This document addresses tutoring at Henry Ford Community College by examining current practices at the institution and offering innovative means to improve student learning support. It begins by offering an overview of tutoring models and other support services and examining the practices other institutions and the organizational strategies suggested by recent scholarship. Outlining the various campus offices and divisional practices that impact tutoring, it moves on to note the suggestions of HFCC faculty, staff, and administrators and recommend innovations based upon both those comments and the ongoing research into student learning support models.
Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........................................................................................................... 3
INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 3
TUTORING AND OTHER ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES: BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS ......... 4
  PEER TUTORING ..................................................................................................................... 4
    One-On-One Tutoring Models ................................................................................................. 6
  Group Tutoring Models ........................................................................................................... 7
  Other Peer Services .................................................................................................................. 8
  PROFESSIONAL TUTORING ................................................................................................. 9
LITERATURE REVIEW: BEST PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES .............................. 9
  FUNDING ................................................................................................................................. 9
    Government programs ........................................................................................................... 9
    Private benefactors ............................................................................................................... 10
    Tutoring Fees Charged To Students .................................................................................... 10
    Institutional Support ............................................................................................................ 10
  TUTOR SELECTION .............................................................................................................. 10
  TUTOR TRAINING .................................................................................................................. 11
  TUTOR COMPENSATION ....................................................................................................... 11
LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTERS (LACs) ............................................................................. 11
RELATED STUDENT SERVICES .............................................................................................. 13
  Writing Centers .................................................................................................................... 13
  Programs for Freshmen ......................................................................................................... 13
  Comparison of Services and Affiliations .............................................................................. 14
CURRENT SERVICES AT HFCC .............................................................................................. 14
  ASSISTED LEARNING SERVICES (ALS)................................................................................ 14
    Management and Staffing ..................................................................................................... 15
    Peer vs. Professional Tutors at ALS ..................................................................................... 15
    Tutor Training ...................................................................................................................... 15
  THE LEARNING LAB ............................................................................................................ 15
    Resources Offered ............................................................................................................... 16
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TUTORING AT HFCC ................................................................. 22

CENTRALIZATION .......................................................................................................... 23

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT/EXPANSION ................................................................. 23

MANDATORY, STRUCTURED TUTOR TRAINING ...................................................... 23

INCREASED FUNDING .................................................................................................. 23

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION OF SERVICES .......................................................... 24

A VARIETY OF SERVICES, EACH SUITED TO SPECIFIC NEEDS ............................... 26

Individualized and Group Tutoring ............................................................................. 26

Supplemental Instruction ............................................................................................. 26

Services for Minority Students and Underrepresented Populations ......................... 26

Freshman programs .................................................................................................... 26

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION ............................................................ 26

THE ROLE OF FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENT/PROFESSIONAL TUTORS 26

TUTOR CERTIFICATION ................................................................................................ 28

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION AT HFCC .................................................................... 28

CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................. 28

RESOURCES.................................................................................................................... 28
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peer tutoring typically serves as a central element of efforts to facilitate student learning. At Henry Ford Community College, three separate offices offer a variety of tutoring services: the Learning Lab, Assisted Learning Services, and Partners Plus. While all offer educational support for HFCC students, notable problems limit their impact on the broader campus community. Their services often overlap, creating redundancy and perhaps confusing students; funding and facility limitations (particularly the unavailability of space for individual and group tutoring) prevent enough services to meet student demands from being offered; particular kinds of tutoring are not currently offered; tutor training is minimal or nonexistent; and political conflicts sometimes arise between offices striving to provide similar services.

Tutoring is not the only form of student learning support offered to students at most colleges. K.J. Topping notes that the “dual requirement to improve teaching quality while doing ‘more with less’ has recently increased interest in peer tutoring in higher and further education. However, it would be unwise to seize upon peer tutoring as a universal, undifferentiated and instant panacea” (321). A wide range of student support services are offered by colleges and universities across the United States in order to provide their students—particularly those who are financially or academically disadvantaged or who have physical, mental, or emotional impairments—with the resources needed to succeed. Writing centers, learning assistance centers, offices for students with special needs, faculty mentoring, and web-based instruction are among the many out-of-class academic services used by various institutions to assist students, increase retention, and improve student satisfaction. Many of these services are also offered at HFCC, and a consideration of how tutoring in particular fits within this larger web or resources is essential if efforts are to be made to improve either.

Scholarly research and the observations of staff and administrators at HFCC provide several potential innovations that could improve the college’s current offerings and reduce redundancy. Most notably, six suggestions are offered as innovative opportunities to improve these services: 1) centralizing student learning resources, 2) increasing facilities space, 3) providing tutor training and compensation, 4) increasing funding, 5) publicizing learning support programs, and 6) offering an academic support model incorporating a variety of services including tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing assistance, and freshmen success programs.

INTRODUCTION

This document addresses tutoring at Henry Ford Community College by examining current practices at the institution and offering innovative means to improve student learning support. It is informed by scholarly research regarding tutoring models and other forms of student learning assistance, feedback from administrators and staff at HFCC, and an examination of the practices of local higher learning institutions and a few exemplary programs across the nation.

The first section of this document addresses the various forms of tutoring models, defining terms, comparing advantages and disadvantages, and outlining key differences.

The following section includes a summary of important tutoring considerations—such as selection, training, assessment, and compensation—as well as funding sources and broader student support.
services that complement peer tutoring or serve as institutional offices within which such tutoring is offered.

An overview of the current tutoring and student learning support offerings at HFCC is provided in the third section, which describes the three campus organizations primarily responsible for students’ out-of-the-classroom academic assistance and provides an indication of the methods currently utilized by various divisions to provide tutoring support or other learning resources.

The final component of this document addresses the central issues raised by the associate deans and key figures involved in various academic service offices at HFCC, offering a number of recommendations for improvements that can be made to the learning support resources on campus. Drawing upon research, models from other academic institutions, and the needs expressed by members of the campus community, this section offers several specific suggestions for possible innovations to improve tutoring and student learning at Henry Ford Community College.

TUTORING AND OTHER ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES: BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

The colloquial usage of the term “tutoring” is quite basic, typically referring to individualized or small-group instruction students receive in a particular subject matter, often by a peer or a student of a more advanced level of study. In addition to broad categories of tutoring—peer tutoring, professional tutoring, and web-based tutoring—related forms of additional academic assistance may be provided via faculty instruction, mentoring, library resources, writing centers, and offices for students with disabilities or special needs.

PEER TUTORING

As K.J. Topping has noted, peer tutoring is a concept that has grown and evolved over the years, creating difficulties in explaining exactly what is meant by the term. Topping remarks that, “As peer tutoring has developed, defining it has become more difficult, and a current definition seems so broad as to be rather bland: ‘people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by teaching’” (322). Bland though it may be, this definition highlights a number of the key elements of tutoring, as well as several of the ways in which variants may differ.

Elements Common to Peer Tutoring Models

- Peer tutoring is effective because the tutors, as peers, are seen by tutees as approachable, understanding, and non-judgmental
- Peer tutors are not educators or professionals
- Peer tutors themselves benefit—as the old saying goes, “to teach is to learn twice”

As peer tutoring in particular is widely used and may be structured in any of a wide variety of formats, it is worth further exploration of prominent models. Various styles of one-on-one and group tutoring

---

* K.J. Topping points to a study by Moust and Schmidt that “found that students felt peer tutors were better than staff tutors at understanding their problems, were more interested in their lives and personalities, and were less authoritarian, yet more focused on assessment” (325). While students feel that they relate better to peer tutors, however, such student perceptions may not accurately reflect the actual quality of tutoring or instruction, as numerous studies point to higher test scores and grade point averages for faculty-instructed versus peer-tutored student groups.
models may be found on college campuses nationwide, as well as a few other forms of peer learning assistance services.
VARIABLES IN DIFFERENT PEER TUTORING MODELS

- The number of tutees instructed at once (one or a small group)
- The skill level of the tutors (it may be greater than, equal to, or, in some cases, less than that of their tutees)
- Tutor and tutee roles (they may be fixed or students may alternate roles)
- Tutor experience (the tutor may have already completed a course for which he or she is tutoring others, or he or she may assist fellow students in a class taken for the first time)

One-On-One Tutoring Models

Several similar tutoring models involve one-on-one tutor/tutee groupings. These pairs, or dyads, may be comprised of students of the same academic level (same-year) or students at different points in their academic careers (cross-year). In same-year models, the tutor and tutee may be consistent roles or the students may take turns in each of the roles.

Same-year dyadic fixed-role tutoring

This model involves “tutoring between pairs (dyads) in the same year of study, i.e. at the same point in the course, where one member retains the role of tutor throughout” (Topping 332). This model can be effective within an individual course but is not feasible for implementation on an institutional level, since tutors and tutees must be in the same class, creating logistical difficulties in terms of finding and pairing tutors/tutees. Additionally, K.J. Topping suggests in a review of studies on the effectiveness of different tutoring models that “The literature demonstrates [for this model...] the potential problem of ‘the blind leading the blind’” (333).

Same-year dyadic reciprocal peer tutoring

Another format based on the pairing of one tutor and one tutee of the same level, students in this model alternate “roles within each session, creating tests for each other before the session discussing the outcome, and coaching their partner as necessary” (Topping 333). This model encourages gains in understanding for both students by requiring each to prepare for the interaction with the other. As Topping notes, it is “not merely pairing but structured exchange which [is] effective” (334). This model shares the logistical failing of the previous format, however, and is not a good candidate for an institution-wide program.

Dyadic cross-year fixed-role peer tutoring

This variant of tutoring combines the benefits of one-on-one tutoring with flexibility in scheduling, as students need not be in the same class at the same time. This model combines a student tutee with a tutor who has previously succeeded in the target course; studies on its effectiveness demonstrate “a positive relationship between degree of participation in tutoring and examination results” (Topping 335). The principle drawback of this model is that such one-on-one tutoring formats are less cost-effective than group models.
Group Tutoring Models

As in the one-on-one (dyadic) tutoring models, peer tutors in group tutoring variants may be more experienced than tutees or at the same level as them. Some systems emphasize study skills and the modeling of successful student behaviors while others are focused on specific course content.

Cross-year small-group tutoring

K.J. Topping describes this model as one in which “upper year undergraduates (or post-graduates) act as tutors to lower year undergraduates, each tutor dealing with a small group of tutees simultaneously” (327). The benefit of this model is that one tutor can assist several students at once, increasing cost effectiveness. Research on the effectiveness of this format suggests that increasing group size may be inversely correlated with efficacy, however, as “smaller peer tutored groups [yield] better outcomes than [...] larger ones” (328).

This system is currently in use at HFCC for tutoring provided by Assisted Learning Services, which migrated to this model when one-on-one tutoring services were discontinued due to lack of adequate funding.

Supplemental Instruction

A widespread and highly-structured tutoring system based upon the modeling of effective student behaviors including note-taking, test preparation, and studying practices, Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a variant of cross-year small-group tutoring developed in 1973 by Dr. Deanna Martin of the University of Missouri at Kansas City (UMKC). Although tutors work with students for specific courses, “Leaders are trained to ‘model, advise, and facilitate’ rather than directly address curriculum content” (Topping 330). Tutors are required to have previously successfully completed the course in which they are tutoring, and they are typically required to attend the class sessions a second time alongside the tutees.

The term “Supplemental Instruction” is a service mark of UMKC, which operates the program through its Center for Academic Development office. Institutions implementing this system must submit written requests to be granted licenses to use the term, and educators from participating schools have to pay for official training through SI workshops. Despite these requirements, the official SI website notes that “faculty and staff from over 1500 institutions from 29 countries have been trained to implement their own programs.” Eastern Michigan University, Madonna University, Oakland Community College, Wayne State University, Lansing Community College, Western Michigan University, U-M Flint, and Kalamazoo College are local schools providing Supplemental Instruction programs for their students.

Although tutors (referred to as “SI Leaders”) are paid, the service is free for students. The official SI website\(^1\) notes that “All students are encouraged to attend SI sessions, as it is a voluntary program. Students with varying levels of academic preparedness and diverse ethnicities participate. There is no remedial stigma attached to SI since the program targets

\(^1\)The International Center for Supplemental Instruction at the University of Missouri-Kansas City

<http://www.umkc.edu/cad/SI/index.html>
high-risk courses rather than high-risk students.” SI programs are often offered in conjunction with other forms of student support, including writing labs and one-on-one tutoring for non-SI courses, and the popularization of tutoring through SI may actually increase student use of these other resources by lowering the social stigma often associated with such services.

**Personalized System of Instruction (the “Keller system”)**

Another “name-brand” model, the Personalized System of Instruction is less common and seems to have fallen out of vogue in the past several decades. This tutorial procedure, described in 1968 by Fred Keller, “is based upon programmed learning material, though which each student proceeds at their [sic] own pace with the goal of mastering each step. The peer tutor’s involvement is largely as a checker, tester, and recorder to ensure tutee mastery” (Topping 329).

Although a convincing majority of studies on the effectiveness of this system have indicated favorable results with PSI, it relies heavily on programmed learning materials that must be prepared in advance, and at least one critic has “noted that PSI use reached a plateau and speculated that computer aided learning may be currently more fashionable because it is less threatening to teachers” (Topping 330).

**Other Peer Services**

**Peer-assisted writing**

Student writing tutors are frequently employed in college writing centers, where they typically assist students on a variety of writing assignments for a range of courses (including not only English classes but also academic and trade courses with specific writing requirements). Because such tutors may work with one student or in small groups, assisting tutees at the same or at a lower level of coursework, this model cannot simply be classified under one of the variants mentioned earlier.

Students receiving such writing assistance—particularly those who do so on a regular basis—tend to report higher assignment scores and increased personal satisfaction as the result of their tutoring. A meta-analysis of nine studies on peer assisted writing by K.J. Topping indicates that, in addition to improvement on individual assignments, “Other improvements include raised deadline attainment rates, reduced failure rates, and self report of improved writing in the tutors” (337). Effective tutor training is cited as crucial for the development of students working in writing centers, however, as a study by P. Rizzolo cautions “that tutoring in writing [has] to be more than merely proof-reading” (Topping 336) for tutees to reap long-term benefits. A student whose paper is merely corrected by another may receive higher marks on than individual assignment but does not come away from the experience with a better understanding of how to craft a stronger paper; training that emphasizes the facilitation of student self-assessment enables peer writing tutors to provide aid focused on broad writing skills rather than specific error correction.

For more on training, please refer to page 10; for more on writing assistance, please refer to the section on Writing Centers (page 12).
Peer assisted distance learning

Web-based tutoring is beginning to emerge as schools look to provide students with learning resources for online classes and for students who are unable, because of scheduling constraints or other issues, to make it to tutoring services in person. While such models are improving and show promise, they “are no replacement for genuine human interaction—or for teachers and tutors. Though there are examples today of computer-based tutoring programs with artificial intelligence and offshore tutoring programs, these are not credible threats to the teaching profession” (Greenway and Vanourek 41). The depersonalized nature of such tutoring detracts from what research suggests is the most critical aspect of such assistance—the sense that the student is understood and approached on an individual level.

PROFESSIONAL TUTORING

Professional tutors are neither students nor faculty members, but paid tutors with an educational background in the tutored course and typically also having work experience in a field related to the subject of study. Professional tutors are useful in situations where a suitable peer tutor cannot be located. Peer tutors are preferable, however, for several reasons: 1) they are generally less costly than professional tutors, 2) they are typically better able to relate to the concerns of fellow students, and 3) they benefit themselves from serving as tutors, so more students benefit from the same one tutorial.

LITERATURE REVIEW: BEST PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

FUNDING

While individual learning support services on some college campuses may be funded wholly by a single source, “Funding [is] usually reported as stemming from a variety of sources—most reported a combination of sources, e.g. the college, grant funding, federal and state funds for EOP and other 'special' category students” (Zaritsky 8). Government programs, student fees, private donations from individuals or corporate benefactors, and direct institutional funding are the predominant means by which tutoring programs and other campus learning support services are funded.

Government programs

Three government programs are frequently tapped by schools looking for funding for academic support resources. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 “is a compensatory education program supported by funds from the Department of education to enable high-poverty schools to provide opportunities for educationally disadvantaged children” (Curry et al. 1) and currently provides much of the funding for tutoring services offered by the HFCC Office of Assisted Learning Services. TRIO (Student Support Services) funds are not used at Henry Ford, although several local institutions do offer learning services through this federal funding program. Initiated in 1968, Student Support Services (SSS) one of eight TRIO programs. Providing special services for disadvantaged students, it “helps simplify the educational process for either low-income, first-generation, or disabled college students. The goal is to ensure qualified students get the support they need to complete their educational goals” (Walsh 4). Perkins funding may be used to provide academic services for career and technical education students. Officially known as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education
Act of 2006, this program provides another portion of funds used by Assisted Learning Services (although these funds are limited to tutoring for particular courses defined within the Act).

**Private benefactors**

Corporate and individual donors may provide funding to specific organizations either through annual contributions or the establishment of an endowment.

**Tutoring Fees Charged To Students**

Some institutions assess small fees for tutoring services, billing students per hour. As studies of student support services repeatedly point out, however, students most in need of academic assistance are also the least likely to actively seek out such aid; student charges for tutoring services only serve as a further deterrent. Such a system is not currently in place at Henry Ford, although the Center for Personalized Instruction at nearby Madonna University does charge a $10-$12 dollar/hour fee to students not enrolled in the school’s TRIO program (services for those in the program are provided through the government grant).

**Institutional Support**

Recognizing the role tutoring plays not only in improving students’ academic achievement but also on student satisfaction and retention, many institutions allocate significant funding for campus learning support services from their own budgets. These funds are typically applied toward staff salaries and facilities management and upgrades, as compensation for tutors frequently comes from government programs (see above).

**TUTOR SELECTION**

Research suggests that, although administrators often focus solely or predominantly on tutor applicants’ academic indicators including GPA, course grades in a specific subject, or faculty recommendations, other personal qualities should also be assessed during the tutor selection process. The Council of Adult Education’s booklet “Helping Adults Learn” suggests that good adult tutors should 1) know their subject, 2) care about the subject, 3) understand adults as learners, and 4) be willing to learn. While tutors should be competent in the subject matter—they should have reached “that level of competence that allows [them] to understand [their] own strengths and weaknesses in the subject and to know where to go to get any information [they] may lack” (8)—good tutoring is seen less dependent upon subject mastery than the ability to connect with tutees on a personal level, providing them with the self-confidence and tools to arrive at solutions to their academic problems on their own.

As Newman asserts, an effective tutor “encourages his or her students to develop independence and to come to grips with the subject according to their own needs and their own particular way of seeing the world.... [The tutor’s] aim should be to encourage autonomy in [his or her] students so they are finally freed not only from the tutor but from the constraints of the subject and are able to use the knowledge, ideas, and skills that they have learned” (9). Thus, the tutor application process should emphasize interpersonal communications skills and volunteer service in addition to academic ability; some schools evaluate not only written applications materials and recommendations but also interviews and tutor role-playing demonstrations.
TUTOR TRAINING

In her 2008 dissertation on tutor training, Karen Santos Rogers notes the importance of tutor training, specifically in terms of pedagogical approaches tutors may take with those they assist (rather than on the specific content matter to be covered). She also argues that it is folly to assume that a student’s success in a course is sufficient for him or her to serve as an effective tutor. While the focus of her study was specifically focused on writing, the message may apply to all subjects: “Administrators may assume that if tutors have the necessary skills to write well, they will be successful at coaching others’ writing without writing pedagogy knowledge. However, this assumption runs counter to the current literature on writing pedagogy” (97).

Further, it is essential to differentiate “training” from “orientation,” as it refers not simply to awareness of policies and procedures but more importantly to pedagogical approaches and practice through role-playing and other exercises that model tutor behavior. Joyce Zaritsky argues that, while the consensus is that tutor training is important, most schools fail to provide sufficient tutor preparation: “It is generally accepted that, if peer tutors are to be effective, they must be trained [...] although most institutions do provide some training to their peer tutors, the amount of training is relatively little and probably inadequate” (16). In addition to initial and/or ongoing training efforts, assigning several peer tutors to a faculty advisor for regular meetings serves both to address tutor concerns and to ensure adequate accountability on the part of the tutors.

TUTOR COMPENSATION

Peer tutoring is not feasible without some form of compensation as an incentive for qualified students to apply: “Overwhelmingly, the survey results reveal that institutions recognize that it is necessary to pay their peer tutors” (Zaritsky 10). In addition to payment, other forms of compensation include course credit, tuition remission, a letter placed in the student’s permanent file, and fulfillment of requirements for other school programs, such as service obligations or prerequisites for membership in honor societies.

LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTERS (LACs)

A college Learning Assistance Center (LAC) is a centralized campus office that provides a variety of academic support services, working closely with academic departments and other campus services. While the functions of such organizations naturally differ from school to school, the Burns Learning Assistance Process Model (see following page) lists fourteen major functions typical of such organizations:

FUNCTIONS OF A LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER

1) Academic Evaluation/Diagnostic Testing
2) Programs to Improve Study Skills and Learning Strategies
3) Peer Tutoring and/or Professional Tutoring Services
4) Supplemental Instruction
5) Computer Assisted Instruction and Other Educational Technology
6) Developmental courses—for credit or non credit
7) Faculty Services and Outreach
8) Publicity and Public Relations
9) Informing College Administrators About Your Program
10) Staff Training
11) Referral Services
12) Counseling
13) Advising
14) Evaluations

Marie-Elaine Burns’s Learning Assistance Program Model, depicted in Martha Maxwell’s “What Are the Functions of a College Learning Assistance Center?”

As Maxwell notes, “Large institutions usually have separate departments for each of these functions, while smaller colleges may include most or all of them under a learning center umbrella” (4). At HFCC, many of these roles have been assumed by existing campus offices, so it may be necessary to determine whether students are best served by keeping those functions with those offices or by moving them under the purview of a broader office such as a Learning Assistance Center.
Maxwell warns that, “In starting a learning center, it is vital that you determine what functions are already being offered on your campus and who offers them” in order to coordinate efforts and minimize political infighting. Some offices may be overburdened and welcome the opportunity to transfer responsibility for some functions to the LAC, while “other directors would consider it an invasion of their turf and fight you—no matter what personnel resources or funding you have” (3). With long established campus services such as the Assisted Learning Services office, the Learning Lab, and Partners Plus often serving the same pool of students, faculty and staff affiliated with those units may perceive themselves to be competing for funding and support. “If different units behave like warring fiefdoms and refuse to cooperate,” Maxwell cautions, “students suffer” (4).

The best way to implement such a service would be to use it as a common “face” for student learning resources that students would come to identify as the place to go for assistance with coursework and study skills. One study found that the largest number of institutions supervise their tutoring programs through a centralized administrative program (Zaritsky 11) or learning assistance center, which typically houses additional student support services. Individual campus offices would be maintained, although it would be advantageous to relocate them to a common building where possible.

Students seeking assistance at the LAC would be directed to the appropriate office, thus creating a sense of cohesion while still maintaining existing campus organizations. By simply adding a layer of organization on top of existing offices rather than reorganizing them, HFCC could potentially avoid the conflict Maxwell writes about and also enable, with minimal additional resources, existing services to be better managed so as to reduce redundancy.

**RELATED STUDENT SERVICES**

**Writing Centers**

Many institutions, including Henry Ford, house writing centers that supplement “writing instruction that is going on in the classroom in semester- or quarter-long courses. The typical student who is served by the supplemental lab seeks help with classroom assignments or specific skill areas. Such students may work at the lab on a voluntary basis for several visits, or they may be referred to the lab or required to attend by the classroom instructor” (Almasy 13). Tutoring is but one component of these centers, which “have a vast array of possible techniques at their disposal, ranging from one-on-one tutorials to small-group workshops or large-group modules, from programmed self-instructional texts, audio-tapes, and videotapes to computer-assisted instruction” (Freedman 2). The availability of clean, quiet, well-lit workspaces and the presence of an academic atmosphere encourage students to take advantage of such centers, which can serve as a nexus of writing and learning resources.

**Programs for Freshmen**

A number of institutions attempt to bridge the gap between high school and college through freshmen success programs, and offices. The goal of such offerings is to assist students with the transition to college-level work, improve learning outcomes for new students, and improve retention rates. Schoolcraft College and Oakland Community College are two local institutions with such programs, and the web site for Eastern Michigan University’s “Get on the Right Track” program offers a model of what these kinds of programs might offer (see <http://tlc.emich.edu/righttrack/index.html> for details).
Comparison of Services and Affiliations

The following chart, compiled during the Winter Semester of 2009, lists common student learning support services offered by various local community colleges and four-year institutions. It also indicates which schools currently hold membership and/or tutoring certification in one of three state and national organizations. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this chart, this data was collected on publicly-available school web pages and may not encompass all service offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centralized office or “umbrella” organization</th>
<th>Henry Ford</th>
<th>SC4</th>
<th>Delta CC</th>
<th>Delta CC</th>
<th>Macomb</th>
<th>Macomb</th>
<th>Monroe</th>
<th>MCC</th>
<th>SC4</th>
<th>Delta CC</th>
<th>Western CC</th>
<th>Western CC</th>
<th>Monroe</th>
<th>Western CC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring services</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental instruction (or similar program)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular, structured workshops/seminars</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman success programs or courses</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office for students with disabilities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing office or other writing specific services</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math office or other math-specific services</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs for low-income students</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs for women and/or minority students</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Reading and Learning Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Tutoring Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACTA Association for Developmental Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CURRENT SERVICES AT HFCC

While Henry Ford does not currently operate a single learning assistance center, several organizations on campus provide various forms of tutoring and other academic support services. The Assisted Learning Services office, the Learning Lab, and Partners Plus handle the greater portion of such offerings, while various divisional services provide further student support.

ASSISTED LEARNING SERVICES (ALS)

Assisted Learning Services (ALS), located on the first floor of the Learning Resources Center (Hallisy Hal), provides academic assistance (including testing accommodations, textbooks on tape, adaptive equipment, and American Sign Language interpretive services) for eligible students. ALS also operates a peer tutoring program that makes use of limited Title I funding to offer peer tutoring services for a range of academic courses, as well as peer and professional tutoring, funded through Perkins grant money, for eligible students in state-approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
The peer tutoring provided by ALS varies from semester to semester, as it is impacted by several variables: student demand, available funding, room access, and qualified tutors. Current peer tutorial offerings (Winter 2009) include Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, French, and Spanish. Tutoring for other courses, including Psychology, has been offered in previous semesters when there was student demand. In Winter of 2008, 310 students were scheduled for tutoring services through Assisted Learning Services; 8 professional tutors provided 33 hours of tutoring a week, and 9 peer tutors offered 90 hours of tutoring services weekly.

Professional tutoring may also be provided, typically for coursework in Business, Art & Education, Criminal Justice, Hospitality, Technical, and Medical programs. Current professional tutoring (Winter 2009) is offered for Architecture Construction Technology, Drafting, Pharmacy Technology, Physical Therapy Assistance, Surgical Technology, and Nursing courses. In previous semesters, there have also been offerings for Skilled Trade and Apprentice, Energy Technology, Computer Information Systems, Electronics, Accounting Economics, Firefighter/Paramedic, and Respiratory Therapy classes. Tutors are not currently provided for these courses for various reasons: lack of student demand for assistance in those courses, the inability of divisions and ALS to locate qualified tutors, or the lack of sufficient funds to address all student tutoring requests.

Management and Staffing

While the Assisted Learning Services office was once staffed by six full-time positions and one part-time professional tutor coordinator, budget constraints have diminished ALS staff to two full-time positions and four part-time staff. Diane Eberts points out that the office once “had one full time Departmental Administrator, one full time Faculty Advisor, one full time Group Tutoring Coordinator, one full time Counselor, two full-time paraprofessionals (to provide disabled students ambulatory assistance and testing services), one full-time secretary, one part-time group tutoring coordinator (set up professional tutoring services), several peer & professional tutors and sign language interpreters.” The two paraprofessional positions providing ambulatory services (assisting disabled students travelling across campus) were eliminated not due to budgetary matters but rather as the result of concerns about legal risk to the college.

Peer vs. Professional Tutors at ALS

Peer tutors are used whenever possible. However, for most Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, professional tutors are hired because of the specialized nature of those programs and the difficulty of finding qualified peer tutors.

Tutor Training

There is not a formalized tutor training program for ALS tutors at this time.

THE LEARNING LAB

The most frequently utilized academic support resource for students on campus is the Learning Lab, located on the second floor of the Learning Resources Center (Hallisey Hall). According to data provided by Jeff Morford, the current Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction, close to 3,000 different
students made use of Lab resources in the Fall semester of 2008, making over 17,000 individual visits.‡ While the lab offers numerous different resources (see below), approximately half of student visits are reported to be for faculty instruction. Roughly half of those visits are to the Math Desk, with the Reading and Writing offices splitting the remaining visits.

**Resources Offered**

Numerous learning support services for reading, writing, mathematics, and world languages courses are offered through the Learning Lab. One-credit-hour laboratory courses, handouts, textbooks and reference materials, work spaces for individual and collaborative studying, computer access, web-based programs for mathematics, reading, writing, vocabulary, and language development, drop-in assistance through the Math Desk, Reading Office, and Writing Office, and the recently-established World Languages Center are among the resources available to assist both Mathematics and English & World Languages students with their coursework.

**Handouts**

Free instructional handouts are available online through the Learning Lab web site and on bookshelves lining the Lab walls for students to pick up on their own or at the recommendation of faculty or Learning Lab staff. Organized into Reading, Writing, and Study Skills sections and further subdivide by content, they offer both instructional content and practice exercises.

**Textbooks, reference materials and dictionaries**

Numerous supplementary texts, dictionaries, workbooks, and other reference materials are accessible to students on bookshelves or on desks in student work spaces.

**Computer access**

The Learning Lab is equipped with computer workstations and a printer that students can access via the same Print Management System in use at the library.

**Computer- and web-based programs for reading, writing, vocabulary, and language development**

In addition to internet access and word-processing capabilities, computer workstations are equipped with several software applications that offer support for students requiring instruction in or practice with English topics including reading, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and essay construction.

**ENG 083, ENG 084, and ENG 086 laboratory courses**

Three one- or two-credit hour laboratory courses provide individualized instruction for students experiencing difficulties with reading or writing. Students meet at the Reading or Writing Office to complete diagnostic testing and work with faculty members to create a tailored plan of instruction based upon the results of that testing.

‡ The official numbers are 2,891 students (unduplicated) and 17,347 total visits (including repeat visits).
Drop-in assistance through the Math Desk, Reading Office, and Writing Office

In addition to working with registered 083, 084, or 086 students, faculty staffing the Reading and Writing Offices assist students on a walk-in basis. While most students request assistance with assignments for English courses, they may also seek aid for writing and research projects for other courses. Faculty at the Math Desk also assist students individually and in small groups with assignments and studying for classes from Pre-Algebra to Calculus.

Management and Staffing

The Learning Lab is staffed by two full-time, one part-time, and two work-study positions: one full-time DFSE technician, one full-time DFSE secretary III, one part-time (20 hour) DFSE receptionist, and two work study student assistants. Additionally, the Lab is directed by the Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction, who is a full-time faculty member receiving six credit hours of redirected time in the fall and winter semesters. As Jeff Morford points out, however, the job title is misleading—it refers to additional learning in the colloquial sense, not to true “Supplemental Instruction” as the term is used by the University of Missouri at Kansas City (see page 6).

Tutor Training

There is not a formalized tutor training program for Learning Lab math or writing tutors at this time.

PARTNERS PLUS

Located in the Learning Technology Center, Partners Plus is a Michigan College University Partnership (MICUP) Program between Henry Ford Community College and the University of Michigan-Dearborn. It is intended to serve as a support program for HFCC students whose goal is to transfer to U-M Dearborn to complete their bachelor’s degrees. As such, Partners Plus offers tutoring services as one component of its broader academic support services, which also include academic advising, peer coaching, mentoring, financial assistance, professional leadership development, professional job shadowing, community service, workshops, and student retreats.

Created in 1994 with the goal of assisting minority students seeking to transfer to UM-Dearborn and an initial group of 40 students, Partners Plus has expanded to serve 300 students annually. Honored with recognition as a model program for the State of Michigan, the state funding assistance that was only intended to last for three years was extended to eleven years. Now that the seed funding is no longer being offered, however, the program is entirely funded through institutional support; the program’s initial budget of roughly $300,000 has been slashed to approximately $68,000.

Although tutoring services were offered beginning in 1996 as one form of assistance for students in the Partners Plus program, the need for such academic support across campus has become evident by the continually growing popularity of the Partners Plus tutoring program—even among students not formally a part of the Partners Plus program. This semester, approximately 330 active and 800 total students have or continue to make use of tutoring services offered through Partners Plus.
Management and Staffing

Partners Plus is staffed by one full-time Director position (on salary through the University of Michigan-Dearborn, not HFCC), one Assistant, and one Co-op student. While tutoring is but one component of Partners Plus, four tutors currently serve students through the office, one each in accounting and science and two for math.

Tutor Training

While there is not a formalized tutor training process in place for Partners Plus tutors, Michael Thomas has indicated that all tutors are instructed in basic communications techniques that emphasize respect and positive feedback.

COLLEGE DIVISIONS

Surprisingly, academic assistance and learning support services for students vary wildly from division to division. Because of the specialized technical nature of programs in some divisions—most notably Health Careers, Nursing, Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship, and Technology—peer tutoring is minimal or absent; staffed hand-on laboratories or one-credit hour supplemental classes may provide sufficient support for students enrolled in courses in those divisions. Other divisions may offer courses with identified needs for additional learning resources, but these needs may be unmet or else

To improve student support services on campus, minimize student confusion about learning resources, reduce redundancy, and increase institutional efficiency, better coordination is needed among divisions and between divisions and existing student support offices.

Business and Economics

Elaine Saneske, Associate Dean of Business and Economics, reports that there is a need for tutoring services for students in accounting and economics courses. Current student learning resources include computer labs, tutoring through Partners Plus, and web-based supplementary materials.

Computer labs

Computer labs, staffed by adjunct instructors who can assist students with questions about business courses, provide learning support for all students but are especially useful for those enrolled in various Business Computer Applications (BCA) and keyboarding courses.

Tutoring (through Partners Plus)

Tutoring for accounting courses is currently being offered through Partners Plus, thanks to the efforts of Mr. William Bregor.

Web-based programs

A web-based resource has recently been made available for accounting classwork via WileyPLUS (https://edugen.wiley.com/edugen/), and anecdotal evidence suggests that it is proving to be a
successful learning resource—particularly for the growing numbers of evening and weekend students who find that other services are not available outside of class during the times they are on campus. A similar resource for economics coursework may soon be available, as well.

**English and World Languages**

There is a consistent need for student learning assistance for all English and World Languages course offerings, from developmental (lower than 100-level) and research-based classes through literature and world languages classes. The Learning Lab is the central resource for students in such courses. A fledgling Writing Tutor program and the new World Languages Center, both located with the learning lab, are recent additions to the academic support resources for students in this division.

**Learning Lab**

Students in Reading, Writing, and World Languages courses can turn to the Learning Lab (see page 14) for a variety of resources including faculty instruction, instructional handouts and practice exercises, textbooks and reference materials, and computer-based writing and language development software.

**Honors Program/Learning Lab Writing Tutor Program**

For the past several semesters, Dr. Pete Kearly Kim has been developing a small writing tutor program to supplement the faculty instruction offered in the Learning Lab during hours of peak usage. Noting that the Writing Office regularly experiences high demand at certain times (typically around lunch time) and that instructors are frequently also engaged by their ENG 086 (one-credit hour laboratory course) students, Dr. Kim sought to recruit honors students to provide additional assistance to students seeking writing aid during those busy periods.

Lacking resources to provide financial compensation for such student writing tutors, Dr. Kim is able to offer students in the Honors Program service hours that count towards the 15-hour service requirement of the Honors Program. The drawback of this plan is that there is no incentive for student writing tutors to continue providing assistance once their fifteen hours of service have been met. Additionally, some students in the Honors Program may request to provide tutorial assistance only at the end of the semester when they realize that their service requirements have not yet been fulfilled. Both of these issues lead to problems with the continuity and reliability of the service.

**Recently established World Languages Center**

Completed in the fall of 2008, the World Languages Center (Located in the Learning Lab) consists of a Language Laboratory classroom and a Language Study Area. The classroom is equipped with 30 student computer workstations, an instructor station, a data projector, and audio-visual language learning software. The study area includes four flat-panel television screens with access to international satellite programs, eleven individual computer workstations, and a staff computer station and desk. Hybrid classes taking advantage of this facility will be offered beginning in the fall of 2009.
**Fine Arts and Fitness / Social Science/ Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship**

Tutoring services are not currently offered for any courses in the Fine Arts and Fitness, Social Science, or Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship divisions. Students in these divisions are frequently referred to tutorial services for math or English skills needed in their courses, however. A brief Supplemental Instruction program was offered for political science (see page 24), but it is no longer currently offered.

**Health Careers**

Tutoring services are offered through the Assisted Learning Services office for four of the Health Careers division’s subjects: Surgical Technology, Respiratory Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Pharmacy Technician. Given the nature of these content areas, professional rather than peer tutors provide tutorial support for Health Careers students.

Ron Bodurka, Associate Dean of Health Careers, notes the problem created by the lack of physical spaces in which tutoring might take place. Although, as he remarks, the Health Careers building was designed with tutoring space in mind, that location has since been converted into an adjunct office to meet demands in other areas created by limited facilities.

**Mathematics**

Student learning assistance for students in Mathematics courses is provided through the Learning Lab, the Assisted Learning Services office, and a recently developed peer tutoring program. There is great demand for student assistance for mathematics courses; approximately half of the students seeking faculty instruction at the Learning Lab report that they visited the facility for aid with math assignments.

**Learning Lab**

Students in Mathematics courses can turn to the Learning Lab (see page 14) for a variety of resources including handouts, work spaces for individual and collaborative studying, computer access, web-based math programs, and drop-in assistance at the faculty-staffed math desk.

**Assisted Learning Services**

In the Winter 2009 semester, seven peer tutors provide tutoring for specific mathematics classes through the Assisted Learning Services office. These tutors assist students with material covered in particular courses rather than on a drop-in basis; for example, assistance for MTH 283 (Linear Algebra) is offered by Joe Noles on Mondays from 2:00 pm – 6:30 pm. Tutoring sessions run at various times on Monday-Friday between 8:00 am and 8:30 pm.

**Learning Lab Peer Tutors**

A relatively recent innovation paralleling the Lab’s fledgling writing tutoring program (a collaboration between the Honors Program and Learning Lab—see page 18), peer tutoring for mathematics is now available at the learning lab between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. Unlike the tutoring offered through ALS, this model is intended to serve walk-in students with questions
about material in a variety of different courses; it has been made available to alleviate the heavy demand on the faculty-staffed Math Desk.

**Nursing**

Academic support for students in Nursing courses comes in three forms: one-credit hour “supplement” courses, tutoring through Assisted Learning Services, and Student Nursing Association (SNA) mentoring. Associate Dean Katherine Howe points out that peer tutoring is not a viable option for Nursing courses for two reasons: the highly specialized content makes finding qualified students especially difficult, and the scheduling demands of most Nursing students are such that there is no time for them to serve in a tutoring capacity. For these reasons, most academic support is provided through faculty instruction and professional tutoring. Given the demanding nature and high attrition rate of most Nursing classes, there is a definite need for academic services outside the classroom.

“Supplements”

Three one-credit hour classes (NSG 083—Supplement to Nursing and Self-Care II and III, NSG 085—Supplement to Nursing and Self-Care IV, and NSG 087—Supplement to Nursing and Self-Care V) are offered to provide additional assistance for students concurrently enrolled in specific Nursing classes by encouraging the development of the critical thinking skills necessary for student success. These classes are taught as extra-contractual courses by full-time faculty.

One drawback noted by Katherine Howe is the reputation the supplemental courses have garnered for providing the answers for the courses they supplement. Competitive honors students frequently register for these classes, reducing the availability of slots for the students who could most benefit from them. Howe notes that there is a “fine line between helping students meet their needs and helping them bypass a course.”

Despite this challenge, the Nursing division would like to expand the number of supplemental course offerings so that they need not be taken concurrently and to permit them to be offered once a semester rather than once per year. Howe also suggests that a course in study skills and “how to be successful in nursing” would be beneficial.

**Assisted Learning Services**

Professional tutoring is offered for NSG 120/126 and NSG 155 through the Assisted Learning Services office. This tutoring is typically offered by graduates of Henry Ford who have not only the requisite content knowledge but also personal experience with the Nursing program.

**SNA mentoring**

On a less formal level, mentoring and student support are provided to students through active participation in the Student Nursing Association, SNA.

**Science**

Students enrolled in science courses may receive academic support provided through ALS tutors, a small and informal supplemental instruction program, and an open chemistry lab. Biology, Chemistry, and
Physics courses create the most demand, while tutoring is also available on a more limited basis for Astronomy courses.

Assisted Learning Services

Peer tutors provide tutoring assistance for students in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Astronomy courses. With the exception of Astronomy, for which tutoring is only provided during one session a week, there is currently high demand for this service. In the Winter Semester of 2009, between three and eight tutoring sessions are offered per day for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics courses.

Supplemental Instruction

An informal and unofficial variant of Supplemental Instruction is currently offered for students in BIO 131. Charlie Jacobs, Associate Dean of Science, notes that, with proper funding, this program could be expanded to cover the demonstrated need for such a service in CHEM 131, CHEM 141, and BIO 233 (Anatomy and Physiology).

Chemistry Lab

The science department also offers an open chemistry lab during specific times for students who wish to ask questions about chemistry assignments or homework exercises. No experiments are conducted at the lab, as it is intended for instructor assistance with homework problems.

Technology

While no tutoring programs are currently in use for students enrolled in Technology courses, David Wiltshire, Associate Dean of the division, points out that this role is filled by the laboratory technicians who staff the division’s open labs. Both the CISCO and the CIS programs operate open labs, which are funded primarily through student lab fees. These labs are staffed by “lab techs,” part-time non-faculty staff members who nonetheless have specific expertise in different technology-related areas (one lab tech might be proficient in JAVA programming, another in networking, etc.). These lab techs are supported by co-op students, 2nd year students who are assigned general lab duties but who may also assist students with questions.

Given appropriate resources, Wiltshire noted that an open lab in Power Engineering would be especially helpful, particularly for the growing population of online, evening, and weekend students served by the college. Such a lab would be staffed and operated in the same model as the other Technology labs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TUTORING AT HFCC

While tutoring and other forms of learning assistance are available for students at HFCC, there are numerous shortcomings with the current system. Campus tutoring services are fragmented—the Learning Lab, Assisted Learning Services, Partners Plus, and some individual divisions all offering various forms of tutoring. This patchwork system, coupled with a lack of internal promotion, has led some administrators and faculty to lament a lack of student awareness of the available services. Additionally, poor funding of existing programs creates other challenges, including difficulty in finding and compensating qualified student tutors and the unavailability of tutoring for courses that there would
otherwise be demand for. Limited facilities space, poor tutor training, and incomplete service offerings are also areas that should be addressed by the college if tutoring and other related student academic support services are to truly be improved at Henry Ford.

CENTRALIZATION

The disparate tutoring and academic support services on campus should be unified under one banner. Under the Learning Assistance Center model (see page 10), existing offices need not be dissolved or even drastically reorganized; administrative functions would operate in the same manner as they currently do, but a common “face” to our learning assistance offerings would ease student confusion, facilitate their direction to the appropriate resources, and streamline those administrative functions. Students coming to such an “umbrella organization” would come to recognize one center for learning assistance; once there, they would be directed to the appropriate existing resource.

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT/EXPANSION

One of the most common themes voiced by both the college’s associate deans and the staff of HFCC’s current learning support services was that expanded space for student learning outside the classroom should be a top priority in any efforts to improve existing academic support offerings. Investigation of Learning Assistance Center models and programs at other institutions suggests the need for the following key facilities:

- A main office
- Branch offices for subdivisions (the equivalent of HFCC’s existing offices)
- Rooms for workshops/larger group activities
  - For larger functions, rooms in other campus locations should suffice, although it is suggested that one or two classrooms or classroom-sized spaces be available in the central learning assistance center itself, where they may be permanently outfitted with resources commonly used in workshops and seminars
- Numerous smaller rooms for one-on-one tutoring or groups of 3-5 students

MANDATORY, STRUCTURED TUTOR TRAINING

Tutoring research indicates the need for and value of tutor training (see page 10). Tutor training programs need not be developed in-house, however; several independent organizations offer tutor training and certification programs that schools might tap. The College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), for example, offers three levels of certification through its International Tutor Program Certification (ITPC).

Oakland Community College, Madonna University, Mott Community College, Wayne State University, Kirtland Community College, and Ferris State University are local examples of CRLA “certified tutor programs.” The Michigan Tutorial Association (MTA) and the National Association of Developmental Education (NADE) are two other educational organizations that many local colleges and universities are members of (see comparison chart on page 13).

INCREASED FUNDING

§ For additional information on this program, visit the CRLA’s tutor training web site at <http://www.crla.net/itpc/index.htm>.
Especially during periods of financial strain, tutoring and other student learning support services may be viewed as resources that are nice to have, but expendable. John Roderick points out that this kind of position is easy to adopt, noting that “There is, ironically, tremendous pressure on many [...] administrators to find alternatives to the tutoring process. After all, the argument goes, a one-to-one student-teacher ratio hardly reflects sound fiscal management from the college’s point of view” (32). This perspective makes it simple to cut or underfund such services but overlooks the ways in which colleges reap a return on their investment through other channels, including increased retention rates and the facilitation of enrollment development efforts.

An institutional commitment to funding academic support services is essential if such offerings are to be successful. One report on improving support services for low-income students in community college notes that, “since student services are often one of the first areas of community college life to be cut when budgets are tight, institutions who wish to consider whether they can do more to preserve funding for these activities during periods of austerity” (Purnell and Blank 35).

This same report offers a reminder that many external funding sources often go untapped simply because they are not explored or pursued. Organizations including “local philanthropies and business organizations that are interested in workforce development issues” may be eager and willing contributors to improved student learning services if only their aid is sought.

Finally, while HFCC currently benefits from government funding through Perkins and Title I grant monies, other financial assistance programs (see page 8) may provide additional sources for funding beyond the school’s own investment:

Currently, outside the community colleges themselves, dollars to support improvements in current student services are extremely limited, and most funding sources are targeted only to certain subsets of the student population—for example, to welfare recipients or to students who can document low incomes. Nevertheless, community colleges that are interested in improving student services and have not already done so should consider actively pursuing these avenues of support, which include funds available through TANF, TRIO and the federal Workforce Investment Act. (Purnell and Blank 35)

Federal grant programs, business and philanthropic contributions, and the college’s own financial investments represent three channels of revenue for tutoring and academic support programs. It is clear that opportunities are present for Henry Ford Community College to increase funding for its student learning resources by exploring these options.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION OF SERVICES

Many students are unaware of the services that are offered by the school. Joyce Zaritsky suggests that, “if institutions wish to reduce their attrition rates, the fact that ‘at risk’ students are precisely the ones who generally do not seek out help must be addressed” (Zaritsky 17). Better publicity of available resources is one way to increase the number of students who take advantage of existing services. Many institutions have a detailed, regularly-updated, and clearly organized web site to inform students of student support resources; such an online presence could be a tremendous asset for HFCC services.
If a centralized learning assistance center model were adopted, this task would be further simplified, as students would only need to be encouraged to visit one location or to visit one section of the HFCC website to address their needs.
A VARIETY OF SERVICES, EACH SUITED TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Tutoring per se is but one of a variety of academic support services and must be viewed within that broader context when funding and program development/expansion efforts are undertaken. A comprehensive student learning support system at Henry Ford Community College would be comprised of several distinct but important subsets:

**Individualized and Group Tutoring**

Tutoring is essential as it targets individual *students* with demonstrated needs for academic assistance outside the classroom. It is offered in various forms at HFCC but could be expanded, publicized, better managed, and further funded.

**Supplemental Instruction**

Supplemental Instruction complements tutoring, but it serves a different need as it targets not *students* but *courses* that are historically challenging for the general student population. While tutoring might be offered for nearly any academic course, supplemental instruction is only intended for rigorous courses—particularly capstone courses or important prerequisites—that many students struggle with.

**Services for Minority Students and Underrepresented Populations**

HFCC currently operates two programs that serve this subset of learning support service: Partners Plus and Focus on Women. However, much could be done to further the valuable work currently being done by these campus offices, which are underpublicized and located on different parts of campus.

**Freshman programs**

The article “Best Practices in Student Support Services” notes that a “freshman year experience” and an “emphasis on providing academic support for developmental and popular freshman courses” were among “the most important commonalities” of successful projects studied (3). Such a program would ease the transition between high school (or the workforce) and college, provide students with a strong peer support network, and introduce new students to other campus learning support services (see page 12 for more).

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

While this report provides a detailed look at current student learning support services at HFCC and opportunities for future innovation, there are undoubtedly questions it leaves unanswered and complex issues it is only able to briefly mention. Among these possibilities for further exploration are the following three topics:

**THE ROLE OF FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENT/PROFESSIONAL TUTORS**

While the participation of and cooperation between all three of these groups is essential for any tutoring efforts, the extent to which each should be involved in various processes (including tutor selection, training, and evaluation as well as direct student assistance and managerial duties) should be
further investigated.
TUTOR CERTIFICATION

Several tutor training and certification programs, including the College Reading and Learning Association’s International Tutor Program Certification, would assist in the pedagogical preparation of selected tutors and offer a measure of credibility to the institution’s efforts to improve student learning resources. Which programs would be the best for HFCC’s needs?

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION AT HFCC

A small-scale version of a Supplemental Instruction program was recently operated on a trial basis by four HFCC faculty in various divisions. Eric Rader, Cheryl Garrett, Jeff Morford, and Jared Boyd worked to implement Supplemental Instruction for political science, biology, mathematics, and economics courses, respectively. This trial program was discontinued after only one year, far before student awareness and faculty support for the program could reach sustainable levels. While it is known that the initial results seemed favorable (data indicate that failure rates were lower among students participating in S.I. sessions), details about this project and its future implications at HFCC are unavailable for this report and should be further explored.

CONCLUSION

Tutoring can help improve student learning outcomes, but it is important to remember that it is but one part of a larger educational system. While the research overwhelmingly suggests that peer tutoring in all of its various forms can improve the educational outcomes for both tutees and tutors alike, it “is usually a relatively small component of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies deployed in higher education” (Topping 340). In other words, tutoring is inseparable from the wider network of student resources available on most college campuses, and students benefit from the coordination and collaboration of these offices and programs as well as from the improvement of individual units.

The student learning support services currently in place at the college are commendable and, in many areas, are comparable to the offerings of other local higher education institutions. However, several innovations could be put into place to improve, streamline, and expand tutoring and related services on campus. Most notably, six suggestions are offered as innovative opportunities to improve these services: 1) centralizing student learning resources, 2) increasing facilities space, 3) providing tutor training and compensation, 4) increasing funding, 5) publicizing learning support programs, and 6) offering an academic support model incorporating a variety of services including tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing assistance, and freshmen success programs.

RESOURCES


Bodurka, Ron. Personal Interview. 20 Feb 2009.


Howe, Katherine. Personal Interview. 16 Feb 2009.


Kim, Peter Kearly. Personal Interview. 4 Feb 2009.


---. “What Are the Functions of a College Learning Assistance Center?” 16 Jan 1997.

Morford, Jeff. Personal Interview. 28 Jan 2009.


Thomas, Michael. Personal Interview. 1 Apr 2009.


Webster, Maureen. Personal Interview. 17 Feb 2009.
