The Center for Academic Success

A Summary of the Fourth Year:
Enhancing CAS Services to Empower Student Success

Pamela Lau, Director, Center for Academic Success
June 30, 2010
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During the 2009/2010 academic year, the Center for Academic Success continued to offer three primary areas of service – academic advising and student advocacy, tutoring and learning assistance, and credit-bearing tutorials and modules. If repeated student usage is a sign of effectiveness and relevance, then we can safely say that students found CAS very helpful and relevant in their pursuit of academic success. In fall 2009, there were more than 22,000 student visits. This was an increase of 29% over fall 2008; in spring 2010, the 20,599 visits was a 25% increase over spring 2009. Indeed CAS was well-utilized by students; on any weekday, the hours between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. typically bore resemblance to Grand Central Station, bustling with learner-centered activity.

During this past year, the CAS team sought to strengthen our work of helping all students learn. Peer Tutoring introduced ALT 501 Peer Tutor Training for all new peer tutors. This course formalized the required fifteen hours of training for all new tutors into an official one-credit course which is entered into each tutor’s academic record. Evelyn Brown, one of the Academic Development Specialists, developed a study skills course that focused on applying technology to enhance learning. She successfully piloted three sections of this among students with low-reading skills. Andrew Holm continued to refine his extraordinary teaching strategies for students who struggle with Pre-Algebra, expanding the number of sections for these students. Sue Schreiber encouraged CCS 098 students to read beyond class-assigned materials by coordinating a reading contest in partnership with Townsend Press where every participant can win a monetary prize as long as he or she reads the stipulated number of books. Several CAS members have also been involved in new student preparation initiatives. Larry Taylor, CAS Academic Advisor, and Anita Taylor, CAS Office Assistant, helped launch a Care Call program for new out-of-district applicants to Parkland. Student Development Advocates, Shevon Walker and Jan Thom, together with Larry are currently spearheading a pilot for introducing face-to-face orientation for new students with CCS 098 reading placements. The pilot will begin in June, 2010.

CAS also continued to extend its work beyond the Parkland campus. The Peer Mentoring relationship with Lake Superior College, Duluth, MN and Macomb Community College, Warren, MI continued through the end of fall 2009. A team of five from Parkland participated in the closing meeting at Delta College, Bay City, MI in October, 2009. We hosted visits from Joliet Junior College, IL and Muscatine Community College, IA. The work of CAS was presented at several national and regional conferences.

This past year, we also welcomed a new member to CAS: Sue Schreiber joined us as our Operations Manager at the end of July 2009. She has enhanced our work with her grace, commitment, and skills. It has been really good to have her on board with us.

This is my final year as director of CAS as I will be assuming other responsibilities within Parkland. As I have observed in previous years, the work of CAS would not be possible without the dedicated, diligent, and talented professionals who proudly make up the CAS team. Over the last four years, it has been my privilege and excitement to see this team of professionals come together to generate that special synergy that makes CAS unique, a synergy that fuels our work in empowering students.

Pam Lau, Director, Center for Academic Success
The Center for Academic Success continued to offer its three major areas of service to students this past year: (1) Walk-in tutoring and learning assistance; (2) For-credit tutorials and modules; and (3) Academic advising and student development support.
Staffing
Faculty and professional support staff provide the primary areas of service in the CAS. While some faculty and the professional support staff are official CAS staff members, we also draw upon faculty, full-time and part-time, from the academic departments who choose instructional work in the CAS as part of their semester load.

Center for Academic Success

Tutoring and Learning Assistance
- Academic Development Lab:
  - Academic Development Specialists (2)
- Math Faculty Tutoring:
  - Math Faculty (2)
- Writing Lab - on campus & online:
  - Writing Specialist (1) & Composition Faculty (15)
- Peer Tutoring:
  - Tutor Coordinator (Faculty - 1) & student tutors

Modules and Tutorials
- Modules for Developmental Course work:
  - Reading, Writing, & Math Faculty (9)
- Basic Skills Tutorials:
  - Faculty (4)
  - Academic Development Specialist (1)
- Elementary Chemistry Module:
  - Faculty (1)
- Study Skills Tutorials:
  - Reading & Biology Faculty (3)

Advising and Student Development
- Advising & intrusive support for students:
  - Academic Advisor (1)
  - Student Development Advocates (2)

Administrative Support
- Administrative support & front desk staffing
  - Operations Assistant (1)
  - Office Assistant (1)

OFFICIAL CAS TEAM:
1. CAS Director
2. Operations Assistant
3. Office Assistant
4. Academic Advisor
5. Student Development Advocates (2)
6. Academic Development Specialists (2)
7. Full-time faculty with reassigned time:
   - Tutor Coordinator
   - Writing Specialist
   - Study Skills Specialist

For team contact information, see page 48
### FACULTY AND STAFF PROVIDING THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN CAS
FALL SEMESTER 2009/SPRING SEMESTER 2010

#### STAFF TEAM
1. Pamela Lau – Director
2. Sue Schreiber – CAS Operations Assistant
3. Anita Taylor – CAS Office Assistant
4. Evelyn Brown – Academic Development Specialist
5. Susan Jones - Academic Development Specialist
6. Larry Taylor – Academic Advisor
7. Shevon Brown-Walker – Student Development Advocate
8. Jan Thom – Student Development Advocate
9. Omar Adawi – Tutoring Coordinator
10. Beth Bachtold – Study Skills Specialist
11. Angela Gulick – Writing Specialist

#### INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

##### A. MODULES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Chemistry/Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lee Milton</td>
<td>Rochelle Harden</td>
<td>Andrew Holm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Wallace</td>
<td>Seth Mendelowitz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patti Verstrat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Math** - *These faculty teach modules in the traditional tutorials – 1 instructor: 3 students setting*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barbara Buoy</th>
<th>Hany Hamdy</th>
<th>Shirley Kolb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Wahl</td>
<td>Wendy Wallace</td>
<td>Donna Avery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Sections for IMT students)*

##### B. TUTORIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading/Study Skills</th>
<th>ESL for Heath Professions</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth Bachtold</td>
<td>Christina Havenland</td>
<td>Seth Mendelowitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patti Verstrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deanna Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### WALK-IN LEARNING ASSISTANCE

##### MATH FACULTY TUTORING
- Wayne Clark
- Kevin Hastings

##### WRITING LAB
- Neil Archer
- Eva Ginsburg
- Angela Gulick
- Jeff Hickman
- Andrea Johnston
- Nia Klein
- Sue Kuykendall
- Amber Landis
- Rich Morris
- Brian Nudelman
- Chad O’Neil
- Steve Rutledge
- Thom Schnarre
- Amy Penne
- Lori Williams

##### Parkland Online Writing Lab (POWL)
- Amy Penne
- Ray Meredith
- Angela Gulick

##### “CAS AFFILIATES”: TUTORIALS USING CAS COURSE PREFIXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental Hygiene Board Prep</th>
<th>Literacy for Non-Native Students</th>
<th>TEAS Prep (Science and Math)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim Pankau</td>
<td>Charles Larenas</td>
<td>Joseph Bails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Jinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALN 151 EDGE Program</th>
<th>Dental Hygiene Board Prep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Belton</td>
<td>Kim Pankau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Garrett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey Hickox</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2009-2010 Highlights of CAS Services and Initiatives

On any given week during the fall and spring semesters, the schedules of CAS team members are filled with the “routine” activities of tutoring and learning assistance, advising, providing instruction through module and tutorial classes, and/or simply directing “traffic” in CAS. However, this busyness in serving students is balanced by a constant exploration of new approaches to helping students learn. The unwritten assumption is that what we do is good, but our instructional and support strategies can always be enhanced. Here are some of the initiatives and different approaches implemented in the past year or started for the next.

1. Academic Development Lab: The Academic Development Lab under the leadership of Evelyn Brown and Sue Jones, Academic Development Specialists, continued to be a hub of activity in 2009/2010. Besides the ongoing tutoring and learning support for students with developmental course work placements, Evelyn and Sue took time to do the following.

   a. Annual Planning Project: Purchase of site license of Read and Write Gold 9 learning software and promoting its use among students: Through the college’s Annual Planning proposal process, CAS in partnership with the Office of Disability Services obtained funds to purchase an all-campus site license for Read and Write Gold 9. This is learning software that supports all students but is especially helpful for students with learning disabilities, reading/writing challenges, and/or using English as a second language. This software, when used appropriately and repeatedly, improves reading fluency and comprehension.

      ▪ Student usage: Since the purchase of the software, we have seen a gradual increase in individual student usage from fall 2009 to spring 2010. It is estimated that Sue and Evelyn have worked one-on-one with 80-100 students using RW Gold. About 50% of these students use the software to complete an assignment while 25% will return later to use it on their own. The most popular use of RWGold is to proofread written work.

      ▪ Faculty usage: With the word out about the possible applications of RW Gold, some faculty have started to explore its use in the crafting of class assignments and possible integration into classroom instruction.

      ▪ Tutorial: Evelyn Brown developed and offered pilot sections of an assistive technology tutorial, teaching students to use available software for learning course material and assignment completion. The tutorial covers more than the use of RW Gold, although this software is an important component of the curriculum. Two sections were offered in fall 2009 and one section in spring 2010. In total, 30 students signed up for 44 credits. The fall 2009 pass rate (C or better) was 79%.

   b. P-20 Partnership: This coming summer, Sue Jones will develop workshop materials to show K-7 teachers in the Thomasboro school district engaging ways to use computer-based programs to teach math. She will work with the FASTT Math program. Although this work is outside of her CAS responsibilities, it is an important part of our college’s outreach to local school districts. Strengthening the learning in the schools helps to reduce the number of students who come to Parkland with significant academic deficiencies.

2. Peer Tutoring: Student usage of Peer Tutoring services continued to be strong this past academic year. Tutoring Coordinator Omar Adawi’s submission for College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) International Tutor Program Certification (Level One/Regular Tutor) of the CAS Peer Tutor program was accepted. The official certificate was received on October 7, 2009. This certification is national affirmation of the quality of the Peer Tutor program that Omar has developed and improved over the years. Also, this past year, we began the practice of adding ALT 501 Peer Tutor
Training into each trained student tutor’s academic record. This recognition of training received will follow each student in his or her subsequent pursuit of post-secondary education.

3. **Writing Lab:**
   a. **Magazines:** Writing Specialist Angela Gulick started a “Magazines for the Writing Lab” project. Donated by faculty and staff, the magazines are placed in the Writing Lab for any WL client to read, take, and/or exchange. It has added another dimension to the Lab, prompting student browsing as well as allowing good magazines a second life.
   b. **Using the Lab as a work place:** In the spring semester 2010, we saw a very significant increase in the number of students using the Writing Lab as a place to complete writing assignments. These students did not seek any writing assistance from the faculty. 519 student visits were for this purpose, making up about 30% of the total number of visits. This was a 339% increase over the number of student visits for this same purpose in fall semester 2010. That students find the Writing Lab a conducive place to think and write independently is a welcomed and interesting development.
   c. **POWL:** This was the second year of Parkland Online Writing Lab. Despite Angela’s persistent and creative efforts at getting the word out about this online service, the number of POWL visits fell by 33% to only 65 for the entire academic year (not including summer). Given the need for more faculty to staff the on-campus WL during peak hours, we have reluctantly decided that spring 2010 was the last semester for POWL.

4. **Tutorials and Modules:** Providing opportunities for alternative approaches to teaching and learning is one of the hallmarks of CAS and one primary reason that we have been able to do this is because talented and dedicated faculty choose to work with students who have learning challenges.
   a. **Increase in math module enrollments:** In the past academic year, 67 students decided to complete a developmental math course through the slower-paced modules. This is approximately a 70% increase from last year. And last year’s enrollments were a 105% over the previous year. Clearly this is a trend that is gaining in popularity as we seek to help students with math challenges complete the math requirements for their academic programs. While increasing enrollments is good, it is more important that students complete their module sequences. We are pleased to report that during this past academic year, 13 students successfully completed their required module sequence and passed the math departmental final. This allows them to move on to the next math course. Another 20 students completed the modules sequence but, at the time writing, had not yet taken the required departmental final.
      - **Expanded number of small-class sections:** Building upon Andrew Holm’s success in the small-sized modules for MAT 094 (we measured success in terms of passing with a C or better as well in terms of class persistence), we expanded the number of sections offered in spring 2010 to three. We had a Modules A & B section, a Modules B & C section, and a Modules C & D section.
      - **Modules for special cohorts:** We say that alternative delivery is one of the hallmarks of CAS. This applied not only to the way instruction is delivered but also to the timing of classes. This spring we worked with students in a grant-funded program in Industrial Maintenance Technology program and adjusted class schedules in a unique way to meet the students’ 12-hour shifts at Plastipak and Guardian West.
   b. **Oral communication for students in Health Professions:** In fall 2009, we again offered an oral communications tutorial for health professions students. The enrollment was small and we acknowledge that we need to find different ways of attracting students to take advantage of this
much needed course. But we were excited that with the help of funds from the Health Professions Department, we were able to purchase equipment (earphones with microphones) and speaking practice software, American Speech Sounds, specifically developed for students working towards careers in health care. This was taught by Christina Havenland, ESL faculty from the Humanities Department.

5. **CAS Advising and Student Development Services**: The CAS advising team was busy with advising students and providing guidance to students throughout the academic year. The one-on-one relationships they build with students to support them in their pursuit of academic aspirations takes up the most of their time. But they have taken time out for three important projects.
   a. **Care Calls to Out-of-District Students**: Larry and Anita Taylor teamed up with Greg Square to pioneer a system of care calls to out-of-district students. Funded as an approved Annual Planning proposal, the pilot project was launched in June 2009 and continued through July 2009. While this was not an “official” CAS project, the staff involved and the students affected were largely from CAS so we can informally have some “claim” on the project. The project will continue through summer 2010 and is projected to become part of the First Year Experience project.
   b. **Migration of college information systems**: One project that loomed large for all but especially those on the advising team (and the administrative support staff) was the migration from the old mainframe system over to the Datatel Colleague student information system. While this is not an initiative in the typical sense of the word, it is a systems’ change that required (and continues to require) intense learning, practice, initiative, long-suffering patience – and humor.
   c. **Face-to-face Student Orientation for CCS 098**: It has been two years since Parkland switched over from face-to-face orientation to a fully online version. Students with developmental reading placements are directed to do this online orientation in CAS. There has been dissatisfaction over the learning outcomes for students. Students tend not to retain much of the information conveyed in the online orientation. As a result, CAS advising led by Shevon Walker is currently a pilot face-to-face orientation among students with CCS 098 placements. This pilot will be launched in June 2010.
   d. **Increasing intrusive support**: The increase in academic advising among developmental students has unintentionally resulted in a lowered emphasis on intrusive advising services. We recognize, however, that this is an essential and distinctive aspect of the advising work that CAS does. In order to bring the work of providing intrusive support back to the forefront, CAS advising is, at the time of writing this report, in conversation with CCS 098 faculty members on developing active partnerships. One proposal is that for fall semester 2010, each CAS advising team member will be attached to two CCS 098 sections as the designated advisor. The advisor/advocate will work closely with the CCS instructor to guide and direct students to setting good goals, making appropriate choices, and putting forth the needed effort to attain academic success.

6. **Visit to Heartland**: For Professional Development Day in February, 2010, we decided to visit the learning center at Heartland Community College, Normal, IL. We also spent a good portion of our visit time observing the Read Right program for developmental readers. This opportunity to see what another community college in Illinois is doing to serve students especially the ones who face academic challenges was refreshing. It was especially enlightening to see how the Read Right program is conducted. Seeing it at work has set us thinking about possible ways to bring this to Parkland in the future. From what we observed and learned about its success among the Heartland
students, it appears that this might be a program that will enable us to better help students who arrive at Parkland with significant deficiencies in reading and cognitive processing skills.

7. **Taking CAS beyond Parkland**
   a. **Peer mentoring community:** The Peer Mentoring relationships with Lake Superior College, Duluth, MN and Macomb Community College, Warren, MI continued through December, 2009. The closing meeting for this program was held in Delta College, Bay City, Michigan on October 26 – 27, 2009. The Parkland team included Beth Bachtold, Brian Counter, Rochelle Harden, Kevin Knott, Pam Lau, and Marietta Turner.
   b. **Presentations at professional conferences:** Pam presented on the work of CAS at the following conferences:
      - Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)Leadership Congress, San Francisco, CA, October 2009
      - VELT program: Chinese college administrators, Parkland College, November, 2009
      - Area High School Counselors meeting, Parkland College, March, 2010 (*This presentation was given by Shevon Walker.*)
      - ICCB Developmental Education Advisory Committee, Springfield, IL, April 2010
      - Harper College, Best Practices Learning Symposium, Palatine, IL, April 2010
      - Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 2010
      - ACT Midwest Regional COMPASS conference, Oak Brook, IL, April 2010
   c. **Other visitors:** CAS regularly gets inquiries from other community colleges about its programs and services to support students, especially those in developmental education classes. This year’s visitors included teams from Joliet Junior College, IL in August 2009 and Muscatine Community College, IA in November 2009.
To assess our work in empowering student learning and increasing success, we annually seek answers to three primary questions:

1. Are students using our services?
2. Are students who use our services regularly more successful in their coursework than their peers who do not?
3. Are students satisfied with the services we provide in D120?

**QUESTION 1: ARE STUDENTS USING OUR SERVICES?**

The data we collected through our computerized swipe-card sign-in system show us very clearly that students are coming to CAS in D120 to access our academic and student support services, take credit-bearing courses, and complete assignments.

**Walk-In Services for Tutoring/Learning Assistance and Advising**  
**Academic Year 2009-2010**  
*Duplicate headcount/Number of student visits*  
*Unduplicated headcounts, where available, in parentheses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walk-in Services Tutoring &amp; Advising</th>
<th>SUMMER 2009</th>
<th>FALL 2009</th>
<th>SPRING 2010</th>
<th>TOTAL (+/- % over 2008/09)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising &amp; Student Development Support*</td>
<td>636 (381)</td>
<td>2320 (661)</td>
<td>1874 (534)</td>
<td>4830 (-2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Development Lab*</td>
<td>1694 (894)</td>
<td>2507 (1030)</td>
<td>1956 (867)</td>
<td>6157 (+124%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Lab**</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2213</td>
<td>4293 (+&lt;1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Tutoring*</td>
<td>745 (146)</td>
<td>2579 (548)</td>
<td>2706 (507)</td>
<td>6030 (+13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Faculty Tutoring*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1850 (334)</td>
<td>1886 (315)</td>
<td>3736 (+44%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All services</th>
<th>CAS Total Usage*** (+/- % over 2008/09)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUMMER 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4821 (+60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Student visit numbers from sign-in swipe-card system  
** Writing Lab numbers from manually recorded tally sheets  
** *Total usage includes walk-in assistance visits, advising appointments, usage of facilities to study, students enrolled in credit-bearing tutorials and modules, class reservations.
Comparison of Duplicated Headcount Visits with Previous Academic Years
Data from Fall and Spring Semester Usage (excluding Summer)

* Duplicated headcount/Number of student visits

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>2692</td>
<td>3891</td>
<td>3979</td>
<td>4194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Development</td>
<td>3096</td>
<td>2221</td>
<td>3187</td>
<td>2446</td>
<td>4463</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math Faculty Tutoring</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>2758</td>
<td>2853</td>
<td>2588</td>
<td>3736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Tutoring</td>
<td>4088</td>
<td>5010</td>
<td>5224</td>
<td>4843</td>
<td>5285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>2987</td>
<td>4299</td>
<td>4102</td>
<td>4092</td>
<td>4216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Usage</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,589</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,527</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,756</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,487</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,684</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2005/06 usage data taken from records of four learning support units (Academic Development Center, Writing Center, Peer Tutoring, and Learning Lab) which were the predecessors of CAS

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Usage of Walk-in Learning Assistance and Advising Services
Fall & Spring Semesters 2005/2006 to 2009/2010

- 2005/2006*
- 2006/2007
- 2007/2008
- 2008/2009
- 2009/2010

* 2005/06 usage data taken from records of four learning support units (Academic Development Center, Writing Center, Peer Tutoring, and Learning Lab) which were the predecessors of CAS
Reflections on the Number of Student Visits

1. **Overall increase:** There has been a significant increase in the number of times students use CAS this past academic year. Although we know that this is a popular place on campus for all students seeking academic support and advising help, this large increase in numbers surprises even us. We can attribute this increase to several different factors:

   - **Referrals:** Staff and faculty refer many students to CAS. Several faculty members from the Natural Sciences and Humanities departments hold regular office hours in CAS and this helps to introduce CAS as a place of learning. Students bring fellow students. We frequently hear of students who come because others have told them that CAS is the friendly place to get help.
   
   - **Class reservations:** Developmental reading faculty frequently reserve the Academic Development Lab for classes, especially when they are not in a computer classroom. Again, this brings students into an area where they can receive one-on-one help for all levels of developmental course work.
   
   - **Class visits:** CAS Student Development Advocates, Study Skills Specialist, Writing Specialist, and CAS director are invited to do class visits each semester. Some classes are brought down to tour the facilities.
   
   - **Wide range of services:** One of the distinctive features of CAS is the range and integration of services provided. CAS goes beyond being a tutoring service. We focus on integrating the learning and student development aspects of retention strategy with learning assistance and this enables us to serve the whole student. This comprehensive network of services helps us live up to our billing as a one-stop learning center.
   
   - **Student satisfaction:** Student satisfaction with the instruction, assistance and/or advice provided is the best advertisement that CAS has. Many of the students who use CAS are
regulars who use our services repeatedly. Not only do they find the instruction and help beneficial, but they also spread the word among their peers at the college.

2. **Changes made to student sign-ins**
   In last year’s report, we noted deficiencies in our sign-in system. This year’s increases in recorded number of student visits may be in part due to changes made in response the observed deficiencies. The changes we made included the following:
   - **New students:** The sign-in screen now has an option for new students who come to CAS for orientation.
   - **Meeting with director:** There is also an option for students who see the CAs director to discuss module options for developmental course work or complete the course progress process.
   - **Re-arranging the list of services:** The Academic Development Lab is now at the top of the list of service options on the sign-in screen since this is the option chosen by the majority of students with developmental course work placements. This takes into consideration the general disinclination of many freshman developmental students to read further down a list of options.
   - **Student worker help:** We rearranged the front office set-up so that a student worker is strategically positioned to help students with signing in. New student worker training has also contributed to the building of a motivated team of student workers, committed to maintain CAS’s high standard of customer service and student support.
   - **Campus Technologies:** Changes to sign-in system would not have been possible without the gracious help provided by Patrick Holy of Campus Technologies. We in CAS have benefitted much from his patient willingness to lend his programming expertise to help us keep track of students and their usage of services and run reports as needed.

3. **Student usage of available CAS services**
   Students use CAS for many reasons. Some come for advising; some others take modules and tutorials; still others come for tutoring or to take advantage of study facilities. The question is whether students who come for one kind of help learn about other services and avail themselves of the support provided. We have not done an extensive study into this but results from the spring 2010 exit interviews conducted among students who took modules and tutorials in CAS is instructive. One question in the exit interview focused on what other CAS services students made use of besides coming in for module/tutorial classes. Among the 23 respondents who took CAS math modules, only a small number actually made regular use of the math tutoring services provided in CAS. Allowing for the fact that some module students are evening non-traditional students who work all day and are unable to come in when the full slate of math tutoring is available, the relatively low use of tutoring presents a concern as students who opt for math through modules are students who typically find math challenging and would benefit from more help, not less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math Faculty Tutors</th>
<th>Academic Development Lab</th>
<th>Peer Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 used daily</td>
<td>1 used daily</td>
<td>1 used daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 used weekly</td>
<td>1 used 2-3 times per week</td>
<td>1 used 2-3 times per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 used 4-7 times a semester</td>
<td>2 used 4-7 times a semester</td>
<td>2 used 4-7 times a semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 used 2-4 times a semester</td>
<td>1 used 2-4 times a semester</td>
<td>1 used 2-4 times a semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 used once</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This exit question among writing tutorial/module students also indicated the same lack of use of the writing assistance offered in CAS. Of the 9 respondents, only 2 said that used other CAS tutoring services: one of these students said he or she used CAS writing support on a daily basis and the other reported use 2 – 4 times in the semester.

**Action for improvement:**
- Explicit encouragement: Module and tutorial students are required to complete homework assignments in CAS. Instructors can actively encourage students to use tutoring services for homework help, as needed.

**Question 2: Are students who use our services regularly more successful in their coursework than their peers who do not?**

This is one of the more important questions that can and should be asked when evaluating the effectiveness of learning support services. In what follows, quantitative data collected on the effectiveness of our services will be shown in tables and charts. A primary focus will be on whether the students attain passing grades on the course(s) for which they sought CAS help.

As always, it is important to qualify the numbers presented. Measuring effectiveness is one of the more challenging tasks in the assessment and evaluation of learning assistance. For one thing, students who come to CAS for help often bring significant academic deficits and are not ready to do college-level coursework yet. Academic deficiencies are frequently compounded by a range of non-academic or outside-the-classroom problems and a combination of challenges can sometimes overwhelm even the most motivated and diligent students. Also, success cannot always be measured by a passing course grade or program completion (even though these are the quantifiable overcomes that are the standard measures of effectiveness). For some students, success comes only after several attempts or by withdrawing and opting to use the slower modularized approach for developmental coursework completion. For some other students, improving basic skills instills a higher degree of self-confidence even though the improvement attained may not lead to passing grades or degree completion. For yet other students, course persistence (that is, staying the course – literally – and not withdrawing) in and of itself is success, even though this may not translate into adequate attainment of course learning outcomes and repeating the course in question might be required.

**Math Faculty Tutoring**

Math Faculty Tutoring is available Monday through Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Two math faculty members, Kevin Hastings and Wayne Clark, provide this service to students with developmental math placements.

**Evaluation Approach**
- **Comparing pass rates:** We are evaluating the effectiveness of Math Faculty Tutoring by looking at the pass rates (C or better) of students who accessed this service at least 5 times in one semester. The pass rates of these students are compared with the overall course pass rates for MAT 094 Pre-Algebra, MAT 095 Beginning Algebra, and MAT 098 Intermediate Algebra. The assumption is that most of the students who come for MFT help are ones who find math particularly challenging. It is
an indication of MFT effectiveness if these students can at least match the pass rate of their peers in the classroom.

- **Course persistence:** We also looked at these repeat users of MFT to see how many of them persisted through the course and attained at least a D. While D is not a passing grade in terms of what the Mathematics Department deems as a minimum attainment of course learning outcomes, it does indicate that the student did not give up and was retained throughout the duration of the course. Some degree of learning was taking place through the end of the course. Also, D is regarded as meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards for continued financial aid. Attaining a D thus helps the students to remain in good financial aid standing.

The following tables and charts illustrate what the data tell us.

### COMPARING PASS RATES* OF STUDENTS WHO UTILIZED MATH FACULTY TUTORING WITH OVERALL COURSE PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DEV MAT COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAT 094</th>
<th></th>
<th>MAT 095</th>
<th></th>
<th>MAT 098</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Course</td>
<td>Math Faculty Tutoring: 5 visits or more per semester</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Course</td>
<td>Math Faculty Tutoring: 5 visits or more per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pass Rate(%)</td>
<td>Pass rate (%): C or better*</td>
<td>Pass rate (%): D or better**</td>
<td>Pass Rate(%)</td>
<td>Pass rate (%): C or better*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58.0% n = 26</td>
<td>69.0% n = 26</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42% n = 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>75.0% n = 16</td>
<td>81.0% n = 16</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48% n = 33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* C grade or better: Department requirement for proceeding on to next math course in identified sequence

** D grade or better: Indicates course persistence; counts as satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes
MAT 094: EFFECTS OF MATH FACULTY TUTORING
Students who use MFT 5 times or more in one semester

- Course Pass Rate
- C or better
- D or better

Fall 2009: 56% C or better, 58% D or better
Spring 2010: 69% C or better, 81% D or better

MAT 095: EFFECTS OF MATH FACULTY TUTORING
Students who use MFT 5 times or more in one semester

- Course Pass Rate
- C or better
- D or better

Fall 2009: 55% C or better, 42% D or better
Spring 2010: 46% C or better, 70% D or better

MAT 098: EFFECTS OF MATH FACULTY TUTORING
Students who use MFT 5 times or more in one semester

- Course Pass Rate
- C or better
- D or better

Fall 2009: 50% C or better, 53% D or better
Spring 2010: 51% C or better, 65% D or better
Reflections:

1. **Number of Participants:** We saw a phenomenal increase of 44% in the number of students who utilized Math Faculty Tutoring this past academic year. This well surpasses the number of students when MFT had Title III funding and was offered for five hours every week day.

   While the overall number of students who use MFT repeatedly is still relatively small compared to the overall numbers of students who are enrolled in developmental math classes, we are seeing significant increases in the number who use MFT at least five times a semester when we make comparisons with repeated users in the last academic year. 76 students came to MFT more than five times in fall semester 2009, an increase over 27% over the year before; 72 repeat users were recorded for spring semester 2010, an increase of 44% over the year before. Students returning to use a service indicate that they perceive the service as helpful towards their goal of achieving success in math.

2. **Effectiveness:** In general, we can say students who come to get help several times a semester tend to pass at higher rates than their peers in the classroom. This fits the trend noticed over the past four years of data. Coming consistently for help yields a greater probability of course success.

   However, it is important to remember that the numbers focus on the performance of a group of repeat users each semester and thus only provides a snapshot of how a select cohort of students performed in their developmental math. Comparing the pass rates of repeat users this past academic year with the previous year, we see that the MAT 094 and MAT 098-level students performed significantly better in fall 2009 than in fall 2008. But MAT 095-level students in MFT in fall 2009 performed more poorly in terms of final course grade than in fall 2009.

   Also, looking at the grade distribution of the students who used MFT regularly, it is fairly significant to note that although not every student passed with the minimum grade, many more stayed to the end of the course and earned a D. This persistence in the course is unusual as many of their peers in similar academically precarious situations would have withdrawn. The students somehow were encouraged to remain persistent and were willing to persevere to the end. This means that learning continued through Week 16 of each semester; this persistence also helped students to remain on the side of academic progress as far as financial aid criteria are concerned.

3. **Planned Improvements:**

   - One recurrent comment on student surveys of Math Faculty Tutoring is the need for more faculty tutors. The ability to double staff at least one hour would be a good response to student requests for more tutoring help. However, in the light of budget constraints, it appears unlikely that we will be able to provide extra faculty in the coming year.

   - Students also tend to utilize MFT services just prior to major tests. This is of course fairly typical college student behavior where the urgency of understanding math, its concepts and methods of proper computation only become apparent on the eve of the days of reckoning. However, this approach is highly ineffective for students who are already math-challenged. CAS needs to find ways to work with faculty to instill better, success-yielding learning behaviors among students with developmental math course placements.
The number of student visits to the Writing Lab in the past year continued to be strong. A total of 4293 visits were recorded for the whole academic year (summer and fall 2009 and spring 2010). [* This number is derived from WL faculty tally sheets. Tally sheets are manual records which provide us with a more accurate count than from the computerized sign-in system at the CAS entrance. Students in a hurry do not always reliably indicate which service they are accessing in the CAS.]

For assessment purposes, we focused on students who came to the Writing Lab at least five times per semester and looked at their grades for the courses for which they sought help in the Writing Lab. We believe that the WL cannot take the credit for good grades (or the blame for poor grades) of students who used the writing assistance services four times or less. Data reports showed that students who came to the Writing Lab repeatedly tend to do well in their courses.

Fall Semester 2009
- 69 students came in the WL more than 5 times.
- 58 of them (84%) passed their classes with a C or better.
- Of these 58, 40 (69%) of them earned A or B grades.

Spring Semester 2009: This pattern of students doing well was repeated in spring 2009.
- 54 students came 5 times or more.
- 45 of them (83%) passed the course they received help for with a C or better.
- Of these 45, 33 (73%) attained A or B grades.

Student course performance lends support for the belief that students who regularly receive writing help from the Writing Lab faculty will succeed in their courses.

Courses: Most of the students who use the Writing Lab at least five times a semester seek help with assignments for a composition class, developmental reading class, or LAS 189. Only 13% of these students want help with writing assignments from non-composition or writing intensive classes.
POWL: This was the second year of offering POWL, the Parkland Online Writing Lab. This online service was launched upon the assumption that students in the many online courses offered by Parkland would benefit from having online writing assistance. Despite many attempts at publicizing the service to students and faculty in a multiplicity of ways, the overall use of POWL has remained low. In 2008-2009, there were 94 visits to POWL (fall 2008: 48 visits; spring 2010: 46 visits). The number of POWL visits declined in 2009-2010 to 65 visits (decrease of almost of 30% from the year before). There were 29 visits to POWL in fall 2009 and 36 visits in spring 2010. Given that there is a demand for more composition faculty to work directly with students in the Writing Lab and there are clear cost effectiveness considerations, we have decided against continuation of POWL in the next academic year.

PEER TUTORING

Peer Tutoring continues to be one of the most heavily utilized services in CAS. (It “competes” with the Academic Development Lab for the most student clients.) Over the course of the past academic year (summer 2009, fall 2009 and spring 2010), 6030 students came in for tutoring services provided by Peer Tutors. This represents an increase of 13% in terms of student usage when compared to the 2008-2009 academic year.

To get a better picture of the impact of Peer Tutoring services on student course performance, we looked at students who used tutoring help at least eight times in each semester. Many students come in for less than eight times, but our CAS Tutoring Coordinator believes that it is not reasonable to draw a causal link between tutoring services and its impact on a student’s final grade if the student’s average use of tutoring was no more than once in two weeks.

The sign-in swipe-card system gives the following information on students who used Peer Tutoring services at least 8 times in a semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students using Peer Tutoring</td>
<td>90 students made 1348 visits for 57 courses</td>
<td>96 students made 1551 visits for 63 courses</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 times or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students seeking mathematics help</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>106 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students seeking chemistry help</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students seeking physics help</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students seeking help for other subjects</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most students who come to Peer Tutoring seek help with the more quantitative disciplines: college-level mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, accounting, and business. The highest
demand among repeat users (8 times or more a semester) is for help with math courses. 57% of repeat visits in this group have to do with math. Chemistry and physics are the next highest.

Effect of Repeated Tutoring Sessions on Course Performance
We looked at the effect of Peer Tutoring (PT) on students who used tutoring for eight times or more each semester by focusing on the course performance (success being defined as C grade or better for the courses for which the students sought help) of the following:
(1) All students who used PT at least eight times;
(2) Students who came for help with mathematics;
(3) Students who sought help for physics; and
(4) Students who wanted help for chemistry.

Students Who Used Peer Tutoring at Least 8 Times and Their Rate of Success*
Fall 2009 and Spring 2010
(Comparison 2008/9 data in shaded column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pass rate of students using PT at least 8 times</th>
<th>2008/09 Total</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>2009/10 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass rate of students using PT at least 8 times</td>
<td>75% n = 159</td>
<td>85% n = 90</td>
<td>71% n = 96</td>
<td>73% n = 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Students</td>
<td>67% n = 87</td>
<td>73% n = 55</td>
<td>67% n = 51</td>
<td>70% n = 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry Students</td>
<td>96% n = 23</td>
<td>76% n = 14</td>
<td>79% n = 19</td>
<td>79% n = 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics Students</td>
<td>85% n = 20</td>
<td>86% n = 7</td>
<td>77% n = 13</td>
<td>80% n = 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Success is defined as earning a grade of C or better
Reflections on Effectiveness

1. Success rate averages: The office of Institutional Accountability and Research (IAR) reports the average course retention (C or better grade) for the college from 2005 – 2009 as 73.6%. This means that the overall 73% pass rate of students who accessed Peer Tutoring help repeatedly (eight times or more per semester) almost matches the college average. A closer look at the numbers shows that the fall students did considerably better than the spring semester students. They exceeded the college average by more than 10%!

As always, there are several factors to consider when we look at the pass rates of students who utilize Peer Tutoring help: (1) Many, though not all, students who seek tutoring help are struggling to cope with class material and to complete assignments. This may be due to poor educational preparation in the past. For some of these, successful mastery of the prescribed curriculum may not happen within one 16-week semester. (2) Many students come for tutoring help primarily (or only) when assignments are due and on the eve of quizzes and major tests. The lack of proper study skills and strategies limits the effectiveness of tutoring. Even coming in multiple times before major tests will not always make up for the lack of consistent independent study and effective strategy use. (3) The course performance of weaker-skilled students is balanced by the highly motivated students who will use all means available to keep on top of course material and maintain a high quality grade in the class. (4) Students tend to seek tutoring help for the higher-level, more quantitative subjects where there are clear objective criteria for what is the correct answer and mastery of material. There is usually little room for more “subjective” assessment and, for some students, this means it is harder to earn a passing grade. (5) Some students need individualized, intensive one-on-one instruction and tutoring as the challenges they face with course material are significant. However Peer Tutoring is not set up to provide that kind of one-on-one teaching and tutoring. In this sense, there are limits and constraints set by budget and purpose that make Peer Tutoring not as effective for this kind of student.

2. College-level math success rates: The heaviest demand for tutoring is for college-level math courses. This past year, repeated users primarily asked for help in MAT 128 Calculus I, MAT 129 Calculus II, MAT 228 Calculus III, and MAT 229 Differential Equations. Some relevant considerations are helpful in understanding the pass rates of students who seek PT help:

- Many students are focused and diligent; a few came in more than 40 times in a semester. But many of them find math a definite challenge. One student in fall 2009 came to Peer Tutoring 50 times for help with MAT 124 but only earned a D. He persisted through the course but was unable to earn the minimum C grade needed. But another student who came in 48 times to work on MAT 125 earned an A. This underscores the wide range of students who need tutoring help with math and repeated use of tutoring services is not the only factor in passing a college-level math course.

- Comparison with course pass rates:
  - MAT 128, Fall 2009: 7 students used Peer Tutoring repeatedly for help with MAT 128. Of these 7, 5 passed (4 of them with A grades). This would mean that 71% of them passed the course. The course pass rate for MAT 128 in fall 2009 was 67%.
  - MAT 229, Fall 2009: The course pass rate for MAT 229 was 77%. 8 of those students came to Peer Tutoring for help. All these students passed with a C or better, a 100% pass rate.
  - MAT 228, Spring 2010: 9 students used Peer Tutoring for their MAT 228 class in spring 2010. 6 of these students passed, a 67% pass rate. The course pass rate for spring 2010 was 53%.
  - PHY, Fall 2009: The course pass rate for all PHY (Physics) courses in fall 2009 was 70.4%. Of the 7 students who came to Peer Tutoring for Physics help, 6 of them passed, a pass rate of 85.7%.
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PHY, Spring 2010: The course pass rate for all PHY (Physics) courses in spring 2010 was 79.4%. Of the 13 students who came to Peer Tutoring for Physics help, 10 of them passed, a pass rate of 76.9%.

In general, we can say that there is a strong likelihood that students who use Peer Tutoring regularly will do better than the overall course pass rate.

DEVELOPMENTAL MATH MODULES

Target constituency
CAS has been offering developmental math modules since its inception in summer of 2006. These modules are designed to meet the needs of several kinds of students including the following:
(a) Students who have poor quality math-related educational experiences in the past and have difficulty with the faster-paced math courses in a college classroom
(b) Students who have math-related learning disabilities
(c) Students who can handle the math concepts but need an instructional approach that is different from what is possible in a 30-seat traditional classroom
(d) Students who have significant levels of anxiety in relation to math learning and math testing
(e) Non-traditional students who have forgotten math learned in earlier phases of life, fear doing math alongside younger students, and/or prefer the instructional format of CAS modules
(f) Students who have not succeeded in math in the traditional classroom setting

Increase in module enrollments
The popularity of math modules has increased significantly through the years. This past year, we had 36 students begin math modules in fall 2009 and 31 students in spring 2010, a significant increase of 71%.

The first set of columns in the chart below displays a comparison of the numbers of students choosing to take math through modules over the past three years.
This growth in the math module enrollment is due to several factors:

- Counselors and advisors have better information about the math modules and the kinds of students who may benefit from this instructional approach.
- Math faculty members refer students to CAS if they encounter students who struggle greatly in the math classroom. CAS director in consultation with the Math Department chair either drop-swaps or withdraw-swaps such students from their multi-credit hour math course into module credits depending on the time of the semester the referral is made and on the reasons behind the difficulty of the math class.
- Students spread the word about modules among their peers.
- Course progress students come to CAS to complete the third-attempt process and are introduced to modules during their meeting with the CAS director.
- Flexibility in CAS scheduling makes it possible to meet the unique schedules for students who work on shifts in local manufacturing plants. The spring 2010 students included a special cohort of students pursuing the Industrial Maintenance Technology certificate.

Assessment of effectiveness

The assessment of math modules in terms of its effectiveness in helping students complete course requirements is a challenge for the following reasons:

- The modules result in students taking a longer time (two or three semesters as opposed to the standard one semester in the classroom) and this stretches out the time needed to count completers.
- Students come to college with a multiplicity of non-academic life issues and many stop out for a time. Module sequences sometimes cannot be completed in a timely manner, at least not within the time frames we typically measure completions.
- Some students taking math requirements through modules struggle with significant learning challenges. They find that even the best instructors cannot always make the learning come faster or easier and assure successful completion.

Given these parameters, a basic assessment question is simply whether students complete their module sequences at all. Completion is one important measure of effectiveness for two reasons: One, the slower pace of modules provides a greater chance that a student will stop out mid-sequence and not return; and, two, many students enrolled in modules have weaker academic records with non-academic issues. These when coupled with math deficiencies mean a greater likelihood of giving up on math.

Completion of modules is measured in two ways, one being “less complete” than the other.

(i) Before starting on modules, the student takes a diagnostic to identify the number of modules he or she needs to attain the computational skills for a specified developmental math course. Completion is measured in terms of completing all identified modules with a C or better.

(ii) The Math Department requires each student who completes his or her module sequence to take the departmental final for the course in question and pass that final with a C or better. Passing the final ensures that the departmental prescribed course-level learning outcomes have been attained and is the condition upon which the student is permitted to enroll in the next math course required for his or her academic program.

The chart above shows that 33 students completed their required sequences this past year (an 83% increase over the previous academic year). But many of these completers did not take their departmental final exams at the end of spring 2010 even though they had been repeatedly told of the requirement. This can be attributed to the lure of summer and the sheer relief of not doing math on a daily basis, resulting in students leaving campus after finals and not returning to make appointments to
take the final. Emails have gone out to request that the final be completed before the end of summer semester. The number of students completing the module sequence as well as passing the departmental final is the same as last year’s: 13.

Observations and Conclusions
1. **Popularity:** The math modules option is growing in popularity.
2. **Pedagogy:** The modules option is pedagogically sound because it ensures understanding of each segment of the course before a student is permitted to move on. Instruction paces a student’s comprehension and ability to do the prescribed computations.
3. **Alternative for students with challenges:** Most of the students who completed their developmental course requirements through modules will probably not have been successful in the regular traditional classroom setting. There are many cognitive and affective obstacles preventing them from doing so. This option at least avoids discouragement and frustration, and saves tuition even though it is a longer option. In this sense, this option is clearly effective.
4. **Mid-semester option:** The availability of modules means that students who are not passing a traditional developmental math course may, in the middle of the semester, swap into a module to at least build better foundations for a future re-take of the course. Without this option, the typical student action is to withdraw, not work on math skills for the rest of the semester, not address deficiencies in skills that precipitated the failure, and then attempt the course again at a later time. Modules allow for on-going math learning outside of the standard class/semester-long format.
5. **Limitations of face-to-face instruction:** Although the number of students taking advantage of modules is increasing, this number is small compared to the vast numbers of students who are required to take developmental math. (About 70% of entering freshman students at Parkland place into pre-college/developmental math.) A recurrent question is whether a modular approach can be expanded to meet the needs of more students. There are clear limits to using face-to-face instruction. One, budget constraints means we have to limit the number of hours an instructor can meet with students. This in turn restricts the amount of direct instruction and opportunities for quick feedback students receive. Teaching and learning typically slows down, sometimes unnecessarily. Two, face-to-face individualized teaching means only a small number of students can be assigned to one instructor. These considerations have led to our investigating alternative approaches using technology. Starting in summer 2010 and continuing into fall 2010, CAS will pilot sections of modular math using a web-based math program called ALEKS. These pilots will take place in a small classroom with 8 computers. The instant feedback of the program means that students can learn even when the instructor is helping another student. The 24/7 access into ALEKS for the duration of the semester means that the motivated and/or less-math challenged student can make move through the math modules at a quicker pace. The more precise diagnostic tool that ALEKS provides will help students build sounder foundations for progress in math learning.
6. **Database:** Until this year, data about module students, their progress, their start and end dates have been stored in a non-interactive Word table. CAS’s new Operations Assistant has created an Access database which permits a helpful range of queries. This data management tool will enhance the assessment of math modules in the future.
**Question Three: Are students satisfied with the services we provide in D120?**

Following the practice of the past three years, we used student surveys to ascertain the level of student satisfaction with the tutoring, learning assistance, and advising help that they have received in CAS. We also used the surveys to obtain information to help us better understand why students come to CAS, what aspects of our services they find most useful, what improvements they would like to see and so on.

**Academic Development Lab**

The Academic Development Lab (ADL) was a very busy area of CAS in the past academic year. In fall semester 2009, 1030 students used the ADL and its services 2507 times: in spring semester 2010, 867 students came in 1956 times. Student surveys were distributed in spring semester after midterm. There were 56 returned surveys. The following data sets and charts represent what we learned in the survey.

**Information from 56 returned surveys**

1. **Student Satisfaction**: Students told us that they were satisfied with the help they received in ADL. 90% of the respondents to the question on satisfaction were either very satisfied or satisfied.

   | Student Satisfaction with Help Received in the Academic Development Lab |
   |-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
   | Very satisfied                              | 29 (62%)        |
   | Satisfied                                    | 13 (28%)        |
   | Somewhat satisfied                          | 5 (10%)         |
   | Not satisfied                                | 0 (0%)          |
   | TOTAL                                        | 47 (100%)       |

   ![Bar chart showing student satisfaction](chart.png)

2. **Reasons for Using ADL services**: We also used the surveys to identify the major reasons for using ADL services. Students are encouraged to use the ADL for studying and completion of homework. Some come just to use the computers to word-process homework. Others come in for the assistive technology software. Still others want to consult with Sue and Evelyn.

   | Reasons for Using the Academic Development Lab |
   |-----------------------------------------------|----------------|
   | To use computers for class assignments        | 34             |
   | To consult with Sue or Evelyn on CCS, dev. ENG or MAT courses | 30             |
   | To print assignments                          | 20             |
   | To use special software to help with studying & assignments | 20             |
   | To learn how to use Angel, email, WebAdvisor  | 3              |
   | Other                                         | 12             |
3. **Student Comments:** The surveys also gave students an opportunity to write comments. We asked two questions: (i) why they were satisfied or not satisfied with services received; (ii) what they perceived as the best thing about the Academic Development Lab. The following is a compilation of what students told us.

**Student’s comments on their degree of satisfaction**

38 surveys had written responses to question (i). 14 of these comments focused on customer-service issues. Each comment was positive. 11 comments talked of the help received with learning, and again they were all positive. 5 wrote comments about the environment and the amenities, again all positive. There were only 4 comments expressing dissatisfaction.

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT LAB**

**Focus of Student Comments on their Level of Satisfaction**

Spring 2010
This tells us that students value positive attitudes in the ADL staff as they work with students. They want to be treated in a welcoming manner; they value being respected and supported as they pursue their academic goals. The help received and effectiveness of the tutoring services offered in the ADL were also important to the survey respondents.

Selected comments are reproduced below verbatim to give a flavor of the responses received. They are arranged in the following categories.

a. Student-centered customer service
   - I had trouble printing and Sue and another lady helped me and was very friendly
   - Sue and the other people who work here always help me to the best of their ability. They take their time and they don't get upset when you don't know the answers right away.
   - Yes, because they are very polite and it is always nice and quiet in here.
   - I love coming to the lab. Mrs. Su and Evelyn are so very helpful and smart. They know just about everything
   - After being out of school for 30 years, Evelyn and Sue have given me the support I have needed to make it this far
   - Very enthusiastic and available. Thanks!
   - All the staff members are really nice and smiley. They always help me.
   - Teachers are willing to help.
   - Any time I had a question someone was there to help me
   - People are very caring and understanding

b. Help with learning
   - Because I struggle with math and these two ladies are excellent.
   - Because I knew nothing about computers and I'm learning and that's good.
   - Good instruction on the various subjects.
   - The teachers have helped me out so much on what I am suppose to do.
   - It helps me a lot with my work two understand the assignments better.
   - They help you learn and keep going over the information to you know it
   - Because they explain things in a concise way so you can understand how to do the work yourself. They don't give up on you no matter how much trouble you are having understanding something
   - Satisfied with the way Sue approached the problems on math and helped with English, writing.
   - Sue makes it very understandable to the older person. She also does not worry so much about the math terms and makes sure that I understand the basic concepts.
   - Getting an understanding of anything that goes on in Parkland
   - Well, everything that I struggle in they have some type of way that I could get help, and truly do it well.

c. Environment and amenities
   - It is one of the best place to do homework and study.
   - This place is convenient and quiet
   - The reason I like coming to D120, because its free printing and I can also get the help I need
   - Because its very helpful for when you don't have a computer at home with internet
d. Dissatisfaction
   - Because I couldn't get on to it
   - Because you don't give me enough answers to write on my essay.
   - My only issue is their volume. They speak really loud...
   - I was looking for a program on the computer and no one new what I was wanting or how to get to it. Although they were friendly in their cluelessness.

Student comments on the best thing about the Academic Development Lab
There were 37 comments about what the students liked about the ADL. More than one-third of the comments (14) praised the help they received in the Lab. Eight students focused on the specific help they received with learning. Seven highlighted the ADL staff as the best thing about the ADL. Another seven focused on the equipment, technology and related services, especially the free printing for developmental course work. One student liked the relaxing atmosphere.

THE BEST THING ABOUT THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT LAB
Spring 2010

Selected comments are reproduced below verbatim to give a flavor of the responses received. They are arranged in the following categories.

a. Helpfulness
   - That you get the help you need and sometimes help each other out.
   - I can do all my work there and never have to leave. Everything I need is right there.
   - You can always receive what you need.
   - Extra help and it always smells N-I-C-E :)  
   - How they help you understand the way things work.
b. Learning assistance
- That I can learn about math. My teacher does not seem to care if I know the material or not. So, I come to D-127 to learn. It’s great! Now that I think about it, that might be why it took 2 full hours to get the work nearly finished.
- For the most part it is very quiet and everyone seems to stay on track, making me stay on track.
- It’s a friendly, trustworthy and caring environment. Makes learning even more fun.
- Is that the staff help me with a good explanation about how to solve most of my math problems.
- The teachers are there to help when you’re doing homework or quiz and test reviews. And they can just jump in and explain how to do the work. So you can be successful. Without their help many would not be able to pass their courses.

c. The staff
- Evelyn and Sue
- The people and the peer tutoring.
- Read and Write 9, Scan machines and Sue!
- You get the help you need. From Mrs. Sue and Mrs. Brown and the rest of the staff.
- Sue and Evelyn and all their help
- People make sure you get stuff done and boost your confidence
- People try to help you. It’s not very loud.

d. Equipment and technology and related services
- Using the computers and its free printing
- The Reading PLUS because it helps me understand it better
- Free Printing :)
- Computers and printing
- The computers are really fast!!
- They have free printing or pretty much free everything.
### CAS ADVISING

#### Student Satisfaction with Help Received in the Academic Development Lab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Information from 82 returned surveys

1. **Student Satisfaction**: The students who answered the surveys were clearly very pleased with the advising help they received from the CAS advising team (one Academic Advisor, two Student Development Advocates). 54 students said they were very satisfied, 21 were satisfied and only one felt dissatisfied. 99% of the students who responded to this question on satisfaction were positive about their advising experience in CAS.

![Bar chart showing student satisfaction levels](chart.png)

2. **Student Perception in Increase in Self Efficacy**. One of the purposes of CAS Advising is to help student increase their sense of self efficacy. We added a new question to the annual survey instrument this year to gauge whether students perceived an increase in self efficacy as a result of their visit: “As a result of your visit today, do you feel you have a better understanding of your academic/personal situation and the next steps you should take?” Survey responses indicate a resounding yes to the question. Out of 77 answers to the question, only one student said no.
3. **Reasons for Advising Visit:** We used the survey to identify major reasons students walked-in or made appointments to see members of the CAS advising team. Students were asked to check all options that applied. Of the 82 completed surveys, 70 students (85%) said that they came to get advising help to set up class schedules for the next semester. Given that this survey was administered from midterm through the middle of June 2010, this is not surprising. Continuing students as well as new students need to get schedules done for summer and/or fall semester. What would be important to the mission of CAS is whether students also come for help with the college/life management issues pertaining to student life. The survey responses show that some students do come for counsel on these matters but the need to set up class schedules is the overriding motivator behind these advising visits.
**ACTION FOR IMPROVEMENT:** There have been conversations how the CAS advising team can do more to work with students beyond academic advising. Providing just-in-time student development support is a significant part of the intrusive support that is supposed to be the hallmark of CAS advising work. This is particularly the case with students who place into CCS 098. Weak reading skills are often symptomatic of other academic deficiencies, the lack of academic/life management issues, and ignorance of the culture of college. The heavy flow of students who access advising help just for academic advising (that is, choosing classes for the following semester and deliberating whether to withdraw from classes) has resulted in less opportunity to develop the advocacy part of CAS advising work. To this end, CAS has been in conversation with developmental reading faculty about developing a closer link between the Student Development Advocates and Academic Advisor with CCS 098 students. Starting in fall 2010, each member of CAS advising will work closely with the faculty of two CCS 098 sections. This partnership will involve class visits, liaising with faculty on student success matters, and helping students put in requisite effort, access CAS tutoring services, and keep to deadlines. The goal is to develop more effective ways to help student learn, persist and succeed.

4. **Students and Their Degree of Satisfaction:** Students were asked to write explanations on their level of satisfaction with CAS advising services. The 60 comments received can be divided into the following categories. The percentages in parentheses give an indication of what mattered most to students: (a) Quality of information and explanation of next steps (33%); (b) Scheduling and related matters (27%); (c) Confidence in advice received (8%); (d) Quality of customer service (18%); and (e) General compliments or complaints (13%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of info. &amp; explanation of next steps</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling &amp; related matters</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in advice received</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of customer service</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General compliments/complaints</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CAS Advising**

What matters to students in terms of their satisfaction

Spring 2010
Selected comments are reproduced below verbatim to give a flavor of the responses received. They are arranged in the following categories

a. Quality of information and explanation of next steps
   ▪ She was very right to point and knew exactly what I needed to hear. Very informative
   ▪ He told me more than everything I needed to know and pointed me in the right direction.
   ▪ Because when you have no one that helps you and you start to struggle, you come see a counselor. They help you better yourself and school work and home problems
   ▪ Because when you have no one that helps you and you start to struggle, you come see a counselor. They help you better yourself and school work and home problems
   ▪ Because I have a set plan and goal
   ▪ Very good at talking things out-reading (course) descriptions, giving me a better feel for what I’m signing up for.
   ▪ Mr. Taylor is always helpful with new information I may have a concern about and he always explains it in a way that is understandable

b. Scheduling and related matters
   ▪ I feel like all the counselors are very helpful and nice and again helpful when it comes to scheduling for spring and fall. They also tell me how to manage my busy schedule.
   ▪ Mr. Larry Taylor explains in detail what steps are needed for the student to be successful. He makes it easy when registering for classes.
   ▪ I am very satisfied because when I needed help on choosing a major my advisor suggested that I go to the career center
   ▪ She is very helpful and has answered all my questions and made me feel a lot better about things

c. Confidence in advice received
   ▪ Because my future is in their hands and I trust them.
   ▪ Always very helpful and look out for my best interest
   ▪ They are very thoughtful and really want me to be successful. Jan Thorn is wonderful.
   ▪ Things were handled correct.

d. Quality of customer service
   ▪ The people who work here are so nice to you when you come in.
   ▪ Very helpful. Did not feel rushed! Great help!
   ▪ Everything was broke down to where I understand it
   ▪ Jan always takes time to go over every aspect of what you need
   ▪ Helpful and paid attention to each person’s needs

e. General compliments or complaints
   ▪ Got everything accomplished that I came for on the first visit
   ▪ Jan Thom really knows everything
   ▪ Mr. Taylor is always very helpful
   ▪ (From dissatisfied student) The advisors are not helpful at all
Math Faculty Tutoring (MFT) is offered Mondays through Fridays between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. It was staffed by math faculty members, Wayne Clark and Kevin Hastings, both of whom teach developmental math courses. The tutoring help they offer is well sought after by students. In fact, it was so popular with students that we saw an increase of 44% this past year in terms of student visits. More than 300 students in each semester (fall and spring semesters; MFT is not offered in summer) used MFT, logging in 3736 visits in total. Student surveys were distributed in spring semester after midterm. There were 42 returned surveys. The following data sets and charts represent what we learned in the survey.

Information from 42 returned surveys
1. Student Satisfaction: Students told us that they were satisfied with the math instruction and help they received in MFT. 93% of the respondents to the question on satisfaction were either very satisfied or satisfied. No survey respondent was dissatisfied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Satisfaction with Help Received at Math Faculty Tutoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One measure of the effectiveness of learning assistance and of student satisfaction is number of repeat visits students make. Any student can use a service once. They will return if they find the service helpful. Students coming repeatedly signal that they found their time well spent and that they received what they were looking for. Students who used MFT in each of the semesters during the past academic year averaged 6 visits each. They were satisfied with the math help that Wayne and Kevin offered.

Student respondents were invited to comment on their level of satisfaction. Here are unedited samples of what students said.
an. Very satisfied students
   - I got my homework done without problems
   - I received help with everything I needed. They also helped me learn how to use various thing in there.
   - They really listen and helped me with the problems that I didn't understand.
• Waine is very good tutor he should have more time down here. A lot of the other tutors can not explain the process like he does.
• This service is very necessary for students to be successful when they are struggling. It has helped me a lot big thanks to Wayne Clark!
• Wayne helps you out really good. I understood the whole lesson.
• I don’t understand everything in class. The mat faculty tutoring helps me understand the things that I need to do my assignments correctly. Otherwise, I would be falling behind and would be doing my assignments without the understanding that I need. My math grades were starting to go down, but since I have been coming to MFT, my grades are going up again, showing improvement.

b. Satisfied students
This group of students would have been more satisfied if MFT were a little different and they explain their perceptions.
• The help I get is great, but the ratio of tutors to students is bad. I often have to wait 20-30 minutes to get help on a single problem since they’re busy tutoring others.
• They help on specific questions but some instructors don’t really explain why and how they did the problem. Also some instructors don’t walk around, I have to come to them for help.
• Tutors were busy with other students, took too long.
• I got some work done, but wanted a little more help.
• I took a math course (can’t remember name) and I really liked the ALEKS Program.

c. Somewhat satisfied students
Again these students explain their lower level of satisfaction
• More than one instructor should be present.
• It’s really hard getting help when so many students are talking
• Some of the help is not enough especially when it comes to Math. There needs to be more teachers to help us.

Response to comments
• Excellent math tutors: Wayne and Kevin have solid reputations as math instructors and they bring to MFT their understanding of math as well as of the challenges faced by students in developmental math. Their expertise and experience make a significant impact on students who struggle with math when it is combined with a clear commitment to student learning.
• More faculty tutors: The popularity of MFT means that one faculty member for each hour is insufficient. However current budgetary constraints makes it difficult to fund more than one faculty member an hour. However, with the growing awareness among students of the availability of good tutoring, CAS needs to explore other ways of acquiring more math tutors.
• Volunteers: On occasion, we have a volunteer from the community to help with math. However, this is sporadic. Also, we do not have a system to ensure that volunteers understand the challenges adult students face in math and that pedagogy remains sound and in sync with Parkland’s developmental math program.
• Student expectations: There are quite a few students who would benefit from intensive one-on-one instruction and tutoring. These students are sometimes frustrated because they cannot receive that level of intensive individualized math help in CAS. We need to do more to help students understand what kind of tutoring we are able to offer.
2. **Likelihood of returning to use Math Faculty Tutoring**

   No student said that he or she would not return to Math Faculty Tutoring for help. All respondents anticipated coming back. This is an affirmation of MFT and a clear expression of the satisfaction of the students. They see the value it holds for ensuring that they find success in math.

![Pie chart showing likelihood of returning to Math Faculty Tutoring](chart1.png)

3. **How students learned about MFT**

![Pie chart showing how students heard about MFT](chart2.png)

Most students learn about the Math Faculty Tutoring program through their instructors. Instructor referral is most important and we are glad that almost half the students (48%) indicated that the instructor in the classroom had recommended that they make use of this help. Peer referral is also powerful. 23% of the students had heard about this source of math help from friends. Academic advising referrals and CAS publicity materials each account for 16% of how students learned about
MFT. This confirms that publicity materials are important but they, at best, supplement recommendations from people that matter in the students’ lives: their instructors and peers.

**Peer Tutoring**

Student surveys were conducted in fall semester 2008 as well as spring semester 2009 to gauge student perceptions of the tutoring help received. The following data is extracted from the 55 completed surveys. This is less than the 88 completed surveys returned in the previous academic year.

*Information from 55 returned surveys*

1. **Response to Statement**: “The tutoring I received helped me to improve my grade in my course.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to surveys in 2008-2009, the percentage of respondents who reported a positive perception of the impact of tutoring on their course grade has fallen slightly from 90% to 87%. This can be due to any combination of factors including the smaller number of completed surveys, the students surveyed having more challenges with course material, the number of new tutors, the time students come to get help and so on. We are unable to conclusively identify the reasons for the lower percentage. That said, having 86% of respondents stating that tutoring had a positive impact is a clear affirmation of Peer Tutoring and its work in serving students.
2. **Response to Statement: “The amount of time that tutors spent with me was appropriate for my needs.”**

Student responses to this statement can be taken as an indicator of satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Perceptions of the Amount of Tutoring Time was Appropriate to Need for Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A typical complaint among students using college learning center walk-in services is that the tutors do not give individual student sufficient time. The surveys indicate that this is not the perception of the students who used Peer Tutoring services this past year. 91% of the survey respondents felt positively about their experience and were satisfied with the time they were given in their individual tutoring sessions.

Student satisfaction is also evidenced by the number of repeat visitors to Peer Tutoring. Leaving out one-time visitors to Peer Tutoring, the sign-in system shows that in fall 2009, 283 students made 2272 visits for tutoring and in spring 2010, 270 students made 2470 visits. This averages out to 8 to 9 students for every student who came more than once. A student choosing to use a learning support service is indicative of client satisfaction, felt academic need, and perceived effectiveness.

3. **Response to statement: “I would have withdrawn from this course if no help had been available.”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Withdrawal If No Tutoring Help Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PEER TUTORING - 2009/2010

Amount of tutoring time per session was appropriate to student need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Withdrawal Without Tutoring Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two broad categories of students who use CAS tutoring services: one, students who are high achievers and do whatever it takes to maintain high grades; two, students who face challenges in mastering course material. The students in the first category usually do not have to consider the possibility of withdrawal from courses. They have a good handle on course material and accessing tutoring simply increases the assurance that they will maintain success in their courses. Students in the second category are different. Tutoring help can make the difference between passing the course (grade C or better) and failing. It is significant that less than 40% of surveyed students could categorically say that withdrawal would not have been likely if there were no tutoring available. The availability of tutoring services that keep students successful in courses helps to make the academic experience at Parkland a satisfactory one.

4. Response to Statement: “The tutoring schedule fit well with my schedule.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Perceptions of Convenience of Tutoring Schedule</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The convenience of the tutoring schedule is also a factor in overall student satisfaction of a service. 80% of the students surveyed gave a thumbs-up to the way the tutors are scheduled and the overall hours of operation.

5. Student Comments: The surveys give an opportunity for students to write comments. The following is a sample of what the students told us. The comments are reproduced verbatim. Most of the comments expressed appreciation for the help; some students gave constructive suggestions, most of which had to do with hiring more tutors and giving more intensive one-on-one help.

- “Peer Tutor” is great!
- I love peer tutoring.
- The tutors are great! Especially “Peer Tutor”!!!, (six more peer tutors listed)
- The Peer Tutor Program is definitely a valuable tool I have to help me w/ my math class.
- The tutoring lab has helped me tremendously in Math and Physics.
- We need more tutors.  (ACC 117)
- Sometimes not enough tutors available.
- The tutors are great and very helpful. Every once in a while, I came in to get help and there are no tutors (or none for my subject) but this is rare. (MAT 128 student)
- Once in a awhile I have had a hard time getting help because of the amount of students, but on occasion I’ve had a hard time because of lack of attention...tutor is too busy chatting or playing computer games!

Response to Comments
1. **Tutor training:** There is a turnover of tutors every year. Student tutors graduate or transfer to four-year institutions; new student tutors are hired. The training of new tutors is an on-going activity. At the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, required training for new tutors takes place. The 15-hour training requirement is now formalized into a course, ALT 501 Peer Tutor Training and added to the transcripts of all newly trained peer tutors. This CRLA-recognized training program ensures that every new tutor is adequately trained to work with fellow students.

2. **Increase in tutors:** The budget constraints under which all community colleges in Illinois are currently operating make it impossible to increase student employment budget lines. This means that CAS will not be able to increase the tutor man-hours and provide more tutors in response to student requests. One alternative is to train tutors well so that they can provide satisfactory learning assistance. Another approach is to encourage more faculty members to hold office hours in CAS and to offer their expertise to students in their discipline if their own class students do not come for help. Already, a number of Natural Sciences and Humanities instructors do so. Having more faculty members participate in this in-house form of “service teaching” would help to increase tutoring expertise in CAS. A good side-effect is that peer tutors get to see good learning assistance modeled in their midst.

3. **Providing one-on-one tutoring:** Students who are academically challenged sometimes ask and expect CAS to provide intensive one-on-one tutoring. This is a service that CAS is unable to provide due to budgetary limitations. We are looking for ways to better inform our student clients and shape their understanding of the nature of the tutoring services we can provide. To this end, we have put table tents on tutoring tables to explain the limits of each tutoring session.
The Writing Lab, led by Writing Specialist, Angela Gulick, piloted online surveys of students this past academic year. Angela developed a survey and posted it on Survey Monkey. She sent the following message to student clients of the Writing Lab, using the emails collated on a report on the CAS swipe-card sign-in program.

Hello.

My name is Angela Gulick, and I am a faculty member who works in the Parkland College Writing Lab. Our records indicate that you have used the Writing Lab at least once in the past month. We are really interested in hearing about your experiences because we always want to improve our services. We would be very grateful if you took a moment to fill out our brief survey. Your responses will be 100% anonymous and confidential. However, we will use the feedback we receive for future Writing Lab planning and improvements.

Just click on the link below, answer the six questions, and select DONE when finished. Also, please note that we send this survey out approximately once a month, so you may have seen it before. However, we are still very interested in your opinions.

If you do not wish to receive this survey, please email me back with your name and email address, and I will remove you from our list.

Thank you very much. Angela

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=olIumMjH3yg_2bheWF0usOA_3d_3d

Angela M. Gulick
Associate Professor
Humanities Department
C243, Parkland College
2400 West Bradley Avenue
Champaign, IL 61821-1806

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**Student Opinions on Assistance Received in the Writing Lab**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>50</th>
<th>63%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely pleased</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat pleased</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unhappy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely unhappy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information from 80 returned online surveys (66 from fall 2009; 14 from spring 2010)

1. **Student Satisfaction**: Student opinions of the assistance received in the Writing Lab were overwhelmingly on the positive side. 92% of respondents indicated that they were extremely pleased or somewhat pleased. Only 6 students expressed a degree of unhappiness over the service received.
2. **Student comments why they are pleased or unhappy**: The survey invited students to elaborate on their responses about their perceptions of the Writing Lab assistance. There were 63 comments that were positive about the help received; 14 respondents had a somewhat negative account of their experience in the WL. About half of the comments focused on the attitude of the faculty and whether the student sensed a spirit of helpfulness. One-sixth focused on specific areas of writing and whether the help received was effective. A sampling of unedited comments from the surveys is replicated here. It would appear that the online medium allows for students to elaborate more on their experiences than the paper surveys that CAS typically uses. Also, the negative comments are instructive as they give us pause to ask what it is we need to do to improve the services rendered through the Writing Lab:

a. Specific references to improvement in writing-related skills:
   - **The instructor who helped me with my essay was very good at pointing out both the bad and good parts of my essay so that was very helpful. It wasn't about me feeling good about my essay but about me writing a good essay.**
   - **I'd like to correct my grammar mistakes as well as organization of writing, but she(tutor) said she would not correct the grammar mistakes.**
   - **Yes a am an average student when i went to the lab my average writing skills became above average.**
   - **I went there, but I didn't really get any help, because a tutor asked me if I have a specific question for her before she started reading my paper, went I told her that I need help to fix everything wrong on my paper, she just readed and underlined only some grammar errors. I was very sad because nothing change on my paper. that happen to me two time, and I thing in this way, some tutors in the writing lab are not really helpful.**
   - **The first time I walked into the Writing Lab, I did not know what I wanted/needed or how to explain it to someone else. The second time the assistant seemed to know how to help me and with relief, I plunged into writing my first paper. Five drafts later I managed to turn it in at the last minute due date. Thanks so much!**

---

**WRITING LAB**

**Student Perceptions of Assistance Received in the WL**

**Fall 2009 & Spring 2010**

- **Extremely unhappy**: 0
- **Somewhat unhappy**: 6
- **Somewhat pleased**: 23
- **Extremely pleased**: 50
b. Perceptions about the attitude of WL faculty and the help extended to student clients:

- Yes, I can elaborate my response as follows:--
  1. At the first place the approach of all Writing Lab. staffs are excellent.
  2. Secondly, all of them are fond of International students.
  3. Thirdly, I really appreciate their willingness to help foreign students.
In general all staffs are helpful, cooperative, and very kind-hearted.

- I wish I would have caught the instructors name that helped me, but it made my experience very enjoyable and light-hearted.

- I am a student from Ethiopia, as you know English is my 2nd or 3rd language and I am struggling with the spelling, grammar, etc. Personally I am using the writing lab to get many assistances as much as possible more than the native speakers, even more than the international students. I got many useful assistances from the Lab, and I am very thankful for these assistances. But one day I was very upset about unhappy assistance which I received from the lab. Really I was confused. Presently I have stopped using the writing lab. I do not want to be confused any more. Please can you improve your method of assistance especially for international students.
Thank you so much.

- Everytime I needed help there was someone there that could help me. You never feel alone while working in the writing lab.

- I would have to say it was a little of both (pleased and unhappy). I use the writing lab fairly often, and the help seems to be somewhat inconsistent. Some days, the help is really great. Other days, the response from the assistant is very vague and not very helpful. There was an older lady working one evening, I think on a Thursday, and she did what I expected the writing lab to do always. She looked at what I had written, and she took the time to go over it with me and point to certain things that could flow a little better, and where things might be rearranged for more effect, and gave some very good directions. I usually get a very vague response.

There were also many general comments of how helpful, patient, and kind the WL faculty were.

c. Time-related issues (time spent with individual students, wait time):

- The instructor are always in hurry, may be many students come at the same time or there are not enough instructors.

- It would be nice if tutors spent reasonable time between students. If someone is waiting then excessive time shouldn't be spent with just one student.

- The people working there are really helpful, but sometimes it takes a very long time to get somebody. One time I had to wait for more than 30 minutes, because there were too many students waiting for some help.

d. The structure of the WL and its effect on students

- am very happy you offer the help but it makes it a little confusing when every hour you have somebody new and you have to explain to them all what you are doing and then everybody makes a change here and their since we all think different I really like getting the help I need just makes a little confusing when you don't speak to the same person from start to finish and you think the same or you both get in the same track on thinking and somebody comes along then your thinking strategies you had changes when you have somebody else.
3. **Increase in Writing Confidence**: Students were asked whether they perceived an increase in their confidence about their writing as a result of their visit(s) to the Writing Lab. 64% of respondents indicated that they felt more confident because of their use of WL services. 33% thought that the visit had a neutral effect on their sense of confidence. Three students (4%) said that the visit had a negative impact on their confidence.

**WRITING LAB**

**Student Perceptions of Effect of WL Visit on Writing Confidence**

*Fall 2009 & Spring 2010*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel more confident</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effect on confidence</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel less confident</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL responses to question</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student elaborations on why they felt this way are instructive. An unedited sampling of what they wrote gives a helpful idea of what students perceive as confidence building.

- *The teachers there is very kind and patient, which makes me feel good and confident.*
- *The teachers would help but just enough to get my own wheels turning. Some would also compliment my writing and tell me that I am doing great.*
- *I did not realize that I was a good writer until I did the writing lab and my teacher told me I had done an amazing job with it.*
- *With the lab there I know that I can put my ideas on paper they will help with grammar which builds my confidence.*
- *Because of the fact that more foreign language speaker need assistant from the writing lab, all tutors must be very patient open to help and give directions to fix writing difficulties as some of them did. I use to be really motivate and encouraged by one tutor and now went I have to go there I just check the schedule first.*
- *They do care on how I am improving in addition to their help and that does make me confident. because I am always trying and they are supportive.*
- *Because of my lack of computer skills, the writing lab have given me more confidence in my writing.*
- *One of the tutors saw a bad pattern in my writing that I am working to correct in future writings, and another one gave me the best compliment I have received in months.*
- *They make me understand my mistakes and how I need to correct them.*
Yes, my writing flows better since I have been coming to the lab. One teacher told me that for the first time she enjoyed my writing because it flowed so well. (She's more picky) Of course, I could not take all of the credit. I told her I was going to the writing lab as she suggested.

It didn’t make me more confident or less confident regarding my ability to write. However, it was a confidence booster for the particular paper that I was working on. I had not previously written a formal lab report.

I’m less confident about my writing because I don’t know what my instructor wants, even though the writing lab is a great resource.

I’m still not so sure on my writing abilities.

4. General feedback

The online survey ended with a general request for feedback: “Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experiences and opinions about the Writing Lab? We’d love to hear your feedback.” Many of the comments had to do with one of three things: the kind of writing assistance given, staffing and wait time for help, and/or the attitude of the WL staff. Below is a sample of the written comments. Again, it appears that the online medium invites more detailed comments from student respondents.

- What I think the Writing Lab needs to have is someone who can help those of us like myself with the areas of writing that we are not understanding. Like more on a none academic level. What I mean is, have someone who can explain how to think about writing especially when it comes to writing critically. I am having a hard time understanding how to think critically and then therefore form a paper like that. Some of us is just going through the motion of writing and not really knowing what we are really doing. I, we need to be shown in a more simple or easier way to do it. I hope that my explanation is understanding to you. If you feel you would like to call me on my comment please feel free to do so. My name is (student gave name and phone numbers).

- The people in there are usually very nice, but again, please see my comment above. I think a little more detailed help would be very good. I haven’t been in college for many, many years, and it’s safe to assume I’m going to need a little more direction than what most of the assistants in the lab seem to be willing to give. I don’t expect them to tell me answers, but some more detailed direction would be nice. I’m usually 1 of 2 or 3 people in the lab, so it’s not like they’re swamped and can’t take a little more time to read what I’ve written, then give me some meaningful direction. It would be nice to have the lady that was in there a few weeks ago. She was the perfect example of what I would expect to see in the writing lab. Maybe my expectations are not correct. If so, please disregard my comments. Thank you.

- I loved it glad it is their helped change a D paper into a B paper which helped my grade and confidence and explained the importance of proof reading.

- I think there should be more than one person in the writting lab to help because sometimes there is so many people to help and you cant get the one on one time needed.

- Maybe more tutors around mid-terms or at the end of the semester.

- Keep up the good work! I did not think that it was fair for an instructor to make all of their students to come in the last two weeks of class. There were plenty of people in the writing lab that really wanted help and they had to wait for the people assigned to be there to have their paper’s reviewed first. The instructor’s in the writing lab should get a head’s up so maybe more help could be available when this happens.

- I do understand why the wait seem long. it is because there are students that always need help.
• the response time is usually variable depending on what stage I’m at. I usually have a 1st draft most of the way done, and have them help me with the refinements, but they constantly rotate through the students that are there. If I don’t need any help as they get to me, I’ll typically have them bypass me till I ask for help.
• One of the times I came in I was quickly attended to. The next time I couldn’t wait around any longer so I left after 10+ minutes.
• So far, it has been like a lifeline....Totally without help, I think that I would have dropped Engl 101. Again, Thanks!
• I love the way everyone helped me to sign in and writing my paper. You guys are great listeners.
• You my’s well shut er down!
• THANK YOU
1. **CAS Director:**  
   Pam Lau  
   217/351-2431 ▪ plau@parkland.edu

2. **Office Assistant:**  
   Anita Taylor  
   217/353-2005 ▪ ataylor@parkland.edu

3. **Operations Assistant:**  
   Sue Schreiber  
   217/351-2441 ▪ sschreiber@parkland.edu

4. **Writing Specialist:**  
   Angela Gulick  
   217/373-3797 ▪ agulick@parkland.edu

5. **Study Skills Specialist:**  
   Beth Bachtold  
   217/353-2017 ▪ bbachtold@parkland.edu

6. **Tutoring Coordinator:**  
   Omar Adawi  
   217/373-3863 ▪ oadawi@parkland.edu

7. **Academic Development Specialist:**  
   Evelyn Brown  
   217/351-2587 ▪ ebrown@parkland.edu

8. **Academic Development Specialist:**  
   Susan Jones  
   217/353-2056 ▪ sujones@parkland.edu

9. **Academic Advisor:**  
   Larry Taylor  
   217/353-2649 ▪ ltaylor@parkland.edu

10. **Student Development Advocate:**  
    Shevon Brown Walker  
    217/351-2478 ▪ swalker@parkland.edu

11. **Student Development Advocate:**  
    Jan Thom  
    217/353-2022 ▪ jthom@parkland.edu