

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

Name of Program: Learning Center
Division/Operational Area: Library Media Center
Contact Person: Catherine Hodges

Submission Date: 3 May 2007

[Note: The information in this area will repeat on all pages.]

Porterville College Mission Statement:

With students as our focus, Porterville College provides our local and diverse communities an excellent educational experience that fosters intellectual curiosity and growth, lifelong learning, and prepares our students for personal and academic success.

In support of our values and philosophy, Porterville College will:

- Provide quality academic programs to all students who are capable of benefiting from community college instruction.
- Provide comprehensive support services to help students achieve their personal, vocational and academic potential.
- Prepare students for transfer and success at four-year institutions.
- Provide courses and training to prepare students for employment or to enhance skills within their current careers.
- Provide developmental education to students who need to enhance their knowledge and understanding of basic skills.
- Recognize student achievement through awarding degrees, certificates, grants, and scholarships.

Program Mission Statement:

The Learning Center supports the mission of Porterville College by offering academic support to students at every level of skill and ability through peer and faculty tutorial services and a supervised learning software lab.

Program Student Learning Outcomes:

Student Learning Outcomes for the Learning Center are being formulated by a committee consisting of the Learning Center Coordinator and faculty members from several academic divisions, all of whom have received SLO course-level training and developed SLOs for their own classes.

Analysis of Current Performance:

The Learning Center serves students 12 hours a day Monday – Thursday (8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.) and 4 hours on Friday (8:00 a.m. – noon) for a total of 52 hours/week. At peak hours, there are students working on learning software lab assignments at every computer (32) with others on a waiting list for a computer and, on the tutoring side of the room, up to 24 tutors/tutees and/or students waiting for assistance from a writing mentor or a Title V Lab Instructor for a total of 56 + students. Since fall 2003 the Learning Center has housed the writing mentor office (although the writing mentors fall under the purview of the Language Arts Division rather than the Learning Center). This arrangement

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has benefited students as it has centralized Porterville College's drop-in and appointment-based tutorial services.

The Learning Center recruits and trains qualified current students as peer tutors. Between 1996 and 2005, an average of 26 tutors per semester received training and served students who requested tutoring. During fall 2006, 14 tutors served 42 tutees on a scheduled basis (low numbers due to the conversion to the 16-week semester and medical leave of the Learning Center Technician, who coordinates the tutor program, for the first three weeks of the semester); during spring 2007, 19 tutors served 67 students. Both tutors and tutees register for 0 credit classes (GNST PO91 and GNST PO92).

Math, reading and writing lab classes, the majority of them corequisites of lecture classes, are offered in the Learning Center's supervised open lab. This lab contains 32 computers, one of which is an instructor station and another of which projects onto a screen for vision-impaired students. Three stations are wheel-chair accessible. In fall 2006, 300 students were enrolled in math labs (using PLATO, ALEKS or MyMathLab) and 302 students were enrolled in reading and/or writing labs (all using PLATO); in spring 2007, 320 students were enrolled in math labs (using PLATO, ALEKS or MyMathLab) and 299 students were enrolled in reading and/or writing labs (all using PLATO).

Since Porterville College's receipt of a Title V grant in Oct. of 2003, the Learning Center has been staffed by two faculty members, one Language Arts instructor and one Science/Math instructor, during almost half of its weekly hours of operation. There is at least one instructor from one of these divisions present at all times. During 2006-07, 13 full-time faculty and 6 adjunct faculty served as Title V Lab Instructors in the Learning Center. In fall 2006, two instructors, one from each division, were available to students 24 hours a week; Language Arts instructors were available (alone) an additional 12 hours/week and Science/Math instructors were available (alone) 16 hours/week. In spring 2007, two instructors were available 25 hours/week; Language Arts instructors were available (alone) 12 hours/week, and Science/Math instructors were available (alone) 15 hours/week. The instructors are responsible to assist students both in the computer lab (learning software—PLATO, ALEKS, MyMathLab) area of the Learning Center and the tutorial area.

The Learning Center provides proctoring as a service to Porterville College faculty and students as well as to members of the community who are taking courses at other institutions (generally online) and need to complete proctored exams.

As recently as spring 2006, the Learning Center offered brief workshops, or "clinics," to reinforce concepts and skills. Topics included punctuating clauses, multiplying fractions, and overcoming math anxiety. These workshops, led by faculty, were publicized via flyers and emails, announced in classes, and generally popular with students. Since the 16-week calendar was implemented in fall 2006, however, faculty members have felt tremendously pressed for time and have not responded to invitations to offer these sessions.

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Program Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

Learning Center Strengths

The *Independent External Evaluation for Porterville College: Title V Grant, 2003-2008 Organizational Leadership in Action* report (January 2007) accurately observes that “the Learning Center is a focal point of the campus—a place of increased student activity.”

The Learning Center serves roughly 600 reading, writing and math students per semester at 32 computer stations in an open, supervised lab. In addition, provision is made for Spanish and statistics students to complete learning software and graphing assignments on these computers.

The Learning Center is the locus of tutoring services on campus, offering peer tutor training, scheduling tutoring appointments, providing drop-in tutorial services by English, Spanish, Science and Math instructors, and housing the office of the writing mentor program. Peer tutors are able to access their appointment schedules on the Learning Center website.

The Learning Center’s services are advertised to the campus community through classroom visits by the Learning Center Coordinator upon instructor request, an information sheet updated each semester and distributed to instructors and students, a web page with information about the Center and links to the Writing Mentor and instructor schedules, and flyers announcing special events. Bookmarks with Learning Center services and hours are also distributed to students and counselors.

During the first and second week of every semester, the Learning Center Technician conducts orientations for every lecture class that has a corequisite lab. For fall 2006 she created a very effective power point presentation to facilitate this orientation.

The Learning Center has strong working relationships with the PC library and DRC and the Student Success Lab at Bakersfield College. In addition, the Coordinator and Learning Center Technician are members of the San Joaquin Valley Learning Center Consortium and participate in online discussions of practical and pedagogical concerns.

Areas for Improvement

In Nov. 2006 Porterville College hired a basic skills consulting team, the Deming Group, to visit the campus, meet with faculty and staff who are directly involved with basic skills, review our programs and make recommendations. A committee is in the process of considering their report and recommendations, which we received in spring 2007. While the team’s understanding of our basic skills programs and efforts appears to be limited, and in some areas flawed, several of the recommendations for the Learning Center align with our own self-evaluation. Below are areas in which we need to improve, with accreditation recommendations and pages of the Deming Group’s

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report cited where appropriate.

- The Learning Center's most pressing need is for a full-time Coordinator (Deming Report p. 35)—see justification for Position 1 under "Staffing Requests." This need will become even more acute within the next few years given that the new LRC will accommodate more students in the Learning Center and that Porterville is the fourth fastest growing city in California. Although the full-time Learning Center Technician, Charlene Styer, is skilled, energetic, efficient and innovative, the current level of staffing is only enough to keep the Learning Center functioning on survival mode given the breadth of services we provide, the volume of students we serve and the ways in which we need to improve our services. (Note that the faculty members who serve as Title V lab instructors provide an essential service, but they do not provide, nor is it their job to provide, leadership for the Center as a whole; their role is entirely instructional and limited to their particular lab hours any given semester.)

In the meantime, we must take steps to improve in the following areas as time and funding permit:

- We must identify and adopt a system for collecting data to help us determine the effectiveness of our peer and instructor tutorial services (Accreditation Recommendation 2, Standard 1B; Deming Report p. 37).
- We must continue to investigate alternatives to the PLATO Learning Pathways software. The ideal program will include math, reading and writing curricula at levels appropriate to our basic skills offerings, allow for flexibility and customization of materials, and have a flexible, efficient management system which will generate data for individual instructors, academic divisions, and institutional research purposes (Accreditation Recommendation 2, Standard 1B; Deming Report p. 35).
- Tutor training materials should be updated (Deming Report p. 36). Ultimately, we hope to offer a certificate program to tutors on the order of the one at BC.

Our initial strategy for achieving the above goals is to step up our communication with our colleagues in the Learning Center Consortium and at other colleges to learn how they are addressing these concerns. From there, we will make decisions for our own context.

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Goals (This section is for you to report on progress on previously established goals and listing of new goals. If your program is addressing more than 2 goals, please duplicate this page)

Goal(s)	Timetable for Completion	Needed resources	Obstacles to completion (if any)
1. Hire a full-time Learning Center Director or Coordinator	As soon as possible.	Funding and prioritization by CLC.	College budget limitations.

Progress on Goal:

___ Completed (Date)
 ___ Revised (Date)

Comments:

See justification under "Staffing Requests"

Goal(s)	Timetable for Completion	Needed resources	Obstacles to completion (if any)
2. Formulate SLOs	By the start of fall semester 2007.	Time (LC coordinator, faculty committee), training in program-level SLOs.	Time, training.
3. Identify and adopt a system for data collection for drop-in and scheduled tutorial services.	Spring of 2008.	Time, perhaps funding.	Time, funding.
4. Continue to investigate alternatives to PLATO.	Ongoing.	Time, funding.	Time, funding.
5. Update tutor training materials.	Undetermined.	Time, funding.	Time, funding.

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Progress on Goal:

____ Completed (Date)

____ Revised (Date)

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STAFFING REQUEST

<u>Staff Resources:</u>				
<u>Current Staffing Levels</u>		<u>Part-time Staff (FTE)</u>		
<u>Full-time Staff (FTE)</u>				
Faculty		Faculty	.5	
Temporary		Temporary		
Classified	1	Classified		
Management		Management		
<u>Request for New/Replacement Staff</u>				
	Title of Position	Classification <small>(Faculty, Classified, or Management)</small>	Full or Part Time	New or Replacement
Position 1	Learning Center Coordinator or Director	Faculty or Management	Full (In place of, not in addition to, the current 50% position)	Replacement for position vacated by retirement in 2003
Position 2				
Position 3				
<p>Justification:</p> <p>The Learning Center is second only to the library in the number of students it serves. It is ironic that since the retirement of the full-time Learning Center Coordinator in 2003, the Learning Center has greatly expanded its services, yet currently the Center is coordinated by a Language Arts faculty member with 50% release. Although the full-time Learning Center Technician, Charlene Styer, is skilled, energetic, efficient and innovative, the current level of staffing is only enough to keep the Learning Center functioning on survival mode given the breadth of services we provide, the volume of students we serve and the ways in which we need to improve our services (see “Areas for Improvement”).</p> <p>The Deming Report says it well: “[T]he [Learning] Center requires a fully dedicated faculty member who is passionate about serving as many student needs as the resources will support. This person should also be responsible for providing academic support, assisting classroom faculty with learning issues that they often face alone, and assisting the college leadership with plans to provide continued academic support for every department on campus. Budgetary oversight, tutor training, and resource development are also time-consuming responsibilities within this person’s purview” (35).</p>				

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BUDGET REQUEST

	Current Budget	Amount of Increase	Revised Total
2000 (Student)	0	15,000.00	15,000.00
4000	0	500.00	500.00
5000			
Other			

Justification:

Both of the above are requests to have funds restored to their previous levels.

2000--This is a request to restore our tutor budget to its earlier level so that we can continue to offer tutorial services to as many Porterville College students as possible. See below.

Year	Tutor Budget	Balance at year's end
1998	11,826.00	-2590.27
1999	15,000.00	3,473.27
2000	15,000.00	-1,480.14
2001	15,000.00	-1,835.51
2002	15,091.92	-3,646.49
2003	16,415.40	-1,156.25
2004	15,000.00	4,791.43
2005	0.00	-12,732.79
2006	0.00	

(See Catherine Hodges or Charlene Styer for documentation.)

4000—When the Title V grant (2003-2008) went into effect, the Learning Center office supplies budget in the general fund was dropped from 500.00 to 0 as during the grant period we have a noninstructional supplies budget through Title V. Once the grant is over in Oct. 2008, we will need to have the office supplies budget restored to at least the previous level.