**Basic Skills Project Midterm Progress Report for The Writing Center Coordinator** -- Richard Dry, Reading and Writing—RAW—Center Coordinator
January 9, 2013

**Overview:**
This past semester was extremely busy and exciting. In addition to researching models of writing centers at other colleges, I am pleased to have expanded the tutoring hours for the RAW Center for the Spring 13 semester by over 40% through grants and piloted RAW email tutoring (“Ask an English Tutor”). While I’ve accomplished a lot, I still feel that the future of a RAW coordinator hangs in the balance. I have another meeting with the VP of Academic Services, our dean, and the CEMC chair set for January 16th to follow up on ideas I’ve proposed to institutionalize the coordinating position as well as expand tutoring hours in the RAW Center and Library.

**Major Activities in Fall 12:**

-Scheduled Fall 12 RAW teacher tutoring hours and associated communication
-Facilitated a two-hour orientation for RAW teacher tutors (and arranging related payment for adjunct)
-Worked with Vicki Shipman multiple times to identify grant opportunities
-Created and monitored “Ask an English Tutor”--online email tutoring through Gmail (in collaboration with Pauline Trummel and Scott Vigallon)
-Wrote and received a grant to target CTE students, which will pilot with AJ and FST in SP13 (+held 2 planning meetings with Mark Tarte, Ron Johansen, Tonya Hersch, and Dan Wightman)
-Wrote and received an LPC Foundation grant to offer tutoring in the library in SP13 (+ held 1 planning meeting with Cheryl Warren and Heidi Ulrech)
-Wrote and received a CARE grant for a whiteboard, eraser, pens, and new banner
-Arranged payment for RAW Workshops in the Transfer and Veterans Centers
-Created a student exit survey to be piloted in SP13
-Centralized the RAW f2f and online resources under one under one RAW Center Webpage using Contribute
-Met with VP Noble, Dean Flores, Natasha Lang to discuss future funding and institutionalize a funding string for RAW teacher tutoring and coordination.
-Researched writing center models through extensive conversations with writing center coordinators and staff at the following colleges: Chabot, Los Medanos, De Anza, Foothill, Santa Monica, and Marin. I am waiting to hear back from a number of other colleges. I also had a response to my Sustainable Model Survey from coordinators at Johnson Community College (Kansas City), Texas A&M, and Trent University (Ontario).
-Investigated writing center and tutorial center websites at other colleges
-Joined Northern California Writing Center Association, and emailed a few times with Dan Meltzer, Chair
 -Joined a International Writing Centers Association listserv and posted Sustainable Center Survey
-Started working with Rajinder to get success data (past and present)
-Scheduled Spring 13 RAW teacher tutors (in the Center and in the Library)
-Presented my work to the English Department (they volunteered to offer office hours to cover holes in the teacher tutoring schedule and voted to support using FTEF for a coordinator position)

**Findings:**

Research done at other colleges supports the common sense conclusion that reading and writing tutoring by instructors and instructional assistants increases student retention and success (Chabot and DeAnza). Increased retention also increases funding (Basic Skills Poppy Copy).

 All of the colleges I’ve researched offer writing tutoring from instructors or a combination of instructors and instructional assistants covering more hours than we do. Many of the centers use similar components, a combination of a coordinator (staff or faculty), instructional assistants, and peer tutors. In some cases the coordinator runs all tutoring services, but in other cases, especially in larger colleges, the coordination is divided between a coordinator of the peer tutoring and a coordinator for instructor or IA tutors. There is often a discipline specific class for peer tutor training. Funding for the coordinators and for tutors comes in many forms, but coordinator funding is often general fund money, Instructional Division FTEF, or discipline FTEF. The amount of funding varies, but typically there is the equivalent of a full-time staff/faculty position, supported with IAs or peer tutors.

We may be able to secure a part-time coordinator position through a combination of these existing models. Presently, the English Department’s position is that the coordinator should be funded with college .5 FTEF because this is not a division/discipline specific academic service, even though it is fully supported by the English Department. If this is not approved, the department supports using .5 division/discipline FTEF for the position. It is possible that such a position could be combined with supervision of all the tutorial services. Using general funds to pay for a classified position is also an option, though hiring is very difficult at this time and might be an obstacle. We might be able to split the duties of the coordinator between an IA and faculty, reducing the cost.

As for expanding our tutoring hours, it’s possible that we can forgo non-credit apportionment for the RAW Center, which generates only $2497 per year. (RAW is presently funded at 480 hours/year, or .91 FTES.) If we do this, we can possibly reinstate the F hour rate or less to pay IA/instructor tutors like they do at many other colleges. This might allow us to expand our weeks and hours of coverage for with the present levels of funding. I am concerned that the email tutoring might eventually need more dedicated hours so that it doesn’t interfere with f2f tutoring, especially when transfer and scholarship statements are due.

**Planning for SP 13:**

 I have a meeting scheduled for January 16 with VP Noble, Dean Flores, Natasha Lang, and Tom Orf regarding future RAW coordinating and expanded tutoring hours. Additionally, I will look to explore grant options and attempt to expand and institutionalize the pilot programs—RAW email tutoring, library tutoring, and CTE targeted tutoring. I will also oversee these programs and the implementation of the student survey. I will also follow up with Rajinder regarding success data. If we can secure a coordinator and a discipline specific tutoring class is an option, I will also research existing curriculum for such a class and write a proposal.