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Satisfaction Levels of Piedmont Virginia Community College Students with the Tutoring Services

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Satisfaction Levels of Piedmont Virginia Community College Students with the Tutoring Services

A Research Paper Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of
STEM Education and Professional Studies
Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of
Science in STEM Education and Professional Studies

By Michael Kutnak

July, 2009

SIGNATURE PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Michael Kutnak under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in STEM Education and Professional Studies.

Approved by: _____

Dr. John M. Ritz

Date

Graduate Program Director

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Michael Kutnak

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Piedmont Virginia Community College offered tutoring services to currently enrolled students through the school's Learning, Math, & Writing Center. This tutoring program was designed to fulfill the mission of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center: "To help members of the campus community develop the skills necessary to achieve their academic potential" (Piedmont Virginia Community College [PVCC], 2009, Learning Resources: About the Centers section, ¶ 5). According to Laura Symons, the Director of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center, tutors were selected from the student population as well as the local community and received training before the fall and spring semesters (L. Symons, personal communication, February 10th, 2009). Tutors were trained according to the guidelines put forth by the National Tutoring Association (L. Symons, personal communication, February 10th, 2009). The tutoring services were offered by the college as part of each student's tuition costs and were accessible six days a week (PVCC, 2009).

Feedback on the performance and satisfaction level of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center's tutoring program was a key element to the continuation of funding for the program. Piedmont Virginia Community College's President, Frank Friedman, stated that the college will experience a five percent reduction of state funding for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years, resulting in a loss of \$452,239 each academic year (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008). As a consequence, many programs and services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College will have their funding reduced or cut (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008).

Reactions and assessments from current students who have used the services were a critical source of data for administrators at Piedmont Virginia Community College to use when determining future funding levels for the Learning, Math, & Writing Center.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction level of students who used and participated in tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College to determine future funding and continuation of the program.

RESEARCH GOALS

The following research goals were examined in this study:

1. Did students at Piedmont Virginia Community College perceive an academic benefit from the use of tutoring services at the school?
2. Did students at Piedmont Virginia Community College perceive academic advisors at the college actively supported and promoted the use of tutoring services in the attainment of individual academic goals at Piedmont Virginia Community College?
3. What suggestions did students have to improve the tutoring program at Piedmont Virginia Community College?
4. Should tutoring services continue to be funded at Piedmont Virginia Community College?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

According to Smilkstein (1999), adults learn new knowledge with the least amount of difficulty when learning in an environment that complements the brain's natural learning process. The foundation of Piedmont Virginia Community College's

tutoring program was based on this idea (L. Symons, personal communication, February 10th, 2009). Tutors worked with tutees to connect new and unfamiliar knowledge to knowledge that the tutee already possessed (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). The program was designed to positively impact the learning experience and academic achievement of every Piedmont Virginia Community College student thereby furthering the mission of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center (L. Symons, personal communication, February 10th, 2009).

As a result of the announced budget cut backs for the 2009-2010 academic year, most of the student services at Piedmont Virginia Community College will experience reductions in funding (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008). Some programs could be lost entirely (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008). The administration of Piedmont Virginia Community College faces tough challenges in deciding what programs and services will continue to be funded in their entirety and which will lose portions of funding (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008).

One factor that administrators have based this decision on in the past was student feedback on the services provided by the college. According to Rob McHenry, Director of Testing for the Learning, Math, & Writing Center, the office procedure for obtaining student feedback on the services offered through the Learning, Math, & Writing Center was to use a computer program called TutorTrac and a survey titled the Student Satisfaction Survey, conducted by the administration at Piedmont Virginia Community College (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

Through the use of TutorTrac software, students logged individual usage of the tutoring services offered in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Each time a student logged out, he or she was offered the opportunity to submit comments on the tutoring session (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Leaving a comment was not required in order to log out of the system, and no specific questions about the tutoring session or service in general were asked of students when leaving a comment (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

The Student Satisfaction Survey was an assessment of the student population conducted via email by Piedmont Virginia Community College's administration (Piedmont Virginia Community College [PVCC], 2008). Students selected for the survey were asked to respond to a variety of questions about the entire selection of student services offered at the college (PVCC, 2008).

While these two methods of data collection gave administrators some information on which to base financial decisions, each did not accurately report on the attitudes of the population of students who used the tutoring program offered by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center. More specific data were required to assess the attitudes of students directly concerning the tutoring program offered by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center. Therefore, this study attempted a more systematic approach to obtaining and recording the satisfaction level of students with the tutoring services provided by Piedmont Virginia Community College's Learning, Math, & Writing Center in an attempt to assist administrators with future funding considerations.

LIMITATIONS

The following were limitations to the study:

1. The study's participants were confined to current students of Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville, Virginia.
2. The survey was given for a 21 day period during the spring 2009 semester.
3. The study required the use of different tutors within the tutoring program.
4. The study required the use of different academic coaches within the tutoring program.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made in conducting the study:

1. All tutors and academic coaches were trained using the same training program.
2. All tutors provided similar help to students, per subject.
3. All academic coaches provided similar help to students.
4. All participants in the study were neither current nor former employees of Piedmont Virginia Community College's Learning, Math, & Writing Center.

PROCEDURES

Students using the tutoring services offered at the Learning, Math, & Writing Center at Piedmont Virginia Community College were surveyed using a questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was designed to obtain biographical data, as well as, the student's satisfaction level with tutoring services. The survey was conducted over a two week period, in which each person who utilized the tutoring services in that time span were asked to participate in the study. Eligibility for participation in the study was determined by the biographical data obtained within the

survey. The results of the surveys were then tabulated to obtain information on student satisfaction levels with the tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are a list of terms and definitions relevant to the study:

1. Learning, Math, & Writing Center (LMWC) – location of the tutoring program at Piedmont Virginia Community College.
2. Student Services – those services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College specifically designed to assist students with their college experience. These services include the “Welcome Center, Financial Aid, Academic and Faculty Advising, Learning Center, Testing Center, Writing Center, Math Center, Counseling and Career Services, Computer Services, Food Services, Books Store, Student Activities, and Safety” (PVCC, 2008, p. 1).
3. Tutoring – the act of connecting new material to previously held knowledge by working one-on-one or in a group session with a tutor (L. Symons, personal communication, February 10th, 2009).
4. Tutoring session – a tutoring session is defined as thirty minutes or more spent in the learning center working with a tutor in a one-on-one or group environment.
5. TutorTrac – software program used by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to track tutoring appointments and services.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The proceeding chapter has provided a basic outline of the study at hand. The problem of the study was to determine the satisfaction levels of students who used and participated in the tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College to determine future funding and continuation of the program. The study was based on the need for more data on student satisfaction levels with the current tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College and was significant for its impact on determining future funding for the tutoring program.

Chapter II, Review of Literature, investigated the benefits of tutoring in the college environment, as well as current data gathering methods used at Piedmont Virginia Community College's Learning, Math, & Writing Center. Methods and Procedures, Chapter III, followed with an explanation of how the study was conducted, what data collection methods were used, and what population was used. In Chapter IV, Findings, the data were tabulated and the results of the study were supplied and discussed. Chapter V, Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations, concluded the study and offered future recommendations for courses of action concerning funding of the tutoring program at Piedmont Virginia Community College's Learning, Math, & Writing Center and further courses of study on the topic.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

College course work can be very challenging for some students. As a result, Piedmont Virginia Community College [PVCC] offered an extensive tutoring program to all current students to assist with the academic rigors of college course work (Piedmont Virginia Community College [PVCC], 2009). This review will cover the services contained within the tutoring program, the scientific background and basis of those services offered, the proposed budget cuts for the college and the roll of student feedback in the funding of student services at PVCC, and the current methods used by PVCC to collect student feedback on the tutoring program.

SERVICES OFFERED WITHIN THE TUTORING PROGRAM AT PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

According to Rob McHenry, Director of Testing for the Learning, Math, & Writing Center, 98% of the subjects offered at PVCC were covered by the tutoring program in the Spring 2009 academic semester, which operated Monday through Saturday (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Academic coaching was also available to students as part of the tutoring program (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). “An Academic Coach helps you figure out how, when, and where you best learn. Coaches work with you to build learning and study skills for college-level achievement while managing the time and stress of sometimes-complicated lives” (PVCC, 2009). McHenry noted students could set up appointments with specific tutors or come by on a walk-in basis, six days a week (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). “We are open a variety of hours to

accommodate the variety we see in our student's schedules" (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND AND BASIS OF PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S TUTORING PROGRAM

The tutoring program at PVCC was based on research by Smilkstein (1999, 2003, 2007) concerning brain-centered learning. According to Smilkstein (2003, 2007), the brain's natural learning process took place in six stages: motivation, start to practice, advanced practice, skillfulness, refinement, and mastery. Smilkstein (2007) advocated using learning techniques in which new material was connected to material the brain previously held. According to Smilkstein (2003), the brain was composed of nerve cells called neurons which form tree-like structures called dendrites. Smilkstein (2003) contended that "when we are learning, our brain is growing tree-like fibers from the neurons in specific sections of the brain" (p. 9). These dendrites were responsible for receiving chemical messages from other neurons across synapses, or tiny spaces between neurons inside the brain (Smilkstein, 2007).

Smilkstein (2007) stated, "Dendrites can grow only from a dendrite that is already there - from something the learner already knows" (p. 2). Further, Smilkstein (2007) contended that "as we learn, specific dendrites grow so that specific neurons connect at specific synapses to create larger and more-complex specific neural networks. These networks are what we know" (p. 3). According to Laura Symons, Director of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center, the tutoring program at PVCC was based on the idea of building the dendrite networks of student's brains (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). "Tutors are trained to tutor rather than teach" (L.

Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). The goal of the tutor was not to teach the new material, but to grow the dendrite structures of the tutee by connecting new material to previously held material (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009).

When a student did not understand a topic and sought help from a tutor, the tutor did not teach the material in question to the tutee (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). Rather, the tutor worked with the tutee to connect the new material to knowledge the tutee previously held (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). Tutees were much more likely to remember the new material if the tutee made the connection to it themselves; the tutees had grown the appropriate dendrite network to accommodate the new knowledge (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009).

This foundation on which the tutoring program was based also created a distinction between the type of services provided by the tutoring program and those services students would normally be able to obtain from a professor or other school resource. The tutoring program offered by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center provided an academic service different from and in addition to a professor's teachings; this service could not be replicated elsewhere on campus. As a result, academic advisors should have promoted the tutoring program to students as an additional resource provided by the college.

PROPOSED BUDGET CUTBACKS FOR THE 2009-2010 ACADEMIC YEAR

According to Frank Friedman, President of PVCC, the college "will have to find \$452,239 in savings through a combination of reductions" in order to meet the governor's

proposed budget cuts for the 2009-10 academic year (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008). Friedman further stated that “to make these reductions possible we will have to cut back or eliminate some programs or services to students” (F. Friedman, personal communication, October 14th, 2008). Therefore, student feedback became an important tool for the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to use as direct evidence of success to secure future funding levels (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

“Administrators do not want to spend money on student services that are not utilized. Student usage of and feedback on services are essential for determining future funding levels for those services” (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Therefore, assessment of student attitudes towards the tutoring program was an essential part of ensuring that the tutoring services met the needs of the student population. Also, it gave administrators primary accounts from students for use when calculating future budget allocations (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). These demonstrated the importance of the services available to the student population (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

METHODS OF STUDENT FEEDBACK COLLECTION

The tutoring program at PVCC obtained student feedback using two different methods (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). The first method was the use of TutorTrac software (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). The TutorTrac software was the main software program used to record individual student usage of the tutoring center (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Students logged in and out of TutorTrac for each tutoring session they attended at

the Learning, Math, & Writing Center (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). Students were offered the opportunity to leave comments about their tutoring session when logging out but were not required to do so (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009).

While this method did elicit some comments from students who used the tutoring services at PVCC, it did not ask specific questions or require students to structure their comments in any particular way (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). While this data can be used by internal office personnel to improve the services offered through the tutoring program, according to McHenry, “the comments were too unstructured in their nature to be of much use beyond that” (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). This method of data collection did not assess any student attitudes toward the perceived academic benefits of the tutoring services, the role of academic advising in tutoring services, or whether or not students felt the tutoring program should continue to be funded.

The second method used to obtain student feedback by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center was the Student Satisfaction Survey, which is sent to students on a yearly basis (R. McHenry, personal communication, February 9th, 2009). “Survey results provide a baseline assessment of student services effectiveness, and are used to identify services that are working well and areas in need of improvement” (Piedmont Virginia Community College [PVCC], 2008, p. 1). The 2008 Student Satisfaction Survey was emailed to all enrolled students at PVCC and received responses from 11% of the student population over a 14-day period (PVCC, 2008). The survey allowed students the opportunity to leave positive comments as well as suggestions for improvement, but

neither were required (PVCC, 2008). The survey split the services offered by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center into the following categories and asked participants different sets of questions for each: Testing Center, Tutoring/Academic Coaching, Math Center, and Writing Center (PVCC, 2008). The data collected in the 2008 Student Satisfaction Survey showed in the category of “Tutoring/Academic Coaching” that 15% of the respondents had used the tutoring services one or more times in the 2008 academic year, with an overall satisfaction level of 97% (PVCC, 2008). The survey found that “56% of respondents say they know what to do after every session, 28% some of the time, 9% every now and the, and 7% report they never know what to do following a tutoring session” (PVCC, 2008, p. 22). Six comments were left under the Tutoring/Academic Coaching section concerning increases in the hours of service and number of available tutors (PVCC, 2008).

The data collected in the 2008 Student Satisfaction Survey, however, underrepresented the male population of students as well as the part-time student population at PVCC (PVCC, 2008). The survey did not ask participants about any possible connections between academic advising and the tutoring services offered at PVCC. The survey also did not ask whether or not students felt the tutoring program should continue to be funded. While the survey did ask participants “if they know what to do after leaving a tutoring session,” the survey did not ask participants to directly comment on whether or not they perceived any general academic benefit from utilizing the tutoring services offered at PVCC (PVCC, 2008).

Additionally, by creating separate categories for Tutoring/Academic Coaching, the Math Center, and the Writing Center, the survey created artificial distinctions

between services offered at the Math Center, the Writing Center, and the tutoring program. The tutoring program was part of the Math Center and the Writing Center (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). Tutors were staff members of both the Math Center and the Writing Center (L. Symons, personal communication, February, 10th, 2009). It was possible that responses meant for the tutoring program were not recorded properly due to this artificial distinction, thereby skewing the obtained data. This possible skew was evidenced further by the fact that personal comments collected by category from participants about services doing an excellent job contained references to the tutoring program in all four of the categories (PVCC, 2008). A similar trend was seen in suggestions for improvement; participants in the study listed suggestions for improving the tutoring program in all four categories (PVCC, 2008). Furthermore, uniform questions were not asked of each of the four categories which opened the responses to the possibility of duplication and/or inconsistency within individual responses. Again, this suggested a possible skew could exist in the obtained data.

SUMMARY

The Review of Literature presented an overview of the services offered by the tutoring program at PVCC, including what services were available to students and when. The scientific background and basis of those services was examined and revealed the educational theories around which the tutoring program was based. This scientific background and basis was what separated tutoring from teaching, differentiating the Learning, Math, & Writing Center's tutoring services from academic services provided by the college. The 2009-2010 budget cutbacks were examined along with the roll of student feedback in determining future funding. Student feedback was shown to be an

important factor in the decision-making process. Finally, the two current methods of collection used by the Learning, Math, & Writing Center were reviewed. Both methods were able to provide some data to internal office personnel administrators. However, both collection methods also contained factors which could have caused errors or anomalies to occur in the current data set.

Chapter III, Methods and Procedures, follows next. This chapter will discuss the methods and procedures used by the researcher to conduct the study. The instrumentation used to collect the data for the study will also be discussed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. The study was descriptive in nature and consisted of surveying users of the tutoring program at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC). The survey used in the study was designed to collect feedback on satisfaction levels with the tutoring program and consisted of statements ranked by participants using a Likert Scale as well as free response questions. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the survey in greater detail and will include the following sections: population, instrument design, methods of data collection, statistical analysis, and summary.

POPULATION

The population for this study consisted of a sample of PVCC students who were eligible to use the tutoring services during the spring 2009 academic semester. Eligibility for use of the tutoring services was determined by an individual's status as a current student; all current PVCC students are eligible to participate in the tutoring program. The population size for this study was based on PVCC's most recently published enrollment figures; for the fall 2008 academic year 4874 students were enrolled at the college (PVCC, 2009, About PVCC Quick Facts: Enrollment section, ¶ 1). For this population size, a minimum of 357 samples were needed.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The instrument for data collection consisted of a survey created specifically for this study. The survey was designed to determine the satisfaction levels of students with the current tutoring program. Consisting of five parts, the survey addressed whether or

not students perceived an academic benefit from the use of the tutoring program, what suggestions students had for improving not only academic advising regarding the tutoring program but also the tutoring program itself, and whether or not students felt the tutoring program should continue to be offered by PVCC.

The first section consisted of 19 statements which participants were asked to respond to using a Likert scale. The scale was based on five points; participants used one point to indicate strong disagreement with the statement and five points to indicate strong agreement with the statement. If the statement was not applicable to the participant, he or she responded with a score of zero points. The second and third sections addressed how often the participant had used the tutoring services, both tutoring and academic coaching, allowing participants a choice from five selections. The fourth and fifth sections allowed participants to respond freely to different prompts. These two sections addressed specific thoughts that participants wished to share concerning the tutoring program. Each completed survey was coded with a unique identification number in order to maintain the anonymity of participants. This also allowed survey results to be screened for duplicate survey submissions. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The survey used by this study was distributed over a 21 day period in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center of Piedmont Virginia Community College during the spring 2009 academic semester. Surveys were distributed by staff members to any student who entered the Learning, Math, & Writing Center for tutoring purposes during that 21 day period. Students who decided to participate in the study were given the

option of filling out the survey at that point, or after their tutoring or academic coaching session were complete.

During the 21 day period, surveys were also distributed within a variety of classrooms at PVCC. Professors from all departments were asked to participate in the survey process by allowing five minutes of class time for students to complete the survey. Ten professors representing five different disciplines participated; 19 sections of classes were surveyed in this manner. All completed surveys were placed in a secure box, located in the Director of Testing's office within the Learning, Math, & Writing Center. Surveys were coded with unique identification numbers on an on-going basis throughout the duration of the study. A cover letter accompanied the survey and can be found in Appendix B.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Results for the first section in which responses were recorded using a Likert Scale, as well as the responses from sections two and three were tabulated to determine the number, frequency and mean of participant's responses. The free response answers were grouped according to common themes and summarized by number and frequency.

SUMMARY

Chapter III outlined the methods and procedures used to complete this study. The topics discussed within the chapter include population, instrument design, methods of data collection, and statistical analysis. A sample size of 357 students was needed to accurately represent the population of 4874 students. The survey used to collect the data consisted of 5 sections, two of which allowed participants to freely respond. Data were collected in two ways; first by distributing the survey to eligible students within the

Learning, Math, & Writing Center and second by distributing the survey within the classrooms of participating professors. Data were then analyzed for number, frequency and mean. Chapter IV, Findings, will explain the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction level of students who used and participated in tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) to determine future funding and continuation of the program. This chapter contains the data collected from this study. Data were used to determine overall student satisfaction levels with the tutoring services offered at PVCC.

Current PVCC students were asked to complete a survey consisting of five sections, focusing on different areas of the tutoring program. In Section 1 students responded to 19 questions using a five-point Likert-type scale. The remaining four sections of the survey asked participants questions related to the research goals of the study. In Sections 2 and 3, students recorded how often they used the two main services, tutoring and academic coaching, contained within the tutoring program during the spring 2009 semester. Sections 4 and 5 of the survey were free response sections which allowed students to give their own thoughts and opinions.

RESPONSE RATE

Three hundred fifty-seven responses were required for statistical validity. Survey responses were collected from 387 of 4874 current students at PVCC. Responses were coded with individual tracking numbers and screened to ensure no participant submitted more than one survey.

ACADEMIC BENEFITS OF TUTORING SERVICES

Research Goal 1 of this study was to determine whether or not current students at PVCC perceived an academic benefit from the use of the tutoring services. To fulfill this goal, Questions 13 through 17 from Section 1 were created.

Of the 238 responses (61.6%) to Question 13, “my academic coaching session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically,” the mean score was 4.16 (Agree). The mean response to the Question 14, “my tutoring session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically,” was 4.21 (Agree), with 258 responses (66.67%). For Question 15, “when I finish a tutoring session, I feel like I understand the material I had questions about better then before my tutoring session began,” 260 responses (67.18%) were received. The mean response for this question was 4.16 (Agree). Two hundred sixty-one students (67.44%) responded to Question 16, “I would return to use the subject specific tutoring services offered in tutoring program again” with a mean of 4.24 (Agree). Responses to Question 17, “I would return to use the academic coaching services offered in tutoring program again,” were received from 240 students (67.44%) and earned a mean of 4.25 (Agree). Table 4.1 demonstrates the mean scores for all statements concerning perceived academic benefits of the tutoring services.

Table 4.1 Mean Response to Questions Concerning Academic Benefit

Question	Question #	Number of Responses	Percentage	Mean
My academic coaching session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically.	13	238	61.50%	4.16
My tutoring session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically.	14	258	66.67%	4.21
When I finish a tutoring session, I feel like I understand the material I had questions about better then before my tutoring session began.	15	260	67.18%	4.16
I would return to use the subject specific tutoring services offered in tutoring program again.	16	261	67.44%	4.24
I would return to use the academic coaching services offered in tutoring program again.	17	240	62.02%	4.25

ACADEMIC ADVISING AND THE TUTORING PROGRAM

Research Goal 2 was to determine whether or not students believe academic advisors at the college actively supported and promoted the use of tutoring services in the attainment of individual academic goals at PVCC. Data for this section were collected using Questions 5 and 6 from Section 1; Section 4 was also used. The mean response to Question 5, “my academic advisor’s comments to me about the subject specific tutoring encouraged me to use that resource,” was 3.92 (Agree), generating responses from 245 students (63.31%). Two hundred thirty-four (60.47%) students responded to Question 6, “my academic advisor’s comments to me about academic coaching encouraged me to use that resource,” with a mean of 3.87 (Agree). Table 4.2 displays the mean responses to question s pertaining to academic advising and the tutoring program.

Table 4.2 Mean Response to Questions Concerning Academic Advising

Question	Question #	Number of Responses	Percentage	Mean
My academic advisor’s comments to me about the subject specific tutoring encouraged me to use that resource.	5	245	63.31%	3.92
My academic advisor’s comments to me about academic coaching encouraged me to use that resource.	6	234	60.47%	3.87

Section 4 of the survey asked students, “Do you feel the tutoring and academic coaching program should be/is one of the academic services that academic advisors at Piedmont Virginia Community College actively discuss with their advisees? Explain why or why not.” Two hundred fifty-three participants responded to this question with ninety-nine point twenty-one percent (99.21%) agreeing that academic advisors should/did actively discuss the tutoring services with students and point seven nine percent (.79%) disagreeing. Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of responses.

Table 4.3 Responses to Section 4

Do you feel the tutoring and academic coaching program should be/is one of the academic services that academic advisors at Piedmont Virginia Community College actively discuss with their advisees?	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	251	99.21%
No	2	0.79%

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Research Goal 3 for the study was to determine what suggestions students had to improve the tutoring program at PVCC. Data for this goal were collected using Questions 1 through 4, as well as Questions 7 through 12 from Section 1. Data were also collected using Section 5.

The questions presented to students from Section 1 concerned three major areas of concern for improvement; hours of operation for the tutoring services, availability and scheduling of tutoring services, and the physical environment for the tutoring services. These areas of concern were derived from the most frequently received comments from PVCC’s Executive Summary PVCC 2008 Student Satisfaction Survey.

The first area of concern was hours of operation. The mean response to Question 1, “the tutoring and academic coaching program's Monday - Thursday hours, (10 a.m. - 6

p.m.), met my scheduling needs” was 4.00 (Agree) with 305 responses (78.81%). For Question 2, “the tutoring and academic coaching program's Friday Hours (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) met my scheduling needs,” 265 students (68.48%) responded with a mean score was 3.49 (Neutral). When responding to Question 3, “the tutoring and academic coaching program's Saturday hours (10 a.m. - 2 p.m. by appointment) met my scheduling needs,” students gave a mean response of 3.92 (Agree).

The second area of concern addressed was availability and scheduling tutoring services. The mean response to Question 4, “the number of available tutors/academic coaches on staff met my academic needs,” was 4.02 (Agree), with 273 responses (70.54%) collected. When responding to Question 7, “the website used for obtaining an appointment with a tutor/academic coach was self-explanatory and easy to use,” 226 students (58.40%) gave a mean response of 3.84 (Agree). Two hundred seventy-two student (70.28%) answered Question 8, “I prefer to make appointments with a specific tutor/academic coach ahead of time;” students gave a mean response of 3.79 (Agree). Concerning Question 9, “when I do make an appointment, I prefer to make my own appointment on-line,” 239 students (61.76%) responded with a mean score of 3.48 (Neutral). Two hundred seventy-six students (71.32%) responded with a mean of 4.01 (Agree) to Question 10, “the subject I needed help in the most was offered by the tutoring program.”

The third area of concern was the physical environment where the tutoring program took place. Two hundred sixty-nine students (69.51%) recorded a mean response of 4.01 (Agree) for Question 11, “I had enough space in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to work comfortably with my tutor/academic coach,” (Table 4.4). When

responding to Question 12, “the noise level in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center did not distract me from my tutoring/academic coaching session,” the mean response was 3.95 (Agree) from 279 students (72.09%). Table 4.4 displays the mean scores for all statements pertaining to improvement of the tutoring services.

Table 4.4 Mean Response to Questions Concerning Improvements

Question	Question #	Number of Responses	Percentage	Mean
The tutoring and academic coaching program's Monday - Thursday hours, (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.), met my scheduling needs.	1	305	78.81%	4.00
The tutoring and academic coaching program's Friday Hours (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) met my scheduling needs.	2	265	68.48%	3.49
The tutoring and academic coaching program's Saturday hours (10 a.m. - 2 p.m. by appointment) met my scheduling needs.	3	249	64.34%	3.92
The number of available tutors/academic coaches on staff met my academic needs.	4	273	70.54%	4.02
The website used for obtaining an appointment with a tutor/academic coach was self-explanatory and easy to use.	7	226	58.40%	3.85
I prefer to make appointments with a specific tutor/academic coach ahead of time.	8	272	70.28%	3.79
When I do make an appointment, I prefer to make my own appointment on-line.	9	239	61.76%	3.48
The subject I needed help in the most was offered by the tutoring program.	10	276	71.32%	4.20
I had enough space in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to work comfortably with my tutor/academic coach.	11	269	69.51%	4.01
The noise level in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center did not distract me from my tutoring/academic coaching session.	12	279	72.09%	3.95

Section 5 asked participants, “What specific suggestions do you have to improve the tutoring and academic coaching program offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College?” Ninety-five responses were collected for this question. Those responses were organized into the following six subcategories: Physical Space and Environment, Hours of Operation, Number of Tutors, Advertising, Other Suggestions, and Multiple

Categories. Individual responses for each category are listed in Appendix C. Nineteen responses (20%) concerned the Physical Space and Environment category; 30 responses (31.58%) concerned the Hours of Operation category; 17 responses (17.89%) concerned the Number of Tutors category; 12 responses (12.63%) pertained to the Advertising category; 6 responses (6.32%) of responses pertained to the Other Suggestions category; 11 responses (11.58%) fell into Multiple Categories. Table 4.5 shows a breakdown by category of specific suggestion given by students.

Table 4.5 Categorization of Individual Responses to Section 5

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage Of Total Responses
Physical Space and Environment	19	20.00%
Hours of Operation	30	31.58%
Number of Tutors	17	17.89%
Advertising	12	12.63%
Other Suggestions	6	6.32%
Multiple Categories	11	11.58%

Of the responses which covered more than one category, six responses (54.55%) combined the Physical Space and Environment category with the Number of Tutors category; three responses (27.27%) combined the Hours of Operation category with the Number of Tutors category; two responses (18.18%) combined the Physical Space and Environment category with the Hours of Operation category. Table 4.6 demonstrates a breakdown of specific suggestions given by students which pertained to multiple categories.

Table 4.6 Individual Multi-Category Responses to Section 5

Categories	Number of Responses	Percentage Of Total Responses
Physical Space and Environment/Number of Tutors	6	54.55%
Physical Space and Environment/Hours of Operation	2	18.18%
Hours of Operation/Number of Tutors	3	27.27%

CONTINUATION OF SERVICES

Research Goal 4 was to determine whether or not the tutoring services offered at PVCC should continue to be funded. Data for this research goal were collected using Questions 18 and 19 from Section 1. Sections 2 and 3 of the survey were also used.

Three hundred ten students (80.10%) responded to Question 18, “I would recommend the tutoring/academic coaching program to other Piedmont Virginia Community College students,” with a mean of 4.48 (Agree). Responding to Questions 19, “Tutoring and academic coaching should continue to be offered in future semesters,” 338 students (87.34%) gave a mean response of 4.66 (Strongly Agree). Table 4.7 represents the mean scores for statements pertaining to the continuation of the tutor services.

Table 4.7 Mean Response to Questions Concerning Continuation of Services

Question	Question #	Number of Responses	Percentage	Mean
I would recommend the tutoring/academic coaching program to other Piedmont Virginia Community College students.	18	310	80.10%	4.48
Tutoring and academic coaching should continue to be offered in future semesters.	19	338	87.34%	4.66

Section 2 asked “How many subject specific tutoring sessions did you attend during the spring 2009 academic semester?” Two hundred seventy-one students (70.03%) responded 0 to 1 time, 59 students (15.25%) responded 2 to 3 times, 18 students (4.65%)

responded 3 to 4 times, 10 students (2.58%) responded 4 to 5 times, and 29 (7.49%) responded 5+ times. The mean response to this question was 1.62 uses per semester.

Table 4.8 displays the number of students using subject specific tutoring sessions for the spring semester of 2009.

Table 4.8 Student Use of Subject Specific Tutoring

Number of Uses	Responses	Percentage
0 to 1 times	271	70.03%
2 to 3 times	59	15.25%
3 to 4 times	18	4.65%
4 to 5 times	10	2.58%
5+ times	29	7.49%
Average Usage	1.62 times	

Section 3 asked “how many academic coaching sessions did you attend during the spring 2009 academic semester?” Three hundred thirty-one students (85.79%) responded 0 to 1 time, 32 students (8.27%) responded 2 to 3 times, 9 students (2.33%) responded 3 to 4 times, 2 students (0.52%) responded 4 to 5 times, and 13 students (3.36%) responded 5+ times. The mean response to Section 3 was 1.28 uses per semester.

Table 4.9 demonstrates the number of students using academic coaching sessions for the spring semester of 2009.

Table 4.9 Student Use of Academic Coaching

Number of Uses	Responses	Percentage
0 to 1 times	332	85.79%
2 to 3 times	32	8.27%
3 to 4 times	9	2.33%
4 to 5 times	2	0.52%
5+ times	13	3.36%
Average Usage	1.27 times per semester	

SUMMARY

Chapter IV presented the data collected in this study. The chapter noted a sample size of 357 students was need; a sample 387 of 4874 students was obtained. This chapter described the responses received using the survey specifically designed for this study. The chapter also described the survey data analysis conducted.

The findings identified whether or not students perceived an academic benefit from the tutoring program by analyzing Questions 13 through 17 from Section 1 of the survey for measure of central tendency. Next, the findings identified whether or not students felt academic advisors actively promoted the services offered within the tutoring program, by examining Questions 5 and 6 from Section 1 for measures of central tendency. Responses to Section 4 were also analyzed for this research goal by grouping responses according to yes or no answers to examine the percentage of total response found in each grouping in support of this research goal. The findings further identified what suggestions students had for improvement of the tutoring program by analyzing Questions 1 through 4 and Questions 7 through 12 from Section 1 for measures of central tendency. Section 5 was analyzed by grouping individual responses into similar categories in support of this research goal. Percentages of the total number of responses received were examined for each category. Finally, the findings identified whether or not the tutoring services should continue to be funded at the college. Questions 18 and 19 from Section 1 were analyzed for measures of central tendency to determine this research goal. Along with these questions, Sections 2 and 3 were analyzed by grouping responses into categories. Percentages of the total number of responses received were examined for each category.

Chapter V, Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations, follows next. This chapter will summarize the study, draw conclusions from the obtained data, and make recommendation based upon the collected data.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will review the study conducted and draw conclusion about the data obtained. The researcher will then make recommendations for future actions and further research based upon the data collected.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction level of students who used and participated in tutoring services offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) to determine future funding and continuation of the program. In order to determine this, four research goals were examined:

1. Did students at PVCC perceive an academic benefit from the use of tutoring services at the school?
2. Did students at PVCC perceive academic advisors at the college actively supported and promoted the use of tutoring services in the attainment of individual academic goals at Piedmont Virginia Community College?
3. What suggestions did students have to improve the tutoring program at PVCC?
4. Should tutoring services continue to be funded at PVCC?

This problem arose from the planned budget cuts for the school's 2009-2010 academic school year related to the tutoring services. While PVCC had collected some data in past semesters concerning the tutoring services via the Student Satisfaction Survey and TutorTrac software, these data did not accurately record the attitudes and feelings of students toward the tutoring services specifically. The population used for this study consisted of students at PVCC who were currently enrolled in the spring 2009

academic semester. The study was limited to students of PVCC in Charlottesville, Virginia. Participation was limited to a 21-day period during the spring 2009 semester. The study required the use of different tutors and academic coaches within the tutoring program.

A minimum of 357 participants were need for this study. Responses from 387 of 4874 current students were collected using a survey specifically designed for the study. The survey consisted of five sections. Section 1 contained statements to which students responded using a Likert-type scale. Questions from Section 1 were analyzed for measures of central tendency and used to investigate each of the four research goals. Sections 2 and 3 consisted of closed questions, used to examine whether or not tutoring services should continue to be offered by the college. Responses in Sections 2 and 3 were categorized based on the answer chosen and then examined in regards to the percentage of total responses received. Sections 4 and 5 consisted of open questions. Section 4 was used to examine whether or not students perceived academic advisors were actively promoting the use of the tutoring services. Responses to this section were first divided into yes and no responses. The percentage of the total number of responses was then examined for each of the two categories. Section 5 was used to examine whether or not students had specific suggestions for improvement of the tutoring services. Responses were divided into the following six subcategories; Physical Space and Environment, Hours of Operation, Number of Tutors, Advertising, Other Suggestions, and Multiple Categories.

Surveys were distributed in two manners. First, surveys were distributed to all students who came to the Learning, Math, & Writing Center during the 21-day study

period. The second method of distribution was through classrooms. Professors were asked to volunteer five minutes of their class time to all students to complete the survey. The results of the survey were analyzed for measures of central tendency. The free-response answers were grouped according to common themes and summarized by number and frequency.

CONCLUSIONS

Research Goal 1 was to determine whether students at PVCC perceived an academic benefit from the use of tutoring services at the school. Responses to Questions 3 through 17 from Section 1 were used to answer this goal. Responses to Questions 13 and 14 indicate that students agreed both subject specific tutoring and academic coaching sessions were beneficial. Responses to Question 15 signify that students agreed that they understood the material in question better when a subject specific tutoring session was completed. In response to returning to use the academic coaching and subject specific tutoring services, Questions 16 and 17 demonstrated that students agreed they would do so. Based on those findings, students at PVCC did in fact find an academic benefit from the use of tutoring service.

Research Goal 2 was to determine whether students perceived academic advisors at the college were actively supporting and promoting the use of tutoring services in the attainment of individual academic goals. Questions 5 and 6 from Section 1 along with Section 4 were used to answer this goal. Responses to Questions 5 and 6 demonstrated that students agreed that their academic advisor's comment about subject specific tutoring and academic coaching encouraged them to use those services. Ninety-nine point twenty-one percent (99.21%) of responses to Section 4 indicated that students

agreed that academic advisors should actively discuss the tutoring services with their advisees. Based on the results from both sections, students at PVCC did feel that academic advisors at the college actively supported and promoted the tutoring services.

Research Goal 3 was to determine what suggestions students had for improvement of the tutoring services. Questions 1 through 4, as well as Questions 7 through 12 from Section 1 were used along with Section 5 to answer this research goal. Questions from Section 1 concerned the following categories: hours of operation for the tutoring services, availability and scheduling of tutoring services, and physical environment for the tutoring services. Questions 1 through 3 pertained to hours of operation. Responses to the first and third question indicated that students agreed that the Monday through Thursday, and Saturday hours of operation met their academic needs. According to responses received for Question 2, students were neutral concerning the Friday hours of operation meeting their academic needs.

Questions 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 from Section 1 pertained to the availability and scheduling of tutoring services. Responses to Question 4 indicated that students agreed that the number of tutors and academic coaches met their academic needs. Students agreed that the website used for scheduling tutoring services was easy to use and that they preferred to obtain appointments ahead of time according to responses received for Questions 7 and 8. In response to Question 9, students were neutral about using web based methods of making appointments with tutors or academic coaches. Students agreed that the subject they most needed help with was offered by the tutoring program, according to responses to Question 10.

Concerning the physical environment where the tutoring program was held, Questions 11 and 12 were used to analyze Research Goal 3. Responses to Questions 11 and 12 indicated that students agreed the physical space and noise level of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center met their academic needs.

Section 5 elicited specific student suggestions for improvement and were grouped together by the following six categories: Physical Space and Environment, Hours of Operation, Number of Tutors, Advertising, Other Suggestions, and Multiple Categories. Based on the responses received, twenty percent (20%) concerned the Physical Space and Environment category; thirty-one point fifty eight percent (31.58%) concerned the Hours of Operation category; seventeen point eighty-nine percent (17.89%) concerned the Number of Tutors category; twelve point sixty-three percent (12.63%) pertained to the Advertising category; six point thirty-two (6.32%) pertained to the Other Suggestions category; eleven point fifty-eight percent (11.58%) fell into multiple categories.

Based on the findings related to Research Goal 3, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, students agreed that the hours of operation for the tutoring services meet their academic needs. Second, students agreed that the availability and scheduling of tutoring services met their academic needs. Third, students agreed that the physical environment where tutoring services were held met their learning needs. Fourth, while most students agree that these three areas meet their academic needs, those three areas did receive specific comments or suggestions for improvement from 95 students (24.55%). Therefore, hours of operation, number of tutors, and the physical space should be considered for improvement in future semesters. The area of advertisement of services

should also be considered for improvement. This area of concern was previously unidentified by past research (PVCC, 2008).

Research Goal 4 was to determine whether or not the tutoring services should continue to be funded at PVCC. Questions 18 and 19 from Section 1 along with Sections 2 and 3 were used to collect data for this research goal. Students agreed, according to responses collected for Question 18, they would recommend subject specific tutoring and academic coaching to fellow students. According to responses collected for Question 19, students strongly agreed that the subject specific tutoring and academic coaching should continue to be offered by the college. In response to Section 2, the average attendance rate for subject specific tutoring sessions for participants was 1.62 times per semester. For Section 3, the average attendance rate for academic coaching sessions for participants was 1.28 times per semester. Based on the data collected, students do feel that the tutoring services should continue to exist. The tutoring services are supported, recommended, and utilized by the student population of PVCC. Therefore, funding should continue for the tutoring services offered at PVCC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions within this study, several suggestions were made. The researcher proposes the following recommendations:

Tutoring services should be among the first recommendations of faculty and staff members for students in need of academic assistance at the community college level. The researcher recommends services should continue to remain free of charge to all current students as this will have a positive impact on students' academic progress and retention levels at the college.

Academic advisors should continue to actively promote and discuss the tutoring services with all of their advisees. The researcher recommends that a workshop be given each semester to academic advisors during faculty planning week. The workshop should detail the policies, procedures, and services offered within the tutoring services of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center.

Individual responses received from students in Section 5 of the survey indicate that the staff and administration responsible for the Learning, Math, & Writing Center should look to improve four key aspects of the tutoring services. The first aspect is the hours of operation. Thirty-one point fifty eight percent (31.58%) of individual responses concerned the Hours of Operation category. The researcher recommends an expansion of the current hours of operation to include the following: longer hours Monday through Thursday; full-day service on Fridays; more regular weekend service. The researcher also suggests that special early morning sessions or late evening session be implemented to benefit the diverse student population of PVCC.

The second key aspect is the physical space and environment in which the tutoring services are offered. Twenty percent (20%) of the individual responses received pertained to the Physical Space and Environment category. The researcher recommends an expansion of the current facility to accommodate more students. If this is not feasible, the researcher recommends moving the tutoring program to a new location.

The third key aspect is the number of tutors. Seventeen point eighty-nine percent (17.89%) of responses addressed the Number of Tutors category. The researcher recommends the overall size of the tutoring and academic coaching staff be increased. This increase should not be limited to the physical number of tutors and academic

coaches, but it should also encompass a growth in the amount and variety of subjects those tutors and academic coaches are qualified to cover. Further study is recommended to determine the correct ratio of tutors to subject matter in order to provide the most effective way to offer assistance to all students.

The fourth key aspect is advertisement of the tutoring services. Twelve point sixty-three percent (12.63%) of individual responses collected pertained to the Advertising category. More effective methods of expanding the knowledge of the student body concerning the tutoring services are required. Faculty and staff members of all levels at the college should actively be engaged and recruited as possible spokespersons for the tutoring services. Students should also be utilized in this manner. The researcher recommends the staff and administration of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center engage in a media campaign designed to attract attention to the tutoring services.

Finally, the researcher recommends that funding of the tutoring services at PVCC continue in future semesters. The researcher further proposes that funding be increased from its current levels. The tutoring services are one of the most valuable student services offered by PVCC. Increased funding would allow the staff and administration of the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to more ably address the areas in need of improvement as noted above. Students indicated academic benefits from use of the tutoring services and that they would recommend the program to fellow students. Therefore, such a positively and popularly supported program should be expanded in order to maintain and improve the level of services offered within the college.

The researcher recommends two alternate possibilities to augment the tutoring services should funding levels remain intact. First, instruction within the classroom can be improved across all disciplines at the college. Recommendations for specific strategies on instructional improvement from each Department Chair and faculty member should be collected and analyzed by the office of the President of the college for effectiveness, practicality, and ease of implementation. Based on those recommendations, training opportunities and materials should be provided to departments. Department Chairs should coordinate with the office of the President to ensure all faculty and staff receive proper additional professional development. More rigorous standards should also be applied by all Department Chairs to their evaluations of individual professors teaching methods and practices. Department Chairs should coordinate with the office of the President, and all other departments at the college to ensure a commonality of standards for teaching practices across all disciplines.

Second, high schools can improve the quality of students sent to the college. Expectations for incoming freshmen can be more clearly defined by the PVCC and communicated to the local feeder high schools. On a larger scale, the Virginia Community College System can also clarify and update their expectations for incoming freshmen, communicating those requirements to high schools statewide. This would allow Superintendents and Principals across Virginia to adjust the quality of instruction within in their high schools in accordance with updated standards.

Both alternatives would alleviate some of the demands placed on the tutoring services. Each would allow staff and administrators to restructure critical resources to adequately address the previously noted areas of improvement. This, in turn, would

increase the overall effectiveness and quality of the tutoring services offered at the college.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Survey

Appendix B – Survey Cover Letter

Appendix C – Student Suggestions for Improvement

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Student Survey of the Tutoring Program at Piedmont Virginia Community College

Name:

Empl ID #:

Section 1) Please score the following statements about Piedmont Virginia Community College's tutoring program from one to five, according to how strongly you agree or disagree with them. One indicates you strongly disagree; five indicates you strongly agree. If any statement does NOT apply to you, give that statement a score of zero (0).

N/A	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neutral (Neither Disagree or Agree)	Agree	Agree Strongly
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | Score |
|---|-------|
| 1) The tutoring and academic coaching program's Monday - Thursday hours, (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.), met my scheduling needs. | _____ |
| 2) The tutoring and academic coaching program's Friday Hours (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) met my scheduling needs. | _____ |
| 3) The tutoring and academic coaching program's Saturday hours (10 a.m. - 2 p.m. by appointment) met my scheduling needs. | _____ |
| 4) The number of available tutors/academic coaches on staff met my academic needs. | _____ |
| 5) My academic advisor's comments to me about the subject specific tutoring encouraged me to use that resource. | _____ |
| 6) My academic advisor's comments to me about academic coaching encouraged me to use that resource. | _____ |
| 7) The website used for obtaining an appointment with a tutor/academic coach was self-explanatory and easy to use. | _____ |
| 8) I prefer to make appointments with a specific tutor/academic coach ahead of time. | _____ |
| 9) When I do make an appointment, I prefer to make my own appointment on-line. | _____ |
| 10) The subject I needed help in the most was offered by the tutoring program. | _____ |
| 11) I had enough space in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center to work comfortably with my tutor/academic coach. | _____ |
| 12) The noise level in the Learning, Math, & Writing Center did not distract me from my tutoring/academic coaching session. | _____ |
| 13) My academic coaching session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically. | _____ |
| 14) My tutoring session/sessions was/were beneficial to me academically. | _____ |
| 15) When I finish a tutoring session, I feel like I understand the material I had questions about better than before my tutoring session began. | _____ |
| 16) I would return to use the subject specific tutoring services offered in tutoring program again. | _____ |
| 17) I would return to use the academic coaching services offered in tutoring program again. | _____ |
| 18) I would recommend the tutoring/academic coaching program to other Piedmont Virginia Community College students. | _____ |
| 19) Tutoring and academic coaching should continue to be offered in future semesters. | _____ |

Section 2) How many subject specific tutoring sessions did you attend during the spring 2009 academic semester?

- A) 0-1 B) 2-3 C) 3-4 D) 4-5 E) 5+

Section 3) How many academic coaching sessions did you attend during the spring 2009 academic semester?

- A) 0-1 B) 2-3 C) 3-4 D) 4-5 E) 5+

Section 4) Do you feel the tutoring and academic coaching program should be/is one of the academic services that academic advisors at Piedmont Virginia Community College actively discuss with their advisees? Explain why or why not.

Section 5) What specific suggestions do you have to improve the tutoring and academic coaching program offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COVER LETTER

Satisfaction Levels of Piedmont Virginia Community College Students with the Tutoring Services

Thank you for choosing to participate in this study. We understand that your time is valuable and appreciate you taking a moment to fill out this survey. Your responses to this survey are very valuable to the staff and administration here at the Learning, Math, & Writing Center and will be used to improve the tutoring services offered here. Please be as accurate and honest as possible.

This survey is being conducted in order to obtain a student perspective on the tutoring program offered at Piedmont Virginia Community College. Therefore, your most exact and honest responses are needed to obtain the best data. Please feel free to share your personal thoughts and experiences when filling out the survey. Your insights are the key to improving our services!

Please be assured that the data collected will be kept secure and confidential at all times. Each returned survey will be given an individualized tracking number, and all responses will be recorded and summarized using this tracking number. Your name and student I.D. number will not be connected to any responses in the presentation of the data, or in the final analysis. This research is being conducted through Old Dominion University.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO PHYSICAL SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

A bigger facility.
It needs to be a larger area.
Bigger room.
I think that we need a little bit more space in the tutoring center.
Larger space
More space.
Bigger space.
More space in tutoring area.
I know space is limited, but semi private tutoring rooms for students w/ certain accommodations requirements would be helpful.
Spread out space tutors use - noise can be an issue.
More room is needed in the Math and Writing Center. Noise level as indicated is a problem also.
Expand the learning center.
Too crowded though the tutors multitask very well considering the circumstances.
Maybe a bigger space - it can get crowded.
Maybe more to a bigger area it does get a little small in there sometimes.
A bigger room for maybe group help.
More background music.
The space could probably be expanded in the tutoring area. Also it is very stuffy back there.
It would be nice to have more room or air-conditioning.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO ADVERTISING

Let more students know it's available.
As there is a tour of the library, give a tour of the learning center for all students. My friends ask me where it is, as they have not been shown.
Make it better known
Have teachers use more actively.
Publicize a little bit more because when I needed help I totally forgot the learning center existed, or even knew where it was.
More publicity (not many people know about the services) perhaps notes from teachers, something that would help student know that they could benefit from additional tutoring. It's not an idea that often pops into mind, and again, not many people know it exists.
Make it more known to students.
Get the word out more!
Put out more information about it! I didn't know anything about it until I failed a class, and a counselor recommended it.
Do some more advertising so the students know that it is available.
Let more people become aware how easy it is to set up and use.
I might be helpful for instructors in subject for which tutoring is available to announce in class the availability of coaching/tutoring

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO HOURS OF OPEARTION

My most often available times for tutoring are early morning times (6am - 9 am) and later evening times (5pm - 8pm). I understand how it's unfair to ask for assistance at those hours, but if there were willing tutors it would have benefited even more so.
Open sooner.
Make earlier hours.
Earlier hours. The hours of the tutors are during most people's class times.
Extend Friday hours till 3 pm.
Offer more time on Friday.
On Friday tutoring should be available till later because 12 is early.
Offer it later on weekdays.
I'd like to see tutoring and academic coaching ends around 10 pm.
Extend evening hours.
Tutoring until later in the evening since some have to work all day and can't fit it into their schedule.
Have late night tutoring maybe till 7:00 pm
Maybe have more evening tutoring and help hours since a large portion of PVCC students work 9-5 jobs.
I would like to see their hours extended beyond 6 pm for thus of us who work full-time 8-5 or 9-6.
Make tutoring schedule more flexible.
The times were not applicable for me. I would have gone to the math tutoring center but the hours were selective.
More hours on the weekends.
Better hours for students who work.
Expand hours to accommodate working students
Better hours to work with full-time employee schedule.
Longer hours during the week. Stay open later! More Sat. Hours to meet the needs of people that work full time.
Longer hours for tutoring
More Hours
Longer math hours.
Nothing besides seeing if they could be open longer.
I wish that it was open longer during the week and I wish that it had longer hours on the weekend. I enjoyed the sessions w my tutors - I jus wish that I could schedule longer times.
If the hours were longer I would be able to study with help before my evening classes begin.
Increase the range of hours. This is more intended for night students that are unable to reach the tutoring program.
Maybe tutoring sessions could be expanded to 2hrs per session at least.
Chat online.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO NUMBER OF TUTORS

I think we need more tutors for specific subjects. Once I went last year for some tutoring but there was no tutor for that specific subject.
More tutoring for the nursing program.
I would suggest that there be more tutors for a wider range of subjects.
More engineering tutors or at least one!
Sometimes tutors weren't present for appointments. Make sure they could be more punctual for appointments.
Tutors for higher level classes.
More language tutors.
Get a statistics tutor who specializes in statistics.
Have more professors as tutors, not just other students.
More tutors in the summer.
More tutors in the summer.
More tutors on staff at a given time.
Have someone for each subject. Sometimes I couldn't get the help I needed for a specific subject.
More coaches.
More tutors.
Add a few more tutors for all subjects.
More tutors.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO OTHER SUGGESTIONS

I would like to see study groups for math consisting of other needy students.
Specified tutoring groups.
Weekly study groups for specific subjects.
Free Food.
Tutors need to be more friendly and should seem happy to help, not like it's a hassle.
The tutors should be more patient and encourage students at their level of understanding. One of the tutors I met was generalizing his tutoring so much.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO PHYSICAL SPACE AND NUMBER OF TUTORS

Perhaps enlarge the program with tutors and space.
More tutors, bigger space
More room. More flexible hours.
Less noise and more hours
More staff, longer Saturday hours.
More tutors, longer hours.
More space and tutors.
More space. At certain times - finals, or when you know that certain papers are due - have more tutors available.
Better computers, more space, and more than just writing and math tutors. There are many other subjects.
Larger space, more tutors - community college enrollment is growing.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO HOURS OF OPERATION AND NUMBER OF
TUTORS

More staff, longer Saturday hours.
More tutors, longer hours.
Longer hours, more tutors.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO PHYSICAL SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
HOURS OF OPERATION

More room. More flexible hours.
Less noise and more hours