

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE
PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT: NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

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

Submission Date: May 2011

[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:

1. Provide quality academic programs to all students who are capable of benefiting from community college instruction.
2. Provide comprehensive support services to help students achieve their personal, vocational and academic potential.
3. Prepare students for transfer and success at four-year institutions.
4. Provide courses and training to prepare students for employment or to enhance skills within their current careers.
5. Provide developmental education to students who need to enhance their knowledge and understanding of basic skills.
6. 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.

Vision:

The Learning Center will provide outstanding, multi-faceted academic support to Porterville College students, partnering with them to facilitate the achievement of their goals.

Values:

In support of our mission statement and vision, the Learning Center is committed to the following core values:

Students—The Learning Center values each student and is committed to the College Mission Statement’s opening statement: “With students as our focus”

Learning—The Learning Center exists to support student learning and provides customized assistance to facilitate student success.

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Assessment—The Learning Center is committed to an on-going process of assessment designed to monitor and improve the effectiveness of our service to students.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students receiving peer tutoring services will succeed in tutored subjects at the same level as, or at a higher level than, their non-tutored classmates.
- Students receiving faculty tutoring services will succeed in tutored subjects at the same level as, or at a higher level than, their non-tutored classmates.
- Students receiving Learning Center services—lab, tutorial, and exam proctoring—will feel supported in their pursuit of their specific content and skills goals.

(Notes: 1. SLOs are based on the standard-setting work of Hendriksen et al on assessing academic support as published in *The Journal of College Reading and Learning*. 2. SLOs specific to lab classes and modules are established and assessed by their respective divisions.)

Analysis of Current Performance:

As of fall 2010, the Learning Center serves students 11 hours/day Monday – Thursday (9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.) and 3 hours on Friday (9:00 a.m. – noon) for a total of 47 hours/week. At peak hours, there are students working on learning software lab assignments at 30 computers and up to 16 at the tutoring tables, working with tutors or lab instructors or waiting their turn, for a total of 46. This is a drop in hours of operation and student usage; at the time of the previous program review, May 2007, the Learning Center was open 52 hours/week and peak hour saw 56 students at the computers and tutor tables.

The Learning Center recruits and trains qualified current students as peer tutors. Between 2007 and 2010, an average of 19 tutors per semester received training and served an average of 108 students who requested tutoring. During fall 2009, 20 tutors served 135 tutees on a scheduled basis; during spring 2010, 16 tutors served 83 students. The May 2007 program review reported an average of 24 tutors per semester (higher by 5 than the current average) serving an average of 55 students (lower by 53 than the current average).

The Learning Center is an open, supervised lab. All of the current math and English lab classes (Math 61L, 55L, and 51L) and components (to Eng. 81R, 81, 83, and 72) use web-based programs. Orientations to these labs are conducted in the Learning Center, and many students choose to do their lab assignments on site to avail themselves of help from the Learning Center Technician and lab faculty in their disciplines. Additionally, some classes/instructors require a specified number of hours to be completed in the Learning Center (e.g. 12 hours for Eng. 81 and 83) to ensure that students have technical and instructional assistance available to them. In fall 2009, 176 students were enrolled in math labs (ALEKS, MyMathLab) under the supervision of Math Lab Coordinator Stewart Hathaway

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and 181 in English labs (MyReadingLab, MyWritingLab, MySkillsLab); in spring 2010, 130 were enrolled in math labs and 236 in English labs. In addition, Spanish and statistics students use Learning Center computers to complete their lab work and assignments.

During fall 2007 and spring 2008, the Learning Center Coordinator piloted Pearson web-based labs (MyReadingLab and MyWritingLab) with groups of lab students as part of the 2007 program review goal to investigate alternatives to PLATO software. PLATO, purchased as a package in the 1990s by the district, had provided unsatisfactory service since at least 2004, although PC paid a hefty annual service agreement fee (as of 2008, \$6,500.00). The Pearson labs were piloted after investigation of a number of other alternatives to PLATO. In May of 2008, both PLATO and Pearson representatives were invited to demonstrate and discuss their products in open sessions held in the Learning Center. The sessions were well attended by math, reading, and writing faculty. As a result of these sessions and the successful pilots of the Pearson labs, language arts faculty agreed to adopt the Pearson products to replace PLATO. Math faculty followed suit the following year, with the result that PC no longer has a relationship with PLATO. The Pearson subscriptions are packaged with textbooks and can also be purchased separately online. Some math instructors continue to use ALEKS software, providing students with access codes purchased through the 2003-2008 Title V grant.

The Learning Center is staffed by one lab instructor from the math/science or language arts division during all hours of operation. Through spring 2008, lab instructors from both divisions were available to students at least 24 hours/week, with the remaining 28 staffed by an instructor from one of the divisions. When the 5-year Title V grant period ended, Porterville College was unable to keep its commitment to institutionalize peak-hour double-staffing as stipulated in the grant; both hours of operation and staffing were reduced.

The Learning Center also 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. Non-PC students are charged \$15.00 per exam; they pay in the Business Office, and revenue goes into the General Fund.

Program Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

The Learning Center serves roughly 350 reading, writing and math students per semester at 32 computer stations in an open, supervised lab. (This is a drop from an average of 600 reading, writing, and math students served per semester as reported in the 2007 program review; the reduced number is attributable to the curricular change from a required co-requisite 27 hour lab class for Eng. 81, 82, 83, 84 and 72 to inclusion of 12 hours of lab work in each of the lecture classes.) In addition, provision is made for Spanish and statistics students to complete learning software and graphing assignments on these computers. There is a faculty presence at all times, although, as noted above, only one discipline is represented at a time, a factor which contributes to the drop of an average of students working in the lab at peak hours (56 to 46).

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As detailed above, following several semesters of research, discussion, and piloting of alternatives, the Learning Center no longer uses PLATO software—a positive development by all accounts. PLATO has been replaced by the web-based Pearson and ALEKS programs. Pearson provides timely and reliable service.

During the first and second week of every semester, the Learning Center Technician, instructors, and representatives from Pearson conduct orientations for corequisite lab classes and lecture classes with lab assignments; these orientations equip students to visit the Learning Center on their own, requesting technical or subject-specific assistance as needed.

The Learning Center continues to be the locus of tutoring services on campus, offering peer tutor training, scheduling tutoring appointments, and providing drop-in tutorial services by English, Spanish, science and math instructors. In 2010, new tutor training materials were purchased. In addition, the process to obtain certification for our tutoring program through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) has been initiated. The drop in the average number of tutors from 24 to 19 since the 2007 program is puzzling, especially given the increase in average number of tutees from 55 to 108. What can be known for certain is that the tutors are serving many more students than they were at the time of the previous program review.

The Learning Center's website, created and maintained by the Learning Center Technician and updated each semester (and as needed during the semester), provides students with the schedule of lab instructors as well as information about the tutoring program. Hard copies of the lab instructor schedule are available to students and faculty at the front desk of the Learning Center (the LC Technician's desk and work station), and the schedule is distributed electronically as a PC_email each semester. The Learning Center Technician posts flyers advertising both tutoring positions and tutorial services every semester. She also sends recruitment emails to faculty, requesting that they check with their top students to see if they would like to become tutors.

Data collection on usage has become largely computerized since the last program review. In 2008, the Learning Center implemented Time Keeper software; PC's subscription to that software ended in Dec. 2009, and Time Keeper was replaced by the district-wide SARS system. SARS has been problematic at the beginning of both semesters since implementation, in that the student data (rosters) can only be input at the district, and there have been delays of several weeks, beyond our control, that have resulted in untracked usage and skewed reports. During the first three weeks of fall 2010, many students stated their reluctance to work on their lab assignments, fearing (justifiably) that their hours "wouldn't count."

The Learning Center maintains strong working relationships with the PC library and DRC. In addition, the Coordinator and Learning Center Technician are members of the San Joaquin Valley Learning Center Consortium, and the coordinator is a member of the College Reading and Learning Association.

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Proctoring services are an important service of the Learning Center. The Learning Center Technician proctored exams for 41 non-PC students during fall and spring of 2009-2010 (\$615.00 to the General Fund). During summer of 2009, she proctored 46 (\$690.00) non-PC exams. In summer of 2010, however, following the 25% reduction of the position, she was available to proctor only 2 exams (\$30.00). In addition to non-PC exam proctoring, the Learning Center proctors exams for hundreds of PC students every semester. Some of these exams are formally scheduled for entire classes by the instructors; others are a service to students who were ill at the time of an in-class exam or allowed to retake an exam.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Six areas are identified and discussed below. For the first five, “strategies and actions to make those improvements” hinge on restoration of personnel/positions, specifically the Learning Center Technician and the Learning Center Coordinator, since present levels of staffing are inadequate for sustainability, much less forward progress. The information on the reductions is as follows:

- A. In spring 2010, the Learning Center Technician position (classified) was reduced from 100% to 75%, a 25% reduction. To complicate matters, the position had been split in 2005 between Learning Center Technician (90%) and Computer Lab Assistant (10%); thus, after the reduction to 75% in spring 2010, the *actual* reduction was to 67.5% Learning Center Technician and 7.5% Computer Lab Assistant. The upshot: the Learning Center Technician position is now 67.5%.

- B. In Aug. 2009, the Learning Center Coordinator position (faculty) was reduced from 50% to 20%, a 60% reduction. In Aug. 2010, it was raised to 30%, still a 40% reduction from the “original” 50%. Until 2003, it had been a full-time position; the 2007 program review for the Learning Center requested a 100% position and included the following justification from a 2006 report written by the Deming Group on Basic Skills at PC:

“[T]he [Learning] Center requires a fully dedicated [100%] 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).

It is an unwise expenditure of time and energy to strategize specific actions toward shoring up the Learning Center’s weaknesses until staffing is again adequate for sustainability. Once conditions are again sustainable, the following areas should be addressed.

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1.DATA COLLECTION:

While the Learning Center now has a computerized system data collection on usage, data collection to determine effectiveness of the Learning Center's peer and instructor tutorial services is an area that needs to be addressed, one that was identified in the last program review. Forward movement in this area has been compromised by three moves (four after a further move in Dec. 2010) in three years in addition to aforementioned staffing reductions.

2.CERTIFICATION OF TUTORING PROGRAM:

College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) certification for the tutoring program needs to move beyond the initial stages and aggressively pursued.

3. ONLINE TUTORING PILOT:

Equipment has been purchased and the groundwork done (a visit to see BC's online tutoring operation, research into online tutoring at other colleges) to begin online tutoring at PC

4.SKILLS CLINICS REINSTATEMENT:

Skills clinics were a Learning Center offering until 2006. These clinics were 20-30 minute sessions on specific skills: correcting sentence fragments, adding fractions, etc. Faculty and students continue to inquire about this service.

5.EXAM PROCTORING:

The dramatic difference between the 46 non-PC exams proctored during the summer of 2009 and the 2 proctored during summer 2010 signifies a damaging reduction in our outreach to the community. Many of the students who need exams proctored during the summers are high school students taking online courses through universities around the country. A positive experience visiting the Learning Center to take an exam has the potential influence them to consider beginning their college career at Porterville College.

6.REINSTATEMENT OF HOURS OF OPERATION AND RESTORATION OF DOUBLE STAFFING DURING PEAK HOURS:

To fulfill PC's stated mission, the Learning Center must return to 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. and 8:00-12:00 Fri. hours of operation—a restoration of five hours/week. In addition, the presence of both a math and English lab instructor for peak hours (11:00-2:00 Mon.-Thurs.) is a necessity for sustainability. Currently, many students leave disappointed, not finding the assistance they need, and as the semester progresses, fewer come for help, assuming they will not find it.

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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. Formalize SLOs			

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date 2010)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: Assessment to begin 2010-11

Goal(s)	Timetable for Completion	Needed resources	Obstacles to completion (if any)
2. Continue to investigate alternatives to PLATO			

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date Spring 2008)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: The process as well as new software selections as a result of investigation are detailed in "Analysis of Current Performance."

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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)
3. Update tutor training materials			

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date Fall 2010)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: Extensive research was followed by purchase and duplication of new training materials, to be implemented spring 2011.

Goal(s)	Timetable for Completion	Needed resources	Obstacles to completion (if any)
4. Identify and adopt a system for data collection on academic impact of drop-in and scheduled tutorial services	As soon as possible	Personnel—restored 100% LC Tech position and 50% release coordinator position—see staffing requests	Lack of personnel

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date)

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised (Date Oct. 2010)
Comments: The original goal (2007) included data collection on usage; this facet of the goal was achieved in fall 2009.

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)
5. Gain CRLA certification for tutor program	As soon as possible	Personnel—restored 100% LC Tech position and 50% release coordinator position—see staffing requests	Lack of personnel

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: See explanation in “Current Program Strengths and Weaknesses.”

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)
6. Establish online tutoring service.	As soon as possible	Personnel—restored 100% LC Tech position and 50% release coordinator position—see staffing	Lack of personnel

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Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: See explanation in "Current Program Strengths and Weaknesses."

Goal(s)	Timetable for Completion	Needed resources	Obstacles to completion (if any)
7. Reinstate skills clinics	As soon as possible	Personnel—restored 100% LC Tech position and 50% release coordinator position—see staffing requests.	Lack of personnel and funds.

Which of numbered items under the Mission Statement (see page 1 of this document) will be furthered if this goal is completed? (select all that apply)

Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4 Item 5 Item 6

Progress on Goal:

Completed (Date)
 Revised (Date)

Comments: See explanation in "Current Program Strengths and Weaknesses."

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STAFFING REQUEST

Staff Resources:				
<u>Current Staffing Levels</u>				
<u>Full-time Staff (FTE)</u>		<u>Part-time Staff (FTE)</u>		
Faculty		Faculty	30%	
Temporary		Temporary		
Classified		Classified	75% (more accurately, 67.5%--see p. 5)	
Management		Management		
<u>Request for New/Replacement Staff</u>				
Use one line for each position requested. Justify each position in the space below.				
	Title of Position	Classification (Faculty, Classified, or Management)	Full or Part Time	New or Replacement
Position 1	Learning Center Technician	Classified	Full (This is a request to restore the position to 100% from its reduction to 75% in spring 2010.)	Restoration
Position 2	Learning Center Coordinator	Faculty, Classified, or Management	Part-time: If faculty, 50% release (This is a request to restore the position to 50% from its reduction to 30%.)	Restoration
Justification: (Address each position requested)				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As detailed in "Areas for Improvement," the reduction of the Learning Center Technician position from to 75% has compromised essential Learning Center operations and functions including proctoring, data collection, and hours of operation. In addition, students (tutors and tutees in particular) are directly impacted, facing delays in employment, tutor-tutee matches, 				

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and scheduling—all specific to the Learning Center Technician job description.

2. From the 2007 program review, justification for a request for a FULL-TIME Learning Center Coordinator: *“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 Learning Center Technician 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.”*

As detailed earlier, the coordinator position was cut from by 60% (to 20% release), then, after a full academic year, raised to 30% release. This means that the current release is still at a 40% reduction from the 50% which we formally requested, in 2007, be raised to 100%. **Given the state of the budget at this point, we are requesting restoration of the coordinator position to 50%, acknowledging as we do so that this is only enough for sustainability.**

It is worth repeating here the observations and recommendations of the Deming Report (2006), which were quoted in the 2007 program review:

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).

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BUDGET REQUEST

	Current Budget	Amount of Increase	Revised Total
2000 (Student)	17,000.00	---	17,000.00
4000	700.00	---	700.00
5000			
Other—lab instructors: Full/time OL, Adjunct	F/t OL: 67,000.00 Adj: 17,000.00	F/T: 23,000.00 Adj: 5,560.00	F/T 90,000.00 Adj: 21,560.00
Other—replacement computers	---	36,100.00 (excludes shipping and handling)	36,100.00 plus shipping and handling

Justification:

(Include justification for each amount of increase requested.)

The increase request for lab instructors is based on the “Areas for Improvement” section of this program review. It reflects a restoration of operation hours to 8-8 M-Th and 8-12 Fri (5 hours/week) and restoration of dual staffing for 3 peak hours/day 4 days/week (12 hour/week total). The total request is for a restored 17 hours/week for 14 weeks/semester. (The Learning Center is not open to students during the first week of classes or finals week.)

The computer request is for 38 computers to replace the existing Learning Center computers (36 student computers, one for the Timekeeper station to track usage, and one for the instructor station.) Director of IT Chris Craig confirms that this is a necessary purchase.