of students visiting the departments below for academic support and tutoring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Visits/Appointments/Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Writing Center</td>
<td>1300 visits and over 4000 appointments in FY 08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASTR</td>
<td>2912 visits in FY 08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALT Center</td>
<td>5438 individual tutoring sessions for fall 2008 only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The expanded range of academic courses supported as well as the increased hours of operation could easily serve several thousand students over the course of a semester.

Value of College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) certification for Undergraduate Tutors and Peer Mentors

It is important to highlight the significance of having both tutor training and mentor training certified by a professional association like the College Reading and Learning Association. This process, while intensive, requires units to think critically about the expected outcomes of the programs and services for the students. The certification process also creates levels of expertise within your student employees (that relate to higher hourly wages) and provides excellent professional development opportunities. Both the SALT Center and MASTR have certified tutor training programs and we have found it to be an asset to students in terms of standardizing the quality of tutoring they receive. The peer mentoring certification would be a new process being undertaken by the professional staff of the SLC but we feel confident it will enhance the quality of services delivered and received by students.
CRLA is a group of student-oriented professionals active in the fields of reading, learning assistance, developmental education, tutoring, and mentoring at the college/adult level.

CRLA Tutor Program Certification offers numerous benefits for individual tutors, tutorial coordinators, and programs. The following is a partial list of the opportunities/benefits that are possible with CRLA Tutor Program Certification:

1. Develop a super tutoring program from scratch by utilizing certification guidelines, The CRLA Tutor Training Handbook, and the experience of other professionals attending CRLA Conferences.
2. Utilize allotted time for development of an individual certification plan to carefully rethink your whole existing tutorial program, an opportunity for a fresh perspective.
3. Using CRLA guidelines, organize separate training sessions into a coherent curriculum and possibly a credit course.
4. Create a spirit of teamwork in your department by involving colleagues in tutor training curriculum design, actual tutor training, and tutor evaluation.
5. Generate interest in the community about your program by giving a press release to local and campus newspapers about your CRLA Certified Program. Include CRLA CERTIFIED TUTORS on all of your program advertisements.
6. Secure greater student and faculty confidence and respect for your tutorial staff and program.
7. Attract attention and interest among other tutorial services on campus. May stimulate interaction for the betterment of both programs such as working together on training.
8. Attract highly motivated tutors with CRLA Certification credentials and extensive training.
9. Tie wage rates to CRLA Certification levels in order to provide incentive for additional training and experience. This also helps with retention of tutors.
10. Involve upper level tutors in developing and/or conducting segments of lower level tutor training. This creates excitement and motivation for ALL tutors and staff.
11. Honor certified tutors by hosting a ceremony/party in their honor. Invite all tutors, selected faculty and staff.
12. Emphasize the transferability of CRLA Tutor Certification to other certifying colleges and universities. In other words, a Level I Certificate earned at one institution would be recognized at another.
13. Encourage tutors to add CRLA Tutor Certification to their resumes and to talk about their training and experience in job interviews.
14. Add to your own resume with items such as authored certification proposal, developed and conducted tutor training and maintained certification records.
IMPC: International Mentor Program Certification

History

Many academic support programs, retention efforts, and student development programs now use peer mentoring. However, much like peer tutoring, these programs have often been implemented without clear standards for training and sometimes without much training. That situation is addressed by the Peer Mentor Program Certification sponsored by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).

Purpose

In the concerted efforts of our various organizations to professionalize developmental education and the academic support that comes under its umbrella, the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) published professional standards for tutoring, adjunct instruction, developmental course work programs, and the teaching/learning process (NADE GUIDES, 1995). Preceding the "Guides," CRLA had implemented certification for professional tutors. Certification plans are still in progress for academic support centers and individuals working in developmental education.

Endorsements

All these efforts have been endorsed by the American Council of Developmental Education Associations, the inter-organizational entity that permits us to integrate our professional initiatives and address issues affecting our profession with a unified voice. The new Peer Mentor Program Certification is the result of a similar concerted effort.

Certification Levels

The program of Peer Mentor Program Certification is based on more than two years of work during which many professionals gathered and contributed information. Its format is patterned after the Peer Tutor Program Certification and provides two training options for certification at Level I. One of those options includes the ten hours of training a student may have completed for tutoring plus an additional five hours of training related to mentoring. Each level of certification for peer mentors requires at least 15 hours of training presented in a variety of formats from a menu of topics. Mentoring experience, selection criteria, and evaluation are also integral components of the criteria. However, the criteria still allow for the unique needs of each program, making the program flexible while professionally structured and standardized.

Certification communicates validity to our critics, prestige among our colleagues, and credibility to our administrators and institutions. The certification criteria can be used to develop a new program of peer mentor training, to revise one, or expand one already in place. As with the tutor certification, the program will be a "living" one: criteria will be reviewed annually in light of professional input and changes in the profession.
Outcome Evaluation:

The goal here will be to closely track student usage of the various types of free and fee based services being coordinated and delivered from the SLC. We will look at this usage data across the entire semester and academic year to determine if staffing and availability are meeting students’ needs. In addition, we will create a student survey using Student Voice and send it to a random sample of all students using the SLC to determine their perceptions of value of services on their academic performance.

Summary and Conclusion:

The Student Learning Center is being proposed to the VP for Student Affairs as a new academic support and service department charged with supporting students with a network of learning and academic resources, including opportunities for individual and group tutoring, exam review sessions, peer mentoring, learning strategies instruction and web based resources. In the first year, the SLC will focus on delivering free drop-in and group tutoring, weekly course review sessions, peer mentoring, and web resources but there is also some planned availability for fee based individual appointments. If after meeting with a professional staff member the student determines that their particular needs surpass the available free resources, the student may elect to use fee based individual appointments with tutors, academic coaches, mentors, or strategic learning specialists.

Professional staff will design, implement and coordinate the program to provide academic support and resources to undergraduates primarily in their first two years. However, upper division students may also use the SLC and inquire about the availability of resources in their specific degree plans. The primary goal of the SLC will be to create a drop in center where students can receive assistance from peer tutors specializing in math, science and writing skills. In addition, tutors will be available at select times for support in many of the general education and freshman classes. Peer mentors will also be available for drop in and group sessions that focus on time management, learning strategies, and educational planning or goal setting. While all students may use the drop in center, most of the services will be aimed at freshman and transfer students.

In conclusion the Student Learning Center (SLC) will provide undergraduate students with a range of learning resources assembled within one centralized location to be determined in the next few months. There has been some discussion about using Bear Down Gym, space in the Student Union, or the ILC. If I can answer any additional questions for the committee please do not hesitate to contact me and thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jeff M. Orgera, PhD
Director, SALT Center