

# LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Learning Support Services (LSS) aims to promote educational equity for all UC Santa Cruz students by fostering interactive, peer-based academic communities through Small Group Tutoring, Modified Supplemental Instruction, Drop-In Services, and Writing Tutoring. At LSS, students are developed intellectually, conceptually, and professionally by building a strong foundation for student success and empowerment at the university and beyond.

During the 2015-2016 Academic Year, LSS programming was guided by:

- Expansion of services due to Measure 63 and EVC Student Success Funds
- The expansion was guided by the external report completed by the Division of Student Success indicating that current LSS services have positive student outcomes in terms of course grades (Modified Supplemental Instruction) and retention (Tutoring). It also found that each tutoring/MSI session seemed to have a cumulative impact on success so designing programs that promote early sign-ups and regular attendance are preferable. It was found that LSS was over utilized by many groups of students including: EOP students, Pell Grant recipients, Latino students, and female students. This did raise concerns that LSS is not effectively reaching out to male students and transfer students.

**Table 1** Overview of Utilization and Cost LSS Program 2015-2016

Program	Total Number of Students	Service Deliveries*	Contact Hours	Contact Hours per Service Delivery
<b>Total LSS Programs</b>	<b>6,019</b>	<b>12,857</b>	<b>78,128</b>	<b>6.07</b>
MSI	4,916	9558	59,577	6.23
SPHS	136	253	1243	4.91
Small Group Tutoring	1,541	2,066	10,425	5.04
Tutoring for MSI Supported Courses	588	763	3,616	4.73
Weekly Writing	183	247	896	3.62
One-Time Writing	25	50	51	**
Drop-in Math	265	555	262	**
Drop-in Writing	251	556	296	**
Mentor	48	104	1,693	16.27

\* Service Delivery is a duplicate count of students based on their attendance of sessions with-in a defined program; \*\*not calculated for this program

Overall, comparing 2015-2016 to 2014-2015 there was a 5% increase in the number of students served, an 8% increase in contact hours. The funds were able to cover the 4% wage increase for tutors effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and expansion of services including: an increase in the number

of courses supported, offering new services, and increasing the number of tutoring/MSI sessions offered for specific classes. EOP students accounted for 51% of the contact hours and 48% of our tutor staff were EOP students. Both of these percentages are higher than the campus average of about 39% EOP students.

## *Expansion of Services*

### **Modified Supplemental Instruction (MSI)**

MSI offers support to mostly lower division and select upper division courses. MSI Learning Assistants attend lecture, hold 3-5 session per week that are each 1.25 hours long. Session size generally varies from 3-12 students per session but the average session size is about 7 students.

Classes that were previously supported with Small Group Tutoring but had such high utilization to the point that students were wait-listed were converted to be supported by MSI. MSI Learning Assistants can easily serve 30-40 students per week rather than the 16-20 students per week Small Group Tutoring tutors serve. Twenty-two courses were switched from Small Group Tutoring to MSI in the 2015-2016 academic year.

LSS also increased the number of MSI Learning Assistants for highly utilized courses. In 2015-2016 there were 275 MSI Learning Assistants, an increase of 37% from 2014-2015. The increase of Learning Assistants hired had three purposes:

- More students would be able to attend MSI as more sessions were offered, alleviating schedule conflict issues.
- The MSI Learning Assistants were also the same employees who provided Small Group Tutoring for the MSI supported courses. This allowed students to meet twice a week with the same Learning Assistant who knew the student's needs. Learning Assistants are also more prepared as they attend lecture.
- Better addressed access for students with accommodations. For students who requested accommodations before the quarter started, LSS was able to set the student up with the MSI Learning Assistant who attends the class rather than a Small Group Tutor who does preparation on their own.

Many professors are “flipping” their classrooms, this means that the professors are having students work in groups during lecture to help students better understand the material. Since MSI Learning Assistants are paid to attend lecture, LSS reached out to faculty to let them know that MSI Learning Assistants would be able to assist students by working in small group activities during lecture. This academic year, we had 8 classes use MSI Learning Assistants during flipped classroom activities.

### **Spanish for Heritage Speakers**

Students enrolled in Spanish for Heritage Speakers (SPHS) are encouraged to join a conversation group where the students discuss readings associated with the class. Students meet in small groups, 2-4 students, for 6 weeks during the quarter. All students enrolled in the course are strongly encouraged to attend tutoring sessions and usually about 85% or more of the students do attend these sessions. This program is a partnership between LSS and the Humanities Division and the cost of the students' salaries is a shared expense.

## **Small Group Tutoring**

Small Group Tutoring offers support in both lower division and upper division courses. Small Group Tutors prepare on their own and hold 3-5 sessions per week. Tutoring sessions are 1 hour long and usually hold 2-4 students; however, session size can sometimes be increased to 6 students for highly utilized courses. Most commonly, tutoring sessions were attended by 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and, as a comparison, MSI was most commonly attended by 1<sup>st</sup> year students. The Small Group Tutoring program also offered more sessions which resulted in a 33% decrease in sessions that had more than 4 students.

Since 22 courses were switched from Small Group Tutoring support to MSI, it was expected that the Small Group Tutoring program would see significant decrease in the number of students seen. Although there was a 21% decrease in the number of students seen, overall students used Small Group Tutoring more frequently. There was an increase from 4.6 hours per service delivery per quarter (2014-2015) to 5.0 hours (2015-2016).

## *Politics Program*

The Politics Small Group Writing Program was created through a partnership with Learning Support Services and the Politics Department. The Small Group Writing Program consists of 1 tutor who works closely with the class and holds 4-6 sessions a week; each session holds up to 6 students and the tutor and students meet weekly for an hour. During the tutoring sessions, the tutors work with students on writing exercises aimed to improve students' writing skills in the Politics discipline. Students who participate in the program are identified early on in the quarter through their performance in a writing assignment. Students are also offered extra credit for regular attendance. In the 2015-2016 academic year, Learning Support Services supported 9 politics courses ranging from lower-division introductory courses to upper division advanced courses.

## **Tutoring for MSI supported courses**

Tutoring for MSI supported courses was used in 79% of all MSI supported courses in the 2015-2016 academic year. Of the 588 students that used tutoring for MSI supported courses, the majority were frosh (38%), followed by sophomores (30%), juniors (21%) and seniors (10%). This is a similar trend seen in the larger MSI program as most of the courses supported with MSI (55%) are lower division courses most commonly taken by frosh and sophomores.

53% (305) of students who used tutoring for MSI supported courses were EOP students. Of the 3611.5 contact hours used by students, 55% (1,998) of them can be attributed to EOP students. The percentage of EOP students who used tutoring for MSI and the student/tutor contact hours are slightly higher than those seen in MSI program. When looking at the utilization of the MSI program, only 43% of students served were EOP students and 49% of the tutor/student contact hours were used by EOP students. Tutoring for MSI supported courses further increased educational equity for EOP students by providing a space for them to use additional resources.

## **Drop-in Services**

Drop-in Writing expanded its hours from 3:00-6:00pm to 3:00-7:00pm Monday-Thursday. In Drop-in Writing, students meet one-on-one with a writing tutor for 30 minutes. The extension of hours resulted in an 18.5% increase in contact time with students.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, Drop-in Math cut its hours from 4:00-8:00PM to 5:00-7:00PM Tuesday-Thursday. In the 2015-2016 academic year, LSS reinstated the previously scheduled time of Tuesday-Thursday 4:00-8:00PM. In Drop-in Math, tutors work one-on-one with students in courses ranging from College Algebra through the Calculus series for short periods of time. The tutors are encouraged to move from student to student. This increase in Drop-in Math hours almost doubled the contact time from the 2014-2015 academic year. Overall, the contact time between student and tutor increased by 94%.

### **Weekly Writing Program**

In the Weekly Writing program, students sign-up with a tutor at the beginning of the quarter then meet weekly for one hour in a one-on-one session for the remainder of the quarter.

Although there were no purposeful efforts made to increase the number of students who used weekly writing tutoring, more students did use the program, resulting in a 22% increase of students served.

### **One-time One-hour Appointments**

A new program for students requesting writing assistance was developed in Fall 2015 and implemented throughout the year. The One-Time One-Hour Writing Appointments program offers student the ability to sign up for a one-time, one-hour, one-on-one writing appointment. This program was designed to address three issues:

- In the weekly writing tutoring program, we found that students who did not have weekly writing assignments due would not show up for their scheduled writing tutoring session
- In Drop-in Writing, utilization was unpredictable making that program difficult to staff
- In Drop-in Writing, students only meet with tutors for 30 minutes and students often gave similar feedback of wanting to meet with their tutor for a longer period of time

### **Mentoring**

In the 2015-2016 academic year, Learning Support Services developed a program aimed at the retention of sophomore students both in academic difficulty and students who were interested in participating in a mentor program. The program aimed to provide at least 3 hours a week of meeting time between mentors and students. In these meetings, mentors were tasked to help students do well in college. This meant mentoring on personal issues, like stress management, to academic issues, like how to study for a test. Mentors and mentees were interviewed by coordinators and placed into groups based on majors and personality. Groups were usually between 2-3 students although there were many individual sessions. Overall, Learning Support Services supported 47 students in the mentoring program.