



**Solano Community College**  
**Academic Senate**  
**BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes**

Friday 12/8/17, 12:00-1:30pm, Room 135

**Voting Members:** Josh Scott (Basic Skills Coordinator), Tracy Schneider (English Basic Skills Coordinator), Barbara Villatoro (Math Basic Skills Coordinator), Candace Roe (DSP), Jose Cortes (ESL), George Olgin (ASTC), and Dwayne Hunt (Administration).

**Advisory Members/Guests:** Rebecca LaCount, Melissa Reeve, Cynthia Simon, Genele Rhoads, Isabel Anderson, Michael Wyly, Neil Glines, Nicholas Cittadino, Sarah McKinnon, Shirley Lewis, Terri Pearson, Claudia Tenty, Pei-Lin Van't Hul, Peter Cammish, Rischa Slade, Dawn Carpenter, Carlene Coury, Gale Anderson, Renee Nichole Hamlin, Robert Payawal, Claudia Tenty, Heather Watson-Perez, Shirley Lewis, Theresa Brunner, Andrew Wesley, Nick Turney, and Peter Zitko.

1. **Call to order** – Joshua Scott, Chair
2. **Comments from the public.**
3. **Approval of 11/3 minutes.** Melissa Reeve.
4. **Discussion of ASTC—what’s the vision?**
  - a. Presentation from George (attach George’s handout)
  - b. Three student tutors of the ASTC introduced themselves and talked about their positive experiences helping students. Tutoring extends beyond academics; sometimes students just need a listening ear. **Q & A with the tutors:**
    - Jose: What do the tutors take away personally from the experience of tutoring?
      - A learning process for tutors as well. Tutoring helps learn the subjects better than when they took the classes themselves—figure out the “why” of things they took for granted. Learn to work as a team.
    - Dwayne: what do students say who don’t use the service? What are their reasons?
      - They don’t have time.
      - They may have another setting that’s more comfortable, such as EOPS and Umoja services and online services.
    - Jack: Do you want more connection with professors to better help their students?
      - Yes—the best way would be if more professors could spend an hour a week or so of their office hours in the ASTC.
      - Currently, Chemistry faculty are doing this as routine. They help not only their own students, but any student they can.
    - Terri: Are there areas or gaps where students need more support that we’re not providing?

- Yes: Tutors are just peers, not counselors, but at times their job feels like counseling. Sometimes students cry. A lot of times their problems are personal, not academic
        - Embedding counselor in the ASTC could be a way to address this need. Not good enough to tell them “got talk to your instructor, counselor, etc.”
    - Michael: Maybe a good idea to have peer tutors come out to classes in the first couple weeks to present services / invite students to use the service. Message might be more inviting coming from students.
      - George agrees, and also is ordering “ASTC Tutor” T-shirts to raise visibility.
      - Michael: Maybe do the “cart” as counseling sometimes does, to raise visibility in different parts of campus in early weeks.
    - Melissa: Are students always clear about their assignments and instructors’ expectations? Could instructors better support this?
      - Usually they have their handouts—occasionally they don’t. Sometimes they can’t afford their books; the ASTC uses the Library textbook reserves, but not every book is in there.
- c. Additional discussion:
- Heather: Are all peer tutors on campus trained in the same way, through the same process?
    - Dwayne: That’s a goal. Starting soon with general tutors and MAC tutors, and embedded tutors. Training will occur in the ASTC in Spring ’18, using TUTOR 50 course.
    - George: Doesn’t even know what other tutoring is occurring on campus other than those above. Dwayne: Umoja uses professional tutors rather than peer tutors.
    - In general there’s a need to uniformity so that students get the same message no matter where they go.
  - Claudia: We should look at online tutoring options; might alleviate the need at the centers, too.
    - George: We need to decide whether we want to contract an outside service, or train some of our students for a homegrown offering.
    - Dwayne: Currently we’re looking at vendors, and are close to selecting one for an outside service.
- d. Celia and Dwayne share their thoughts on the ASTC:
- i. Celia:
    1. We need to start with our interests and goals rather than with positions we want to hire.
    2. Views on different models of tutoring / academic support.
      - a. She prefers the model of supplemental instruction.
      - b. 1-on-1 model can be very effective for some students, but not for others.
      - c. Small group tutoring can work better, because more voices = more questions.
    3. Students coming out of K-12 come with the idea of “support services” meaning they are in trouble, failing, or special needs. We need to shift

the dialogue, and the people best positioned to do that are instructional faculty.

- a. Give students the message that “successful students do the following things”—including using support services, convening study groups, etc.
  - b. Teach / Model for students how to use services effectively.
  - c. The #1 factor students report in what influences their success is the extent to which they feel nurtured.
    - i. Tutor training needs to include preparing students for the emotional burden or it, and how to know their boundaries & when it’s time to refer someone out.
    - ii. Make sure we provide support for tutors on a regular basis.
      1. Tutor training is in place just to collect apportionment
      2. Front-end training can only cover so much. They need support monthly, to address the needs that arise at different times in the semester.
4. Tutor.com: offered through Solano County Library, linked on our college library site. It’s a good resource for faculty as well as for students.
  5. Universal design: Find different ways to present material and different modes for students to demonstrate understanding. Tutors need to learn this, too, and be versed in different strategies.
  6. Instead of starting with staffing requests, our priorities should be:
    - a. What is it we want to accomplish?
    - b. What skills are required to reach those goals?
    - c. What staffing is needed to achieve this?

#### Further discussion:

- Jose: Experience at Chico was there was a lot of support, including online materials, to help tutors respond to different situations, including responding online.
- Heather: Likes the idea of homegrown service better, because as faculty we can approach those tutors as opposed to an online stranger who might or might not be aligned with our pedagogy.
- Josh: We should see our tutors are part of the age-old progression of student-teacher relationships.
- Jack: It makes a big difference for students to get to work with someone they feel a connection to, and not to have to wait for service. Service by appointment could alleviate the problem of waiting.
- Terri: We need different options for different students. One goal of tutoring center should be to cultivate cohorts / support networks among students—something we now students need, and which we struggle with as a commuter school.
- Jack: Students need a welcoming place to come to, to get their homework done. As soon as they leave here, “life intervenes.”
- Josh: How do we create smaller, cohesive communities within the institution?
- Jose: A lot of his experience in tutoring centers has been appointment-driven, which can be convenient, but which also can lose the feeling of just being in a cool, comfortable space to

work. The bird room is a good example of a place where friends just hang out and work together. We need to build this kind of niche *in addition to* offering service by appointment.

- Michael: One benefit to the SI model is that SI's are present in class to model successful behaviors.
- Heather: Concerted effort to get more faculty working in the ASTC. Tutoring as an *instructor* made her more aware of students' needs.
- Terri: Often invites students to meet her in the ASTC instead of her office, so she can introduce them to the ASTC. Promotes students to be more aware of the general resources available as they leave her class.
- Jack: Decorate. Put out a puzzle, etc. Make a welcoming space that doesn't feel "clinical," "like a morgue" (student feedback)

### **Online tutoring:**

We have access to set up Tutor.com so that it's directly connected with specific CRN's, and we would get feedback from the tutors. Currently some students are using it through the library, but it's not set up for specific courses.

- Terri, Josh, and Heather all expressed concerns that using an outside service sacrifices the opportunity to build relationships with our students
- Michael suggests that if we do get serious about outside services, faculty should vet potential services by going through those processes ourselves to see what the student experience would be like.
- Celia acknowledges online tutoring is not for every student, but could be very productive for mature, fully-online students.
- Josh: Cost? Dwayne: \$24/hour for online tutoring services, billed by cumulative student usage time. No contract.

- a. Next steps
  - i. Understand/research online options
  - ii. Develop tutor training—support George on this
  - iii. ASTC/MAC—Cultural decision.
  - iv. Work on apportionment issues
- b. Taskforce to report back to BSI in January
  - v. George, Heather, Terri, Melissa, Jose, Jack,

### **Goals for Spring '18:**

- a. **ASTC**
- b. **Math Placement**
- c. **Professional Development**
- d. **Pathways**