



Assessment and Continuous Improvement
Report
Academic Skills Center (ASC)

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Introduction

The Academic Skills Center (ASC) provides free, accessible academic support across all disciplines to empower students as they strive for academic excellence. Our primary target populations are first- and second-year students with an emphasis on remedial and GUCR course support; students who fall under the HSI and NASNTI designations; and others who face “social, cultural, economic and geographic barriers that limit access to higher education.”

We offer tutoring services in a variety of modalities (drop-in tutoring, one-on-one appointments, small-group tutoring, and study sessions) as well as physical and online study spaces and other academic resources. ASC tutors are a mix of undergraduate HU students (“peer tutors”) as well as tutors with Bachelor-level degrees or higher from HU or other institutions (“Bachelor+ tutors”). Additionally, the ASC provides supplemental contracted online tutoring through Smarthinking, which offers 24-hour access and support for upper division courses.

We believe that the centralized academic support services the ASC oversees is of vital importance for an institution of this size. For historical context, circa 2014, the university moved from a decentralized tutoring model—with multiple departments running their own tutoring programs—to a centralized tutoring model, in which all tutors are managed through the ASC. This important change eliminated duplicative work amongst various programs, established equitable hiring and evaluative practices, and eliminated competition for tutors between programs. Programs such as CAMP, TRIO and other grants can now meet their program objectives without providing their own tutor hiring, training, and management structures. Most importantly, this change ensures that all students receive the same level of support whether or not they qualify for special programs.

Changing Landscape

The ASC faced unprecedented circumstances because of the COVID-19 pandemic during Academic Year 2020/2021. Below are some of the key changes we made or observed in response:

- The ASC moved all of its services 100% online, including scheduled appointments via private Zoom links and a virtual drop-in tutoring room.
- We expanded our regular hours to include weekday evenings from 7 PM to 10 PM and weekends from 10 AM to 7 PM to meet the needs of students whose schedules were disrupted by the pandemic.¹
- The demographics of our tutors flipped from mostly peer tutors with a few Bachelor+ tutors, to more Bachelor+ tutors and fewer peer tutors.² Among other implications, since Bachelor+ tutors are paid more than peer tutors, this change impacted our budget.

¹ These expanded hours were made possible by COVID relief funds, and reflect the increased willingness tutors showed to work non-standard hours last year.

² Historically many of our peer tutors have been referred to us by faculty. Faculty made fewer of these referrals last year, likely because it was more challenging to get to know students in an online-only format and therefore more difficult to identify potential tutors. Our online format and expanded hours also allowed us to hire recent Heritage graduates and other Bachelor+ tutors whose location or outside obligations might have previously prevented them from working for the ASC.

- The number of tutoring sessions that took place decreased significantly from previous years, as we discuss in our data and analysis, below.

Assessment Plan

The ASC mission statement aligns with the Heritage University mission to “empower[] a multi-cultural and inclusive student body to overcome the social, cultural, economic and geographic barriers that limit access to higher education”:

The mission of the Academic Skills Center (ASC) is to provide free, accessible academic support across all disciplines that empowers students as they strive for academic excellence. The ASC staff recognizes the uniqueness of each individual in Heritage’s diverse student body. We believe that scholars bring a wealth of experience with them and that our primary duty is to help build bridges between students and the various cultures and expectations of academic discourses.

As part of each student’s academic support network, we facilitate independent learning, cultivate confidence, and build a community where learning is understood as a lifelong journey of personal growth. We provide a relaxed, supportive environment where students can work and study collaboratively, receive one-on-one peer tutoring, and participate in tutor-led group study sessions and workshops tailored to the content of courses and students’ needs.

The ASC developed our Assessment Plan gradually over three years, beginning shortly after we assumed leadership of the program in 2018. We began with a series of interviews with current and past employees of the ASC, as well as several past leaders of the ASC (Mary James, Mel Hill, and Irma DePrieto). We referenced standards set by the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA), toured the tutoring programs at CBC and CWU, and researched other university tutoring centers online. During our first year of leadership, we focused on establishing a baseline understanding of all aspects of the ASC. We prioritized building a sustainable data collection system, developing employee hiring and management systems, and creating a strong tutor training program.

With baseline data and operations in place, we then looked at the mission and strategic plan of Heritage University in order to refine our ASC mission, and began to develop goals that would align with both. We identified goals we were already achieving or working towards and looked for resulting gaps, including skills and structures that would benefit our tutors in their future endeavors. Finally, we fine-tuned our goals in the series of Assessment Workshops led by SaraBecca Martin in 2018. Throughout our process, we focused on identifying benchmarks that relied on data we could collect accurately and consistently.

We have gradually begun implementing the Assessment Plan throughout its development, including a full review and analysis of our goals and benchmarks both in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021, with the latter review forming the content of this report.

Goals, Measures, Alignment, and Evidence

Heritage University Academic Skills Center Assessment Plan, 2020/2021			
Goal	Mission & Strategic Plan Alignment	Evidence (Target/Benchmark)	Measures/ Data Sources for Benchmark
<p>Goal #1: The ASC will provide safe and welcoming spaces, both physical and virtual, that ensure students equitable access to and utilization of multiple modes of academic support and other resources (tutoring, technology, software, etc.).</p>	<p>Mission: “multi-cultural and inclusive student body”; “overcome the social, cultural, economic and geographic barriers that limit access to higher education”; “student-centered education”</p> <p>SP: Sections 1.2.a (“HU will fully implement systems for academic support and tutoring for all students”) and 1.3 (“fully developed systems...that embrace a multicultural and inclusive institution that will distinguish it from all other institutions in the region”)</p>	<p>Benchmark #1: Did client usage of the ASC increase or hold steady this academic year compared to the average of the past four academic years?</p> <p>Benchmark #2: Are clients served by the ASC a representative sample of the whole Heritage student population, with particular attention paid to subsets of the population who are at risk of falling into an equity gap?</p> <p>Benchmark #3: Did clients report 90% or greater satisfaction related to access and usability of ASC services?</p> <p>Benchmark #4: Were enough ASC tutors available in both major content areas (STEM and writing) during ASC hours of operation, particularly during high-demand times?</p> <p>Benchmark #5: Did client usage of Smarthinking increase or hold steady this academic year compared to the average of the past four academic years?</p> <p>Benchmark #6: Are clients served by Smarthinking a representative sample of the whole Heritage student population, with particular attention paid to subsets of the population who are at risk of falling into an equity gap?</p> <p>Benchmark #7: Did Smarthinking clients report 85% or greater satisfaction related to access and usability of Smarthinking services?</p>	<p>Benchmarks #1 and #2: Tutor logs linked to student records for demographic information</p> <p>Benchmark #3: Post-tutoring appointment satisfaction survey</p> <p>Benchmark #4: Tutor availability schedule</p> <p>Benchmarks #5 and #6: Tutoring session data provided by Smarthinking, linked to Heritage student records for demographic information</p> <p>Benchmark #7: Satisfaction survey data provided by Smarthinking</p>

Heritage University Academic Skills Center Assessment Plan, 2020/2021

Goal	Mission & Strategic Plan Alignment	Evidence (Target/Benchmark)	Measures/ Data Sources for Benchmark
<p>Goal #2: Students will experience high-quality academic tutoring and college-readiness mentoring (from both peer tutors and Bachelor+ tutors).</p>	<p>Mission: “student-centered education”</p> <p>SP: Sections 1.1 (“educational systems that are student-centered and transformative”) and 1.2.a (“HU will fully implement systems for academic support and tutoring for all students”)</p>	<p>Benchmark #1: Did ASC clients report 90% or greater satisfaction related to quality of ASC tutoring and other services?</p> <p>Benchmark #2: Did Smarthinking clients report 85% or greater satisfaction related to quality of Smarthinking tutoring?</p> <p>Benchmark #3: Have 100% of ASC tutors undergone a complete vetting process, including completing an application and meeting the requirements for tutoring in their subject areas?</p> <p>Benchmark #4: Has the ASC achieved or maintained CRLA International Tutor Training Program Certification?</p> <p>Benchmark #5: Did at least 80% of tutors complete the ASC Tutor Training Program?</p>	<p>Benchmark #1: Post-tutoring appointment satisfaction survey</p> <p>Benchmark #2: Satisfaction survey data provided by Smarthinking</p> <p>Benchmark #3: ASC hiring records</p> <p>Benchmark #4: Confirmation of certification from CRLA</p> <p>Benchmark #5: Tutor training attendance records, and CRLA certificates prepared by ASC</p>
<p>Goal #3: Tutors will develop leadership skills to take with them beyond the ASC as a result of professional learning communities facilitated by ASC Leadership.</p>	<p>Mission: “education that cultivates leadership”</p> <p>SP: Section 2.3.a (“an organizational culture that values participation in constructive decision-making and supports employee welfare”) and 2.3.c.ii (“training and professional development for employees”)</p>	<p>Benchmark 1: Percentage of tutors who complete CRLA certified training program.</p> <p>Benchmark #2: Did the ASC Leadership Team complete annual reviews for 100% of tutors employed at the time of review and share feedback with tutors?</p> <p>Benchmark #3: Did 100% of tutors who plan to return the following year complete an annual self-reflection questionnaire?</p>	<p>Benchmark #1: Tutor training attendance records, and tutor training exit tickets in Socrative</p> <p>Benchmark #2: Annual tutor employee reviews by ASC leadership</p> <p>Benchmark #3: Annual self-reflections by ASC tutors</p>

Assessment Schedule

Heritage University Academic Skills Center Assessment Schedule, 2020/2021		
Goal	When data collected & by whom	When data reviewed & by whom
<p>Goal #1: The ASC will provide safe and welcoming spaces, both physical and virtual, that ensure students equitable access to and utilization of multiple modes of academic support and other resources (tutoring, technology, software, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor logs: Collected in real time after each tutoring session; compiled for review at the end of each term (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - Post-tutoring appointment satisfaction survey: Sent automatically after each scheduled tutoring appointment; compiled for review at the end of each term (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - Tutor availability schedule: Maintained as the weekly employee schedule in the Homebase app; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Tutoring and Tutor Training - Tutoring session data provided by Smarthinking: Collected in real time by Smarthinking after each tutoring session; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - Satisfaction survey data provided by Smarthinking: Collected in real time by Smarthinking after each tutoring session; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting 	<p><i>Ongoing Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor logs: Reviewed weekly for issues by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - Post-tutoring satisfaction survey: Reviewed in real time for issues by the ASC Leadership Team <p><i>Periodic, In-Depth Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutor log data is reviewed by the ASC Leadership Team at the end of each term, in January and June - All data for Goal 1 is reviewed by the ASC Leadership Team in June for Assessment Plan Review

Heritage University Academic Skills Center Assessment Schedule, 2020/2021		
Goal	When data collected & by whom	When data reviewed & by whom
Goal #2: Students will experience high-quality academic tutoring and college-readiness mentoring (from both peer tutors and Bachelor+ tutors).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-tutoring appointment satisfaction survey: Sent automatically after each scheduled tutoring appointment; compiled for review at the end of each term (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - Satisfaction survey data provided by Smarthinking: Collected in real time by Smarthinking after each tutoring session; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Data and Reporting - ASC hiring records: Collected within a week of hiring of each new tutor; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Tutoring and Tutor Training - Tutor training attendance records: Collected in real time by the Homepage app during biweekly training and/or verified via Socrative exit tickets at the end of each session; compiled for review at the end of each academic year (at minimum) by the Coordinator of Tutoring and Tutor Training - CRLA certificates prepared by ASC: Prepared and sent to tutors at the end of each Academic Year by the ASC Director, based on amount of time spent tutoring (according to tutor logs) and tutor training attendance records 	<p><i>Ongoing Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-tutoring appointment satisfaction survey: Reviewed in real time for issues by the ASC Leadership Team <p><i>Periodic, In-Depth Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All data for Goal 2 is reviewed by the ASC Leadership Team in June for Assessment Plan Review
Goal #3: Tutors will develop leadership skills to take with them beyond the ASC as a result of professional learning communities facilitated by ASC Leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual tutor employee reviews by ASC leadership: Prepared at the end of each term - Annual self-reflections by ASC tutors: Collected at the end of each term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All data for Goal 3 is reviewed by the ASC Leadership Team in June for Assessment Plan Review

Information Sharing

Results and Analysis will be shared with the following:

Full Report:

- Assessment Committee, September 2021
- Provost's Office, President, & VPs upon request

Regular Reporting of Specific Data:

- Monthly and end-of-term data provided to grant partners (CAMP, TRiO, and CRESCENT) regarding the members of their cohorts who were served by the ASC

- Selected data provided to tutors at least once per year for group discussion and analysis as part of tutor training

As Needed/As Requested Reporting:

- Periodic presentations to Provost and other stakeholders (including a Progress and Budget Report meeting with Kazu Sonoda and Mary James on December 14, 2020, and a Staffing and Budget Needs for New Academic Year meeting with Kazu Sonoda and Mary James on July 15, 2021)

Results and Analysis

Goal 1

“The ASC will provide safe and welcoming spaces, both physical and virtual, that ensure students equitable access to and utilization of multiple modes of academic support and other resources (tutoring, technology, software, etc.).”

Results of Assessment

Benchmark #1: Did client usage of the ASC³ increase or hold steady this academic year compared to the average of the past four academic years?

Client Usage of the ASC, Academic Year 2020/21 Compared to Four-Year Average			
	Academic Year 2020/21	Four-Year Average (Academic Years 2017/18 through 2020/21)	Benchmark Met?
Unique Clients Served by ASC	227 clients	309 clients (average)	No
Tutoring Sessions Held by ASC	2080 sessions	2714 sessions (average)	No
Percentage of Heritage Student Body Served by ASC	22.6% of student body served	31.1% of student body served (average)	No

Benchmark #2: Are clients served by the ASC a representative sample of the whole Heritage student population, with particular attention paid to subsets of the population who are at risk of falling into an equity gap?⁴

³ Unless otherwise noted, all discussions throughout this report of “ASC services,” “ASC clients,” “usage of the ASC,” etc. refers to tutoring and other services provided directly by ASC tutors and other staff. Smarthinking tutoring, which is provided by an external service, is noted and discussed separately.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Heritage student body demographic data was gleaned from an InfoMaker report retrieved on 12/20/2020 that included all students enrolled during Fall 2020. ASC client demographics were established by linking user ID or, in rare cases, user email address to student body information retrieved via InfoMaker report on 12/20/2020 for users who accessed the ASC during the Fall 2020 term, or on 6/7/2021 for users who accessed the ASC during the Spring 2021 term.

In comparing ASC clients to the Heritage student body, our aim is not strictly to serve the same ratio across all populations. Instead, our goal is to serve a greater proportion of students who experience educational barriers; this includes first-time freshmen, Hispanic students, Native American students, and first-generation college students. Other demographic groups, such as various age categories, have an unknown level of comparative need, so our present goal is simply to monitor them from year to year. Finally, for some demographic categories, such as gender, we aim to match as closely as possible ASC client demographics to Heritage student body demographics in order to ensure equity.

We wish to note that nonbinary, transgender, and other sex and gender designations are not currently included as options in Heritage’s student data collection. Once those options become available, we look forward to ensuring that we are adequately serving these students, who may face additional barriers and discrimination.

ASC Client Demographics Compared to HU Student Body Demographics, Academic Year 2020/21			
	Percent of ASC Client Population	Percent of Heritage Student Population	Benchmark Met?
First-Time Freshmen ⁵	50.7%	33.4%	Yes
HSI Designation (“Hispanics of any race”)	69.6%	58.9%	Yes
NASNTI Designation (“Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native”)	10.1%	8.0%	Yes
First-Generation College Students	17.2%	24.8%	No
GPA ⁶	52.0% “A” 30.8% “B” 7.9% “C” 2.2% “D” 4.4% “F”	60.3% “A” 25.2% “B” 7.0% “C” 1.9% “D” 5.6% “F”	Monitoring only
Gender ⁷	71.4% female 21.1% male	73.5% female 25.8% male	Yes
Age	64.3% Age 15-24 17.6% Age 25-34 7.5% Age 35-44 4.0% Age 45+	56.8% Age 15-24 28.4% Age 25-34 9.8% Age 35-44 5.0% Age 45+	Monitoring only

⁵ According to “Entrance Code.”

⁶ GPA of 0.000 to 0.400 = F, 0.401 to 1.400 = D, 1.401 to 2.400 = C, 2.401 to 3.400 = B, and 3.401 to 4.000 = A. Analysis of GPA data has significant limitations at this time and should be reviewed with caution. The GPA for each student reflects the number recorded in Jenzabar at the time the student demographic data is retrieved at the end of each term. It does not reflect GPA at the time a tutoring session took place, how a student’s GPA changed throughout the term, or the effect of tutoring on GPA.

⁷ Individuals falling into “Unknown” categories of each demographic subset are more common in ASC users than in the Heritage student body, due to (non-student) community members using the ASC as well as ASC tutoring sessions where incomplete student information was collected (e.g. student ID or email address was incorrect or not collected). Thus, known demographic categories for ASC data tend to be slightly lower overall than in the student body, due to the slightly higher proportion of the “Unknown” category. This is particularly apparent in binary data sets, such as gender.

Benchmark #3: Did clients report 90% or greater satisfaction related to access and usability of ASC services?

ASC Client Satisfaction with Ease of Tutoring Setup, Academic Year 2020/21	
Post-Tutoring Session Survey Responses	Benchmark Met?
ASC clients who scheduled a tutoring session were emailed a post-session survey and asked to respond to the question, “How easy did you find it to set up and attend your session?” ⁸ One hundred percent (100%) of respondents selected a 4 or 5 (with 1 representing “Very Difficult” and 5 representing “Very Easy”) from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes

Benchmark #4: Were enough ASC tutors available in both major content areas (STEM and writing) during ASC hours of operation, particularly during high-demand times?

Our ideal schedule, in theory, is to have two tutors on shift in each broad tutoring category (STEM and writing) at all times the ASC is open (or at least during weekday hours, as weekdays tend to be less busy). This allows one tutor in each category to be available for drop-in sessions while another can be booked in advance for appointments. However, this level of coverage is not always practical from a budget and tutor availability standpoint, nor is it always necessary during low-demand times.

As such, we have not yet established a specific threshold for determining whether we have met this benchmark (an issue we discuss in the Analysis and Continuous Improvement sections). Nevertheless, we feel comfortable stating that we met or came close to meeting the benchmark for STEM tutoring last year and did not meet the benchmark for writing tutoring, as reflected by the data in the table below.

ASC Tutor Availability, Academic Year 2020/21			
	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Benchmark Met?
STEM	2 or more STEM tutors on shift for 93.98% of weekday hours	2 or more STEM tutors on shift for 86.75% of weekday hours	Yes
Writing	2 or more writing tutors on shift: 27.71% of weekday hours	2 or more writing tutors on shift for 60.24% of weekday hours	No

Benchmark #5: Did client usage of Smarthinking increase or hold steady this academic year compared to the average of the past four academic years?

⁸ Survey responses were collected anonymously via online form. Requests were automatically emailed to clients roughly 2.25 hours after the start time of each scheduled appointment. The response rate was approximately 11%, with $n=154$.

Client Usage of Smarthinking, Academic Year 2020/21 Compared to Four-Year Average			
	Academic Year 2020/21	Four-Year Average (Academic Years 2017/18 through 2020/21)	Benchmark Met?
Unique Clients Served by Smarthinking	72 clients	65 clients (average)	Yes
Tutoring Sessions Held via Smarthinking	267 sessions	218 sessions (average)	Yes
Percentage of Heritage Student Body Served by Smarthinking	7.2% of student body served	6.5% of student body served (average)	Yes

Benchmark #6: Are clients served by Smarthinking a representative sample of the whole Heritage student population, with particular attention paid to subsets of the population who are at risk of falling into an equity gap?⁹

As with Benchmark #2, how we determined success for this benchmark depends on each particular demographic category.

Demographics of HU Smarthinking Clients Compared to HU Student Body Demographics, Academic Year 2020/21			
	Percent of Smarthinking Client Population	Percent of Heritage Student Population	Benchmark Met?
First-Time Freshmen ¹⁰	40.3%	33.4%	Yes
HSI Designation ("Hispanics of any race")	69.4%	58.9%	Yes
NASNTI Designation ("Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native")	2.8%	8.0%	No
First-Generation College Students	18.1%	24.8%	No
GPA	70.8% "A" 22.2% "B" 4.2% "C" 0% "D" 0% "F"	60.3% "A" 25.2% "B" 7.0% "C" 1.9% "D" 5.6% "F"	No
Gender	76.4% female 19.4% male	73.5% female 25.8% male	Yes
Age	62.5% Age 15-24 23.6% Age 25-34 6.9% Age 35-44 4.2% Age 45+	56.8% Age 15-24 28.4% Age 25-34 9.8% Age 35-44 5.0% Age 45+	Monitoring only

⁹ Smarthinking user demographics were gathered by linking user email address to student body information retrieved via InfoMaker report on 12/20/2020 for users who accessed the ASC during the Fall 2020 term, or on 6/7/2021 for users who accessed the ASC during the Spring 2021 term.

¹⁰ According to "Entrance Code."

Benchmark #7: Did Smarthinking clients report 85% or greater satisfaction related to access and usability of Smarthinking services?

The ASC does not directly control the quality of services offered by Smarthinking, which makes it challenging to set a benchmark for success. We have selected 85% satisfaction as a benchmark for all Smarthinking categories; this percentage falls between the historical satisfaction rating HU students have reported with Smarthinking (which has tended to be between about 70% and 85%, depending on survey question) and the 90% satisfaction benchmark we set for our own services. We felt this was sufficiently high to ensure we are monitoring quality and value, while not overly high for a service whose services we don't directly control.

HU Smarthinking Client Satisfaction with Technology and Essay Submission, Academic Year 2020/21	
Post-Tutoring Session Survey Responses	Benchmark Met?
Smarthinking clients who attended a synchronous tutoring session or used asynchronous services were asked to respond to the statement "Rate the technology (5 is the best)." ¹¹ Eighty eight percent (87.5%) of respondents selected "4" or "5" from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes
Smarthinking clients who used asynchronous services were also asked to respond to the statement "Rate the process for sending & retrieving your essay." One hundred percent (100%) of respondents selected "4" or "5" from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes

Analysis

Analysis of ASC Benchmarks (Excluding Smarthinking)

The ASC saw a sign a decline in tutoring usage this year in all three of the categories we assessed: number of tutoring sessions held, number of clients served, and percentage of the Heritage student body served. Since we maintained or expanded nearly all of our services and resources last year (including number of tutors, hours of operation, and tutor training program), we attribute this change to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online-only classes and tutoring. New students are often introduced to the ASC via campus tours, events, word of mouth, and accidental discovery, but all of these methods were reduced or eliminated last year. Additionally, switching to an unfamiliar tutoring model (online tutoring) may have intimidated or discouraged some users.

While our overall usage rates were down, we largely met our goals relating to the demographics of the students we served, including Hispanic and Native American students and first-time freshmen. A significant and unanticipated change this year, however, was a decrease in the proportion of ASC users compared to Heritage students who are first-generation college students. During Academic Year 2020/2021, the ASC only served 15.7% of all first-generation Heritage students; during the previous year, we served 35.2%. As with all students, first-generation college students had fewer or no in-person opportunities for serendipitously learning about or engaging with the ASC. And students in this group who did know about our online services may have faced particular struggles with adapting to or accessing technology or otherwise found online tutoring intimidating or unappealing.

¹¹ Smarthinking satisfaction surveys are designed and collected by Smarthinking, with results available via our online account.

One demographic group we would like to serve more of is students with a GPA of F. In the past year, only 4% of ASC users had a GPA of F. Although a relatively small group of Heritage students falls within these categories, it is nonetheless a population that has a demonstrably greater need of academic support.

During our data collection and analysis this year, we recognized the limitations of assessing Benchmark 4: “Were enough ASC tutors available in both major content areas (STEM and writing) during ASC hours of operation, particularly during high-demand times?” As it’s written, the benchmark is vague—we have not defined either “enough ASC tutors” or “high-demand times.” Busy times can vary significantly from term to term based on classes offered, and often are not apparent until after the tutoring schedule for the term is set—moreover, the presence or absence of tutors can itself influence how busy the center is. Nor do we have a way at this time to measure how often students try and fail to find a tutor to work with them at their preferred time or in their preferred subject.

Analysis of Smarthinking Benchmarks

The ASC’s primary function is to provide tutoring conducted by peer and professional tutors who are employed and trained by the ASC and who are familiar with Heritage coursework and students. Separate from this, we provide students with free access to Smarthinking, an online tutoring service owned by Pearson Education. This service, which is funded for Heritage students by grants, provides 24 hour a day access to tutoring as well as some upper level and graduate level subjects not covered by ASC tutors.

The ASC doesn’t control Smarthinking services or quality, and thus are limited in our ability to make changes based on the data we collect about it. We include our analysis of it in this report for several reasons: it provides an important piece of information about what services are available to Heritage students and how and whether we can use Smarthinking to fill any gaps in the core services we provide; and it allows us to ensure it continues to be worth the expense. However, because of the limitations noted above we have chosen to analyze and discuss it separately from other ASC services.

Smarthinking usage increased last year in all three of the categories we assessed: number of tutoring sessions held, number of clients served, and percentage of the Heritage student body served. Notably, 48.7% of all Smarthinking sessions took place outside of ASC operating hours (overnight or during campus holidays or breaks). Although the ASC expanded its hours significantly last year to meet student need during the pandemic, Smarthinking continues to help fill a gap in coverage that ASC tutors cannot reasonably meet.

Smarthinking did not meet our benchmark for serving several demographic categories as compared to the Heritage student body: Native American students, first-generation college students, and students with a GPA of a C or lower.

Continuous Improvement

One of our primary focuses relating to Goal 1 in the coming year is to bring our overall and demographic-specific tutoring numbers back up to (or close to) pre-COVID rates. Students, faculty, and administration are once again facing an unknown scenario for Academic Year 2021/22 as COVID variants surge and the Heritage community adjusts to new campus restrictions and a mix of in person, online, and hybrid classes. We acknowledge the uncertainty the next year holds, while identifying the following strategies for increasing ASC usage:

- We will continue offering extended hours (evenings and weekends) to meet the needs of students who are attending courses remotely or whose schedules and lifestyles have temporarily or permanently changed as a result of COVID. Notably, 29.9% of all tutoring took place during extended hours during Academic Year 2020/2021, and 56.8% of all ASC clients accessed services during extended hours one or more times.
- We will also continue to offer online tutoring (both scheduled appointments and limited drop-in availability) in addition to offering in-person services. We see online tutoring as a beneficial service to offer long term, regardless of the future of COVID-19. Additionally, some of our tutors are unable or unwilling to provide in-person tutoring at this stage of the current pandemic.
- We will add marketing and outreach to our weekly ASC Leadership Team Meeting agenda, and we will identify and implement two new marketing ideas to reach more students, one of which will specifically include Smarthinking.
- We already created three new informational videos about our services (a general overview, an overview of in-person services, and an overview of online services) which were shared during NSO.

For reaching first-generation college students, our primary response for the coming academic year is our new Intervention Specialist position, Sandra Mena. This role is unique within the ASC in that Sandra will proactively reach out to and provide support to students who may require assistance, rather than depending on students to identify and access our services on their own. She will be focusing on students experiencing academic suspension or probation; new students; students in developmental math and English; and students with multiple absences, failing grades, or advocacies; among others. In addition to directing students to tutoring services in the ASC, to Smarthinking, and to other campus resources, she will herself be providing individual, ongoing guidance to these students.

The results of our satisfaction survey regarding access and usability of our services exceeded our benchmark. However, this survey is currently only sent to students who scheduled their tutoring sessions in advance. This year we plan to survey clients who use our drop-in tutoring services as well.

There are also two changes we will consider making to Goal 1 in the coming year. First, we plan to rethink Benchmark #4, which asks whether we have “enough ASC tutors available in both major content areas... particularly during high-demand times.” The spirit of the benchmark is not about having a certain amount of tutors on shift at any given time, but about ensuring that students can find tutoring assistance in the subjects they need at the times they need. Before our next assessment period we will consider whether this benchmark is measurable (for instance, through a survey), and if so, revise the

benchmark to reflect that new metric. If we determine it is not reliably measurable, we will consider removing it from our assessment plan.

Secondly, we would like Goal 1 to align more directly with SP 1.2.a.iv: “HU will address the need to provide adequate mentoring and tutoring services for students that do not qualify for TRIO, CAMP, or other programs.” We plan to consider methods to identify students who aren’t served by such other programs, and reflect on what our metrics would be for establishing whether we are successfully serving those students. Depending on this reflection, we will determine whether and how to adjust our goal and benchmarks for future assessments.

Goal 2

“Students will experience high-quality academic tutoring and college-readiness mentoring (from both peer tutors and Bachelor+ tutors).”

Results of Assessment

Benchmark #1: Did ASC clients report 90% or greater satisfaction related to quality of ASC tutoring and other services?

<i>ASC Client Satisfaction with Tutoring Quality and Overall Experience, Academic Year 2020/21</i>	
Post-Tutoring Session Survey Responses	Benchmark Met?
ASC clients who scheduled a tutoring session were emailed a post-session survey and asked to respond to the question, “How would you rate the quality of tutoring you received?” ¹² Ninety five percent (95.4%) of respondents selected a 4 or 5 (with 1 representing “Poor” and 5 representing “Excellent”) from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes
ASC clients who scheduled a tutoring session were emailed a post-session survey and asked to respond to the question, “How would you rate your overall experience today?” ¹³ Ninety seven percent (96.7%) of respondents selected a 4 or 5 (with 1 representing “Poor” and 5 representing “Excellent”) from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes

Benchmark #2: Did Smarthinking clients report 85%¹⁴ or greater satisfaction related to quality of Smarthinking tutoring?

¹² Surveys were collected anonymously via online form. Requests were emailed automatically roughly 2.25 hours after the start time of each scheduled appointment. The response rate was approximately 11%, with a total sample size of 154 responses.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See Goal 1, Benchmark #7 for an explanation of how we selected 85% satisfaction as our metric for Smarthinking.

HU Smarthinking Client Satisfaction with Tutors and Overall, Academic Year 2020/21	
Post-Tutoring Session Survey Responses	Benchmark Met?
Smarthinking clients who used asynchronous or synchronous services were asked to respond to the question, "Would you recommend SMARTHINKING to a friend?" ¹⁵ Ninety percent (90.4%) of respondents selected "Yes" from a yes/no dichotomous option.	Yes
Smarthinking clients who used synchronous services were asked to respond to the statement, "Rate your tutor (5 is the best)." Eighty three percent (82.9%) of respondents selected "4" or "5" from a 5-point Likert scale.	No
Smarthinking clients who used asynchronous services were also asked to respond to the statement "Rate the feedback you received from your tutor (1-5 Scale, 5 is the best)." One hundred percent (100%) of respondents selected "4" or "5" from a 5-point Likert scale.	Yes

Benchmark #3: Have 100% of ASC tutors undergone a complete vetting process, including completing an application and meeting the requirements for tutoring in their subject areas?

In order to become an ASC tutor, applicants must submit a completed ASC Tutor Application, which is reviewed and approved by the ASC Leadership Team. In order to tutor in a given subject, tutors must receive a faculty recommendation and/or have received grades of B or better in related coursework.¹⁶ Bachelor+ tutors may substitute the faculty recommendation or grade requirement with a related degree or other experience, as determined and approved by the ASC Leadership Team.

Documented Vetting of ASC Tutor Qualifications, Academic Year 2020/21		
	Benchmark Met?	
Completed application or re-application ¹⁷	Applications received and saved to employee file: 96% Application not on file: 4% (1 tutor)	Partially
Vetted for all approved subject areas	Peer tutors formally vetted ¹⁸ for approved subject areas in Academic Year 2019/20, but not formally vetted for new subjects added in 2020/21: 48% of all tutors Bachelor+ tutors not formally vetted for approved subject areas: 35% of all tutors Peer tutors not formally vetted for all subject areas: 22% of all tutors	No

¹⁵ Smarthinking satisfaction surveys are designed and collected by Smarthinking, with results available via our online account.

¹⁶ Tutors are or may be listed for approved subjects on the ASC page on MyHeritage, on physical signage in the ASC, and in social media posts or advertising materials. Their approved subjects are also integrated into our scheduling software to determine which tutors can be scheduled for which subjects. When no approved tutors are present or available, tutors are permitted to attempt to help students in a subject for which they are not approved, while acknowledging to the student that their ability to provide assistance in that subject may be limited.

¹⁷ Tutors who were hired prior to the present leadership may have been asked to submit an ASC Tutor Reapplication if their original application was missing or out of date.

¹⁸ See Analysis for a discussion of informal versus formal vetting.

Benchmark #4: Has the ASC achieved or maintained CRLA International Tutor Training Program Certification?

CRLA Certification of ASC Tutor Training Program, Academic Year 2020/21		
	Certification Period	Benchmark Met?
Stage 1, Level 1 Certification granted to the ASC Tutor Learning Community Training Model by the College Reading & Learning Association's (CRLA) International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) team	February 23, 2021 – February 28, 2022	Yes

Benchmark #5: Did at least 80% of tutors complete the ASC Tutor Training program?

ASC Tutor Training consists of required, hour-long sessions held approximately biweekly throughout the academic year, for a total of 12 sessions in Academic Year 2020/21. Sessions are conducted by ASC Leadership Team members, the Director of Composition (for writing tutors), or guest experts. All tutors attend sessions together in the fall term for general tutoring training, while STEM and writing tutors attend separate sessions in the spring term for content-focused training. Tutors are considered to have completed the ASC Tutor Training Program if they attend or make up at least 90% of all required sessions.¹⁹

ASC Tutor Training Completion Rate, Academic Year 2020/21	
	Benchmark Met?
86% of tutors ²⁰ completed the ASC Tutor Training program	Yes

Analysis

We celebrated a significant achievement this year by applying for and receiving CRLA certification for our ASC Tutor Training Program. The certification process involves multiple stages. Our Stage One CRLA certification lasts for one year. Stage Two certification requires an application for renewal, which we are presently undertaking and will be submitting at the end of November. If our new application is accepted, our certification will be valid for two additional years. At the third and final stage, a successful renewal application will validate our certification for four years and another renewal application will be required every four years thereafter.

CRLA certification conveys a number of benefits: It sets professional standards for tutors, provides recognition and positive reinforcement for tutors' successful work, and increases overall program

¹⁹ This metric permits tutors to miss one training session per year due to urgent personal or academic conflicts while still being able to complete the training program.

²⁰ This figure excludes two tutors who were hired partway through the year and thus were not eligible to complete the entire training program.

credibility.²¹ It also allows us to officially recognize many of our tutors with a certificate of completion of the program, which they can take with them to future career and educational opportunities.²²

Another success this year was exceeding our metrics for client satisfaction data regarding tutoring quality and overall quality of services. Smarthinking client satisfaction fell below our metric for one survey question, but only by a small margin. As noted under Goal 1, we don't control the quality of Smarthinking services, so we will simply continue to monitor this area.

One area where we fell short of our goal was in conducting and documenting our formal vetting process for the academic subjects each tutor is approved for. It's important to note that this does not indicate a lack of qualification amongst our tutors, nor a lack of concern/engagement by leadership about those qualifications. Rather, it indicates the need for better-developed timelines and processes for ensuring the formal vetting process takes place in a timely manner and is fully documented. Too often this past year, we relied on an informal vetting process: confirming approval for subjects during the application process but not documenting our approval; relying on personal knowledge of the tutor's academic experience for vetting; or neglecting to confirm approval for new subjects added by tutors between terms.

Finally, we struggled during our assessment plan review to finalize a working definition of "college readiness mentoring." We need to examine whether we are currently offering college readiness mentoring and to what degree, as well as whether and how we might measure our success in that area.

Continuous Improvement

Most urgently, this year we will identify and implement a procedure for formally approving tutors for each subject they are listed for. This procedure will include a timeline (when the vetting will take place, including for new tutors as well as those who add additional subjects to their repertoires over time) and a clear process for the vetting (who conducts it, how they conduct it, and where and how they document their findings, including for bachelor+ level tutors).

We found during the course of applying for CRLA certification—as well as conducting this assessment—that we may need to adjust our system for evaluating whether a tutor has completed our training program. Any revised system needs to be flexible enough to accommodate tutors with various circumstances, such as those who are hired mid-term; those who have completed equivalent training sessions (or the entire ASC training program) in previous years; and those who have bachelor's degrees or higher, along with extensive teaching or tutoring experience at another institution.

As mentioned above, we will also discuss possible changes to the "college readiness mentoring" language in our goal. In particular, we will settle on a working definition, then discuss ways to measure our progress towards meeting that goal. We will also discuss whether we can reasonably meet the goal without significantly expanding our services. If we determine "college readiness mentoring" is not within

²¹ For a more comprehensive overview of the CRLA certification process and benefits, please see <https://www.crla.net/index.php/certifications/ittpc-international-tutor-training-program> (last visited 9/28/21).

²² In order to receive a certificate, tutors must complete the entire training program over a period of one year (which may be applied retroactively up to 1 year prior to the certification period), as well as accumulate 25 hours of experience actively tutoring students.

our scope of primary services or not reliably measurable, then we will consider removing that language from the goal.

Goal 3

“Tutors will develop leadership skills to take with them beyond the ASC as a result of professional learning communities facilitated by ASC Leadership.”

Results of Assessment

Benchmark #1: Did the ASC Leadership Team complete annual reviews for 100% of tutors employed at the time of review and share feedback with tutors?

ASC Leadership Team Annual Review of Tutors, Academic Year 2020/21	
	Benchmark Met?
No reviews formally completed in Academic Year 2020/21.	No

Benchmark #2: Did 100% of tutors who plan to return the following year complete an annual self-reflection questionnaire?

ASC Tutor Self-Reflections, Academic Year 2020/21	
	Benchmark Met?
93% of returning tutors submitted self-reflections at the end of Academic Year 2020/21. ²³	No

Analysis

We fell significantly short of our benchmarks this year for Goal 3. This reflects both a failure to fully complete the tasks identified in the benchmarks, and a failure to sufficiently document and follow up on the tasks that we did complete.

We identify two current roadblocks to meeting these benchmarks. The first is structure: While we have completed some portion of these two benchmarks every year, we have yet to develop a formal process for conducting and documenting our reviews. The second is time: given the volume of the tutoring staff we employ and the significant demands on ASC Leadership Team schedules (including faculty obligations for several of our members), it has been difficult to find time to address each tutor individually. Both of these roadblocks were amplified this year due to the overall challenges presented by COVID-19. The ASC has documentation showing that most of our tutors have completed self-reflections each year, as well as documentation showing our attempts to systematically evaluate our tutors; however, we have yet to complete one full cycle of that process within one year.

²³ 14 tutors who worked for the ASC in Academic Year 2020/21 have returned for Fall 2021; of these, 13 submitted self-reflections. Out of all 23 tutors who were employed at the end of Academic Year 2020/21, 21 submitted self-reflections (91%).

More broadly, in working on this assessment we recognized that the benchmarks we set for this goal do not adequately measure what we consider success for the goal. The current benchmarks focus as much or more on measuring our tutors' performance as employees—that is, the benefit they bring to the ASC and the Heritage community—than on measuring the positive impact the ASC can have on its tutors and their personal and professional development. Without question, performance reviews and self-reflections can help tutors become better and more mindful employees, which will serve them well in their future endeavors. But we believe there is more we can do to support the overall wellbeing of our tutors both now and in the future.

Continuous Improvement

Regarding our existing benchmarks, our primary task is to formalize a detailed and measurable process for conducting employee reviews (including who is involved in the reviews, when they are conducted, and how and when we communicate the results to tutors) and for soliciting employee self-reflections (including when we require them to be submitted and when and how we respond to the tutors with feedback on their reflections). The transition of Amy Vaniotis's position to full time (noted below) will help with this, as it means more available time overall within the team to develop and implement such a process.

In terms of making sure we support tutor wellness, there are a number of structured and unstructured ways we already attempt to support and benefit our employees: We ask for their preferred working schedules and do our best to accommodate them; we survey tutors to see if they have technology or other needs; we incorporate invitations for feedback or questions into many of our requests for information; and we try to cultivate an environment of empathy and collaboration with and for our tutors. Part of our continuous improvement work this year will be to identify which of these types of existing strategies are measurable, and adding additional benchmarks to the goal to capture the work we're already doing.

We also plan to identify benchmarks for wellness areas we believe are missing and identify how to measure them. For instance, we may implement an end-of-term satisfaction survey directed to tutors, or create a benchmark which ensures that tutor training incorporates a certain amount of professional development topics for tutors.

Finally, we question whether our choice to focus on "leadership skills"—which we selected to align with the HU mission—is sufficient for this goal and reflects our true priority. We plan to discuss making the goal more robust by incorporating some key phrases and ideas from the HU strategic plan, such as "participation in constructive decision-making," "support[ing] employee welfare," and "training and professional development for employees."

Summary

Successes

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, we celebrated a number of significant successes. Most of these have been discussed in the report above, including our seamless pivot to online services, student usage of our expanded evening and weekend hours, our ability to retain and hire experienced recent graduates as tutors, and the certification of our tutor training program by the CRLA. We also enjoyed collaborating with CILT by twice cohosting an “Incomplete to Complete” event to assist students with incomplete contracts.

The shift to online services provided growth opportunities for our tutors, including encouraging them to be more independent and to develop problem-solving and leadership skills. And the ASC Leadership Team wishes to note the strength of our collaborative and supportive working style in dealing with all of the challenges the year presented.

Concerns

An obvious concern from the past year was the reduction in the number of tutoring sessions, which translates to Heritage students not engaging in crucial academic support.

While transitioning to online services went well, it also presented challenges for tutors, including less real-time support and community from each other and from the Leadership Team. From our perspective, we had less oversight of employees in an online environment, including ensuring compliance with position expectations and providing meaningful projects for tutors to work on during downtime. And having established a successful new mode of tutoring in the form of online services, we now face the challenge (in workload, staffing, etc.) of continuing to offer those services while returning to offering in-person services as well. Returning to the physical space presents its own set of challenges, such as sanitizing, maintaining social distancing while sharing resources during tutoring, reserving quiet spaces for conducting online tutoring sessions from campus, and the reduced capacity of the ASC rooms due to social distancing requirements.

Finally, our biggest obstacle and source of great concern throughout our years of leadership has been the lack of an institutional tutor wage budget. We recognize the tremendous support we received from the Provost’s office this year in ensuring that our services did not cease, and we rely on and are grateful for our various grant partners as well as federal and state work study funds to support our services. However, each grant has its own needs and restrictions, and we sometimes question whether our responsibilities to our supporting grants conflict with our mission to serve all students. We also face difficulties planning long term for the program when the source of funding and the possible restrictions or requirements for how funds can be spent are not known from year to year.

Changes for the future

One of the significant change for the coming year is the addition of Sandra Mena in the role of Intervention Specialist. While this position is designed to provide critical support to struggling students long term, it is especially important for the coming year as students adjust to returning to campus and continue facing additional barriers as a result of the pandemic. Her position will be key in connecting first- and second-year students to the academic support the ASC provides at the most critical points in their academic journeys. Additionally, this position will be crucial in supporting the mission of the ASC by ensuring that students who are not served by special programs may have access to a high level of academic support.

We have also transitioned Amy Vaniotis from a limited part-time position to a full time position as Coordinator of Data and Reporting. This will allow us to more fully analyze data we already collect, which will in term assist us in making decisions such as whether and how we offer or could offer “college readiness mentoring.” It will also allow us to collect and analyze new data, such as by surveying users of our drop-in tutoring. Amy will also provide data support for the Intervention Specialist, particularly in setting up initial data collection systems for that position.

Finally, we look forwarding in the coming year and beyond to working in partnership with Dr. Sol Neely. Dr. Neely is developing a more robust training program specifically for our writing tutors which is tailored to the HU composition program, is working to create a more welcoming physical space, and is more generally planning to expand and fine-tune our writing services. We are glad to offer Dr. Neely our support and resources for realizing his vision.

To close, we offer this summary of the action items identified throughout this report as well as who will complete them and when:

<i>2021/2022 ASC Assessment Plan Action Summary</i>			
	Planned Action	Person/People Responsible	When and How to Assess
Goal 1	Continue offering extended hours and online services	ASC Leadership Team and tutors	Review tutor log data and satisfaction survey data at midterm and end of term to confirm these hours and services are still benefiting students
	Add marketing and outreach agenda item to weekly Leadership Team meeting, and identify/implement two new marketing ideas	ASC Leadership Team	Discuss weekly; assess at end of each term how many marketing initiatives have been undertaken
	Reach out directly to vulnerable students and establish baseline data	Intervention Specialist, Coordinator of Data and Reporting	Intervention specialist to provide ongoing support; review data on students worked with at end of academic year to establish a baseline for future years

<i>2021/2022 ASC Assessment Plan Action Summary</i>			
	Planned Action	Person/People Responsible	When and How to Assess
	Create and implement satisfaction survey for students who use drop-in tutoring services (online and in person)	Coordinator of Data and Reporting	Implement regular survey by October 15, 2021 in order to have data collected to include during next assessment cycle
	Reassess benchmark #4 regarding number of tutors on shift	ASC Leadership Team	Discuss and decide during December 2021 Assessment Review
	Consider adding goal/benchmark alignment with SP 1.2.a.iv	ASC Leadership Team	Discuss and decide during December 2021 Assessment Review
Goal 2	Develop and implement a procedure for formally approving tutors for each subject they are listed for	Leadership Team	Finalize and implement by October 1, 2021
	Refine tutor training attendance system	Coordinator of Tutoring and Tutor Training	Finalize and implement by October 1, 2021
	Consider revising or removing “college readiness mentoring” from Goal 2 language	Leadership Team	Discuss and decide during December 2021 Assessment Review
Goal 3	Develop and implement a procedure for employee reviews and employee self-reflections	Director of ASC, Coordinator of Tutoring and Tutor Training, and Coordinator of Data and Reporting	Finalize procedure by Spring Break 2022, and implement between April 1, 2022 and May 6, 2022
	Review existing employee wellness measures to see if they should be incorporated and measured as benchmarks	Leadership Team	Meet to discuss by October 31, 2021
	Identify at least one new benchmark to add to Goal 3 that addresses how the ASC can improve employee wellness	Leadership Team	Discuss and decide during December 2021 Assessment Review

Resources needed for changes

Financial support for the ASC is always our central need and concern. Last year marked the end of a grant which had previously contributed significantly to our budget. While the administration has assured us it will fund the difference between our grant allocations and our program needs, and while we are deeply grateful for the financial and structural support we receive from the administrations and from various grants, it is difficult to plan and strategize for our program without being sure of the amount or source of funding that will be available to us.

We ask for faculty engagement in the coming year (as we always do, but especially with the recent return to campus) to ensure students are aware of our services, including what students can and can't expect from those services and how to access them. We also hope faculty will actively work to identify and refer promising tutor candidates to us for future terms.



As we work to bring usage of our services back up to pre-COVID levels, we will need assistance from the marketing department, including such possibilities as physical marketing materials and social media posts. We will also depend on support and collaboration with other HU departments, particularly other student-support focused departments, to direct students to our services.

Finally, we will need—and are confident we will receive—the support and patience of students, faculty, and administration as we integrate online and in person services and adapt to the limitations of returning to a socially-distanced campus experience.