

Project Details

Title	Remaking Tutoring for Student Success: Focus on Modes and Measures	Status	ACTIVE
Category 1 - Helping Students Learn		Updated	
Timeline		Reviewed	
Planned Project Kickoff		Created	07-06-2015
07-15-2015		Last Modified	07-06-2015
Target Completion			
05-20-2016			

- **1: Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve:**

VU's Answer: The purpose of this project is a needs-assessment, designed to address the gap between students' perception that tutoring is a valuable, effective program to enhance their success and students' under-utilization of tutoring services, according to current Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data (both VU and national data).

Diverse institutional areas will be involved in this project. Currently, tutoring services for VU students are available at various sites and online. VU also offers special programs that feature tutoring, including Student Transition into Education Programs (STEP), Student Support Services/COPE, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Student Success Center.

- **2: Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this action project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution's current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio:**

VU's Answer: Student persistence depends on academic support through tutoring. This project is important because improved student retention is an on-going strategic goal and is directly related to VU's funding because of the State's interest in increasing student success and graduation. With a thorough needs analysis, we are in a better position to re-envision tutoring as it is currently offered (mostly campus-based, with rigid hours) and make sure that tutoring exists to meet the needs of a broader spectrum of students, including those working on-line or unable to come to campus for tutoring. Tutoring is both an example of academic support to students and a vital component of VU as a learning community.

This project addresses issues integral to accreditation. For example, **HLC Criteria 3. C. 6:** "Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid

advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development,” and **3.D.2:** “The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.” Moreover, this project reflects VU’s on-going assessment of student success initiatives, including tutoring.

Retention depends on effective tutoring, according to VU stake-holders and educators beyond VU. According to the Community College Center for Student Engagement publication, “A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success,” tutoring is a high impact practice that aids retention. The publication suggests that VU’s gap between students’ perception of the value of tutoring and use of it is consistent with national CCSSE results. According to the publication, 73% of all CCSSE respondents indicate tutoring is either *somewhat* or *very important*, yet only about a quarter of the same students use tutoring. For the VU team who attended the CCSSE Workshop in Santa Fe, tutoring was the chief area of VU’s focus. This project will help VU complete the tasks and various planning done for that workshop.

- **3: List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed:**

VU’s Answer: The project should focus on goals manageable in less than one year: July 15, 2015-May 15, 2016.

- Inventory current tutoring offered
 - Survey current faculty expectations for student use of tutoring sessions
 - Review how VU informs students about and promotes tutoring services/one-on-one assistance
 - Collect student-use numbers—traditional students (campus-based), on-line/distance ed
 - Survey and/or complete focus group study of students and tutors to understand services desired, used, and offered
 - Review training in order to identify possible needs/gaps
 - Bring in a tutor “authority” to speak to tutoring issues, needs, tutoring “best-practices,” and maybe to offer analysis of our review and recommendations
 - Identify and implement tutoring improvement strategies to be implemented 2016-17, including plans for on-going assessments of tutoring
- **4: Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project’s duration:**

VU’s Answer: A task force will be designated representing faculty, professional staff including representation from Multi-cultural Services and tutoring lab personnel, students, and at least one dean. Broad representation should help meet the expectation

and ensure that we have shared ownership by diverse stake-holders, reflecting an institutional action project.

The larger group may be able to form sub-committees who can better address specific project goals as identified in Part IV of this document. Responsibilities beyond the goals of the project include keeping minutes of meetings and getting accurate numbers of students/tutors involved in surveys/focus groups.

We have identified a budget so that we may utilize an ID tracking system to get a sense of student use, not only how many, but how often students return and student demographics so we can zero-in on subpopulations of students who should be targeted for greater use of tutoring. Tracking will also help us to establish expectations for future use.

- **5: Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when:**

VU's Answer: Below is the strategic plan, including due dates, for the Tutoring project:

Remaking Tutoring for Student Success: Focus on Modes and Measures--Strategic Plan

Phase 1 of Improving Tutoring: Needs Assessment, July 15, 2015-May 15, 2016

Objective	Completion Date	Responsible Persons	Resources	Completion Measures
I-1. Establish Tutoring Committee	Sept. 15, 2015	Provost	Time	Committee and mission approved and operating
I-2. Inventory of current tutoring offered at VU	Oct. 31, 2015	Assessment Subgroup A	Time	Report of various tutoring services, locations, student users, hours, etc.; research of tutoring offered at other institutions
I-3. Survey of faculty expectations for student use of tutoring	Oct. 31, 2015	Assessment Subgroup B	Time	Report of faculty expectations for student use of tutoring/study sessions offered by labs or faculty; research of expectations at other institutions
I-4. Collect or track student use of tutoring	2 nd week of semester through end of Fall 2015; beginning	Assessment Subgroup C	Tracking Devices for VU and Jasper campus labs; data from student	Report of numbers of students using tutoring: total, frequency, demographics, credit hours, etc.; research of use at other institutions

	of Spring to April 1, 2016		support services (COPE, Multi-Cultural Affairs, etc)	
I-5. Review of how VU markets tutoring services	Feb. 15, 2016	Assessment Subgroup A	Time	Report of tutoring marketing, both labs and faculty offerings; research on how tutoring is marketed elsewhere
I-6. Review of tutor training	Feb. 15, 2016	Assessment Subgroup B	Time	Report on tutor training, both what is offered and what might be needed, including research of training offered elsewhere
I-7. Survey/focus group study of student and tutor to determine services used, desired, offered, and other issues such as labs, access, hours, etc.	Feb. 15, 2016	Assessment Subgroup C	Time	Report on tutoring services offered, used, needed, including research on services offered elsewhere
I-8. External tutor authority	Feb. 15, 2016	Assessment Committee	Funds requested for AQIP Project, \$1,500-3,000	Review and recommendations for improving tutoring by consultant and survey of faculty and staff who attend session
I-9. Recommendations for tutoring improvements	May 1, 2016	Assessment Committee	Time	Final Report that includes and is based on reports above
I-10. Plan for on-going assessment of tutoring	May 1, 2016	Assessment Committee	Time	Included in Final Report

6: Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals:

VU's Answer: The following are the challenges for Phase One of improving tutoring, challenges for the needs assessment stage:

- o Collecting all the information will be time consuming.
- o Collecting meaningful data will be essential to decision making.
- o Find a tutoring authority to help VU work through key processes.
- o Keeping the work on track.

The following issues are not relevant to an exploratory year, but will likely follow from the review:

- Centralizing and budgeting for a wider array of student needs will potentially cause stress—either because current situations might be moved/changed/defunded or because new approaches to tutoring might create new funding needs.
 - Developing assessments for the number of users and the quality of tutoring services will be new and potentially threatening
 - Changing approaches to tutoring (those that coach students rather than doing for students)—if necessary—will be difficult.
 - Establishing tutor training will be new (but that will be future issues)
- **7: Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project:**

VU's Answer: Currently the institutional approach to tutoring lacks any unified expectations for tutors, has not been assessed, and is essentially an independent operation of the offices offering the services. The needs analysis proposed for this project will allow VU to articulate the connection between tutoring and student success more effectively. As we identify specific ways students are more likely to utilize tutoring, we are better able to adjust processes and policies to serve students and help more of them succeed academically.