Early Outreach and Support Programs

Student Learning Center

A Division of Student Affairs
California State University, Chico
I. Department Mission Statement

The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide a high-quality learning environment outside the classroom that helps CSU, Chico students to become active, lifelong, independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, writing assistance, and supplemental instruction. The SLC demonstrates its commitment to diversity through collaboration with programs for low-income, first-generation college students, and ongoing staff development. Recognizing the need to maintain and improve services, the SLC regularly surveys students and staff to evaluate progress on learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and impact of academic assistance on student success.

Department Goals (Last Reviewed June 2016)

1. The Student Learning Center will provide individual and small group tutorials in undergraduate subject content areas, writing, and in learning strategies. (Student Affairs Goals 1, 2, 3; University Strategic Priorities 1, 4, 8)

2. The Student Learning Center will provide supplemental instruction for high-risk courses and EOP first year students. (Student Affairs Goals 1, 2, 3; University Strategic Priorities 1, 4, 8)

3. The Student Learning Center staff will cultivate working relationships with students, faculty, and staff that encourage effective communication and that are conducive to the delivery of services to students, faculty, and staff. (Student Affairs Goals 1, 2, 3; University Strategic Priorities 1, 2, 4)

4. The Student Learning Center staff will maintain top quality and current expertise in the field of learning assistance, writing, and supplemental instruction through professional reading, mediated resources, and other opportunities for professional development. (Student Affairs Goals 1, 2, 3; University Strategic Priorities 1, 2)

Contribution of Goals to Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation

The common factor of each of the SLC goals is to provide a high quality learning environment outside of the classroom that enhances student achievement and success.
• **Recruitment:** The free academic support services offered by the SLC have been highlighted to prospective students by the Admissions Office, Summer Orientation, the Educational Opportunity Program, the Chico Student Success Center, and other admissions and recruitment programs on campus.

• **Retention:** SLC goals serve to support student retention by helping students develop transferable, lifelong learning skills such as better understanding of specific course material, exam preparation, asking questions, memory techniques, and confidence. Our data shows that on average students who regularly visit tutoring and/or SI earn higher grades than those who do not.

• **Graduation:** The overarching goal of the Student Learning Center is to help students who use the services graduate. By helping students build background knowledge and learning skills, the SLC develops student confidence, motivation, and persistence.

II. **Departmental Accomplishments**

• Two of the 2016 CSU, Chico student commencements speakers highlighted how their participation the Student Learning Center was a significant part of their Chico experience.

• The SLC Writing Center expanded outreach and collaboration across campus this year by working with campus librarians, Student Judicial Affairs, and attending multicultural welcome receptions.

• The SLC participated in ongoing discussions and collaboration with Academic Affairs faculty and staff on expanding SI, especially for bottleneck STEM courses.

• Students in programs serving low income, first generation college students and students with disabilities were given priority for tutoring appointment sign-ups.

• The SLC offered evening drop in tutoring hours for math and writing during dead week and finals week in the BMU Wildcat Leadership Center to extend access during crucial times during the semester.

• A panel of SLC tutors, an SI leader, and a student user presented a CELT workshop titled: “Collaborative Learning at the Tutoring Table” to explore the role peer tutoring plays in developing a "growth mindset" among students.

• The SLC helped plan and present information during Transfer Student Summer Orientation sessions.

• The SLC was granted Student Learning Fee funding for 2016-2017 to purchase new computers used by students and tutors and to take two to three writing tutors to either a regional or national writing center conference.
Highlights:

• Two of the student Commencement speakers highlighted the role their experiences in the SLC played in their academic, personal, and professional success. Antonia Lubben, a student who is blind in one eye and suffered from severe math anxiety and depression, talked about how the Student Learning Center was “so supportive with open doors and open arms” offering free tutoring since her freshman year. Antonia was a student panelist for the SLC CELT presentation in October. She started a doctoral program in Physical Therapy at CSU, Long Beach this summer. Manvir Chahal, a former SLC accounting tutor talked about how his experience as a tutor made him realize he has “a passion for helping others, especially those who are disadvantaged.” This led him to join and eventually run the CSU, Chico Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program that provides free tax preparation services to those in the community who need it most.

The SLC Writing Center took advantage of several opportunities to expand outreach, collaborate, and enhance services in 2015-2016. The Writing Center expanded diversity outreach efforts by tabling at the Re-Entry Student Welcome, Bienvenida Reception, and Asian and Pacific Islander Welcome Reception. Writing Center tutors collaborated with the Meriam Library Information Literacy Program on a literature review workshop and presented a workshop on avoiding plagiarism with Student Judicial Affairs staff. Campus librarian, Kevin Klipfel offered research writing tutoring appointments in the SLC and the SLC Writing Coordinator participated in the NCWCA Pre-Conference Workshop, “Supporting Multilingual Students in Writing Programs & Writing Centers: Principles & (Best) Practices” at Santa Clara University in April. The Writing Center
offered a GRE writing workshop series during January Intersession resulting in capacity attendance of 45 students.

- Supplemental Instruction (SI) is supported by the CSU, Chancellor’s Office as a proven solution to address the problem of bottleneck courses that limit students’ ability to progress toward graduation. Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions can be scheduled to take place in classroom space outside of the SLC and can accommodate larger groups of students at one time. Shifting to more SI sessions and fewer tutoring sessions for large enrollment bottleneck courses in STEM subjects has the potential to reduce crowding and offer academic support to more students. In recognition of the growth of the SI program, the SLC has been granted permission from the Vice President of Student Affairs to hire a full time, 10 month SI Coordinator, allowing the Writing Coordinator to focus exclusively on outreach, collaboration, addressing the needs of multilingual writers, and professional development for the Writing Center tutors. In 2015-2016 the SLC Associate Director and SI/Writing Coordinator have had ongoing conversations with faculty in the chemistry department, the Interim Director of Faculty Development, and the HSI STEM grant committee on expanding Supplemental Instruction (SI) at CSU, Chico during the 2016-2017 academic year. Funding has been granted by the CSU, Chico SLF committee and the CSU Chancellor’s Office to support SI in the 2016-2017 academic year. The HSI STEM grant is still being reviewed. The SLF funds will pay for 6 SI Leaders for CHEM 111 in fall semester 2016 (two for each section). The SLC plans to shift support for CHEM 111 to SI exclusively and offer no tutoring for the course in fall 2016. A large number of faculty were granted Chancellor’s Office funding for SI in 2016-2017, but at this point the SLC has only committed to working with the chemistry department on hiring, training, supervising, and paying additional SI Leaders which will double the current number of SLC SI Leaders. If the HSI grant is funded, the SLC has also committed to adding 2 additional STEM SI courses to be determined based on DWF rates.

Diversity Efforts:

- The SLC expanded priority tutoring appointment sign-ups on the first Friday of the semester. In the morning, sign-ups were open for ARC students only, and in the afternoon appointment sign-ups were offered to students in programs serving first generation, low income students including EOP, SSS, CSSC, REACH, PATH, and AACE. A total of 603 appointments were scheduled during priority sign-ups fall 15 and spring
Below is a demographic comparison of students who took advantage of priority sign-ups and those who signed up on the all campus first day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMU Drop-In Tutoring</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for 2015-16</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Changes in Policies and Procedures

- The SLC strategically cut back on tutor hours because tutor salaries increased from $11.50 to $12 an hour in fall 2015, but the SLC was not granted SLF funding for 2015-2016. Despite the salary increases, the SLC spent approximately the same amount on tutor salaries in 2015-16 as they did the previous year. As a result, subject tutoring group sizes and waitlists increased.

- As mentioned above, the SLC successfully piloted early tutoring appointment sign-ups for students registered with the Accessibility Resource Center in 2014-15 and in 2015-16 expanded early sign-ups to
include programs serving first generation, low income including EOP, SSS, CSSC, REACH, and AACE.

IV. Resources Summary

Resources Allocation:

- SLC annual allocation (lottery) $119,464
- Rollover from 2014-2015 $1,481
- Student Learning Fee allocation (General Fund) 0
- Total allocation for 2015-2016 $120,945
- Projected Annual Expense – SLC $120,694
- Projected Balance $251

Human Resources:

- For the first time in the past five years, the SLC had a consistent career staff of three for the entire academic year, and next year we anticipate increasing staffing back to the level it was in 2006 with three full time 10 month career staff and a 12 month Associate Director. Given that we have four times the number of visits we had 10 years ago, this staffing level still presents challenges, but makes the workload more feasible.
  - In August of 2015, an ASAII position was filled to replace a vacancy from the previous April. Two student clerical assistants were promoted to lead positions to help manage the SLC front desk.
  - In May of 2016, the SLC Coordinator was hired as the Associate Director for the Student Learning Center.
  - The SLC was granted approval by the VPSA to hire a full time, 10 month SI Coordinator (SSP II) for the 2016-2017 academic year due to anticipated expansion of Supplemental Instruction on campus.

Facilities/Equipment:

- The Student Learning Center was granted SLF funding for the 2016-2017 academic year to replace 14 aging, outdated student computers for login, student clerical staff, and student tutoring staff.
- After eight years in the Student Services Center and more than 200,000 visits, the SLC space is showing more wear and tear. A facelift would make the environment a more appealing learning environment; however, the SLC budget priority is paying for tutors and SI leaders who work directly with students.
V. Program Assessment of Past Year

Program Objectives for 2015-2016

1. Strategically reduce tutoring hours and subjects and more specifically direct services, access, and outreach to target populations including EOP, SSS, REACH, students of color, students with disabilities, and low-income, first-generation students not being served by a campus program.

   **Met** - As the College of Business expanded tutoring hours, the SLC phased out accounting and finance tutoring in 2015-16 and referred students to business. In addition, the SLC expanded early tutoring appointment sign-ups on the first Friday of the semester to include programs serving first generation, low income students and students with disabilities. In the morning from 9:00-noon, ARC students had priority to sign-up, and in the afternoon from noon to 5:00 pm students in EOP, SSS, REACH, PATH, and AACE had priority. Not only did this provide first access to appointments to the students who would most benefit, it also reduced the lines and wait time for students signing up for appointments on the first day of open sign-ups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Sign-up total</th>
<th>Early sign-ups</th>
<th>1st Day for the whole campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sp 16</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F15</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp15</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>81 (ARC only)</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F14</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>57 (ARC only)</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Present a CELT workshop on “Collaborative Learning Strategies at the Tutoring Table.”

   **Met** - The SLC convened a panel of subject and writing tutors, an SI Leader, and a student who utilized and benefited from SLC services for a presentation at the 2015 CELT Conference on campus. The panel discussed the role peer tutoring plays in developing a growth mindset among students. The session was well attended and led to a positive collaboration between the Meriam Library and the SLC in developing research skills and information literacy.

3. Collaborate with the Cross Cultural Leadership Center to offer evening drop-in tutoring in the BMU before midterms and finals week.

   **Met** - As discussed above under Diversity Efforts, the continued collaboration with the CCLC was well attended and provided greater access to SLC tutoring services during strategic times in the semester when students were most motivated to take advantage of them. The Student Services Center closing at 6:00 pm limits access to tutoring in the SLC during the times when students might benefit most from it, so being able to
offer expanded hours was beneficial for the 167 students who utilized the services during 220 visits.

4. Continue to integrate iPads into tutoring by investigating and implementing best practices.
   Met - A breakout session on using technology resources during tutoring was offered during spring 2016 tutor training and a large portion of the training included having tutors discuss and practice using the iPads. In addition, we streamlined the checkout process to make the iPads more accessible for tutors. As a result, the number of tutors who checked out iPads to use during tutoring increased significantly.

**Ongoing Assessment Efforts:**

**Demographic Reporting:**
Note: Due to the changing demographics of the university and SLC diversity efforts, SLC usage by students who identify as other than white has increased by 32% in the past 5 years. The number of students using the SLC who identify as Hispanic has almost doubled from 619 in 2011-2012 to 1178 in 2015-2016 (a 90% increase).
Service Usage Summary:

Total SLC Visits Comparison

Note: The number of first day of appointment sign-ups now includes both an early sign-ups day on the first Friday of the semester for students in programs serving low income, first generation college students and students with disabilities and the first day that appointment sign-ups are open to the entire campus.
Student Satisfaction - Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Writing, and Study Skills from Spring 2016 Surveys

Student Satisfaction from Spring 2016 Surveys

Note: Our overall satisfaction rate is 94%.

Tutorial

Number of students receiving tutorial services/Number of courses tutored (Primary Goal 1)

Subject tutor Students and Visits

Note: The SLC had to cut back on tutor hours this year due to budget shortfalls resulting from not receiving SLF funds and a tutor salary increase. As a result, the number of students and visits went down.

Study Skills Workshops
In 2015-2016, the SLC sponsored 34 study skills workshops on the following topics:

- Academic Article Basics
- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Avoiding Procrastination
- Budgeting Your Money
- Business Information for Career Research
- Developing a Research Question That Interests You
- Effective Note Taking
- Finding a Mentor
- Getting Your Needs Met in College
- Google and Beyond- Finding Credible Information Online
- Growth Mindset and Learning
- Literature Review
- Mastering Study Skills
- Money 101: Budgeting and Credit
- Money 101: Graduation and Student Loans
- Motivation and Success
- Memory Strategies
- Note Taking Strategies
- Organizing Your Essay
- Overcoming Challenges
- Personal Information Management
- Planning for Finals
- Pre-Writing: How to Begin Your Essay
- Reading Strategies
Reducing Test Anxiety
Smart Strategies for Success
Stress Reduction
The Well Balanced Student
Time Management

Note: Thanks to a collaboration with the Meriam Library, several research related workshops were added in 2015-2016 and study skills workshops were held in the Library Education Room (MLIB 226) in spring 2016.

Supplemental Instruction

Number of Students Attending Supplemental Instruction Sessions (Primary Goal 2)

Grade Outcomes for SI Students Receiving SI Tutorial (Primary Goal 2)
Note: In spring 2015, SI was expanded from six courses to eight including CHEM 108 and BIOL 211. The grade differentials between the students who attended SI and those who did not in those courses indicate that SI had a positive impact.

Writing Tutoring

Number of Students Participating In Writing Tutorials (Primary Goal 1)

Note: More students visited the SLC Writing Center in 2015-16, but tutor hours were reduced and the number of GRE Writing Workshops were cut back resulting in fewer overall visits.

Student Assessment of Satisfaction, Quality and Student Learning Outcomes
**Learning Outcomes**

**SLO #1:** The Student Learning Center will offer services and programs that develop transferable learning skills that will enhance their academic and personal success both in and out of the classroom.

**Top Five Study Skills Developed by Student Users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Tutoring</th>
<th>Supplemental Instruction</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Study Skills (% not available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of Subject (96%)</td>
<td>Understanding of Subject (91%)</td>
<td>Proofreading and Editing Skills (61%)</td>
<td>Motivation/Persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Preparation (83%)</td>
<td>Exam Preparation (80%)</td>
<td>Grammar (58%)</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Questions (55%)</td>
<td>Better Overall Study Habits (65%)</td>
<td>Organization (53%)</td>
<td>Better Overall Study Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Techniques (48%)</td>
<td>Memory Techniques (61%)</td>
<td>Intros and Conclusions (45%)</td>
<td>Preparing for Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence (45%)</td>
<td>Motivation/Persistence (60%)</td>
<td>Developing Main Ideas (45%)</td>
<td>Memory Techniques</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Each SLC program conducts ongoing assessment throughout each semester. Subject tutoring and SI conduct mid and end of semester surveys of students who use the services. The Writing Center asks students about their experiences immediately after they meet with a tutor, and Study Skills Workshop surveys are emailed to students the day after they attend. This chart shows the top five skills students identified on their surveys for each program.

**Qualitative Assessment of Student Skills:** Many of the comments on the student surveys of tutoring, workshops, and SI give more insight into the specific benefits of tutoring in helping students develop transferable learning skills, persistence, and confidence (see below).

“At first, I was scared to get tutored because I was afraid I would become frustrating to my tutor, or I would seem dumb. However, from the first session, my tutor was very friendly and welcoming. He never made me feel dumb for not knowing, he would say things like "I had the same problem", make himself relatable and help us through the problem.”

“It was helpful to work with a group in SI and discuss in depth a certain subject and then to teach it to the class. Having other students teach me and ask me questions was extremely helpful as well. Drawing things out on the posters and being able to see everything we
needed to know about a certain subject really helped to simplify it.”

“The most important thing I learned from participating in the writing tutoring is that they are there to help me. If I'm confused, frustrated, or get stuck on my paper they are there to give me advice and help me figure out how to write my paper. Most importantly they don't judge me by my writing format. This is especially what I love about the writing center.”

“My tutor was able to listen to each individual's questions and form answers that were geared towards the direction the student's question was phrased. As well, he was able to relate answers back to previous problems students had faced and increase the overall understanding of course material.”

“I learned in tutoring that it is okay to be wrong and mess up, especially when you are learning a new language. One just had to keep on trying and asking for help.”

“In lecture I heard concepts but didn't necessarily understand but in tutoring, it all fell into place.”

**SLO #2:** The Student Learning Center will develop the professional and lifelong learning skills of its student staff through training, mentoring, and ongoing feedback.

**Top Five Professional Skills Developed by SLC Student Staff (all programs)**
Note: This spring 55 of the 85 SLC student employees submitted surveys. The numbers above indicate how many of the 55 respondents chose each of the skills identified.

Note: On the end of semester SLC student staff survey, satisfaction is tied to the experience of developing professional and academic skills.

Qualitative Assessment of Student Staff Skills Developed (comments from SLC student staff surveys)
• “As an SI Leader, I learned how to address certain scenarios respectfully and professionally, I learned to be mindful of my own stereotypes and how I stereotype others, I learned how to redirect the question to other participants, and I learned how to work as a team.”
  ~Katelyn Alvarez, Physiology Anatomy SI Leader

• “The SLC taught me to build confidence in others. The students that come into the SLC are usually bright and hardworking. However, they have a hard time in the subject they’re coming in for. You have to help them over the barrier by running WITH them, not ahead. A good tutor knows the subject. A great tutor knows the students.”
  ~Ryan Ceccarelli, Statistics Tutor

• “The SLC gave me the opportunity to take on a leadership role. Tutor training helped me prepare for situations I had never thought about and made me feel more ready to help students. Many of my students asked for advice about academic and career choices. I felt honored that they trusted me and elated when I was able to help someone consider grander possibilities by helping them believe in themselves.”
  ~Tiffany Thom, Writing and Spanish Tutor

• “This job has taught me how to interact with others in a professional manner and has helped me to be more considerate of what other people may be going through when they come in and express frustration toward us.”
  ~Carina Gutierrez, Clerical Lead

VI Analysis

• As student salaries and demand for academic assistance continues to grow, the SLC will need additional funding, space, and staff resources to help it respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population of first generation, low income college students. CSU, Chico is now a Hispanic
Serving Institution (HSI) and has a responsibility to provide targeted support to smooth the transition to and through the university. The SLC continues to make the most of the resources it has, but this year had to cut back on tutoring subjects and hours resulting in a larger waitlist and bigger tutoring groups. There were more complaints about the noise level on the end of semester tutoring program student surveys:

- “It would be helpful if there were noise dividers so that it is not so noisy and distracting since there are multiple tutoring sessions going on at the same time in the same room.”
- “I don't know if this is possible but it can get pretty loud in there so if that could be fixed, cool!”
- “It’s always loud in there during my tutoring sessions.”
- “It would be great to have bigger work areas with noise dividers to block other tutor and student conversations.”

Expanding Supplemental Instruction could reduce the impact on the SLC space provided that classrooms can be found for SI sessions during the semester. It would also be helpful for the Student Services Center to be open later in the evening to provide greater access to services to students at times that are more accessible for them. The extended tutoring hours in the BMU have shown that students will take advantage of academic resources if they are available to them in the evening. SLC staff continue to work on collaborating with faculty and staff in Academic Affairs to pursue funding opportunities, but those opportunities also present new challenges in terms of increased workload for already overloaded staff. The SLC must navigate growth strategically by focusing on services that provide the biggest impact with the least cost in budget, staffing, and space.

**VII. Program Objectives for 2016-2017**

1. Apply for College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) Five Year International Tutor Training Program Recertification.
2. Expand the Supplemental Instruction Program by hiring a full time SI Coordinator and adding SI support to additional STEM courses.
3. Explore collaboration and funding opportunities for ongoing SLC support (which may include HSI Title V, Student Learning Fee, Chancellor’s Office, and other potential funding sources) without overloading SLC staff and facility resources.
4. Expand professional development for the SLC Writing Coordinator and writing tutors through attendance at a professional conference and learning more about how best to serve the needs of multilingual writers.