Task Force to Review Tutoring Services on Campus

Charge from UPAC Report

Learning Assistance Center/Campus Academic Resource Program – These two programs offer faculty-based (LAC) and (primarily) student-run (CARP) tutoring services in support of SF State students. LAC has expanded its outreach in response to the GWAR implementation and has reached capacity at current staffing levels (note: the same may be said for CARP). The Council is aware that the findings of the Facilitating Graduation groups (I & II) suggest that support services like these are essential components to students’ success and that we will likely face increased demand for these kinds of services in the future. However, the Council sees similarities in these services as a potential source of unnecessary redundancy and supports a review of these functions to ensure that efficiencies are maximized.

Additionally, Provost Rosser asked the Task Force members to address the apparent confusion on campus about the services/roles of LAC and CARP, as well as their relationship to college/department/EOP tutoring centers. Specifically, are there overlaps/inefficiencies in the current structure?

Data Gathering/Review Process

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the tutoring services available across campus, as well as the campus-wide utilization of LAC and CARP, a survey was sent to all Chairs/Directors (see Appendix A).

We received responses to the survey from 14 departments and the English Tutoring Center (Appendix B), as well as numerous testimonials from faculty and students across campus (Appendix C). This information indicated that the only areas, in addition to CARP and LAC that have any significant budgeting for tutoring services are the English Tutoring Center (approximately $12,000/semester) and the Math Department (approximately $6,700/semester). The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) also provides tutoring, as a required component of their federally-funded services.

Additionally, the Task Force members held in-person conversations with the following individuals:

Oscar Gardea - Director of EOP
Nancy Hayes – Dean, College of Business
Sugie Goen-Salter – Director of the Intensive Reading/Writing Program
David Bao – Math Department Chair (responded in writing)
Deborah vanDommelen and Peter Ingmire – Director of LAC and Faculty Tutor in LAC
Morris Head – Director of CARP
As a result of our consultations/review, the Task Force members make the following conclusions/recommendations:

**General Observations**

After extensive consultation with entities across campus, including LAC and CARP, the Task Force members conclude that the university receives invaluable academic services to support student learning with minimal financial resources (Appendix D). The numerous testimonies from both faculty and students attest to the high quality of both programs. It was clear that the two centers have complementary strengths and we did not find significant duplication of resources either between LAC and CARP or with other tutoring centers across campus (which are limited).

While each center has a Director, they complement one another while managing their operations very differently. They each have very high skill levels and years of experience. The Director of LAC has an invaluable relationship and expertise in English, including English Language Learners (ELL), while the Director of CARP has long-established, very positive relationships with the math and science departments. There is clear benefit from both programs for not only the students who receive tutoring, but also the students who are doing the tutoring. The types of tutoring required by the two centers attract complementary sets of students who apply for the tutoring positions. It is also important to note that because LAC functions primarily during the day and academic year, while CARP is primarily in the evenings during the academic year but also operates during summer sessions, combined supervision of the two centers is required for a minimum of 12 hours/day during the fall and spring semesters. A single supervisor cannot handle both operations.

The services provided by LAC and CARP are essential to furthering the mission of SF State, particularly with respect to traditionally underrepresented minorities. The benefits to both tutees and tutors are linked directly to what we are trying to accomplish with the facilitating graduation initiative, both in improving graduation rates and closing the achievement gap.

**Organizational Structure of Campus Tutoring**

While there is minimal duplication among services, it would be beneficial to have the organizational structure change to better integrate some of the services. We recommend the following:

- Undergraduate Studies move toward adopting the language such as Services for Academic Success that would include the Undergraduate Advising Center, New Student Programs, Tutoring Services, and the Intensive Learning Program (ILP). The Committee learned about effective collaborations that already exist among these units, and their interaction should be encouraged.
- A website would be developed for the Services for Academic Success that could then link to the various entities within it.
• The Tutoring Centers could adopt an “umbrella” name such as *Tutoring for Student Success*, and under that would be LAC and CARP, with a clear distinction as to their functions. Although both organizations will continue to offer tutoring in a broad range of subjects throughout the day and evening hours, the LAC will enhance its focus on ELL students and their classes while CARP will strengthen its collaborations with the Colleges of Business and Science and Engineering to increase student success in those areas. Both will continue to support the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) faculty and students. LAC will maintain its outstanding training courses for tutors, while CARP will continue its successful student leadership development.

• As much as possible, the procedures and processes should be integrated in terms of intake, appointments, etc.

• We also strongly recommend centrally organizing the training of tutors. For example, when librarians offer a workshop in support of tutoring, it should be available to all tutors across campus. As resources become available, the AU tutoring course could also be opened to all students who are tutoring across campus.

**Communication to Campus Community About Tutoring Services**

There does appear to be a communication problem with respect to faculty understanding the roles of LAC and CARP, as well as other tutoring services. To help alleviate any confusion we recommend the following:

• The Undergraduate *Tutoring for Student Success Center* become more proactive in contacting departments/colleges to ascertain their tutoring needs, and then attempt to hire tutors to meet those needs.

• A single contact should be made to departments and individual faculty members regarding tutoring services. These contacts should represent *Tutoring for Student Success* services.

• Similarly, when tutors go into classes to explain the services there should be one visit that explains the overall process of tutoring, not two separate visits. A single flier/schedule explaining the tutoring services for each semester would be very helpful (including, if possible, schedules/locations for LAC, CARP, EOP, Math and the English Tutoring Center).

• When brochures are developed to give an overview of tutoring services they should address all services, not be broken out into LAC and CARP.

• To the extent possible, it would be very beneficial to have workshops/meetings between faculty and tutors to discuss which topics students find most difficult to master, and strategies for helping those students.

**Future Physical Location of Tutoring Services**

Ideally, the tutoring and advising units that comprise *Services for Academic Success* should be housed together, and centrally located on campus. When/if any new building is designed on campus, the possibility of designating space for an *Academic Success Center* should be strongly considered in the plans. Collecting all these services into one physical
location will enhance their ability to offer students a broad range of coordinated services. Tutoring and advising services are essential to everything we are trying to accomplish in terms of facilitating graduation and student success.

**Summary/Conclusions**

In summary, we applaud the services that LAC and CARP provide to our campus community. These services are critical for the academic success of students, particularly in light of the Facilitating Graduation Initiative, and should be increased, if possible. The increase in services would require Undergraduate Studies to perform a systematic study of how best to identify classes and students that might be most in need of tutoring services, in order to make the best use of limited resources. Undergraduate Studies should also carefully study whether the operations would “scale up” well. It is the Task Force members’ opinions that the marginal cost of increasing the numbers of students and classes served should be relatively low, given the hourly pay rates of tutors and the strategies LAC and CARP use to control the cost of their operations. The Division of Undergraduate Studies will provide oversight for the implementation of the recommendations from this report.