WORKING PAPER

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
Their Possibilities and Limits

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Abstract:

Community colleges provide a substantial array of student support services, designed to help students master basic subjects and to learn "how to be college students." However, the use of these services by instructors and students varies substantially. Some instructors rarely or never mention the availability of such services; others make the use of some services mandatory. But the largely voluntary nature of student services means that many students do not use these services, for reasons ranging from competing demands for their time to avoidance of stigma or stereotype threat. The result is general consensus that the students who most need support services fail to get them — except where colleges have moved to portray such services as "what all good students do."

Like other forms of instruction, student support services have their own pedagogy. But, in observing tutoring services and students labs, it becomes clear that many student services replicate the remedial pedagogy of basic skills instruction itself — repeating the procedures used in class and helping students find the right answers but without additional conceptual understanding. This is, to be sure, not universally true, and Supplemental Instruction and more student-

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focused forms of Student Success courses depart substantially from remedial pedagogy. However, the use of remedial pedagogy sometimes leads to conflicts between student services and conventional instruction.

This problem highlights the problem of competition between instruction and student services, in place of the complementarity usually assumed. Pedagogical and philosophical differences, the inevitable competition for resources and for the limited time of students, the ambiguity of what centralization and coordination mean, and the different approaches to "rigor" all exacerbate the sense of competition over cooperation and integration.

Guidance and counseling is a student support that is particularly important, particularly in helping students and "experimenters" plan their educational programs. But guidance and counseling suffer from limited resources, from limited contacts with students, from the fact that many students – again, often those most in need — don't use these services, and from poor reputations among instructors and students about the weaknesses of counselors in providing the information students most need. As in other areas of student services, there are several promising directions for guidance and counseling that would strengthen these crucial services.

More generally, student services suffer from certain structural problems. One is related to funding, since students services (unlike conventional instruction) do not generate additional revenues for colleges. The large number of adjunct faculty members, especially in developmental education, also complicates contact between instruction and student services. The nature of most colleges as laissez-faire institutions, reluctant to place requirements on either students or instructors, contributes to the voluntary use of student services. Various ways of reshaping student services therefore require challenging conventional practices and norms of community colleges, but the results have the promise of making the entire enterprise of developmental education more effective.

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Community colleges provide an amazing variety of student support

services — services designed to help students both in the cognitive dimensions of

their work in mastering various subjects, and in the non-cognitive dimensions

including "knowing how to be college students,"[*] The theory of action behind

such support services is usually quite transparent: students who have trouble in

classroom instruction can receive supplemental help, complementary to what

happens in the classroom, so that they can master the demands of coursework,

move through a sequence of courses, and achieve whatever goals they set for

themselves. And if their goals are unclear, then one particular support service —

 guidance and counseling — can in theory help with this dimension of planning.

The provision of student services has a relatively long history in

community colleges (Cohen and Brawer 2008, Ch. 7). Still, it's important to

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[*] This phrase comes up over and over again; as we will detail in Working Paper 6, the most common faculty complaint about students is that "they don't know how to be college students", a phrase with a variety of meanings. Many student services are designed explicitly to help students become "college students", especially in courses called Student Success or something related.

remember that student services cannot cover all the needs students have. One of our colleges polled students about what they most needed to be successful. The first mention was a mentor or buddy on campus, but the second was gas cards so that they could get to class, and the college could not figure out how to do that — just as providing child care, or employment opportunities, or family counseling is usually extremely difficult. So many of the challenges that make college-going a balancing act — particularly the demands of employment and family responsibilities — are nearly impossible for colleges to meet. By the same logic, the lack of time makes it difficult for part-time students in particular to spend time on both their regular classes and support services, and — as we will see later in this paper — they sometimes decide that they cannot afford the time for services that might help them in the long run.

Under the best circumstances, a rich menu of support services converts the triangle of instruction, presented in Working Paper 2, into a "quadrangle of instruction", with two centers of learning: the classroom, and supplemental services, as in Figure 4.1. Now students can learn from either — hopefully both — of two centers; they have two sets of instructors with whom to build relationships. But the requirements for consistency among all the elements of the instructional quadrangle become increasingly difficult, as we shall see throughout this working paper: consistency between regular and supplemental instructors, between both the content taught and the pedagogy used in the two centers of instruction, and the overall role of student services relative to

classroom instruction all pose potential problems. Indeed, the very separation of classroom instruction from student services — the fact that the two are generally provided by different individuals, in different organizational units of the community college, with different perspectives on what goals are — has become an issue all its own as the vision of integrating student services and instruction has become more prominent — something we investigate in a section below.

One of the special challenges of examining student services is that — even more than classroom instruction — it's hard to know what happens in these encounters between student and service. Some of them, like counseling sessions, happen behind closed doors; some, like the information instructors provide about specific occupational fields, takes place in the privacy of faculty offices. While a great deal takes place in public settings — in workshops and writing labs, for example — more of it takes place one-on-one, in interactions between tutors and students that are difficult to observe unobtrusively. And the sheer variety of student services, described in the first section below, complicates issues enormously. In this working paper we have therefore relied on a number of sources: observations in labs and workshops; interviews with student services personnel, as well as instructors; and limited interviews with students.

Given the thicket of student services and the complexity of learning about what happens, we have chosen to detail the variety of practices we have seen. On the one hand, a great deal of student services (and especially tutoring) continues to follow the remedial pedagogy of most developmental classrooms, with tutors

concentrating on helping the students get the right answers, without necessarily understanding why the answer is correct. On the other hand, we have observed services that dovetail nicely with classroom instruction, and that move away from remedial pedagogy and expand students' ways of viewing a subject.

The fact that many student services concentrate on non-cognitive dimensions of learning — or "how to be a college student" — as well as cognitive dimensions means that colleges vary substantially in *what* they offer and *how* they support students. At one end, therefore, we find colleges either with very few services, or — just as bad — with a plethora of services that are difficult to understand and access, and generally unrelated to classroom instruction. At the other end we have visited colleges with coherent programs of services that are well-integrated with instruction. In trying to think of which of these services are effective, it is therefore necessary to understand the range of what is being offered, and what it might accomplish.

I. THE VARIETY OF STUDENT SERVICES

Just as we uncovered a veritable blizzard of innovations in the colleges we visited, we found an enormous number of different student services. Each college has a slightly different mix of services, so it's difficult to know what people refer to when they talk about support services; similarly, statements applicable to one services are often irrelevant to another, so broad

generalizations are often difficult. Here's a simple listing of the services we uncovered in 14 colleges we visited:

• Almost all colleges have **centers for tutoring**, most often in writing and math, slightly less often in reading and ESL, and only rarely in transfer-level subjects like science and social studies. The tutors are sometimes peer tutors, with certain advantages — as one writing instructor noted, "I think students feel a little intimidated when the instructor is not quite as open, but if you have students [as tutors] who look no different than they do and understand what's being done, it can be very effective." Chaffey College distinguishes between Apprentices II, with Associate degrees, and Apprentices IV with bachelor's degrees.[*] Sometimes tutors are adjunct faculty. Tutoring sessions are usually one-on-one sessions with students who bring in homework, essays, and problems for help, though some deviate from this pattern. A variant is on-line tutoring, with various computer-based programs available.

• **Tutor training** is an activity in its own right. Some colleges select tutors from students who have passed a course, and then the amount of tutor training varies from informal on-the-job training to more formalized training sessions; some colleges have used a good deal of their Basic Skills Initiative funds on tutor training.[i] The existence of tutor training is tacitly a recognition that no one

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[*] See Working Paper 5 for a fuller analysis of student services at Chaffey College, which are by several measures exemplary and therefore frequently mentioned in this working paper. Because of the difficulty of keeping the college's identity anonymous, we received permission to use its real name.

should be instructing students without some appropriate preparation — though of course this does not apply to conventional instructors, who typically have no special preparation in either instructional methods or in the pedagogies and strategies of learning centers.

• **Supplemental Instruction** (SI) is quite different from tutoring; it tends to focus on specific courses rather than particular disciplines, and — following the University of Missouri Kansas City model — instructors engage students in discussions about the subjects of the course but do *not* either work with "products" (like papers or problem sets) or help students get the right answers. The focus instead is on collaboration and on the use of tools (like notes, books, study guides) and on studying techniques.

• **Workshops** are typically taught to a group of students, by either an adjunct or a regular faculty member. Usually they are brief (1 - 2 hour) sessions on specific topics, including specific sub-skills: fractions and decimals; word problems in math; subject-verb agreement; incomplete and run-on sentences; the logic of the scientific method. They may be either reinforcement of what is taught in conventional classes, or are sometimes subjects that the instructor cannot find time for.

• **Student Success** courses go by many names (including Introduction to College, College Success, or sometimes Applied Psychology), and are intended to provide students with information about "how to be a college student", where to find various services and departments on campus, sometimes career-oriented

guidance and counseling and planning, sometimes non-cognitive capacities like time management (including balancing school, work, and family life). These courses vary enormously so it's rarely clear what they include; there are some textbooks written for such courses, but the use of textbooks varies widely among colleges.

• **First-year experience or matriculation programs** are intended, like Student Success courses, to help transition students into college. They typically include assessments of basic skills, counseling about what levels of coursework might be appropriate, academic counseling about putting together a coherent program, perhaps a Student Success course or two.

• **Summer Bridge** programs take place in the summer before the first fall semester, and are conceptually like freshman year experience programs moved earlier in the student's career. Because we visited colleges during the school year, we did not observe any summer bridge programs.

• **Learning communities** sometimes embed basic skills courses into a roster of two or three (and sometimes more) courses; a typical learning community might include one or two developmental courses with a Student Success or career counseling course. A variant is a learning community including basic skills but focused on a particular group of students: UMOJA and DERAJA for African American students, Puente for Latino students, the Program for Adult College Education (PACE) for older adults (usually women) return to college after years out of the workforce. Such a focused learning community

allows different kinds of bonds among students to form, based on one kind of identity or another; it also allows for exploring issues of racial or ethnic or gender identity that might otherwise be ignored.

• **Guidance and Counseling** are fundamental services offered by nearly every college (though there are indications that, under fiscal pressure, some colleges are abandoning guidance and counseling in favor of computer-based programs). In practice most counseling is *academic* counseling, helping students determine the courses they need to meet their academic goals; *personal* counseling may take place informally, though most colleges direct students with serious personal problems to outside help; *financial* counseling is typically offered by financial aid offices; and *career-oriented* counseling may be given either by a counseling department, in a Student Success course, or — less formally, but often more effectively — by individual faculty members providing information about the education required in various career trajectories (sometimes as part of courses like Introduction to Engineering or Introduction to Human Services). In theory all students have access to guidance and counseling, especially when they enter the college, though the reality is quite different, as we will detail in a section below.

• **Early Alert** is a process where students are informed if they do poorly in one or more courses, or if they fall behind in their program of studies. Usually the point of an Early Alert system is to direct students to counselors, though how this happens varies widely from college to college. A variant in one of the

colleges was a program for students whose GPA fell below 2.0; the program involved a series of day-long seminars concerned with dimensions of Student Success. Similar programs exist in some colleges for all students who go on probation, usually as a result of low grades or missed classes.

Individual colleges may have just two of these — usually guidance and counseling plus some kind of tutoring — while others have almost all of them. One particularly active college provided a rich set of short-term workshops for students; a teaching and learning center with tutors 12 hours a day; a guided learning or self-paced activity with materials on the computer for students who could not make it to the teaching and learning center; and conventional guidance and counseling — so that students had multiple avenues for help. The college we call Chasm College provided a variety of workshops for students including a life management course, a human development course, a College and Life Management class, a math anxiety course as well as Student Success courses and 1-unit skills-oriented labs or workshops.

But sometimes the variety of services becomes confusing. For example, the college we call Southern Metro College has guidance and counseling offered by a conventional department as well as guidance and counseling provided for students "handicapped" by different conditions through EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) and other such services provided to disabled services through DSPS (Disabled Students Programs and Services); there exists both a Learning Assistance Department and a Developmental

Communications Department, there's a Success Center staffed by part-time faculty as well as learning communities (UMOJA and Puente) that provide some of their own support, a center for students on welfare, and then a Center for Retention and Transfer serving a small group of transfer-oriented students. It's extremely difficult to figure out all the learning assistance programs available, how they differ, and for whom they are intended. When our observers noted that they were confused by the array of services, a faculty member admitted that, "well, they're [the students] confused too. . . . and that's what the counselors are supposed to do [to tell students what resources they can get]. I don't know what the counselor is telling them." The college we call Barkham has tutoring centers for reading and math, but it also has a different tutoring center, requiring students to sign up for blocks of time, and whose distinctive function is unclear. As a result the blizzard of services, and who is eligible for which services, becomes incredibly difficult to understand, certainly for outsiders trying to examine what is being offered but also for students themselves. At the college we call Mindano, for example, a student assessment team will share results with a counselor, who will explain to the student what it means; then the student needs to be referred to financial aid for specialized information, and that may direct a student to EOPS. That means 4 different bureaucratic contacts before the student is even enrolled; if each of them takes a period of time to execute, then there may be a substantial delay between initial application and enrollment.

Partly because of this plethora of student services, major goals of the moment are centralization, integration, and coordination; several colleges have mechanisms in the works that will give students a kind of "passport", valid for all services, that also provides information on what's available. But, as we will see, the meanings of integration and coordination themselves vary, and in practice cooperation and coordination are all to likely to be replaced by competition and fragmentation — both within the set of student services, and between student services and instruction.

II. THE USE OF STUDENT SERVICES BY
INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

Given the existence of student services in every college, one obvious question is how instructors and students use these services — that is, how strong are the links in Figure 4.1 between student services, on the one hand, and instructors and students on the other. As with everything else in student services, there is enormous variation in the use made of these services, depending in many ways on the institution's perception of what the roles of student services should be.

In many colleges, instructors are responsible for alerting students to the availability of services. But then one can see, in observing large numbers of classes, that many instructors never mention the availability of student services.

Others mention these services off-handedly, as a source of help if students are having trouble with problem sets or papers. As one staff member mentioned, at a college with a large number of poorly-articulated services,

> I think a grand majority [of faculty] just want to teach their classes, they want to leave, they don't want to get involved in student services. I hear the kind of complaints are that faculty are not understanding, they're not sensitive, they're not encouraging. I've even heard that they've never mentioned support services on campus.

This is particularly likely to be true of adjunct faculty, who visit the campus just for their classes and are just as likely as students to be bewildered by the different student services available. On the other hand, "we do have a small cohort of faculty who are highly engaged", "more aggressive and understanding." In observing classes, some instructors repeatedly stress the services available, and at the extreme some instructors create requirements to spend a certain amount of time in specific services, particularly tutoring or Supplemental Instruction. The rationale for requiring some participation in these services is, quite frankly, that many student will not participate in anything that is promoted as being good for their intellectual development; they will participate only if something is required, or if their grade is affected (for example, by instructors giving extra credit).[ii] But this in turn means that relying on student initiative to get students into support services is unlikely to be effective. Where colleges (like Chaffey) have developed comprehensive systems of student services, course requirements for student services are very much a part of shifting from a notion of a laissez-faire college, where students and

instructors behave as they want to, to an institution with definite expectations and requirements of students — in this case, that they will seek out supplemental services as part of their normal work as successful students — as well as faculty. Indeed, at Chaffey College there is a uniform effort to persuade students that "this is what all good students do" — that all students, whether college-level or developmental, ought to be seeking out supplementary learning activities as part of their learning development. The tendency of instructors to refer students to such services therefore varies among colleges according to their institutional policies and culture. Often, as we will document in a later section of this Working Paper, instruction and student services are often in competition with one another rather than being seen as complementary; when that happens, then instructors are especially unlikely to refer students to their "competitors."

Of course, there are other ways that students learn about student services. Sometimes student services staff show up in classes to announce their services; in some cases tutors actually attend the classes for which they are tutoring, a practice that is particularly common in Supplementary Instruction. As an adjunct math instructor noted,

> Our goal is to have better connection between our math tutor and have him come into the classroom so people know him, because it does seem that if there's face-to-face contact students are more likely to go seek him out.

Student services are also often located in one physical space, or in Centers for Writing or Math, or Centers for Students Success, or located in proximity to the

library so they are visible on campus. Student services staff are trying all manner of ways to alert students: some have tried using social networking programs, "finding students where they are", using Facebook that "makes it cool", for example, as well as the usual flyers and e-mail announcements. Students therefore have multiple ways of finding out about student services, even if their instructors are lackadaisical about informing them.

But in the end, the voluntary nature of student support creates one of the biggest problems: How students use these services. Particularly in colleges with a laissez-faire attitude, there's widespread agreement that it is impossible to make students use these services, and that the students most in need of these services never show up. As one faculty member, in a college that has a particularly rich array of student services commented,

> It's always the A students who go, because they're over-achievers. If they [the faculty] don't send them, rarely will students go on their own because of the love of learning. And so we've been really pushing the idea of giving them extra credit, or ten points a workshop, it's homework, it's part of your grade.

Another noted,

> When I used to spend time in there [the tutoring center], the only ones I'd see would be my high-level students, the ones that didn't need it. Low-level students don't take advantage of that stuff. . . I think we have fantastic student support, if only students would take advantage of it. It's getting them there to do it, is the problem.

But even in colleges that have moved to what they call "intrusive" counseling — where instructors and peer mentors call students to try to get them to come in for counseling and services — a student services staff reported that

14

> We still know that the motivated students are the one who come in to SI [Supplemental Instruction]. The basic skills students, what we call the developmental students, they are not historically the people who seek tutoring.

One of the problems is that attending student services has a certain stigma attached to it — the stigma of failure. One instructor noted that

> I have a lot of students coming from high school, and they're like, "free at last!" They don't want to be in anything that seems like special ed, and so I try to make sure they know it's cool here [in the lab], and what amazing services we offer — I want them to know it's so different from special ed. And that's been very hard.

> In addition, instructors are fully aware that part of the problem is that

many students have competing demands for their time; as one adjunct faculty member stated the problem,

> The feedback I get, like just this past week, is "Why are you not taking advantage of this free tutorial help with your English paper before it comes to me?" And it's "I have just so much time to get through school, and I don't have any more time. And as long as I can pass, that's all I want.". . . And so even though we have these supportive systems set up around campus, I haven't figured out how do we get students to use them.

The result is that a good deal of attendance at student services is crisis or problem-oriented; as a vice president for instruction noted,

> There is not enough utilization of the services. It is only when a problem arises that people begin to take advantage of the services. And it is in part because people are allocating time for the rest of their life — their jobs, other obligations — so they don't really fit in the time necessary for that additional instructional help.

Even an instructor who gave extra credit for students attending a series of Skills for Success workshops complained that "the best we can do is inform them and

15

make them aware of everything and encourage them to go. We can't make them go." That's not precisely right: course requirements (and not just extra credit) can "make them go", since students are highly sensitive to what is required to earn grades and pass courses. But in a laissez-faire college reluctant to impose additional requirements on students, the upshot is that high achievers make use of student services, the students most in need do not, and the concept of student services as a backstop for students with additional needs for both cognitive and non-cognitive support breaks down.

We suspect, though we cannot prove it, that one potentially quite dangerous aspect of student support services affects the students who show up. Conventionally, in the colleges we visited — but with two crucial exceptions — student services are viewed as programs for basic skills students, or students with deficiencies, or "special needs", or problems in completing problem sets and papers. Visits to tutoring centers, the services of Early Alert programs, Student Success courses for "students who don't know how to be college students", and short problem-focused workshops all exemplify a deficiency orientation toward student support. But this runs contrary to the common convention that such deficiency orientations will generate stigma for students, and that this stigma may by itself cause students not to take advantage of student support opportunities.

A recent, elegant, and powerful statement of this problem comes from Claude Steele (2010), who has stressed that there are stereotypes of every kind

lurking in our social institutions — stereotypes that racial minorities are not academically able, that women fare poorly in math and science, that white males may be guilty of discriminatory thinking, and on and on. What is amazing is the vast range of stereotypes that exist as part of our social rankings of individuals. But then, Steele and his colleagues have found, when a stereotype is triggered — when individuals or students are reminded of a negative stereotype — their performance is often much worse than in situations that are viewed as neutral with respect to the stereotype. For students in developmental courses, the potentially threatening stereotype is that they are not "smart" since by definition they have flunked an assessment test of basic skills, or are not able students; the language of instructors that "they don't know how to be college students" is a clear and damaging stereotype, and the association with high school special ed noted above is similarly stigmatizing. So, *unless* an institution takes pains not to trigger these stereotypes, they threaten to emerge and to undermine the performance of developmental students.

The only good solution to the problem of stereotype threat, then, is to avoid invoking this stereotype — as Chaffey College does when it provides all services to all students (instead of just a subset of "weak" students), and when they insist that seeking support "is what all successful students do", not something required only of basic skills students. As the dean of instructional support services insisted,

17

> We place a very high premium on "languaging" our changes because they often influence the culture. That is why we deliberately named our first phase of change our "transformation," and we abandoned "basic skills" as a term for our students. . . We also are deliberate about naming EVERYTHING!

Similarly , another college with a wide roster of support services made sure to include all students in them, and moved away from language of "basic" skills or "remediation" to "foundation" courses, in order to stress the commonality of these capacities among all students and subsequent coursework. The conception of stereotype threat, together with the substantial empirical work behind it, provides us with another way of understanding the poor participation of many students in support services: they simply avoid participating in those services that make them feel inadequate.

The result of all these factors is that only a small percent of students in basic skills courses show up in student services. One college that surveyed students found that only 10% of students in the two lowest-level English courses showed up in tutoring; Chaffey College determined that the changes they made increased participation rates among developmental students from 28.5% before their "transformation" to 55.9% over a decade. A good guess might be that less than a quarter of students in basic skills use student services, except at colleges like Chaffey and Mindano that have made concerted efforts to de-stigmatize student services and make them more broadly available.

Early Alert, in addition to tutoring, provides another good example of how instructors and student attitudes can affect the use of services. In one

campus with an Early Alert system, some faculty like it and make use of it, but some don't: "They're adults; I'm not babysitting. That's usually part of the problem, is that they haven't learned how to do things on their own, and to really go after things." In addition, Early Alert in that college required faculty to call students, and "teachers feel over-burdened, especially adjuncts" — who, after all, teach most of the basic skills courses. For their part, "some students don't like it because they feel they're being checked up on", which is perfectly true: there's a prescriptive element to any Early Alert system that is inconsistent with giving students the responsibility for their own coursework. Finally, "It takes a lot of effort to get students to come into an office", so the counseling end of the Early Alert system worked poorly. But if part of "knowing how to be a college student" is knowing when to seek help, then part of *teaching* students how to be college students is pointing out to them when they need and should seek help, which is what Early Alert systems do. In this college, with instructor indifference, student hostility, and a system that did not provide timely information, the Early Alert system seemed particularly ineffective.

Overall, when laissez-faire faculty face resistant students, then student services are quite ineffective. If only a small proportion of basic skills students use support services, particularly compared to the A students and "over-achievers", then paradoxically student services may work to *widen* the gaps among students, not narrow them.[iii] At the other end of the spectrum, Chaffey College — with a much more coercive system depending on course requirements

19

to get students into such services, with a uniform ethos that "this is what good students do", and with a highly visible system of four Student Success Centers where most student services are located — calculates that a majority of all students use student services at some point during a semester.[iv] So it is certainly possible to develop a system of services that are well-utilized, but it requires institutional commitment to linking instruction with services and to making services more than a voluntary and peripheral part of an education.

III. THE INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES OF STUDENT SERVICES

All of the student services we described in the first section of this Working Paper are *instructional* services, in which an instructor of some kind — often called a tutor, or mentor, or a guidance counselor or counselor apprentice, or sometimes just student services staff — provides some kind of teaching to students, about either the cognitive dimensions of their schoolwork or about the non-cognitive dimensions (especially in Student Success courses). This in turn means that all student services have a pedagogy, or a way in which they deliver whatever the content is. Just as we investigated the pedagogy of developmental courses in Working Paper 2 and discovered the dominance of "remedial pedagogy", so too do we need to inquire what the pedagogy of various student services are.

In observing within tutoring centers, where tutors including peer tutors work one-on-one with students who bring them problems, most tutoring follows the pattern of "remedial pedagogy", with an emphasis on getting the right answers or a formally correct sentences or paragraphs. Typically a student will present a question about a problem set or writing assignment, and the tutor will show the way to the right answer, repeating the procedures used in class but not elaborating them or explaining why they work — as instructors by and large fail to do as well. Alternatively, they will explain the problem using a different procedure, which often confuses the student. This is why some math tutors, in particular, like to attend the classes for which they tutor – so they know how the instructor is teaching it and can use similar procedures in tutorial. In math tutoring, the dominant problem is explaining to students why their incorrect answers are wrong, and then working out the right answers; in tutoring for writing, students typically bring in writing samples and watch while tutors correct errors of grammar and usage, producing error-free sentences and paragraphs. There should be nothing particularly surprising about the tendency toward remedial pedagogy: tutors are typically students who have been through these courses before, and if the instructor depends on remedial pedagogy, the tutors will too. In addition, peer tutors in particular— despite their advantages in being about the same age and experience as students — are only one or two steps ahead of the students they are tutoring, are at best sophomores, have not taken much advanced coursework, and have not been exposed to anything about the

techniques of instruction *unless* the college provides an exceptional tutor training program. So remedial pedagogy in the classroom is likely to replicate itself in tutoring.

The division between didactic "remedial pedagogy" and a more student-centered, constructivist or student-centered pedagogy is most evident in comparing tutoring with Supplemental Instruction. As developed in the "Kansas model" from the University of Missouri at Kansas City Center for Academic Development, the SI leader, who attends all classes, specifically rejects providing answers, and instead leads student discussions about different aspects of a course, providing hints when students are stuck. The materials also clarify that SI is not conventional tutoring, homework question/answer session, another lecture, or a place students go when they miss class; it has its own pedagogy and purpose. Indeed, one SI tutor related a difficult relationship with a faculty member: "I had one faculty member where the professor said, 'oh just go to the tutor. They'll re-lecture you.' " In these cases SI tutors have to discuss the purpose of SI with instructors, since it is certainly not to "re-lecture" the material.

Two Chaffey students reflecting on their experiences as both tutors and SI leaders expressed a similar distinction:

> the tutor [SI leader] does not ever lecture or simply impart knowledge to the students. We guide students using the Socratic method to extract pre-existing knowledge from the students and use it as the foundation for new ideas.

The difference between the one-on-one tutoring and the SI approach is that "students get results from one another [in SI] that a tutor might have to explicate in a tutoring session." So, unlike the simple provision of correct answers that we have seen in a great deal of peer tutoring, the emphasis within SI is on leading students to discover answers for themselves and with peers — a practice that is both student-centered and constructivist.

Other forms of student services can have varying pedagogies. Sometimes the short Workshops covering various sub-skills — punctuation, run-on sentences, decimals and fractions — are structured so they encourage remedial pedagogy, but that would depend on the instructor. Student Success courses range all over the place: some appear to be highly didactic and concerned with information transfer, including information about the services available at a college; others are efforts to get students to define their own educational goals and programs, and are therefore much more student-focused. As is true for conventional classrooms, there is generally no way to understand the pedagogy of student services without observing the instructional relationships, and sometimes — as in confidential guidance and counseling sessions — this is impossible. But our point is first and foremost that every type of student service has a pedagogy, a conclusion that is usually poorly understood and articulated. Furthermore, we fear that in the absence of strong pressures to the contrary — as happens in the philosophy of Supplemental Instruction, for example, or in Student Success and Career Success courses aimed at getting students to develop

their own plans, or in Writing Centers that forego the conventional grammar-sentence-paragraph-essay approach to writing — many student services are likely to revert to remedial pedagogy and information transfer.

One of the most interesting, but discouraging, conflicts occurs when the pedagogy of student services differs from that of classroom instruction. In several colleges, regular classroom instructors complained that tutoring services followed the approach of finding the right answer rather than teaching students how to think conceptually; quote here. At Chaffey College, the revision of their basic skills program was instigated in part because of a tutoring division mired in a "skills" approach to teaching writing, just as the English department was moving towards the writing process approach. In the college we call Chasm College, both reading instructors and the English department had problems with the Learning Center and its "territoriality." But it turned out that the real difference was one of culture and pedagogy: in the English department,

> We're sort of bohemian, liberal, read a lot — and then if the person who's running the Writing Center doesn't seem to be in that cultural space, if it has a schoolmarm-ish feeling then right off you're kind of put off. There's sort of a cultural tension — the English discipline doesn't see a lot of rigor at work . . . The Writing Center is very prescriptive, very power-paragraph, 5-paragraph model.

Such divisions may lead to departments avoiding referring students to student services, so that the relationship becomes adversarial rather than complementary. Reinforcing this, learning center faculty are often viewed as not equal in status to the classroom faculty. With marginal status it is often difficult

for them to be "trusted" with the instruction of students outside of the classroom,

or seen as legitimate partners in the learning endeavor. In other cases students

fail to get the support from learning centers they need: in the college we call

Southern Metro, an instructor noted that

> Our students struggle with English, and they feel they're not getting the support from the LRC, the Learning Resource Center. I think we rely too much on these scantrons — these multiple choice tests. But when we actually give students critical writing assignments, they really struggle. So we get a lot of students who come back and say, "You know I need more support in this area."

In other cases differences in pedagogy impede the movement toward

centralization. In the college we call Chasm College, the college was trying to run

all student services through a Learning Center so that there would be some

semblance of consistency — "you want to give the Learning Center its due so

you don't have people all over the place." But support from a TRIO program was

an outlier: "It took us years to get them not to do tutoring, which was actually to

give them [students] the answers, and to have the tutors be trained through the

Learning Center." This was a story of barriers to centralization and coordination,

but it reinforces the sense that in many cases tutoring uses remedial pedagogy to

provide students help with finding the correct answers, instead of leading them

to understand the material in any deeper way.

In some cases, perhaps not surprisingly, these divisions emerge among

different student services: In the college we call Sable Mountain, the Writing

Center talks about ideas about language while the Reading lab is concerned

wholly with skills and drill on sub-skills, the 5-paragraph essay, and other mechanical approaches to reading. For struggling students, the differences in approaches to reading and writing may be confusing, even if observers can understand them as two poles of instructional approaches.

A second dimension of pedagogy involves the distinction between laissez-faire approaches and what some instructors describe as "intrusive" student services. For tutoring, this manifests itself as the difference between tutors who wait for students to come to them with their problems — in which case the student sets the agenda for the instructional encounter — and instructors who direct or require students to avail themselves of specific services (for example, by establishing a course requirement), in which case the instructor sets the agenda. If students were sophisticated about their own needs and motivated to use the full range of services — as the "over-achievers" are — then the laissez-faire approach would appear to be student centered. But in circumstances where students are poorly informed about services available, have no incentives to do anything coursework-related that is not required, and fail to understand the benefits of using student services — that is, in cases where basic skills students "don't understand how to be college students" — then the more coercive approach is in fact more in the interests of the student.

In addition to voluntary versus required tutoring and Supplemental instruction, the "intrusive" label was applied in one college to their Early Alert system: "We do this intrusively — we call them on the phone, and the peer

mentors call them — it's much more effective." Guidance and counseling can

also be labeled "intrusive" — or "invasive" or "assertive" or "appreciative": as

one adjunct math instructor described her ideal setting for basic math students,

> We should put this into a big learning community effort, and where the leaning communities are is integrated curriculum, assertive or invasive counseling, intrusive . . . It's a horrible name, but a counselor that's there in the classroom: "Let's see what you got on this test. Oh you didn't do very well. What's going on with you?" That kind of counseling. It's something we try to do as instructors, but it's impossible when we have 50 students or more.

Or, as another counselor described it, intrusive counseling is "trying to answer

the questions students would ask if students knew what to ask"[v] —

acknowledging that what one might call laissez-faire counseling, where students

come with their own questions, may not be as effective as "intrusive" counseling.

To be sure, the whole idea of "intrusive" student services is controversial: if

faculty believe that "they're adults — I'm not babysitting", then "intrusive"

services seems inappropriate. But if, as the majority of faculty feel, most basic

skills students "are not ready to be college students", then more intrusive

services are appropriate as part of teaching them how college students ought to

behave — including seeking out support services when they need them.

Third, the pedagogy of student services is very much a function of the

personnel who deliver these services, and the kinds of training they have

received. Not surprisingly, the training programs we observed for tutors vary

substantially. At one extreme, peer tutors are often recruited from the students

who have passed a course for which they are to be a tutor, and they are given

little more than on-the-job training. In other cases, tutors are required to have higher-level preparation in the subject they will be tutoring, as in one college that required all math tutors to have passed calculus — although this guarantees subject matter mastery, not mastery of pedagogical alternatives. Another problem is that content mastery does not guarantee that tutors will be able to understand the dilemmas of developmental students; as one tutoring specialist said, "If you hired someone who assessed at college level reading, they can't necessarily identify with the struggling student. . . those really low level students, they need that — they need somebody who understands what it's like." Another tutor commented that "It's the same for writing — I have students who can write a stellar paper and then a [developmental] student comes in and there's no connectivity between the two — they can talk about Shakespeare, but can you talk with a [developmental] student about a thesis statement or a paragraph?" In this case, the tutoring specialists claim that "we address it in the initial training — we make them aware that their thinking speed is not the students' thinking speed", with role playing and other techniques to get them to see the position of developmental students. But in the absence of the appropriate training, advanced students do not necessarily make appropriate peer tutors.

In still other cases — and the training for SI tutors is a clear case in point — the training includes more extensive preparation in alternative forms of instruction including discussions, the "Socratic method" of leading students to their own conclusions through questions, and the different perspectives students

28

might come to class with. In the college we call Mindano, tutors must take a 2-unit on-line class, with "lots of worthy topics — it provides the tutor a venue to thinking about how they are going to tutor, rather than just going in and tutoring"; such courses are typically designed to present a variety of approaches to tutoring so that helping students to find the right answers is not the only option. Instructors for Student Success courses often come from the counseling faculty, and they are generally trained for personal or crisis counseling, not in conventional teaching methods; similarly, counselors often follow an approach to career counseling which can be summarized as "test 'em and tell 'em" — or giving students interest inventories, then identifying the two or three occupations that seem best to suit their interests and personalities, and finally informing them of the requirements for these occupations. So aside from special cases like SI tutoring and certain forms of tutor training, there's not much deliberation about what kinds of training student services personnel should have.

Ideally (as in Figure 4.1), classroom instruction and student services should have a two-way relationship: instructors in part determine what happens in various services, and even (at Chaffey) conduct some of the workshops and tutoring sessions; and in turn student services personnel provide information back to instructors about what has happened there, what student strengths and weaknesses are. But in practice both of these links are likely to be weak *unless* a college has taken steps (as Chaffey has) to maintain a two-way set of

communications. Instead, each may operate in isolation from the other. Even in

Mindano College, which has been trying to centralize its student services,

> the students who are leading those [basic skills] workshops are supposed
> to contact the instructor once a week. Supposed to — — I have to get on
> them a lot to do that. The problem is also so much harder in math 13 and
> the math 46 level because we have multiple sections of these courses, and
> most of the these courses are taught by part-time instructors, and you
> don't even have a way to communicate with part-time instructors.

In such cases neither tutors nor students themselves — particularly basic skills

and evening students — have no way to contact instructors. In all too many

cases, therefore, the potential two-way connection between classroom instruction

and student services becomes weakened. The result is two independent sources

of instruction to students who themselves have to make sense of the overlapping

and conflicting information.

Finally, we note that many student supports, including writing and math

labs, use various forms of computer-assisted instruction, and a project all its own

would be to investigate how tutoring centers use technology. Many of them use

computer-based programs for drill and practice — returning to the use of

remedial pedagogy that we have found so prevalent with computer-based

programs in the classroom. In some cases, however, there is an explicit rationale

that routine drill can take place on self-paced computer programs, freeing up the

time of tutoring specialists for more difficult and non-routine problems. As a

division of labor between computer-based and in-person tutoring, this makes a

certain amount of sense. But in the college we call Mindano, this ended up

working poorly for two very different reasons. One was that the reading lab, with its use of computer-based vocabulary drill to take the pressure off the instructor, "doesn't sync up" because there were 5 instructors sending students to one lab, and "They would all have to be on the same page for us [instructors] to sync up with them." In addition, they found that the relatively independent work on computer-based programs did not achieve what they wanted:

> We're finding that a lot of students who are in that special group, that they need more interaction. Independent study doesn't work for them because these are people who don't have the skills to begin to know how to organize their time and how to find an idea. . . Because they are not strong readers, to give them instructions in writing is not hitting what I felt was the importance of the whole situation [that they were supposed to analyze in a reading passage].

This was a long argument that, at least for the most basic students, the impersonality of a computer-based program did not work, and the programs could not diagnose what problems they were having — and so the presumed efficiency of drill-based computer programs was in the end undermined. A more comprehensive examination of the uses of technology in student services, as well as in the classroom, is warranted, but our examples suggest that the impersonality and drill orientation of most computer-based programs undermine their effectiveness for many developmental students — except possibly for students needing brush-up or those intensely embarrassed by the stigma of attending remedial classes.

And so we have a series of factors that contribute to a continuation of remedial pedagogy: a lack of training that would provide alternative approaches;

direction by faculty who themselves practice remedial pedagogy in their own classrooms; the interests of students themselves, who are often fixated on getting the right answers rather than engaging in more extensive learning; the short and informal nature of most contacts in student services, where the time necessary to establish an enduring personal relationship is lacking; the use of computer-based programs for continued drill and practice. Of course, none of these factors are necessary, and some colleges — Chaffey is again the conspicuous example — have been trying to develop student services with a very different model, with longer contacts between tutors and students, a greater use of Supplementary Instruction and other approaches that stress the student's active role. But unless college are mindful of the pedagogy of student services, they are all too likely to revert to remedial approaches.

IV. DIMENSIONS OF COMPETITION BETWEEN INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SERVICES

The underlying theory of action of student services is that they are complements to classroom instruction, places where students can come for supplementary help with academic tasks. But all too often, we found, student services are in competition with regular instruction, and the possibilities for congruence and complementarity are instead replaced by division and discord. We therefore sought out reasons why this should be so common.

In several ways student services and classroom instruction compete for the time of students. In one college, an adjunct faculty member complained of a difference between adjunct and full-time faculty: the adjunct faculty would refer students to tutoring and workshops, since they had no office hours in which to help students; but the full-time faculty would not because "they don't want others to interfere, and they think they can do a better job of explaining the material than tutors can." An individual hired as a basic skills counselor began her work by visiting classes to announce her services,

> but it became very obvious that every second they had with those students was precious, and my coming into the classroom meant that was taking away some of that time.

This sense of competition, and of instruction being superior to support services, is particularly true where there are pedagogical differences between classroom instruction and tutoring or workshops: in such cases instructors are likely not to refer students to support services at all. And of course there are the usual divisions around money and territory: any addition to the student services budget is perceived to come from the instructional budget and vice versa, and — particularly in a period of tight budgets — different divisions of a college are in competition with one another for resources. One faculty member said, about a Learning Center, "I think it's just, 'this is my territory. We don't want faculty in here' ", so that one of the strongest mechanisms for integrating instruction and student services — the presence of tutors in classes, and of faculty in tutoring centers — was thwarted by territoriality. Yet other problems seem to reflect a

lack of communication between student services and instruction: one student services staffer complained that "they [instructors} don't know what we do", with the implicit statement that they don't care enough to find out. When student services are marginalized, as they are for various structural reasons we examine below, then again they may find themselves in competition for institutional attention and status as well as funding and student time.

Competition may be exacerbated by the way college administrations have used student services in the past few years. In many colleges we visited, a substantial amount of Basic Skills Initiative funds have been spent on student services, including training for tutors, while — as usual — much less has been spent to improve instructional practice.[vi] Our perception of this pattern is that support services are being used as a substitute for improvements in instruction, which are difficult to achieve in any event and may involve "intrusive" policies like professional development for faculty. On the contrary, adding student support involves simply spending additional funds on one or another of the many services listed in the first section of this Working Paper; it's consistent with the pattern of "progammitis", or adding little programs as a form of innovation, rather than reshaping important institutional practices (as, for example, Chaffey College did in creating four Student Success Centers to house most student services). If instead student services were seen as complementary to classroom instruction, then one would expect to see investment in *both* student services and instructional improvement, and would expect to see more efforts to cultivate the

cooperation we examine below. But the focus on student services from new funds suggests that they are being used as an easier substitute for the more difficult task of reforming instruction.

In addition, there are perceived differences in philosophy that create barriers between student services and regular instruction, as well as the differences in pedagogy. Instructors sometimes perceive student service personnel as defending the rights of students no matter what the situation is, and trying to pass them through to completion with less attention to what they have learned; often counselors see themselves as advocates for students — not facilitators of learning. On the contrary, faculty see themselves as the protector of standards, in the long-run interest of the students. As one math faculty member complained,

> The counselor's got a completely different goal than we do. Counselors want the students to get in, get a C, and get gone. We want a student to get in and thrive, go through a program, and actually do mathematics and not just slide out with a C. Because if they get a C in one course, they probably won't pass the next.

In another college, student services personnel complained about a lack of faculty support in general, but particularly from an "elitist" English department that set standards too high. On their part, the members of the department justified their actions, again, as being in the longer-run interests of students

> If my [English] 99 is more challenging that other instructor's 99s, it is really to prepare them for 101, and we are very proud of the rigor of our courses because we know that the students who go on to university environments know that they have a solid foundation.

But again, more than the knotty question of "rigor" was at stake because of a

difference in pedagogy and what tutors were trying to accomplish:

> The way that the tutors are trained, they're really trained to be more of a sounding board for students — to ask questions of the students — rather than to provide what would to many minds seems like more direct assistance. The Leaning Centers seemingly wants to set up almost a private-like doctor-patient kind of relationship between the tutor and the student with the instructor being this odd kind of satellite off to the side, which we [instructors] see as very odd because most of our understanding of tutorial assistance is to assist faculty with their students' responses to assignments. And so it seems to be a bit skewed where the Learning Center sees itself. . . as kind of leading the charge, then we're supposed to kind of adapt ourselves to its rules and approaches.

In other words, faculty saw the roles of tutors as homework assistance, while the

tutoring center was trying to establish a more student-centered approach to

tutoring; the division was exacerbated because classroom instructors have little

or no experience with the techniques involved in academic support. The result

was rancor and charges of "elitism", rather than any sense of the two working as

complements.

Similarly, in yet another college we call Parson, there was both a tutoring

center and a Writing Center, but the latter was poorly connected to the English

Department so it was unclear how students would find the Writing Center —

"students would have to come on their own", commented one student services

staff member. The tutoring center focused almost entirely on grammatical issues,

with a Skills Bank of exercises and practices described by an English faculty as

"awful"; indeed, staff working there had to pass a grammar test before being

hired. So differences in approach and pedagogy, once again, created distance among departments that might otherwise have worked together.

In the college we call Southern Metro, there has been a long period of uncertainty about centralization and decentralization. There, a developmental communications department vies for students with a Learning Resources Center. As a member of the developmental communications department reminisced,

> Before I got there, they were together, and so then I joined the department, and when I joined it was apart, then they joined, and they split again, and they joined and split, there's been several splits depending on the president coming in, the flavor of the day, whether we should be together or not. And I think we work better together.

Despite centripetal forces and widespread evidence of divisions between support services and conventional instruction, the buzzwords of the moment are cooperation and integration — in contrast to decentralized "silos." But integration has several inconsistent meanings. One of them is providing students with complete information about services available, and then allowing students to find their way to the appropriate services; this of course will not work if "students don't how to be college students." A second meaning involves sharing personnel between student services and conventional instruction, for example when adjunct faculty participate in tutoring and workshops in tutoring centers, or when tutors (especially Supplementary Instruction tutors) attend classes to be sure of consistency between instruction and services. A third conception has led to the development of one-stop centers centralizing all student services, so that students can find all services in one location; in some cases the personnel

working in such centers are cross-trained so that they can perform multiple roles. And yet a fourth conception is that developed by Chaffey College, where workshops are provided by instructors, tutors work under the direction of instructors, Supplemental Instruction is tied to specific courses with tutors attending all classes, and the ethos of student services is that they are activities that all successful students undertake, not just basic skills students or those in academic trouble. So it's important to be careful of claims about "integration" since the meaning of the word and the associated practices vary so much.

Consistency between regular instruction and student support services is surely a goal to move toward. Otherwise the "quadrangle of instruction" depicted in Figure 4.1 turns into two independent triangles of instruction, one focused on conventional classroom instruction and the second emphasizing the roster of student support services. But cooperation and integration are difficult goals to achieve: they require institutional direction to accomplish, not the laissez-faire policies of many colleges.

V. THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Conceptually, we might take each of the support services mentioned in Section I and subject them to further analysis. In most cases, this would simply be redundant, and lead to the kinds of conclusions that we have drawn in previous sections, about student and instructor use and pedagogical differences.

But guidance and counseling are different, both in their ambitions in serving students and in the kinds of roles they play within colleges — particularly the "gatekeeper" role in directing students to different courses of study. So it's worth being more specific about guidance and counseling, as one of the central support services.

Guidance and counseling play several roles in community colleges.[vii] First and foremost, they are part of the matriculation process, when new students come to the college for the first time and establish their educational plans and their programs of study for the next few years. For basic skills students, part of the initial contact is an assessment test, followed by advice on the sequence of developmental courses that a student should take. For students who fall behind in their coursework, or who flunk a certain number of courses, counselors may emerge again as part of an Early Alert process or probationary system. And of course students may revisit their early choices of direction and major, and wind up seeing counselors several times before they decide on a major. So counselors play important roles, not in providing support for the cognitive dimensions of a college education, but in helping students plan for their educational and (sometimes) their occupational futures.

For basic skills students, who often arrive at college without educational plans, or with only the most amorphous ideas of what they need to do, this role of counseling is particularly important. As one counselor explained,

If a student wants to make an ed plan, they can make an appointment with a counselor and then they can do one. But otherwise they're just planning for next semester's courses which can be very detrimental to math or science majors because they have so many prerequisites to take and so many classes — a little shortsighted [not to have a plan].

Another noted that the advice counselors give is part of "being a college student": "Some students need help because navigating the educational system is not something they've had experience with." Certainly the offerings in a typical community college are much more varied and complex than in high school, and the appropriate paths are even more opaque when the long series of developmental courses are considered.

But there are many limits to guidance and counseling. One, right off the bat, is that the resources in counseling are low, and probably dwindling. In one college there were only 6 counselors for 14,000 students, and the number was being reduced to 4 because of budget cuts. In other colleges the ratios were better, but not by much. One college was moving to on-line counseling because of the lack of resources; while this may seem like an appropriate efficiency measure, it also eliminates the personal contact that, most basic skills practitioners agree, is necessary to help students develop and complete their programs. Indeed, as one college was moving toward on-line counseling for fiscal reasons, another college in our sample was eliminating on-line offerings because they found them ineffective.

The result of shortages of counselors is that — particularly at the beginning of the semester when matriculation takes place — meetings with

counselors are rushed: "It's basically been an assembly-line process", said an instructor in Southern Metro college. Another noted that "students will formulate life plans in 15 - 30 minutes, which is a joke, to me anyway" because of the lack of time from counselors.

A second problem is a variant of one we have already examined: the students most in need of counseling and guidance don't show up. In one institution, the counselors were quite uniform in asserting that " most students don't do a plan — only a few in special programs do." One of them went on to clarify that the pressure students feel to get on with coursework and credit accumulation — rather than taking a course in career planning, or other Student Success courses — is part of the problem:

> People don't want guidance. People want to get on with it, even though we can show them all kinds of statistics. . . What I'd like to tell them is that this is what all the smart kids knew about in high school, that you didn't know, that I didn't know. So you can find it out on your own, two years from now, or you can take a guidance class.

 This is similar to the ethic at Chaffey, which is that student support services are for all students, and that successful students know they should utilize such services.

A third issue is that there is a tremendous amount of negative talk about counselors from instructors, particularly with respect to their knowledge about basic skills courses — almost no one holds counselors in high regard. A common complaint is that they just don't know enough about the sequence of courses to help students find the right courses; as a developmental English instructor noted,

"They [students] do not know enough [to place into the right class}, and the counselors are useless as far as advising goes. The counselors don't know, and we try to teach them but [it doesn't work]" — with the result that students find themselves in different courses partly by happenstance. In yet another college, the tension between instruction and student services was partly due to the fact that "the counselors will not change their way of doing things", and the small number of counselors could not handle the overwhelming numbers of students, so an on-line program was the "only alternative."

It's unclear what it means when faculty complain that "counselors will not change their way of doing things", but one of the constant issues in counseling is the dominant use of the trait-and-factor approach to assessment and advice. This involves administering interest inventories and then providing information about the occupations and educational trajectories that seem to fit students' interests. But this approach to counseling — as distinct from "intrusive" counseling, "asking the questions students should ask if they knew what to ask" — is very often another form of information transfer, passing on information about various occupations before it is clear that this is the path that a student wants to follow. In the process, counselors implicitly assume that decisions about educational pathways and career trajectories are readily made once students have full information about the alternatives available. But decision-making proves to be a much more complex process, involving uncertainties about what students prefer, complex calculations of probabilities

and preferences over time, and (unavoidably, it seems) dimensions of non-rational decision-making.[viii] A semester-long course in career alternatives might enable students to grapple with these complexities, but a 15-minute appointment with a counselor surely will not.

Perhaps as a result, students by and large have negative perceptions of counselors. In our small sample of 15 students, a disproportionate number made negative comments about counselors. One called them "rude and rushed", no doubt referring to the problem that counselors are overloaded at the beginning of semesters when students are trying to think what classes to take. Several mentioned that they were given unhelpful or bad advice; one commented that a counselor had a "bad attitude", and was just there to get paid. In many cases, we know from both students and faculty, counselors advise students to take their general education requirements, hoping that during these courses students find something of interest; for this particular student, the counselor gave him a sheet of paper with gen ed requirements, but this didn't provide him any sense of what courses to take over the long run. Others complained about the amount of time it took to get appointments with counselors: "I would have to, you know, wait in line like for an hour at admissions to ask like one question that took like a minute…it's up to your mindset, like how strongly you feel about college, like how much time you're gonna waste to actually know things." Others complained about being directed to a website, or about the lack of information counselors had about specific occupations: "I wish they knew more about the

different occupations 'cuz it's sometimes, like, when I don't know some stuff about what I need to go for and they don't know about it, it's like we're sitting there researching it together, which isn't really helpful. I wish they knew more than I did so that I could come in there, get the help, and just move on." Of fifteen students we interviewed, 3 had positive comments about counselors including two where counselors were assigned to a particular learning community, a common technique for getting counselors more familiar with programs; 6 had negative comments, and 6 had not yet had any contact with counselors. These numbers are small, but they are consistent with the comments from instructors themselves.

There are, to be sure, ways of getting around the general weakness of guidance and counseling. One is to attend Student Success courses that are devoted to formulating educational plans and occupational objectives; these provide a substantial amount of time to develop both knowledge about the alternatives available and to explore different dimensions of decision-making — although some students resist these courses, as we have noted, as being unrelated to accumulating appropriate credits for graduation or transfer. Furthermore, one study has found student success courses to increase degree completion and transfer in Florida (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, and Calcagno 2008), another found positive effects in Virginia (Cho, 2010), and a third found positive effects of Student Success courses specifically in guidance (Barr, 2011). Chaffey College has developed the position of Apprentice Counselor, with students

completing degrees in counseling, social work, psychology, or sociology trained to perform counseling roles, as a way around the lack of funding for counselors. In other settings, counselors are assigned to academic departments, or even to developmental courses, so they become more knowledgeable about the range of courses available and appropriate sequences. Another tactic is to assign counselors to learning communities, where they can get to know students better and learn more about the future options of individuals in the learning communities. Some colleges with extensive work-based learning have used on-the-job experiences to help students formulate what they want out of potential occupations and which ones might suit them.

At the positive extreme, Valencia Community College in Florida has developed a programs of counseling called Lifemap — "Life's a journey; you'll need a map" — with five stages in a student's college trajectory: the transition from high school; the introduction to college, for students just starting out; the period of progression toward the degree; the period of completing degrees and then planning either to transfer or to work; and a stage of lifelong learning, after leaving college. A variety of student services and counseling are available for each of these stages, and the entire process is clearly developmental, matching a student's stage in college with services appropriate to that stage.[ix]

Of course instructors provide counseling, especially in their own subject areas; one mentioned, "I wish that I got paid for all the counseling I do — I'd be a millionaire!", and went on to mention the variety of counseling she used with her

students. (However, we note that programs that require instructors to provide more counseling have often failed because of the variety of faculty and their perceptions about what their roles in counseling should be.) But without one or another of these innovations, a great deal of guidance involves counselors who don't have enough time with each student, who tend to provide little more than information, and who often lack information relevant to the specific trajectory that student might want to follow.

Guidance and counseling are important for all students, not just basic skills students: Students frequently complain that high school has not prepared them to think about the alternatives they face, and many students — the so-called "experimenters" — come to community college in order to find something they are interested in.[x] It seems particularly important for students directed to developmental courses, partly since the long sequence of basic skills courses may appear a waste of time unless someone — a counselor, perhaps an instructor — clarifies why such courses are necessary. As one student complained, "Sometimes I like ask myself, why am I here? Like, why do I need to be here [in basic skills courses]? I should be out, like, hands on or something. I don't need to be sitting here wasting my time on these essays that have nothing to do with nursing" — her occupational goal. So if colleges do not develop services that can provide answers to students' questions about future options — the goal of both academic and career counseling — students are left to drift with basic questions about their futures unanswered.

VI. THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENT SERVICES

Student services suffer from some problems which affect regular instruction less. Prime among them is the issue of funding. In most states the vast majority of funding for community colleges comes from funds generated on the basis of full-time enrollment, so instructors who teach extra sections of courses generate enrollment that in turn pay for their costs, while student services personnel do not generate additional enrollment and state reimbursements. At the margin, institutions can be quite precise about the kinds of courses and the classroom enrollments that pay their own way, in the sense that additional revenues from the state plus tuition generate at least as much revenue as the additional costs required. But this means that services and programs, like support services, that do not enhance enrollment and revenue streams are vulnerable to being cut; as one instructor noted,[xi]

> You can justify anything that has return dollars in the other [revenue]column. But faculty development [or student support] is like planting seeds, and you do not necessarily have a measureable, observable harvest.

However, student services serve students who are already enrolled in a college; in terms of a revenue-based benefit-cost analysis based on enrollment-driven funding, they generate costs but not additional revenues. Only in the situation where funding is contingent upon completion, *and* student services contribute to

completion, can student services be justified under this kind of calculation. So the funding of student services is precarious, and these services are the first to be cut in times of fiscal stringency. Indeed, in the colleges we visited, we heard many stories of cuts to student services including guidance and counseling — proof that support services are always under fiscal pressure. In other places student services have come and gone, under different names, as they are increased in boom times and cut back in recessions. But boom-and-bust funding is not a good way to make *sustained* reforms over time, as we saw in Working Paper 3 on innovations, so the ability of student services funded in this way to make steady improvements in practice is eclipsed by funding realities.

A second structural element in student services stems from the large number of adjunct faculty used in community colleges. One problem this raises is the issue of communicating information to students: adjuncts who have time for little more than their own teaching are unlikely to be well-informed about the array of student services, especially on campuses where multiple services are poorly organized. In addition, some of the best-integrated systems of student support rely on classroom instructors who provide workshops and designs for Supplementary Instruction. But adjuncts do not participate in making these connections between regular instruction and student services. In the terms of Figure 4.1, this means that the potential connection between instructors and support services is weakened, and consistency between the two is likely to be undermined. The alternative, of course, is for colleges to pay adjuncts for

participating in student services, as for example Chaffey College has — but this is a rare exemplar.

Finally, the problem of evaluating student services is much more difficult than even the problem of evaluating other innovations in developmental education. Tracking students is a problem, as they use student services and then move out of such services; at one college with a remedial system for students who GPAs fell below 2.0, , the tracking mechanisms weren't good enough to distinguish between success and failure:

> About half of them in any given semester get back in good standing, or disappear — we really don't know which. And the other half wind up going into the second semester [of the remedial program], and it's getting worse. By the time we have them hooked up to a counselor, it's already downhill.

So the lack of longitudinal data, provided in time to do the students some good, is a barrier to the working of this and other kinds of Early Alert systems.

There has been relatively little evaluation of student services, aside the three studies mentioned above on the success of various Student Success courses. One problem is data: many colleges have fine data on enrollment, since enrollment drives state funding; but they have poor data on participation in student services since that is *not* required for state funding, and since collecting data on all the small kinds of student services, and on the intensity or duration of services, is difficult. But the evaluation problem is more difficult too, because of the substantial evidence that only the best and most motivated students show up in student services — as we argued in the second section of this working paper.

Without considering the possibility that these "over-achievers" are responsible for any positive effects of support services, it is difficult to know how to interpret any effects. So, particularly where support services have to demonstrate their effects on course pass rates and progress through college to justify their funding, it becomes difficult to support student services, especially the great variety that some colleges strive for.

In the end, many of the fundamental characteristics of community colleges have combined to make student services a difficult area. On the one hand, because of the nature of the colleges as an open-door college, many students come with a range of cognitive and non-cognitive deficiencies, including the fact that they "don't know how to be college students." (Even where colleges like Chaffey and Mindano have tried to get away from deficiency language, by stressing that that seeking support "is what all successful students do," there is no denying that some students need support much more than others.) Responding to these needs, and trying to teach all students "how to be college students", is surely the right response to these corollaries of being open-enrollment institutions.

But, on the other hand, other structural dimensions of many colleges have contributed to the peripheral status of support services. The tendency of colleges to be laissez-faire institutions, making minimal demands on students and faculty alike, means that the use of support services in most colleges is voluntary, with the neediest students least likely to participate and many faculty reluctant to

force students to go. The domination of remedial pedagogy has seeped into student services as well, particularly in guidance and counseling aimed at information transfer and in tutoring — partly because this is what most instructors feel is the appropriate pedagogy for developmental education, and partly because students are under the greatest pressure to get the right answers to pass their tests and course requirements, to get the appropriate credits, to make progress toward their eventual goals. The separation of instruction from student services — reinforced in most colleges by a bureaucratic division between the two — has put the two in competition with one another, and indeed, we sometimes suspect that services are being used as substitutes for rather than complements to instruction. So other structural dimensions of community colleges, aside from the issues of funding, adjunct instructors, and data and evaluation noted in the beginning of this section, contribute to undermining the effectiveness of support services. The structural conditions have both made support services more important, and undermined the effectiveness of those services.

Following the example of Chaffey College, it is not difficult to see what might be done to improve student services — in effect, to undo the structural conditions which have put support services in such a difficult quandary. One would be — as we argue further in Working Paper 11 — to move away from the model of a laissez-faire college toward one in which there are more demands on students to participate in such services under the rationale that "this is what all

successful students do." This would also help de-stigmatize student services, to minimize the possibility that stereotype threat operates to make students less willing to take advantage of services being offered. Another would be to eliminate the division between instruction and student services that is so common, not merely by erasing the bureaucratic split, but by making sure (as in Chaffey) that faculty direct most aspects of student services including tutoring, short specific Workshops, Supplemental Instruction, and the array of Student Success efforts that "teach students how to be college students." A third would be address the limitations of remedial pedagogy head on — as, for example, Supplemental Instruction has with its insistence that tutors not act simply to deliver students the right answers, but rather that they guide students in discussions out of which their own answers emerge, or in tutor training that again alerts tutors to the range of possible ways they can work with students. And the complications of student services in an institution with so many adjuncts can be overcome by making sure that part-time faculty can participate in all support services, for example by paying them for participating in workshops and Supplemental Instruction.

All of these steps require challenging conventional practices and norms of community colleges. But the results might be, as at Chaffey College, the development of student support services that live up to their promises of complementing classroom instruction, and making the entire developmental education enterprise more effective.

Figure 1: The Instructional Quadrangle
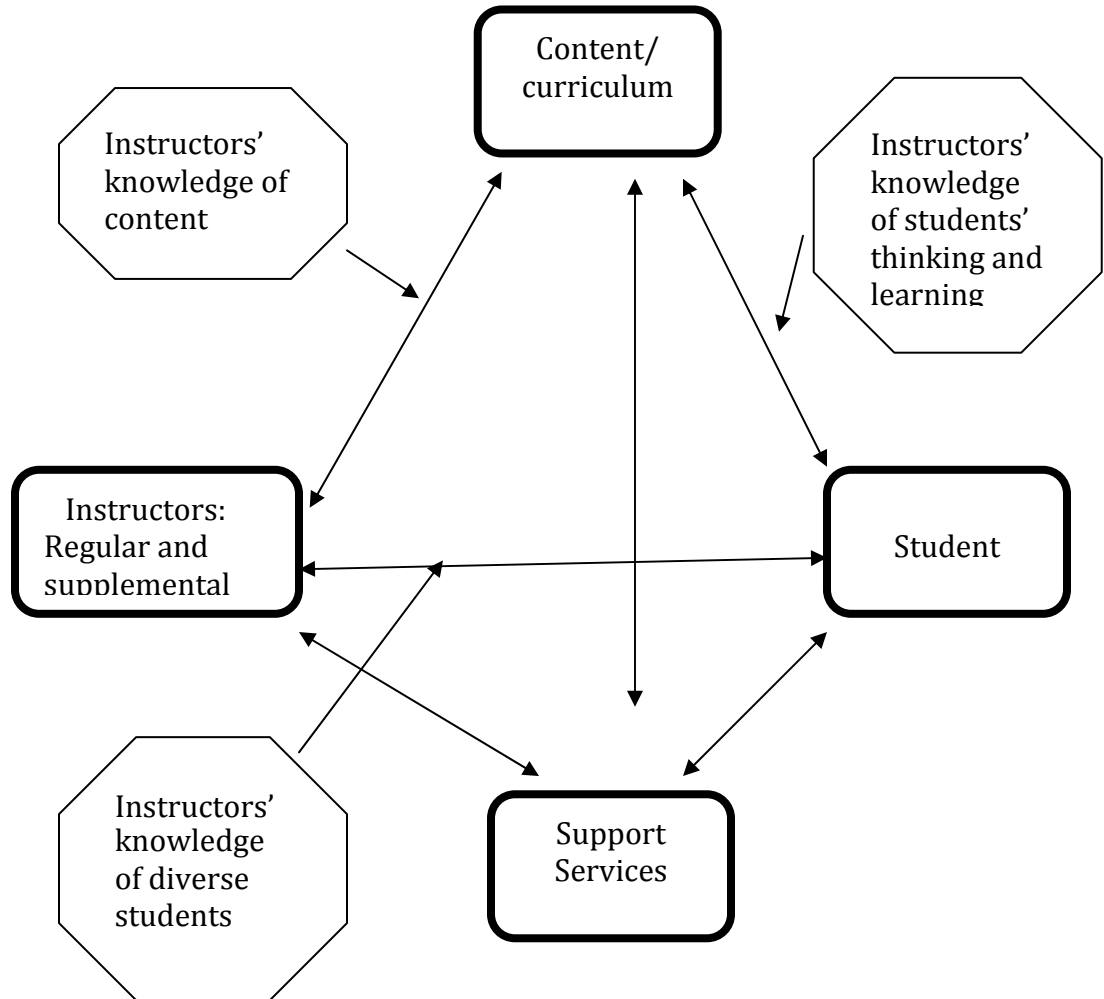
FOOTNOTES

[i] Colleges intended to spend up to 37% of their 2010-11 Basic Skills Initiative funding on supplemental instruction and tutoring and on professional development, providing substantial funding in many cases for tutor training. Data come from Mark Wade Lieu, Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges.

[ii] See Cox (2010) on the ways that students economize on time spent if they think that a task is not directly related to their grade or credit.

[iii] For a similar argument see Karp, O'Gara, and Hughes (2008).

[iv] Some of this is a data problem: most colleges do not collect good data on which students use student services. However, Chaffey has a check-in system where students use their student ID cards every time they use any service — so there are quite precise statistics on who uses student services how often.

[v] This quote comes from a study of counselors in 16 college across the country; see Grubb (2006), p. 211. See pp. 206, 210 - 211 on intrusive counseling. It's noteworthy that the same language emerged in two different studies.

[vi] In figures from the Chancellor's Office provided by Mark Wade Lieu, colleges intended to spend 51.7% of their 2010-2011 BSI funding on advisement, counseling, supplemental instruction and tutoring, while spending only about half that — 27.7% — on categories related to instructional change.

[vii] See Grubb (2006) for another analysis of guidance and counseling, based on a national sample of 16 colleges.

[viii] For the complexity of decision-making even in the conventional model of maximizing expected present value, see Grubb (2002). A recent branch of economics called behavioral economics has confirmed that decision-makers make "irrational" decisions in consistent ways; see, for example, Jabbar (2011) for an introduction to behavioral economics and its applications to education.

[ix] See Grubb (2006) for these various exemplars of guidance and counseling.

[x] On experimenters see Grubb and Associates (1999), pp. 4 – 7; Manski (1989).

[xi] Grubb and Associates (1999), p. 328. This instructor was talking about how faculty development is peripheral and vulnerable to funding cutbacks, but the logic is precisely the same for student services.

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