



Report of the Integrated Learning Center Committee for the Creation of the Ledoux Library and Learning Commons

June 6, 2022

General Overview: The Integrated Learning Center Committee was charged by the Chancellor, Dr. Nancee Sorenson, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. John Hamlin, to compile a set of student needs that could be addressed by a comprehensive learning center that would be housed in the Arnold Ledoux Library and to then propose services that the learning center should provide to meet these needs. As part of its charge, the committee was encouraged to make suggestions relevant to the learning center's mission.

The following members of the faculty and staff of Louisiana State University Eunice were appointed to serve on this committee: Dr. Michael Alleman, chair; Ms. Kristie Broussard; Ms. Heidi Dischler; Dr. Billy Fontenot; Mr. James Jean; Ms. Cassie Jobe-Ganuchau; Dr. Robert Jones; Ms. Symantha Jones; Ms. Felicia May; Dr. Prabin Rai; and Mr. Donnie Thibodeaux. Dr. Nancee Sorenson, Dr. John Hamlin, and Dr. Paul Fowler served as *ex officio* members, and Ms. Victoria Bieber served as secretary.

The committee selected the name Ledoux Library and Learning Commons (LLLC) for the learning center because it provides a comprehensive signifier for all services that will be housed in the library proper. The report that follows has been divided into four sections. In the first section, the committee provides descriptions and justifications for what it believes are the basic mandatory services that the LLLC must provide. The second section identifies logistical concerns and problems in providing these services to students and suggests changes that would resolve these. The third section provides a brief SWOT analysis for further discussion and action. The final section makes further recommendations. It also identifies student and institutional needs that either cannot yet be met by the LLLC or fall outside the scope of the LLLC's mission but, regardless, demand serious consideration. The report concludes with an appendix containing research and comments compiled by the Subcommittee on Technology.

I. Proposed Services

Tutoring: The overwhelming request from students polled by the committee was for tutoring. In some instances, students were unaware that the library was already offering tutoring services; in other instances, students who were aware of tutoring services were not aware of the scope of these services. (That students lacked this awareness suggests that the university is not doing an acceptable job of communicating the resources to which students have access. This is addressed in the Communication and Access sections below.) The primary requests regarding tutoring were as follows: course-specific and

major-specific tutoring, expanded tutoring (including tutoring for online students), and after-hours tutoring. In addition, there were several requests for Learning Center-coordinated study groups, which the committee include in this section since it would be a service ancillary to tutoring services. Finally, the committee recognizes that online students were underrepresented in our polling, yet LSUO and CALL students make up about 10% of our student population; moreover, there are programs such as Criminal Justice that are offered only online. Finally, according to Donnie Thibodeaux, the registrar, “[o]f the 8,962 registered students [in SP22] in ‘seats,’ 3,903 seats are for online course sections,” which comes out to 43.55% of all seats. Thus, the university must provide tutoring for highly non-traditional and out-of-state students.

The committee offers the following suggestions.

- Increase awareness of the tutoring that LLC offers through periodic email and text blasts to the students. Also, require faculty to post this information in the introductory section of all their Moodle course pages.
- Provide online tutoring through Zoom for students who cannot attend tutoring on campus. In addition, there should be opportunities for students to access tutors beyond “standard” Learning Commons times. It should be noted that the university offers Smart Thinking online tutoring for all students, and the committee believes that the university should do a more effective job of promoting this service as an alternative to in-person tutoring, especially for LSUO and CALL students, i.e. our online-only students.
- Faculty can create and/or curate videos that cover basic concepts and skills in specific subject areas. (Note: “Curating” refers to the practice of selecting web-based material that has already been made available to the public. Content specialists among the faculty would review the material, determine its accuracy and accessibility, and make these materials available to the students.) The video collection can be developed over the course of several years so that, from a set of basic videos, the university can eventually provide our students with a comprehensive video library organized according to discipline and course. (The committee recommends adopting the use of Kaltura as the ideal means of creating and housing these videos. See the Additional Technology section below.)
- Facilitate the creation of study groups for specific disciplines and/or courses with designated study rooms in the library. The use of a study group app such as CircleIn should also be considered. The committee has previewed CircleIn, and it offers students—including online students—an easy and cheap means of creating learning communities, study groups, and academic support groups.
- For the faculty to make students aware of these services and to assist them in accessing these opportunities, faculty must be aware of them and how they can best serve their individual students’ needs; therefore, the committee proposes offering professional development training that would equip each instructor with the knowledge by which they can best incorporate tutoring into their students’ learning experience.

Academic Support

- **Advising:** In addition to the current advising model, the LLLC will expand advising hours and modalities. Evening and weekend offerings will allow students more flexibility when scheduling advising visits. Zoom advising, though it already exists, can be expanded to evenings and weekends as well. Students will be able to access the advising appointment scheduler via EAB Navigate. This new system will allow Academic and Faculty Advisors to communicate more easily with their advisees. Timely advising is key to keeping students motivated and encouraged about their academic future. Providing as many opportunities as possible for speedy advising removes one of the barriers that incoming students face. To ensure that students are receiving the best, most accurate, and most up-to-date academic guidance, the committee believes that a program of faculty development in advising best practices is essential to the success of this part of the LLC's mission.
- **Career Services:** Based on student feedback, the committee recommends that the LLLC serve as a resource for assisting students in their career prior to and after graduation. The Career Services section of the LLLC would establish connections with the community to help provide students with internship opportunities and information on expos and job fairs as well as assist them in job searches. In addition, Career Services would provide students with assistance in resume-building, interview skills, and professional communication skills, which can be incorporated into the proposed Workshop Series (see below). As always, promotion and support from the administration is vital for success.
- **Workshop Series:** Students indicated that they needed help with time management, notetaking, test preparations and other skills essential for academic success. The committee, thus, recommends that the LLLC offer workshops throughout this semester that provide students with instruction on these fundamental qualities of a successful student. These sessions can be recorded and made available on the LLLC Webcenter (proposed below) so that students who do not have the ability to attend the sessions in person will still have access to the same information and guidance as those who do.

Digital Literacy: Owing to the requirement from ATD to increase digital literacy among students at LSUE, the committee suggests that the LLLC can and should support this effort in several ways. A provisional definition of digital literacy at LSUE can include the following points that are largely adapted from the work of Professor Hiller Spires, who suggests that to be “digitally literate” students should be able to:

- Utilize current digital tools (including but not limited to Word, PowerPoint, various social media software, collaborative tools from Apple or other technology companies for content creation).
- Find, evaluate, and consume digital content
- Create digital content

- Critique digital content
- Communicate or share digital content

The suggestions below come from a survey of student needs, faculty input, best practices at other universities, and experience at other higher education institutions. The LLLC staff can support these endeavors via staff training and targeted seminars.

LLLC staff should be able to help students:

- Navigate and use Moodle
- Evaluate sources
- Email (including using outlook)
- Upload documents (word and pdf) for assignments
- Access resources and materials from the online library
- Prepare PowerPoint Presentations
- Create short videos
- Operate approved graphing calculators
- Use Digital Collaboration Tools
- Find support for Gen Ed Digital Lit Components

In addition, through LOUIS, the Louisiana Library Network, the LLLC is a Northstar Digital Literacy location. Students can learn basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online and may take assessments to earn digital badges and/or certificates demonstrating end-user abilities.

Disability Services: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) will be housed within the LLLC. ODS assists in creating an accessible college community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the educational environment. The ODS fulfills this aim by maintaining disability-related documents, certifying eligibility for services, determining reasonable accommodations, and developing plans for provision of such accommodations for students with disabilities. The ODS also assists all college departments in providing appropriate accommodations for students in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities. As with advising, faculty development sessions will be necessary to ensure that instructors understand ODS procedures and know how to provide the necessary accommodations to students.

Testing Center: The Testing Center will also be housed within the LLLC. The Testing Center will serve as a Northstar Digital Literacy assessment location, where students may earn Digital Literacy Certificates. The center will continue offering proctoring services for online class sections, students receiving testing accommodations, and placement exams (Accuplacer) for incoming students. Other offerings include: HiSET, CLEP, HESI, Praxis, and Peregrine.

Mentoring: As part of an overall program of improvement and preparedness for the incoming students of LSUE, a pilot program of pre-term workshop days and a yearlong mentorship program is being introduced. The pre-term workshop is a multi-session

program over the span of a few days. This will include campus resources such as Student Services, OIT, Library Services/LLLC, general navigation of the campus as well as technologies required for student success. Additional sessions will be led by faculty on the basics of a successful student experience. The goal is to give these students a head-start in acclimating to our campus, our systems, and our support networks. The LLLC, its resources, and staff are an essential part of this support. The following yearlong mentorship program will continue to build the foundation for a successful academic career and beyond.

The LLLC has been mooted as the home for these programs as their goals are synergistic and the committee has agreed. Suggestions have been collected from students and faculty to define the areas that need the most support alongside the best practices of other institutions of higher education. The LLLC will be a key component to the success of these linked programs, and can contribute by providing seminars and workshops as an adjunct to the programs alongside the center's one-to-one tutoring services. The LLLC will also house group study sessions and safe familiar spaces where students can develop a sense of community.

Financial Literacy: Students who were polled by the committee requested knowledge of financial literacy. Many students lack basic knowledge in this area. According to Next Gen Personal Finance's 2021 State of Financial Education Report, currently only 7 states have or are implementing statewide guarantees for a standalone Personal Finance course for all high school students. In Louisiana, only 2.35% of high schoolers are guaranteed to take at least one semester of personal finance. The committee agreed that informational sessions should be offered via face-to-face, videos, zoom, etc. Topics recommended are, but not limited to, financial aid basics, banking basics, understanding credit, etc.

II. Logistics

For the LLLC to successfully fulfil its function of supporting student success, the committee feels that there are several logistical matters that need to be addressed.

Communication: One of the common pieces of feedback the committee received from students was the need for improved communications, a need confirmed by the number of times students requested services, such as tutoring, that the university is already providing. Although the university may relay information to students about these services through email, posts on the LSUE Current Students Facebook Page, and fliers in the hallways, these strategies do not seem to be effective. The committee recommends that the university investigate more effective means of communication. Among them should be frequent reminders of what services are offered, especially during the fourth week, midterm, the 12th week, and finals. The committee believes that if students early in the fall semester can be made aware of LLLC services through repetition, it will become common knowledge, a shared awareness that students can pass on by word of mouth, which is the most effective student communication.

Access—The LLLC Webcenter: Easier access to services goes hand in hand with improved communication: if students cannot find an uncomplicated way to access the services that the LLLC provides, then it is as though the center is not providing any services at all. Though some students can simply go to the library to access tutoring and other services, others cannot. These include online students and on campus students whose schedules are built around family, employment, or both, such that they have no time to access services while on campus. Easy online access to LLLC services is thus essential to these students or to any students trying to get information about the LLLC and its offerings; therefore, the committee proposes that the LLLC have a dedicated and frequently updated webpage that can be accessed through a single button available on the banner on the LSUE main page. (Athletics already has such a setup.) The webpage can be organized according to services and provides students with easy access to information about services and programs. It can also house tutorials and other support videos. Just as the library serves as the hub of our academic support on campus, this LLLC Webcenter can consolidate all our online resources that students can access straight from the LSUE homepage.

Staffing: The committee believes that LLLC success depends on adequate staffing. The LLLC will need strong support from the Office of Information Technology, but a systems administrator on sight in the library is also essential.

Outcomes: Based on input from Achieving the Dream, the committee recommends that the following data be collected each semester and reported to the Executive Director and the committee itself.

Direct Assessment of Student Learning

1. Student learning outcome data from the most heavily tutored courses including, but not limited to mathematics and English composition courses.
2. Compare student learning outcome data for the current semester and or academic year to past longitudinal data to determine changes in performance.

Indirect Assessment of Student Learning

1. Course grades for students in the most heavily tutored courses with a comparison to longitudinal data to determine changes in performance.
2. The number of students completing their first semester with no credit hours completed.
3. Course grades for marginalized populations in the most heavily tutored courses with a comparison to longitudinal data.
4. Fall to spring retention for new first-time students.

Other Assessments related to the LeDoux Library and Learning Commons

1. Frequency of usage for
 - a. Tutoring tracked longitudinally
 - b. Disability Services tracked longitudinally
 - c. Academic Advising tracked longitudinally
2. Level of student satisfaction with

- a. Tutoring tracked longitudinally
- b. Disability Services tracked longitudinally
- c. Academic Advising tracked longitudinally

Long term outcomes are

1. Fall to fall retention for new first-time students
2. Overall number of graduates and graduation rate

III. Concerns

The committee knows that the areas covered in this report (and more) are key to student success. However, due to on-ground conditions and forces beyond the control of the faculty, staff, and administration, the committee feels that providing a brief SWOT analysis is essential. This analysis covers foreseen strengths and weaknesses within LSUE and external opportunities and threats.

- Strengths
 - Administrative support
 - Faculty buy-in
 - Students want to learn these skills
- Weaknesses
 - Poor IT infrastructure (including the university website)
 - A lack of appropriate funds allocation in the university budget
 - Faculty and staff are already overworked
 - High turnover in support staff positions
 - Inadequate internal communication
- Opportunities
 - As the program grows, the university can become an attractive partner for regional businesses
 - Success on this project will make LSUE more appealing to students that may fear that they are not ready for a large university
 - Bootcamp and mentorship programs could help recruit at-risk youth and set them on a path to success.
 - Bootcamp and mentorship programs could be extended to high school students who are considering attending LSUE or another institution of higher learning
- Threats
 - A growing anti-education sentiment in the state legislature
 - Unclear budget priorities from the state and federal government
 - Other institutions could poach key talent
 - Institutions with a marketing plan to recruit fully online students (SNHU, University of Arizona, etc.)

IV. Further Recommendations/Needs

Additional Technology:

- **Kaltura media server:** Kaltura is a video recording and cloud hosting platform that natively indexes, tags, captions, and archives videos. Kaltura has plug-in options for all major VLEs. Kaltura capture space and capture space lite allow for simultaneous screen and webcam recording. This feature is helpful for faculty when recording lectures or instructions for students. This feature is also handy for students in that it allows them to record PowerPoint (or other) presentations that flow seamlessly and have a professional look. This will naturally assist with the ATD directive for digital literacy.

Faculty and staff can create skills-based videos that can be embedded directly into a course page on Moodle and on a webpage for the LLLC. As these videos are hosted in the cloud, faculty and instructional staff can easily find videos relevant to their classes and drop them into Moodle. Using this software and cloud hosting service means that faculty and staff can easily find in-house material to suit their needs.

Co-Requisite Support: The Learning Commons needs to be prepared to aid students who will be taking co-requisite courses beginning FA23. Tutoring can be a large part of this. In addition, the Learning Commons Webcenter can link to a designated co-requisite webpage with “developmental” resources and assistance.

Mental Health: A disconcerting—though not surprising—request from many of the students the committee spoke to was access to mental health resources. Though the university does provide students with access to mental health professionals through a web service, none of the students were aware of it. The committee does not know if the LLLC should provide mental health services aside from a relaxation space for students who are feeling stressed, but it was clear that the university needs to be more aggressive providing intervention services for students who are experiencing mental health issues. According to the National Alliance on Mental Health, among U.S. adults aged 18-25, 1 in 3 experienced a mental illness, 1 in 10 experienced serious mental illness, and 3.8 million had serious thoughts of suicide.¹ These numbers trend higher among college students. In a 2020 University of Michigan survey, “47% [of the respondents] screened positive for clinically significant symptoms of depression and/or anxiety.... with 83% reporting at least one day of academic impairment due to mental health in the last four weeks;”² moreover, mental health problems among students seriously affect retention rates. The

¹ [Mental Health By the Numbers](#)

² [Anxiety, Depression Reached Record Levels among College Students Last Fall](#) (25 February 2021)

American Council on Education reports, “A longitudinal study of dropout rates among students with low GPAs (<3.0) found that a quarter of students (25 percent) who exhibited symptoms of a mental health problem dropped out, while less than 10 percent (9 percent) of students without mental health problems did so.”³ If our students, many of whom do not have access to good healthcare, are requesting counseling services, then the university should try to respond to this need.

Student Life: Students also requested support in two vital areas that fall outside the LLLC: transportation and daycare. The committee believes that the university needs to explore avenues for assisting students in these areas. Anecdotal evidence among members of the committee strongly suggests that lack of access to daycare (especially on days when the university is open but the local school districts are closed) and reliable transportation are two of the primary causes for absenteeism, and absenteeism can be directly correlated with negative student success in face-to-face classes. One way to address the transportation problems is for the university to facilitate a ride sharing program among students. This would be the most immediate and cost-effective solution. On the other hand, daycare presents a different kind of problem. Nationally, more than 20% of college students are raising at least one child, and of those, 62% are single mothers, over 50% are people of color, 44% work a full-time job, and though 33% of students with children carry a GPA of 3.5 or higher, 52% of all students who are parents never complete a college degree.⁴ The committee would like to know how Acadiana compares to the national statistics in these areas. Regardless, while the university may not have the resources at present to address this issue, the committee strongly advises the university to seek out a means of ameliorating the situation of our student-parents.

³ [Investing in Student Mental Health: Opportunities & Benefits for College Leadership](#) (2019), p. 3

⁴ See the following studies: [College Students with Children are Common and Face Many Challenges in Completing Higher Education](#) (2013), [Parents in College By the Numbers](#) (2018) and the following articles from *The Atlantic*: [How Colleges Tell Student-Parents They Don't Belong](#) (26 May 2021), [The Quiet Struggle of College Students With Kids](#) (11 December 2014)

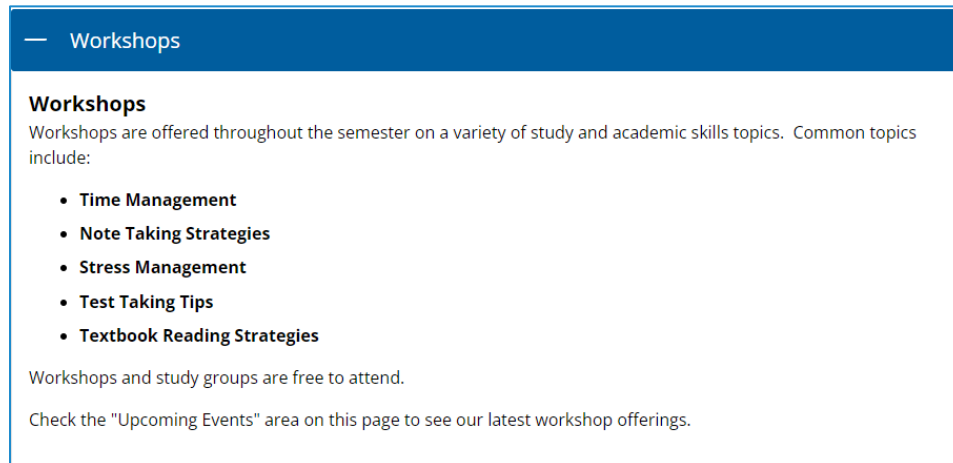
Appendix A: Notes from the Subcommittee on Technology

Virtual Front Desk

At the [North Hampton Community College's learning center](#), they offer the capability to access a “virtual front desk” where frequently asked questions can easily be answered, and students can connect with customer service.

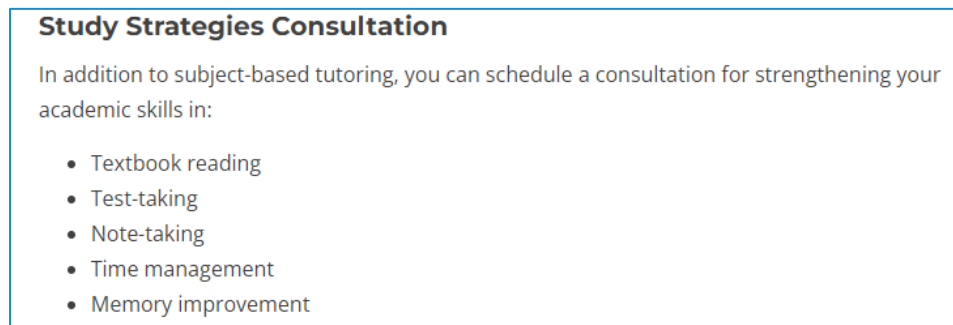
Online Workshops

- At the [Onondago Community College](#), online and in-person workshops are offered on commonly used skills. Faculty could create a video for these online workshops, making it easier to schedule them for students, faculty, and staff.



The screenshot shows a webpage section titled "Workshops" with a blue header. Below the header, the text reads: "Workshops are offered throughout the semester on a variety of study and academic skills topics. Common topics include:" followed by a bulleted list: "Time Management", "Note Taking Strategies", "Stress Management", "Test Taking Tips", and "Textbook Reading Strategies". Below the list, it states: "Workshops and study groups are free to attend." and "Check the 'Upcoming Events' area on this page to see our latest workshop offerings."

- At [Gateway Community College](#), they call these “Study Strategies Consultation.” These consultations could easily be recorded and added to an online database for ease of access.



The screenshot shows a webpage section titled "Study Strategies Consultation" with a blue header. Below the header, the text reads: "In addition to subject-based tutoring, you can schedule a consultation for strengthening your academic skills in:" followed by a bulleted list: "Textbook reading", "Test-taking", "Note-taking", "Time management", and "Memory improvement".

Dedicated webpage for the LLLC

- As with individual academic programs and departments, the LLLC should have its own webpage where students can find all its resources, schedule appointments, and view a virtual front desk if that becomes something we end up using. See links above for examples of how these colleges have used a single-source page to identify and organize all the services provided.

Private eCARE Compass Mental Health Rooms for Therapy Sessions

- One thing that I thought might be able to solve our problem with students not using their free online mental health services is to reserve a room in the library specifically for mental health services. It would have a computer that has the mental health webpage pulled up and students could use the room for up to an hour (or more if needed) to complete their therapy session.