The mission of the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center is “helping students to succeed”.

Dr. Judith R. Griggs, Director
ABOUT THE COVER: During the 2011-2012 academic year, more than 600 Duquesne University students relied on the Michael P. Weber Learning center for tutoring to help them master their subjects. From calculus to chemistry, from languages to literature, from philosophy to physics, this highly popular service is just one of many services that the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center makes available free of charge to Duquesne students. Tutoring is one of several Learning Skills Center services which promote high student retention rates at Duquesne University. The Learning Skills Center also provides important services to the schools and departments within the University, as well as to the Pittsburgh community in general.
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Philosophy

The philosophy of the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center is that, through appropriate intervention, students can learn to become independent, life-long learners. This intervention is individualized and personalized and may be either affective, academic, or a combination of both. Therefore, the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center offers a wide range of comprehensive services to the Duquesne University community and the community at large.

Mission and Goal Statement

Mission

The mission of the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center is to maximize each student’s learning potential to produce life-long learners with a sense of self-worth and social responsibility by providing a supportive learning environment that recognizes the uniqueness of each individual. Our mission is "helping students to succeed."

Goals

The Center serves students and faculty by providing a broad range of programs and learning skills services including those in the areas of skills assessment, learning strategies and techniques, tutoring, academic advisement, counseling and training of learning services personnel. The Center also serves the community at large via initiatives to link the University community with its Pittsburgh neighbors, providing them learning opportunities, exposure to campus facilities, and interaction with scholars and professionals from various fields.

Objectives

The Center has eleven goals, the viability of which is dependent upon adequate staffing and operational resources.

1. To facilitate learning by providing accessible environments that interface with the Center’s personnel, equipment, materials, and learning facilities.

2. To proactively prevent academic failures and increase learning sophistication through the implementation of programs and services for students to learn how to learn for long-term application.

3. To enhance academic performance and retention by monitoring the progress of University students and initiating at a one-stop location restorative strategies involving outreach, information sharing, skills diagnosis, prescription writing and direct services.

4. To provide a legitimate opportunity to educationally-disadvantaged students to pursue post-secondary education through the provision of a comprehensive support system which includes tutoring, academic advisement, and counseling; and through the assumption of a liaison role in the provision of said.
5. To publicize The Center’s programs and services to all university students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

6. To continually adapt The Center’s programs and services to the needs and expectations of the University in accordance with the articulated goals and existing resources of the institution.

7. To provide training to student tutors which results in their increased skill proficiency relative to their disciplines and the required specialized instructional techniques needed; to tutor effectively and to provide opportunities for tutors to build professionalism; and establish a productive work ethic in general.

8. To provide for students’ service learning experiences which link school to life; help to develop thoughtful, active, caring citizens; provide explicit curriculum that challenges students to think and problem solve; encourage students to test their academic knowledge in the real world; stimulate a student’s presence in the community and a community’s presence on campus; and promote the University's commitment to serve the larger community.

9. To provide training in diagnostic and treatment procedures for clinical psychology doctoral students.

10. To serve as a clearinghouse and information center regarding campus-based learning support resources and to refer students to other services deemed appropriate.

11. To collect, maintain and disseminate data on The Center’s use and activity.
A. Review of Progress on Annual Goals

1. College Success Courses

   - At least 50% of the freshmen students attending the College Success courses will earn sufficient credits to become sophomores.

     Outcome: Of the 150 students who started as freshmen; 139 eventually became sophomores at the end of the spring term (92.7%)

   - The Pathways to Success course (required of all first term freshmen earning less than 2.0 at the end of their first term) will increase the overall spring term quality point averages as a group by at least 0.50 above the previous fall term.

     Outcome: During the fall term, students who were required to take the Pathways to Success course averaged 2.09, in spring Term.

   - At least 90% of the students who take a College Success course in the fall term will remain through the end of the spring term.

     Outcome: 92% of students enrolled in College Program Success courses remained to the end of the spring term.

2. OOPS (Outreach Opportunity Program for marginally performing Students)

   - At least 75% of new OOPS program participants with one or more midterm “D” and “F” grade deficiencies will have improved their at-risk course grades by at least one letter grade at final grade report.

     Outcome: Of the 16 “D” and “F” midterm grades received by OOPS students who requested Learning Skills tutoring assistance, 70% improved by at least one grade.

   - Course retention shall be at least 75% for the term which a midterm deficiency occurs (i.e., course withdrawal shall be no greater than 25% when a “D” or “F” grade exists for persons accepting an invitation to receive OOPS services.).

     Outcome: 6.3% of OOPS students withdrew from the term with a “W” grade.
B. Annual Goals for the Next Academic Year

1. College Success Courses

Students who enroll in College Success courses are predominantly first-year freshmen.

**Goals for Freshman Students:**

a. At least 50% of all freshmen students attending the College Success courses will earn at least 30 credits, sufficient to become sophomores.

b. The *Pathways to Success* course (required of all first term freshmen who earn less than 2.0 QPA at the end of their first full term) will increase the overall spring term quality point averages as a group by 0.50 above the previous fall term.

**Additional Goals for College Success Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OVERALL PERFORMANCE (All students collectively enrolled in College Success Courses during 2011-2012)</th>
<th>CLPR008 Strategies for Academic Success</th>
<th>CPR015 Introduction to University Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Term QPA</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Cumulative QPA</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
<td>2.75 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention: Fall Term to the end of the Spring Term</td>
<td>85% or higher</td>
<td>90% or higher</td>
<td>90% or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. OOPS (Outreach Opportunity Program for Marginally Performing Students)

- At least 60% of midterm grade deficiencies (“D,” “F”) will improve by at least one letter grade.

- Course retention shall be at least 75% for the term which a midterm deficiency occurs (i.e., course withdrawal shall be no greater than 25% when a “D” or “F” grade exists for persons accepting an invitation to receive OOPS services).
C. Other Major Accomplishments, Programs and Activities

Highlights of Academic Accomplishments

College Success Courses:

- Strategies for Academic Success
  - 62 students enrolled the Strategies for Academic Success course.
  - The overall average term QPA was 2.97 (based on the specific term in which they were enrolled in the course.)
- Introduction to University Success
  - 79 students enrolled in the course this fall averaged 3.08 on their fall term grade averages.

College Success Courses – Overall Summary

- Dean’s List: 51 College Success course students earned Dean’s List status in 2011 (48 students in the fall term, and 3 students in the spring.)
- Retention: The College Success courses had a fall-to-spring term retention rate of 92.7%. There was a 93.1% rate for the Strategies for Academic Success course and a 93.3% rate for the Introduction to University Success course.

OOPS Outreach Opportunity Program for Marginally Performing Students

10 students responded to an invitation to obtain support through the OOPS program in 2011-12. They had a total of 16 “D” or “F” midterm grades. A low midterm course grade triggers an automatic invitation to join the OOPS program and receive support.

- 3 of the 8 “F” mid-term grades remained the same.
- 12 of the 16 “D/F” midterm grades improved by the final grade report; only one withdrew. No grade went down between midterm and final grades.
- All OOPS students were still attending by the end of the spring term.

Activities

- The Gussin Spiritan Division, in conjunction with Duquesne’s Law School and the Kwame Ture Leadership Institute, sponsored the Sixth Annual Career Day at the Sr. Thea Bowman Catholic Academy on April 8, 2011. For many years, the Division has provided Sr. Thea Bowman Catholic Academy with tutors through the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center’s PACT program. Fr. David Taylor, Gussin Spiritan Division faculty member, currently serves as Director of the school. Our associate director, Dr. Uhuru Hotep, served as Master of Ceremonies for the one-day event which featured speakers from a wide variety of occupational fields such as medicine, law, athletics, and entertainment. The activity also included small workgroup sessions. Luncheon was served.

- Two weeks later, the Gussin Spiritan Division and the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center, in cooperation with Duquesne’s Law School, co-sponsored the fourth annual campus tour for Sr. Thea Bowman students. These youth had the opportunity to visit different schools on campus, to think about different possibilities for future career paths and avenues of study, and to ask questions.
In addition to acquainting the students with several schools on campus such as the Law School, the Business School and the Health Sciences, other campus organizations provided information on extracurricular campus activities and multicultural perspectives, including the Black Law School Association and the Black Student Union. A pizza luncheon was provided at the Nite Spot Café.

- **A computer camp computer literacy project** was offered in partnership with the [Jerome Bettis Bus Stops Here Foundation](https://www.jeromebettisbusstopshere.org) and Duquesne University’s **Learning Skills Center**. The project, initiated in 2007, links Duquesne University, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the Jerome Bettis “The Bus Stops Here” Foundation, is a joint effort to teach practical computer skills to underprivileged inner-city youth. The Computer Camp meets in the fall and spring terms on the Duquesne University campus for eight consecutive Saturdays. Approximately twenty students each term learn to use computer software, including Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Movie Maker. Over the years, staff members have administered these camps, providing program and curricular design as well as weekly oversight. At the final session, students who complete the camp present their accomplishments to the public and receive certificates at a presentation and awards ceremony. They also get to take home their very own computer which is provided to the students by the Bettis Foundation at no charge. The Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center finances bus transportation, lunch, and orientation and awards ceremony meals.

- The Learning Skills Center recruited 20 high school students for the one-week, residential Summer Institute Program, which began on Sunday, July 24, 2011. The week-long institute provided high school juniors and seniors an opportunity to visit the University and experience college life. Students came from the following schools: Langley, Obama, Mt. Lebanon, City Charter, University Prep, Beaumont (OH), Oakland Catholic, Upper St. Clair, Sewickley Academy, Montour Area (OH), Winchester-Thurston, Curwensville Area, and CAPA. Participants attended a three-hour Introduction to the College Experience course Monday through Friday. As a part of the learning process, students attended a seminar to learn about preparing for job interviews and participated in mock job interviews. Students were also required to research various institutions of higher learning and become familiar with their admissions application process. For their final activity, they prepared and presented their research results to their fellow students in a special group session. Throughout their one-week college experience, students were obliged to demonstrate important responsibilities such as arriving on time for class, following a schedule, and devoting appropriate amounts of time necessary to complete multiple tasks. In the process, they also acquired a few basic research skills. In addition to class work, participants attended a number of off-campus activities, including tours to the Medical Examiner’s Office, Schuman Juvenile Detention Center, and Consul Energy. They also attended The Sound of Music musical at the Benedum Center in Downtown Pittsburgh’s Cultural District one evening. The week ended with the Award Luncheon Friday. For their participation in the total experience described, students earned one college credit.

**Programs:**

*School of Nursing:* During the 2011-12 academic year, the Learning Skills center provided several mathematics workshops and individualized tutoring sessions for freshmen Nursing School students who are required to score 90% or higher on their math competency test. All students achieved a 100% passing rate on this test.
D. Linkages to Duquesne University’s Strategic Plan

1. Diversity:

*Strategic Priority #1.2, “The student body will become more diverse and support for human diversity will become a commitment of all students.”*

The Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center encourages economic and academic diversification by co-administering the Pennsylvania Acts program (a.k.a. “Pennsylvania Act 101”) with the Robert & Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division of Academic Programs. The Pennsylvania Acts program provides educational support services targeted toward economically and academically disadvantaged students. Through this program, students who might not otherwise consider attending college, as well as those who are at risk of dropping their college studies due to financial or academic stress, are provided an opportunity to pursue studies at Duquesne University and eventually obtain their degree. New Duquesne freshmen who meet specific academic guidelines are admitted into the Gussin Spiritan Division and receive Pennsylvania Acts services through the Division. The remaining Duquesne student population meeting the state requirements for services under this Act receives similar benefits through services of the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center. Participants in the Pennsylvania Acts program are proactively contacted and encouraged to avail themselves of our services, which include tutoring, counseling, advising, and academic skills coaching. This results in a broader range of academic and socioeconomic student diversity throughout Duquesne University. 75 Pennsylvania Acts students graduated from Duquesne University this year.

2. Community Service:

*Strategic Priority #2.2: “Service to others will be a theme throughout the Duquesne experience.”*

The Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center provides opportunities for service to others through tutoring programs such as *PACT* (Project for Academic Coaching Through Tutoring) and the *Field Observation* service learning courses which are open to all Duquesne students, and the *Jerome Bettis Cyber Bus Computer Literacy Program* that provides computer instruction and hardware to inner city youth.

One popular program that provides a means of community service for Duquesne University student tutors is the Project for Academic Coaching Through Tutoring (PACT) sponsored by the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center, in partnership with St. Rosalia School and community agencies such as the Hill House Association, the Wesley Center: The Center that Cares in the Hill District, and Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in the East End of Pittsburgh. Other agencies that have participated in previous years include the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church in East Liberty. PACT provides tutoring labs at the Duquesne University campus on Saturdays and on two weekday evenings. At these sessions, tutors assist students in grades K-12 with their homework and provide skill development exercises. Some Division students choose to provide off-campus tutoring in schools under the supervision of classroom teachers, or at several community agencies and organizations. During 2011-12, 30 tutors provided services to 36 tutees. Saturday activities included career exploration by tutors and staff, weekly current events and discussions, parent-student orientations for the fall and spring, and learning activities around special events such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and St.
Patrick’s Day. Students were introduced to critical thinking and the importance of time management and effective study skills and organizational skills.
II. CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Tutoring Demands

In the past, due to budgetary constraints, tutoring in our most popular subject, Chemistry was restricted to only one hour per student. When students learned of this, several students felt that this was not enough instruction to meet their needs and they did not request our services; some also stopped coming. Undoubtedly, if it weren’t for that constraint, the tutoring figures would have been higher and we could have served even more students. Understanding the need for more adequate instruction time to fit students’ needs, the LSC increased instruction time to two hours per week per subject. Students from the following departments must be referred to the center in order to receive services: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, English and ESL (English as a Second Language).

Recommendations for the Future of the Center

Additional Space

In-Center Tutoring: Most of the tutoring time that is logged is “in-center” (on-site). This is undeniably a very popular service. Tutoring typically occurs in our single conference room and in the other areas of the center, using couches, coffee tables, and portable white boards. However, there are many times that the conference room is not available for tutoring purposes due to faculty and staff meetings, workshops, committee meetings, or private counseling and testing sessions. Therefore, tutors are left without a suitable space at The Center to conduct their tutoring. To meet the rising demand for in-center tutoring, it would increase our efficiency greatly if the Center were assigned a specifically designated area to conduct
tutoring, one that is easily accessible to both tutors and students and not subject to interruptions and scheduling conflicts.

Tutoring Budget

The demand for tutoring services at the Learning Skills Center has increased substantially over the past several years. Over the last six years, the requests for tutoring have essentially tripled. During 2006-2007, we received 542 requests; this past year, Learning Skills handled 1317 requests and we have seen it as high as 1491 requests for tutoring, a 199% increase. The number of students tutored since then has increased 85% (from 362 to 617). Also during that time, at the request of the University, our tutor pay scale was increased. Non-student tutor salaries have increased since 2008 by 31.6%. Yet, over these years, funding allocated to the Learning Skills Center for tutoring has remained constant. To compensate, there have been some cutbacks in the maximum number of tutoring hours permitted per week per course for tutees. In past years, tutoring funds formerly allocated to the Learning Skills Center were redirected to various departments so that they can provide tutoring within their own departments. The Learning Skills Center routinely receives tutoring requests from these departments, and we are happy to serve these students. If available, additional funding would be helpful and will enable us to serve to our fullest capacity.
OUTCOME ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Outcomes Assessment: OOPS Outreach Opportunity Program for Marginally Performing Students

Goal: Retention

The OOPS and Academic Intervention Programs are specifically designed to outreach to students experiencing academic difficulty and offer assistance similar to that provided to the Spiritan Division students. At a time that may be potentially embarrassing and frightening for some, it can be comforting to have an offer of help during this difficult period. Some do not know where to go; some need a hand extended to them first in order to move on to restorative action. One-stop care is also important to many students, for it limits the number of offices, and thus individuals, with whom they must interact. Direct and immediate attention is the most productive. The Center assumes the roles of advocate, liaison, troubleshooter, and problem solver in providing its support system to students.

OOPS has made a significant contribution to the retention of students University-wide. During each spring and fall semester, the Center contacts all students whose overall or semester QPA fell below 2.00, and those students whose midterm grades were below a “C.” Contact is normally made by a mail invitation. Students who respond are interviewed by the Assistant to the Director for Retention and Evaluation in a confidential setting, the issues are analyzed and an appropriate remedial course of action is put into effect. The strategies normally fall under three general categories: tutoring, academic coaching sessions (study skills, time management, test taking, organizing, etc.), and counseling & advising.

OOPS: 2011-12 Invites:

The Learning Skills Center sent out a total of 1,745 OOPS invitations in the fall and spring to undergraduate students in an effort to improve academic performance. There was a noticeable reduction this year in students who had midterm deficiencies. In previous years, after midterm grades were reviewed, the OOPS program typically sent out about 900 to 1100 letters encouraging low performing students to seek assistance through the OOPS program. This year, the number of students receiving invitations to participate in the OOPS program never reached the 825 mark in either the fall or spring term. From a University perspective, that’s encouraging because it shows that students are learning well and progressing toward their degree. We believe that this pattern could be partly due to the University’s trend in recent years to admit students with stronger admissions qualifications. The Center will continue to offer proactive assistance to all students who show signs of being at risk of failing, inviting them to bolster their performance and benefit by the services that are readily available to them. 10 students sought assistance. The reasons for not responding vary. Sometimes students feel that they are able to improve on their own or they believe that the specific situation responsible for their poor academic performance was temporary and the problem no longer exists. Sometimes students will seek assistance from sources other than the Learning Skills Center. We believe that the most successful students are those who take advantage of the resources available to them.
### OOPS Mailings and Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis for Invitation</th>
<th>Term that the Invitations were Mailed</th>
<th>OOPS Invites Sent</th>
<th>OOPS Responses</th>
<th>Percent Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 End of Term: Term or Cum. QPA Less than 2.0</td>
<td>Beginning of fall 2011</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 Midterm: D, F Grades</td>
<td>Middle of fall 2011</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012 Midterm: D, F Grades</td>
<td>Middle of spring 2012</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1745</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OOPS: Services Requested**

The 10 OOPS students requested tutoring assistance in 28 different subjects. The most frequently requested tutoring subject for the OOPS program this year was Finance (29%), followed by math mainly Calculus II course (25%).

**Tutoring Subjects Requested**
**OOPS: Course Grade Improvement:**

Midterm OOPS invitations are only sent to undergraduate students who received at least one “D,” “F,” or “N” (“not passing”) grade at midterm. There are always some students in this group who have multiple low grades.

This year, three students who signed up for and received OOPS assistance for a low midterm grade this year ended the term with a failing grade for the course.

- Initially, at midterm:
  - A total of 10 students received OOPS assistance for the fall and spring midterm;
  - They had a total of 16 low midterm grades (8 “F” and 8 “D” grades).

- At the end of the term:
  - Only one student withdrew from the course.
  - There were only four “D” grades remaining.
  - There were three “F” course grades left on the books.
  - No Student has dropped the grade to below level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Midterm Grade</th>
<th>FINAL GRADE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, more than three in ten students (37.5%) improved their grade; no student lowered his or her course grade.

**OOPS: Term Grade Averages**

The OOPS student population is smaller than regular tutees population. Therefore, to effectively evaluate their performance, the fall and spring term grades are combined.
• 20% of this year’s OOPS students ended with term averages between 3.0 and 4.0
• 60% had term averages between 2.0 and 2.99.
• two in ten students ever fell below a 2.0 for the term;
  o 10% of the total group earned between 1.50 and 2.0,
  o 10% of this year’s OOPS students earned less than 1.50 at the end of a term.
• The overall term GPA for the group was 2.37.

**OOPS: Cumulative Grade Averages and Credits Earned**

This year’s OOPS students ended the spring term with an average cumulative QPA of 2.51.
• 20 percent had a QPA of 3.00 or higher.
• 70% of students had averages between 2.00 and 2.99.
• Only 10 percent fell below 2.0.
• All students had cumulative QPAs at least 1.50 or higher.
OOPS Credits earned end of academic year 2011-2012

By the end of the spring semester, 90% of OOPS students are eligible to become a sophomore or higher.

**OOPS: Retention Rate**

This year only two OOPS students participated in the fall term. Although all of them stayed through the end of the spring term, a small group such as this would not be an adequate study. This year’s entire OOPS population will have an opportunity to be reviewed with respect to retention in next year’s report.

However, a review of OOPS students over the previous four academic years from 2007-08 to 2010-11, shows that as of the end of this 2011-2012 academic year:

- The OOPS program has maintained a four-year retention rate of about 91%.
- 85% are continuing to make progress toward their degree, and
- Three students (6%) have successfully graduated.

All of these students have, at one or more points in their studies, been at academic risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OOPS INTERVIEW YEAR</th>
<th>Original OOPS Students Interviewed Count</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Still Attending 2011-12, Not Yet Degreed</th>
<th>Total Retention</th>
<th>Four Year Retention Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>91%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tutoring**

**Goal: Retention through Satisfactory or High Level Course Grades**

Tutoring is our most popular service. Tutors provide individualized instruction or group sessions in their areas of expertise. Tutors also meet with instructors, attend supervisory and training sessions, and provide documentation to the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center. The documentation is designed to enhance the quality of the tutoring service provided, and includes a plan for every session (including instructional activities and the outcome of the session), time sheets, information regarding monthly conferences with instructors, and a history of tutoring contacts submitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUTORS AVAILABLE 2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMER 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each tutor is required to attend seminars to hone their tutorial skills. Initially, a pre-screened tutor must attend the Prospective Tutor Seminar as well as the Course Selection Seminar in order to become familiar with Michael P. Weber Learning Skills policies, expectations, and to determine the tutor’s area(s) of expertise. Once completed, tutors attend three mandatory training sessions:

1. **Diagnostic Teaching** teaches tutors how to specifically target a tutee’s needs and how to identify his or her cognitive behaviors.

2. **Clinical Supervision** focuses on improving the tutor’s instructional performance through a colleague relationship with the supervisor.

3. **Developmental Curriculum** teaches tutors how to develop a lesson plan for students who request tutoring that is not in conjunction with a course.

In addition to these required tutor trainings, the Learning Skills tutoring staff has developed and now offers on a rotating basis the following additional advanced training seminars:

**ESL** (English as a Second Language) trains tutors how to bridge the cultural and communication gaps when working with a student whose native language is not English. This is the most popular advanced training seminar and the one most offered. It is provided in conjunction with Duquesne University’s ESL Department.

**Rapport Building** presents the importance of fostering a positive relationship between tutors and tutees in order to create an optimal learning environment. The session focuses on the importance of communicating with one-another on a personal and professional level. Individuals identify specific items that can help another person get to know them better, as well as what they consider to be most challenging in the public sector. Four leadership styles are identified and strategies to help individuals become more assertive are discussed.

**Personality and Learning Styles** identifies four personality types and then compared them with different learning preferences. Specific details are highlighted within each personality types and learning style.

**Dealing with Difficult People** deals with the differences in conflicts. Constructive and destructive conflicts are highlighted, including specific behaviors and emotions of each one. Four approaches are presented for handling, managing and resolving conflicts. Individuals identify what their "hot buttons" were and what specific behaviors may need modifying.

**Academic Round Table Discussion** is an informal meeting designed to share ideas and provide feedback. The individuals discussed what was important to them both in the "professional" role, as well as what they would consider to be a "pet-peeve". Specific strategies are highlighted, as well as ways to compensate for difficulties.

New tutor training topics are added from time to time. Each one is designed to improve tutoring skills, improve the tutor’s understanding, and maintain a high standard of tutoring quality at the Learning Skills Center.

**Overall Tutoring Profile, Summer 2011 to Spring 2012**
This year the Learning Skills Center received almost 1,317 individual requests for tutoring services between Summer 2011 to Spring 2012. The Center provided over 2,000 hours of tutoring to 617 students. There was an average of 2.1 courses requested per tutee.
Requests are classified into two categories: “Filled” and “Not Followed Through.” The Learning Skills Center always tries to provide tutoring to everyone who requests it. However, in every term there are always a number of tutoring requests that go unfilled, usually for two reasons: either (a) the student did not show up for the scheduled tutoring appointment, or (b) the Learning Skills Center was not able to find a tutor for the subject requested. When a tutor is not immediately available, the Center tries its best to locate a qualified tutor but is not always successful.

This year, as usual, the most popular subjects requested were science courses (647 which is almost 50% of total requests). The language arts and mathematics/computer science courses came in second and third respectively in both the fall and spring terms. Business and foreign languages were also requested on a regular basis.
Tutoring Course Grades

Tutoring is one of several factors that ultimately affect grades. A review of the final grades received for the courses tutored reflects on the overall success of the tutoring program. Students most commonly apply for tutoring because they find the course material somewhat difficult. The higher their final course grade, the more likely the tutoring program has met its objective of helping students to succeed.

In year 2011-12 we served 179 students for various science courses (of 647 requests 407 were filled)
## Final Grades of Students Who Actually Received Tutoring

**End of Year 2011-12 Grades of Science Courses Tutored**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 179 students tutored, 70% received a grade of C or higher, 11% received a D and only 2% failed the course.
Evidence of Assessment Results Used to Improve Teaching and Learning

The Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center maintains a full-time staff member whose job title is Assistant to the Director for Retention and Evaluation. This individual’s responsibilities include the following:

- Monitoring the academic progress of all undergraduate students, identifying specific students who show signs of academic difficulty as evidenced by their midterm and final grades, and initiating contact with them to offer appropriate support services designed to improve their educational performance.

- Providing statistical assessment and data analysis services to the department for general purposes, such as analyzing feedback from program questionnaires and student surveys. This service enables the department to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and initiate adjustments as necessary.

- Providing analytical reports detailing the overall performance of the Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center and the Robert & Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division. This enables the Learning Skills Center and the Gussin Spiritan Division to regularly evaluate:
  - The overall academic performance of Division students, both for the current year and over the course of multiple years.
  - The progress that the Departments have made toward meeting existing goals;
  - The effectiveness of our academic programs and student support services.

These reports are distributed internally to appropriate administrative staff within the Department and to Duquesne University’s administration. Details and important highlights are presented in summary form to the Robert & Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division/Act 101 Advisory Board at their biannual meetings held toward the end of the fall and spring terms.

The Academic Intervention Program (AIP) enables professors and instructors to report students who are at academic risk of failing a course. Instructors can, at any time during the semester, report students who are having academic difficulty to the Assistant Tutorial Supervisor of the MPWLSC and the student’s Academic Advisor. The Assistant Tutorial Supervisor initiates contact with the student and arranges a meeting to discuss the appropriate course of action.
Linkages of Assessment Results with Planning and Budgeting

Student Retention: Michael P. Weber Learning Skills Center programs such as:

- **College Success courses**;
- “OOPS” and “AIP” outreach programs which are aimed at improving the effectiveness of specifically identified marginally performing students;
- the state-funded Pennsylvania Acts/Act 101 program, co-sponsored and administered in conjunction with the Robert & Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division, aimed at retaining Pennsylvania residents who are both academically and financially at risk; and
- **Tutoring**, the highly popular program designed to improve course performance and promote better subject understanding and ultimately, higher grades.

All contribute to higher University retention rates and persistence until graduation. High retention impacts the budget positively in the sense that the student contributes to the University’s income while here in the form of tuition and parking and payment of other fees for services. When a student drops out, the University loses not only a potential graduate, but it also loses a year or more of student tuition and other income and also loses a potential Alumni fund donor. The student loses financially because he or she had paid thousands of dollars for a benefit that ultimately never materialized, and also may potentially incur a loss of future income generally associated with a holder of a college degree. Higher graduation figures also positively impact the University’s overall image. Positive write-ups in catalogs and reports tend to attract the attention of more successful students and encourage them to apply for University admission.

Funding for the Department is used to provide:

- Payroll for administrative and office support staff and tutors;
- Faculty salaries for the College Success courses;
- Office supplies, stationery, postage, telephone and administrative supplies;
- *The Achiever*, an annual Pennsylvania Acts/Act 101 student publication written by Pennsylvania Acts students;
- Technology to maintain high efficiency and to enhance the Center’s ability to serve students, the University and the community. This includes items such as computers, software, audiovisual equipment, photocopiers, printing machines, and image scanners.
- Sponsorship of community programs and activities such as the Jerome Bettis Foundation Computer Literacy Camp, The Summer Institute, and PACT which provides tutoring to community children.
Resources Needed to Address Results of Assessment

The Learning Skills Center has been using its resources effectively in administering its ongoing operations throughout the years. Overall, the assessment results show very good performance in the many courses, services and programs that the Center provides to Duquesne students, to the University in general, and to the public.

As discussed previously in section II: "Challenges and Needs," the funding obtained by the Learning Skills Center is used to pay for things such as salaries for faculty, staff, and tutoring services; to purchase equipment and supplies necessary to provide classes, student support services and public service programs, as well as to pay for typical business expenses (e.g., telephone, printing, and office supplies.)

If additional resources can be granted, the following key areas would be worthy of consideration:

1. Funding for tutoring.
2. Additional facility space.
3. Targeted funding by the state to provide Pennsylvania Acts/Act 101 student support services.

Items (1) and (2) have already been discussed in the "Challenges and Needs" section; funding for item (3) must come from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, not Duquesne University.

To briefly highlight the specific issues:

1. Because tutoring salaries were increased at the request of the University while demand for tutoring services also increased, limitations needed to be imposed on the amount of tutoring that we were able to provide students in order to stay within the operating budget. The result shows a decline in the number of students tutored. Additional funding for this service would enable us to tutor more students, to provide more tutoring hours to those requesting academic assistance, and to provide a higher level of tutoring service which we had provided in the past.

2. Relative to the many services that we provide and the many things occurring daily within the department, our office space is small. If granted, additional office space would enable us to work far more efficiently and enable us to better serve Duquesne students.

3. Pennsylvania Acts/Act 101 services are funded through grants provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Funding is awarded on a competitive basis. Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, Act 101 funds have been significantly cut due to financial constraints within the Commonwealth. These are factors that we have little control over. The State has recognized our outstanding Act 101 performance over the years and has enabled us to continue to receive state funding so that we can provide these services. However, the reduced funding has resulted in a significant limiting of the number of students officially targeted to receive Pennsylvania Acts services (formerly in the 180-200 student range, now currently in the 80-100 student range). The restricted funding has also resulted in a cutback of staff members who served these students. We will continue to apply for Pennsylvania Acts/Act 101 funding grants and will continue to serve these students who are identified as at-risk both financially and academically, as the Act 101 contract requires and funding appropriations permit.