Internal Program Review

Self-Study Report

Program Name

Student Support Center

Credentials Offered

NA

Self-Study Completed by:

Rick Caron

Date Completed

10/01/2014

A. **Introduction**

The Student Support Center, located at the Donaldson Campus, supports all programs and students at Helena College. Helena College is an open enrollment college. All students who negotiate the application process in the allotted time frame are accepted into the college regardless, of academic performance level.

B. **Alignment with Mission, Strategic Goals and Core Themes**

The Student Support Center provides all first semester students advising and assists with registration. This process includes proctoring of academic placement testing for the majority of incoming freshman. Pre-nursing students, along with students who have placed into two or more developmental classes, continue to be advised through the Student Support Center. Pre-nursing students are advised until they exit the program or are selected for the LPN or RN school. Developmental students are advised until they achieve college-level course work. All Helena College students, regardless of credit count, can be advised in the center via appointment or on a walk-in basis. In addition to advising and placement testing, peer and 24-hour online tutoring are the services provided through the center. Career Services are another integral part of the Student Support Center. Career Services are designed to assist students with career discovery as well as job seeking support. All services in the Student Support Center are student retention focused.

C. **Alignment with Community Needs**

NA

D. **Student Participation and Success**

The Student Support Center serves all enrolled students in each academic year. Walk-in student use of the facility is tracked using the ACCUTRACK student recording system. Last calendar year renewal of the service was not paid, and lack of non-payment was not realized. Because of this data collection that shows usage trends, the Student Support Center is just now establishing baseline data for each semester usage. The facility is a high student use environment, and that usage is now being collected. The ACCUTRACK student use recording system upgrades allow determination of how students actually use the facility.

In addition to ACCUTRACK, new this fall, all Student Support Center advisors are using a student sign-in sheet that will allow recorded data of how students use staff advisors other than assigned faculty advisors. Usage trends will be able to be determined with this new collection tool. Baseline data is again being established.

The Student Support Center also monitors nearly 1,200 student through the STARFISH retention tracking system. As students become "Flagged" by instructors for various academic difficulties, Student Support Center advisors reach out to students with a variety of interventions to assist them with academic success and retention.

E. **Student Learning Outcomes**
Each year the Student Support Center creates an Annual Assessment. Two outcomes were established for the 2013-2014 academic year:

> Increase access and usage of the Student Support Center (Formerly the Learning Center) services by a minimum of 2%.

> Tutors employed in the Student Support Center (Formerly the Learning Center) will pass an established tutor training program with a grade of 80% or higher.

As mentioned in section D. facility usage cannot be determined because of the current ongoing establishment of baseline data.

All two-semester tutors and the majority of one semester tutors did complete an established tutor training program, and with the design of the course, all tutors were able to attempt the assessment portion of the training until 100% was established.

Recent data reported from Helena College Institutional Researcher Mike Brown, however, supports that the efforts being made in the Student Support Center are in fact assisting students. Part-time student retention is up approximately 1.5%, and full time student retention is up over 12% over last academic year.

F. **Curriculum and Instruction**
Tutoring is conducted with all course work at both college campus facilities. The Student Support Center hires tutors recommended by faculty. Because of this, curriculum can be established by reviewing the Internal Program Reviews from the academic departments at the college.

Student Support Center advisors do support curriculum and instruction by going into classrooms with designed advising lessons that enhance and support curriculum being taught. In addition to classroom visits, staff advisors present the same curriculum at various venues throughout the campus.

G. **Faculty/Staff Profile**
Rick Caron, the director of the program, has graduate degrees in education (M.Ed. and M.Ed. S.C.) and was hired by a selection committee made up of various college

personnel selected by the Helena College Human Resources Department. Rick attends various trainings throughout the academic year related to the department he directs. He is the current ACT Council chair for the state of Montana and is a member of the conference committee for the state of Montana NACADA Council, which is the state's professional organization for academic advisors. He is also a member of NACADA at the national level. Rick is nearing his 3rd year of employment at the college and has 16 years total experience in higher education. He has extensive knowledge of the college's academic programs and student affairs. Rick is also a certified teacher and guidance counselor with the states of Montana and has extensive knowledge of secondary education, which is pertinent to working with college freshman transitioning into the post-secondary system.

Alan Thompson, the Career Services Specialist, has a master's degree in educational psychology. Alan sits on several committees for the college and the city of Helena. Alan is in his 8th year of employment at the college and has extensive knowledge of secondary education. He has work in various institutions throughout the state of Montana and the northwest dealing with admissions.

Krista Townsend, the Academic Advisor II, has a master's degree in English language and literature. Krista attends various trainings related to her position and is a newly established member of NACADA at the national level. Krista is in her first year with the college and has worked in academics at two other institutions before coming to Helena College.

Candice Miller, the Administrative Assistant, is currently working on an Associate of Arts Degree. She recently began her 4th year with the college. Candice has extensive knowledge of the college's academic programs and student affairs and is using her current academic pursuit to enhance her professional skills.

H. Fiscal and Physical Recourses

The Student Support Center is funded by the state of Montana, established by an annual zero based operating budget. The current operating budget is $43,400 when work study funding is established into the total.

The space occupied by the Student Support Center can serve 38 students at one time. This does not account for students who can access online tutoring. The facility, as mention previously, is a drop-in or appointment program. The facility never exceeds its capacity.

I. Recommendations and Preliminary Implementation Plan

The Student Support Center staff will seek to improve services to students. Online tutoring has been available for two weeks. Within that time period, there has been no establishment of what it can provide students yet. As time passes, the program will be assessed for improvement.

The department will also begin transitioning to appointment tutoring as well. This will provide better individual service and less down time for tutors.

One year ago, one-on-one intrusive advising became the focus of advising at the college. This practice will continue and additional training and support services, plus tools will be further established and provided to all advisors, faculty and professional, at both campus sites.

Further training and procedures will be developed for peer tutors as the program gravitates towards a certified tutoring program. This is something that will begin implementation spring semester.

The Student Support Center staff will continue to track students via the Starfish software and use provided information of faculty and student services personnel to identify students at risk. Direct communication with identified students will aid staff in increasing student success and retention.

The Student Support Center staff will provide notes of communication with participants via the Starfish software system. This will aid faculty and student services personnel in providing solutions and support to students who are struggling in academics or have issues that are detrimental to student success. This proactive or intrusive advising is the norm of the department and is data supported to improve student retention.

Current equipment is dated in the Student Support Center and does not provide necessary services to students. New equipment will be investigated and purchased once the correct equipment has been identified. This falls within the guidelines of this year's budget request.