

Assessment Plan
Division of Academic Affairs
ACCESS Tutoring and Support Services
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1. History and Context

Context: ACCESS Tutoring and Support Services, based in the Vice Provost's office in Academic Affairs, offers a variety of free academic supports to undergraduates. Tutoring services are provided by extensively trained peers. The programs include one-on-one appointment based tutoring, walk-in tutoring in three tutoring centers, and the Supplemental Instruction program. In addition, the A+ Program offers reading and learning support services by professional reading specialists.

History: ACCESS (Access to Careers and Courses through Educational Support Services) was established in the early-1970's as a small tutoring program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Its initial function was to provide tutoring in developmental writing, communication and mathematics courses for CHANCE admits in their first year at NIU. Later, support for reading was added.

In the early 1980's ACCESS was moved to the Office of Sponsored Projects as an adjunct to the CHANCE program. Funding came from a federally funded TRIO-Student Support Services grant. The tutoring component of ACCESS was named Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) which provided CHANCE students with one-on-one appointment tutoring and walk-in tutoring by peer tutors.

In 1987, ACCESS re-submitted a TRIO grant for PAL that included a new academic support service called Supplemental Instruction (SI). Developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), SI is an enhanced tutoring service that initially was targeted to CHANCE developmental mathematics courses. The Center for SI at UMKC program provides a rigorous training program for student tutors, known as SI Leaders. SI Leaders attend classes with students, take tests and quizzes, communicate regularly with faculty and hold facilitated group learning sessions to address both content and academic skill supports. Over time, SI has covered a variety of courses which are open to all students. They include Chemistry, Accountancy, Statistics and MATH 108 and 109, the developmental math courses for CHANCE students.

In the early 1990's, the Provost's Office provided ACCESS with institutional funding to replace the TRIO Grant funding for PAL and SI. PAL continued to provide one-on-one tutoring for CHANCE students now including many additional general education courses. Walk-in tutoring was housed in The Diversified Resource Learning Center (DRLC), a classroom space in DuSable Hall which provided students the opportunity to get tutoring on short notice. In 1997, ACCESS became a campus-wide undergraduate support service in partnership with Student Housing and Dining Services (SH&D). A space in Lincoln Hall, known as the Lincoln Academic Resource Center (LARC) was established for walk-in tutoring for all undergrads, targeted on GenEds and core courses. The LARC was funded by ACCESS and SH&D, and a small grant from the O'Brien-Vrba Foundation.

In 1999, in addition to the LARC, SH&D offered a permanent space for the DRLC in Grant South. The name was changed to the Grant South Tutoring Center. The facility became the targeted tutoring center for first-year CHANCE admitted students and their courses but also supported GenEds and core courses for all undergraduates.

In 2000, the Provost encouraged ACCESS to apply to the state for expansion funding to expand services for all undergraduate students. Funding was granted and as a result, two more tutoring centers were opened in residence halls and the list of tutored courses doubled.

By 2005, PAL began to grow out of its original spaces. SH&D offered an 8000 square foot space in the basement of Grant South. The facility was fully renovated by SH&D into a cutting edge tutoring center that includes a smart training room, a small computer-based tutoring room for web-based course materials and potential on-line tutoring, and multiple areas for individual and group tutoring. Furnishings and technology were funded by the Provost's Office. Also in 2005, ACCESS began a partnership with the Student Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) office. Every semester, ACCESS continues to provide some tutors for SAAS's Yorden Center Tutoring facility.

In 2006, it became clear that content tutoring alone was insufficient to meet the needs of some students. Some students required more extensive support with reading effectiveness, time management, test anxiety and study strategies. ACCESS piloted the ACCESS/A+ program as one professional reading specialist whose role was to use her professional training to support the more general academic needs of students. She targeted CHANCE students, students with disabilities, and student athletes. That same year, we were approached by the School of Nursing to help support a new standardized reading test, ACCUPLACER, being used for entry into the nursing program. A+ organized group and individual support strategies for the standardized test, and showed great success with students who used the services. In 2010, the success of A+ for pre-nursing students convinced the Provost encourage ACCESS to apply for a Strategic Planning Grant to expand A+ services. Funds were provided for two additional ten-month contracts for reading specialists to reach more students. Currently, the reading specialists work with reading and learning support for all undergraduate students, still targeting those most at-risk.

Over time, they also became involved with providing support for students taking the state required standardized test for entry to the majors in Education, known as TAP. A partnership with the College of Education and A+ included a plan for those students who are struggling with the TAP test. The students identified by COE as most at-risk are referred to A+ to receive one-on-one and group support.

In summer of 2016, the name of the program was changed to ACCESS Tutoring and Support Services.

2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission:

The guiding mission of ACCESS is to provide a variety of academic support services and through opportunities which aid students in building on learning skills and strategies thereby achieving success and confidence necessary for academic progress. ACCESS programs contribute to re-enrollment, retention and graduation rates through its services. Further, ACCESS supports the diversity of the NIU student body by targeting students for its services who are most academically at-risk, either by their admission status or by their background/deficiencies in specific academic skill areas.

ACCESS provides walk-in tutoring services, one-on-one appointment-based tutoring services, Supplemental Instruction, reading development and other support services for students who require academic assistance to achieve academic goals.

Contributions to Student Success:

To guide and assist students in understanding course subject matter.

To help students learn good study habits and become confident, independent learners.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1. Improve students' academic success, retention and graduation by delivering programs that actively assist students in developing effective, transferrable study skills that enable them to effectively master course content.

Objective 1.1: Students who use PAL will re-enroll in the subsequent semester in numbers higher than that of students who do not use tutoring.

It has been shown in many research studies that the correlation between use of tutoring and grade performance is very small. Students seek tutoring to secure an "A" or to avoid an "F", so the amount of tutoring isn't as significant as what tutoring contributes in subsequent semesters. The skills and confidence of students grow in an effective tutoring environment. Therefore, it is more obvious to see the contribution of tutoring as part of retention. Re-enrollment is used here as a proxy for academic success/retention in this program.

Objective 1.2: Students who regularly use ACCESS/SI will receive a course grade that is higher than that of non-users.

Through the Center for Supplemental Instruction at UMKC, data from the program has been tracked for many years about the contribution of SI to student performance. Based on their longitudinal findings, we traditionally use that assessment method.

Objective 1.3: Students who participate in the A+ program will re-enroll in subsequent semesters at a higher level than that of students not using the program.

The A+ program offers students an opportunity to develop a one-on-one relationship with a specialist focusing in skill building targeted at students' academic weaknesses. Research shows that by developing relationships with faculty and staff, college students are more likely to be retained.

Goal 2: Recruit and hire outstanding students as peer tutors and SI Leaders and offer them adequate training to become effective leaders in the support of students who need assistance. PAL tutoring is guided by the College Reading and Learning Association's certification of tutor training. SI training is guided by the Center for SI's Manager Training Program.

Objective 2.1: SI Leaders will demonstrate effective interaction with students in study groups.

Objective 2.2: PAL Tutors will demonstrate effective interaction with students they tutor.

Objective 2.3: Student staff in ACCESS will be satisfied with training methods.

Goal 3: Effectively market programs and services to the University and students.

Objective 3.1: Longitudinal measures of student contact in PAL will demonstrate yearly growth.

Objective 3.2: Students will frequently use the ACCESS website for program information.

Goal 4: Ensure that students are satisfied with the quality of our programs and customer service.

Objective 4:1: Students and student staff will be satisfied with customer service received from ACCESS staff.

3. Explanation of Assessment Methods

Goal 1. Improve students' academic success, retention and graduation by delivering programs that actively assist students in developing effective, transferrable study skills that enable them to effectively master course content.					
Objective	Assessment Method	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
<u>Objective 1.1:</u> Students who use PAL will re-enroll in the subsequent semester in numbers higher than that of students who do not use PAL tutoring.	Comparing PAL users to non-users re-enrollment rates.	PAL User data from a specific semester is submitted to R&R to gain their subsequent semester enrollment status (enrolled, not enrolled, graduated) along with that of non-users. The percentage of the two is compared.	PAL Users will re-enroll at a level that is the same or greater than that of non-users.	Yearly, Summer	Director ACCESS
<u>Objective 1.2:</u> Students who regularly use ACCESS/SI will receive a course grade that is higher than that of non-users.	SI Standard attendance comparison method	The Center for SI provided us with a standard method by which we evaluate course grades versus usage. SI Usage is broken into categories of attendance and GPAs are calculated for each group.	Students using SI 10 times or more will have an aggregate GPA of ½ letter grade higher than non-users.	Semesterly for each SI course	Data Analyst, Director

Continued: Goal 1. Improve students' academic success, retention and graduation by delivering programs that actively assist students in developing effective, transferrable study skills that enable them to effectively master course content.

Objective	Assessment Method	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
<p>Objective 1.3: Students who participate in the A+ program will re-enroll in subsequent semesters at a higher level than that of students not using the program.</p>	<p>A+ participants re-enrollment will be compared to non-users.</p>	<p>A+ participants re-enrollment in the semester(s) after participation in the program. This enrollment is compared to non-user enrollment</p>	<p>A+ participants, who are primarily students referred to the program due to academic difficulties will re-enroll at the same level or higher than non-users.</p>	<p>Yearly in May</p>	<p>Director, Data analyst</p>
<p>Goal 2: Recruit and hire outstanding students as peer tutors and SI Leaders and offer them adequate training to become effective leaders in the support of students who need assistance.</p>					
<p>Objective 2.1: SI Leaders will demonstrate effective interaction with students in study sessions.</p>	<p>Mentor Reviews</p>	<p>SI Leaders have extensive training before they start the semester. They also have on-going training meetings throughout the year. SI Mentors and the SI Supervisor visit each SI Session from 6 to 8 times each semester in the Fall using an observation sheet. (appendix 1)</p>	<p>On a 4 point evaluation scale for each of 37 categories, SI Leaders will increase the number of "Exceeds Expectations" by 30% by their last evaluation.</p>	<p>On-going collection through the semester. Analyzed at the end of the semester</p>	<p>SI Assistant Director and SI Mentors and Director</p>

Goal 2 continued: Recruit and hire outstanding students as peer tutors and SI Leaders and offer them adequate training to become effective leaders in the support of students who need assistance.					
<u>Objective 2.2:</u> PAL Tutors will demonstrate effective interaction with students they tutor.	Student Evaluations of Tutoring	Students have the opportunity to evaluate tutors every time they meet with them on a Survey Monkey survey.		On-going throughout the semester. Analyzed regularly by the Asst. Dir. Of PAL	Assistant Director for PAL Director Data analyst
<u>Objective 2.3:</u> Student staff in ACCESS will be satisfied with training methods.	Student Tutor and SI Leader evaluations of training.	Both PAL and SI have extensive training based on guidelines by the profession. Our student workers have ample opportunity to evaluate the programs.	95% of tutors and SI Leaders will have an average of a 4.5 out of 5 on their evaluations.	At the beginning of Fall semester Yearly	Asst. Directors of PAL and SI, Director, Data Analyst
Goal 3: Effectively market programs and services to the University and students.					
<u>Objective 3.1:</u> PAL will demonstrate yearly growth.	Longitudinal data collection	ACCESS has collected usage data on PAL for many years to track growth and declines	In FY 2018, usage will increase by 10%	Updates to main data table every semester	Director Data Analyst
<u>Objective 3.2:</u> Students will frequently use the ACCESS website for program information.	MARCOMM monthly report on web content	Web hits are monitored monthly for patterns usage, giving insight into areas when marketing needs to be changed/boosted. Yearly data is also monitored longitudinally.	In FY 18, there will be an increase in usage of 30%	Year end.	MARCOMM WEB Director

Goal 4: Ensure that students are satisfied with the quality of our programs and customer service.					
Objective	Assessment Method	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
<u>Objective 4:1:</u> Students and student staff will be satisfied with customer service received from ACCESS staff.	PAL Satisfaction Survey SI Satisfaction Survey	Students using PAL complete satisfaction surveys at the end of each semester. Students in SI complete satisfaction surveys multiple times during the semester.	90% of student staff will be satisfied with customer service	End of each semester	Assistant Directors, secretary, director

Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Objectives Assessment Methods	1. Improve academic success etc, by helping students	2. Hire and train student staff and improve leadership.	3. Effective marketing	4. Promote customer satisfaction
1.1 Measure re-enrollment of tutored students	D, S	I		I,S
1.2 SI use increases grades	D, S	I	S	S
1.3 Measure re-enrollment of students using A+	S, I			I
2.1 SI Leader Effectiveness	D, F	D, F		I
2.2 Tutor Effectiveness	D, F	D,F		D, F
2.3 Satisfaction with Training	I, F	D, F		I, F
3.1 Increase program usage	I	I	D, F	I, F
3.2 Monitor longitudinal usage			I	I, F
4.1 Customer service satisfaction	I, F	I, S	I, F	D, F