Our #1 priority is the academic success and safety of our students and staff. We will maximize student success by mirroring traditional learning center services with alternative service delivery methods, social distancing measures, and rigorous cleaning protocols.

Elizabeth Coghill, EdD
Director, Pirate Academic Success Center
Succeeding in a Climate of Change

COVID-19’s impact on college life and academics leave students questioning how they can succeed in new online environments. Staying on track in their majors and timely graduation is a hurdle for all students, especially those who are academically at risk in the most “perfect” circumstances. The Pirate Academic Success Center (PASC) at East Carolina University (ECU) has served the ECU student community for over 12 years, establishing a reputation for successful, innovative high impact learning supports. Last year the PASC served 6,702 individual students with 52,733 service visits. The highest frequency of student usage of tutoring was in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, averaging 70% of annual tutoring visits.

Before COVID, PASC services were already a combination of face to face and digital supports. Our plan for 2020 builds on the success of past academic years. Focusing efforts on the highest student usage areas, we will employ digital platforms and high impact engagement activities to ensure tutoring and success services continue to address the needs of enrolled students on the ECU campus.

Services Overview

Our plan will maximize student success by mirroring traditional services with alternative delivery methods for both tutoring services and success services. Regardless of staff teleworking status or in person work schedules, Microsoft Teams will be utilized for all tutoring appointments, study groups, test reviews, success coaching and study skills.

_Tutoring services will continue to offer 135 course offerings with a blend of virtual delivery platforms and scheduling systems._ The approach will be twofold:
1) THRIVE model: The highest demand courses (based on AY 19-20 student usage) will be supported through virtual appointments scheduled through PASC staff. Tutors will work from the main center and will meet tutees on the TEAMS platform. Tutors for these courses will conduct test reviews and study groups on TEAMS and publish course support videos on CANVAS. In addition, student enrollments in these courses will be contacted regularly by call center staff for maximum service usage. See THRIVE model description, p.15.

Courses supported in main center:

- Accounting 2101, 2401, 2521
- Biology 1050, 1100, 1200, 2130, 2140, 2150
- Chemistry 1120, 1130, 1150, 1160, 2750, 2760
- Physics 1250, 1260
- Psychology 1000

2) Used to provide weekend and afterhours tutoring services, the Tutor Matching Service platform will support the fourteen course areas listed below. Tutor Matching Services has been utilized by PASC since 2018 and provides PASC badged tutors for ECU students with the first $200 of tutoring free when using their ECU email.

Courses supported exclusively on Tutor Matching Service:

- Anthropology
- Computer Science
- Economics
- French
- Geography
- Geology
- German
- Sociology
- History
- Mathematics
- Nutrition
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religious Studies
- Russian
- Spanish
Success Services will be delivered utilizing a hybrid of delivery options:

1) COAD 1000 instruction for learning community students will be a blend of Face to Face 1 day per week with ½ class in center each day, and on the “off” day a blend of synchronous live stream into class and asynchronous video and discussion board posts.

2) Success Coaching (mentoring) will be conducted on the TEAMS platform. Virtual Appointments will be held weekly with the Success Coach coming to center and meeting via TEAMS with their mentee. These sessions will be documented for student usage and session reporting.

3) COAD and workshop presentations will be virtual live presentations. PASC staff will join classes virtually, providing a tour of center and presentation. Videos will be sent upon request.

4) Study Skills services provided by professional staff members will be by individual appointment conducted on TEAMS.

5) The Connect for Success Call Center will be conducted with student staff working in designated center offices.

Services Timeline

- Monday, July 13: PASC professional staff return with alternating schedules
- Monday, August 3: Student staff start date
- Week of August 3-7: Tutor Training on TEAMS
- Week of August 3-7: Success Coach Training on TEAMS
- Monday, August 10: Classes start BLOCK 1 and Full Term
- Monday, August 17: Tutoring appointments start
- Monday, August 17: Success Coaching appointments start
- Wednesday, August 19: Study Groups begin
Monday, September 7  Labor Day – no center services
Friday, September 25  Final Exam Prep sessions
Monday, September 28  Final Exams for Block 1
Tuesday, September 29  Classes end Block 1
Wednesday, September 30  No Center Services, ECU Fall Festival
Monday, October 5  Tutoring appointments start Block 2
Wednesday, October 7  Study Groups start Block 2
Thursday, November 13  Success Coaching Ends
Friday, November 13  Final Exam Prep sessions for Block 2 and Full Term
Monday, November 16  Classes end Block 2 and Full Term
November 17 & 18  Final Exams Block 2 and Full Term
Thursday, November 19  Tutoring ends for semester

**Center Operations**

Recognizing the impact COVID social distancing will bring to the PASC, additional changes to center operations are planned. These changes focus on six fundamental modifications in service delivery:

1. Fostering student staff belonging and supervision
2. Maintaining social distancing with student staff “family” units
3. Modifying center spaces, procedures, and equipment for social distancing
4. Exclusively utilizing digital delivery platforms
5. Mirroring PASC services offerings
6. Implementing the PASC’s UNC grant THRIVE model

**Fostering Student Staff Belonging and Supervision**

COVID social distancing and virtual communication affects the way we build and maintain social relationships. Over the past three months, we have been tested by social distancing and have sought connection through chats, WebEx, TEAMS, and video conferencing. For the PASC, the quick transition to virtual delivery for all services and student staff teleworking resulted in a new challenge. How do we engage, develop and
maintain essential team bonds? How do digital environments transform the relationships between staff and student, and students with each other?

Acknowledging the loss of student identity and connectedness to campus under COVID conditions has heightened our concern for the welfare of PASC student employees. This realization prompts PASC staff to consider the effect of teleworking on student delivery of services. If we keep student workers virtual in all capacities, will we be able to develop team identity and belonging? Can we foster the same level of service dedication as traditionally realized by on-campus, in-person, face to face service delivery?

Grappling with these questions, we have returned to what we know about student needs on campus. We know the profound impact feelings of belonging have on student success and campus connection. One of the hallmarks of the PASC has been the ability to emotionally connect with students in meaningful ways. Frequent in person interaction between professional and student staff allows not only for service supervision, it fosters relationship building and belonging. *A primary reason for our choice to have tutors and success coaches serve in-person in the center is the desire to maintain connectivity and engagement between student and professional staff.* Thus, in order to successfully serve other students, PASC peer leaders require our personalized attention, supervision and support.

**Training and Professional Development of Student Staff**

The PASC learning center is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) for tutors and success coaches, levels 1-3. Tutors and success coaches are required to participate in the CRLA certification program and earn a minimum of level 1 certification. CRLA training workshops are facilitated by PASC professional staff and are designed to equip tutors and academic success coaches with the knowledge and skills to assist ECU
students. Normally facilitated in small groups on campus, distancing necessitates digital delivery methods using TEAMS sessions and CANVAS training videos. Our plan is to continue tutor training by blending small group delivery led by staff members on the TEAMS platform. Modeling TEAMS engagement strategies using discussion techniques will maximize interaction and relationship building. Sessions will be held bi-weekly starting in August and will extend to November for all tutoring and success coaching student staff.

Maintaining Social Distancing with Student Staff “Family” Units

For as long as social distancing measures are university mandated, PASC services will be provided through student staff “family” units that consist of the same students working at the same times weekly. This will be employed by both the tutoring and success services areas. Ensuring for the heightened ability to trace exposure, the same tutors or coaches will maintain the same schedules during the week. Professional staff members supervising services will alternate between campus and telework days. While all services will be digital, student staff will work in the center Monday to Thursday, with schedules from 11am to 7pm with breaks for cleaning. See charts below for staffing options. On Fridays, all student staff will telework so that the center can be rigorously cleaned. Professional staff will rotate between teleworking and on campus work and will be paired with the same tutor and success coach units.

Alternating student staff: “Tutor Family” units

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<tr>
<th>Option 1/Monday</th>
<th>A Group</th>
<th>B Group</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>A Group</th>
<th>B Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am-11am</td>
<td>13 Tutors</td>
<td>13 Tutors</td>
<td>10am-11am</td>
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<td>11am - 12pm</td>
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Alternating student staff: “Success Coach Family” units

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<tr>
<th>Monday Group</th>
<th>Tuesday Group</th>
<th>Wednesday Group</th>
<th>Thursday Group</th>
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Modifying Center Procedures, Spaces and Equipment for Social Distancing

Daily Procedures

Keeping student and professional staff safe while providing tutoring and success services requires changes to our normal operating procedures. Among these changes is the daily check in procedures, masks, timecard management, table assignments, food and drink policy, textbooks use and cleaning protocols.

Masks or Face Covering Requirement

Student staff and professional staff will be required to wear a mask when in center spaces. Professional staff may take their mask off when in their offices, and student staff may remove their mask when on TEAMS or recording videos. Once a student leaves their assigned worktable, they must be wearing a mask or face covering. Students who cannot wear masks should contact the PASC director so that alternative working arrangements can be made.

Timecard Management

Student staff will be required to maintain their timecards online using Kronos in PiratePort rather than the center timeclock. Students will be checked in by front desk personnel at the beginning and checked out at the end of their shifts in the ACCUSQL database system.
Table Assignments

Upon entering the center, students will be assigned a worktable and will be provided their work schedule for the day. The table assignment will remain their same work location for the entire semester. On their table will be a touchscreen computer or laptop for hosting TEAMS sessions. Student staff may use their own devices if preferred.

Food and Drink

There will be no food or drinks allowed in the center other than a water bottle for personal use. Students are encouraged to eat prior to work shifts and not to bring in outside items. If vending machines are still accessible, student staff must not bring vending items on the service floors. In compliance with the ECU COVID plan, staff should eat only in their offices and communal dining is prohibited for the semester.

Textbook Use

While an essential tool for tutoring is the course textbook, there is concern regarding the ability to properly clean textbooks for multiple users. Two primary publishers of textbooks used at ECU are providing digital access to the E-text at no charge to the PASC. All tutors will be given access codes so that they can easily access E-text resources. This enables tutors to utilize textbooks digitally and eliminates the need for paper textbooks in the center. Unless enough textbook copies are available to assign to a specific tutor for their use, the PASC textbook inventory will not be available for use by multiple tutors.

Cleaning Protocols

Following each work shift, students will clean their areas with wipes provided by the PASC. After students exit the center, a PASC staff member will clean the workspace one
more time and clean assigned devices prior to a new student’s shift. If using the video recording room, tutors must first reserve the room at least 24 hours in advance. After recording is complete, tutors must notify PASC staff for cleaning before anyone else uses the recording equipment.

Hand sanitizer will be available at entrances, exits, and throughout the center for frequent sanitation. Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands frequently and utilize hand sanitizer often.

Session Reports

Both tutors and success coaches are required to submit session reports at the end of their work shifts. Tutors receive their work schedule for the day and will keep participant attendance on this form. At the end of their shift they will provide email attendance to tutoring@ecu.edu for staff review. Success coaches will provide session reports on RedCap at the end of each session. These reports are reviewed by professional staff daily. All student usage data will be entered and maintained by PASC professional staff in the ACCUSQL database system.

Furniture

Center furniture has been reduced in order to further social distancing efforts in center spaces. The pictures below show 6 feet distance and single chairs at tables in the main center. Tutors will sit at table stations and be provided the necessary computer equipment so that tutoring, and study group sessions can be hosted on the TEAMS platform. Professional staff will be in attendance to ensure adequate supervision of services.
Similarly, the success coaching areas on the first floor have been modified for social distancing measures. Chairs are limited to 1 per table, with a minimum of 6 feet separating student staff. Upholstered furniture has been removed so that only furniture that can be easily cleaned remains. Pictured below are the two areas where success coaches will work.

Lobby chairs have been removed in both the first floor and second floor so that students will not congregate in any center spaces. Sneeze guards will be installed at the North Entrance Welcome Desk and at the Main Center Welcome Desk for staff and student protection. Masks will be worn by all professional and student staff members in center areas.
Personalized Equipment

*Each student staff member will receive a supply kit with equipment for their personal use while providing PASC services.* Student staff supply kits include a headset for TEAMS sessions, pens and markers, cleaning supplies for tables and computer tools, 2 masks, gloves, and their nametag. The kits will be distributed during their first working shift and students will be required to bring their supplies to all work shifts. Similarly, professional staff members will receive individual supply kits for the services they provide. Supply kits include extra masks, boxes of gloves and cleaning supplies, dry erase markers and pens, headsets and technology cleaning cloths. The use of personalized supply kits will significantly minimize the exchange of items between staff members and reduce the transfer of the COVID virus.

Exclusively Utilizing Digital Delivery Platforms

*Regardless of staff teleworking status or in person work schedules, Microsoft TEAMS will be utilized for all tutoring appointments, study groups, test reviews, and success coaching.* Summer 2020 sessions facilitated the ability to assess the effectiveness of digital platform delivery methods. After testing WebEx and TEAMS, we found Microsoft TEAMS to be the most promising platform for service delivery. The implementation of TEAMS was utilized for tutoring appointments, study group sessions, test reviews, study skills coaching, and staff training. Features such as OneNote, Chat, File sharing, Whiteboard, screen sharing, and course channels allowed tutoring sessions to thrive despite digital distance. The ease of connection between student and tutor on multiple has made TEAMS effective. In addition, staff supervision is enhanced using TEAMS. At each session a PASC staff member monitors attendance, student and tutor participation and assists if any problems occur with digital connectivity.
Technology Needs

It is important to note that not all tutors own the necessary equipment to conduct tutoring sessions. They need touchscreen capabilities to effectively tutor. This necessitated the purchase of additional devices dedicated to Fall services and required a technology assessment process to be added to tutor onboarding procedures. If the need arises for online instruction only on campus, devices will be provided to tutors if needed.

Mirroring Learning Center Services

Supporting student success services becomes an even greater priority despite changes in instruction on the COVID campus. The PASC COVID services plan makes every attempt to mirror learning center services while maintaining the safety of students and staff.

Tutoring Services

_PASC tutoring services will blend the use of face to face interaction with digital resources to ensure that all students have access to curriculum support materials in formats that match their learning needs._ Tutors provide contextualized tutoring for students who seek their support. Meeting weekly with enrolled students and producing supplemental materials in digital formats, tutors work to ensure all students in the class can access any time, any day, and at their own pace. Facilitating and recording weekly workshops, tutors emphasize key course concepts and provide multiple means of representing the material. PASC tutors receive training on Universal Design for Learning approaches and learn techniques for working with students with learning differences. Training increases their ability to work effectively with students who are challenged by the pace of rapid delivery and virtual learning settings.
**Tutor Matching Service (TMS)**

The reduction of tutors in the center spaces necessitates the division of tutoring services between digital support services provided in the center for high demand courses, and services provided on the external platform, Tutor Matching Service. TMS has been used since 2018 to provide community and after-hours tutoring options. All ECU students receiving tutoring from PASC badged tutors, those approved by PASC center director, and receive $200 in free services each semester block. PASC call center staff will make every effort to inform students of TMS tutoring services.

**Extending Tutoring to Course Content Videos**

An early innovator of digital support, PASC tutors have been producing course content videos since 2012. Recordings focus on 13 high demand courses in the STEM areas of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. *In the Fall semester course offerings will be expanded to include Biology 1050, 1100 and 1200 and will include much needed study tips for success in online classes.* Videos are archived in PASC sponsored CANVAS sites and all enrolled students are added for easy access. 80% of this year’s viewing occurred in the Spring 2020 semester with over 2,000 students utilizing this service.

Early work of the PASC indicates that tutoring combined with digital resources produced by peers is an effective means of helping students achieve mastery of core courses on the first attempt; helping students avoid costly and timely course repeats. PASC data research illustrates that students enrolled in STEM courses attend more tutoring sessions with 30-40% higher frequency and pass the course earning an A, B or C grade at higher rates. Although these results are promising, an achievement gap remains. STEM tutor feedback reveals students experience difficulty developing much needed science-specific study and
active learning strategies, especially at-risk student populations including males, first
generation students and students of color.

*Tutor-led Study Groups*

Some students are reluctant to utilize tutoring services and are more willing to
participate in course study groups led by a tutor. PASC study groups have been a popular
tutoring service option and primarily support STEM courses. *In the Fall semester, study
groups leaders will be conducting study groups on the TEAMS platform.* Group offerings
expand to include additional Biology, Psychology, Economics and Accounting courses.

In the past academic year, 466 students participated in PASC study groups attending
sessions weekly. Study Groups participation yields benefits by reinforcing the value of peer
facilitated learning and student collaboration, providing meeting consistency and enhanced
learning outcomes. offering direction, resources and encouragement, modeling active learning
with students actively participating and sharing study strategies, and by fostering belonging to
a group.

During the Summer 2020 sessions, tutors began leading study groups to keep pace with
course progression. Focusing efforts on historically high demand courses which included
Biology, Chemistry and Physics; the TEAMS digital platform functioned as a host for study
groups to meet and access shared whiteboard and OneNote tools.

*Academic Success Coaching and Study Skills Services*

Academic success coaching and study skills support is offered to any ECU student
needing help in a specific discipline area and dedicated success coaches are assigned PASC
learning community students. Academic success coaches and study skills services provide test
taking, textbook reading, and study strategies by appointment. Sessions review academic success strategies in generalized formats rather than specific course content. As students transition to rapid pace course work and online learning platforms, the need for course-specific strategies increases. *In the Fall 2020 semester, all success coaching and study skills services will continue utilizing the TEAMS digital platform.* Coaches will be responsible for maintaining contact with their students by phone, email and GROUPME chats for heightened engagement.

*Call Center Outreach*

Connecting students to academic resources presents a challenge for collegiate support services. Traditional methods like email are not always effective in communicating with today’s undergraduates. The PASC call center connects undergraduates to much needed services by streamlining referrals to services, allowing for immediate appointment scheduling, and increasing opportunities for peer engagement. Last year, 58% of students contacted scheduled service appointments.

*Fall 2020 call center staff will contact by phone general student lists and contact enrolled students in specific courses.* Course specific student lists will be contacted bi-weekly for progress updates and scheduled for immediate support services. Student staff will alternate work schedules and use designated offices in the center.

*PASC Learning Community*

Freshmen learning communities are embedded within the PASC and are focused on helping new students successfully transition to ECU. As a learning community member, students receive yearlong support services including academic and college life transition
coaching, peer academic success coaching services, priority tutoring services, Starfish early alert monitoring, enrollment in common coursework, and learning center employment opportunities.

One of the common courses learning community students take Fall semester is COAD 1000. This class is taught by a PASC professional staff member. We know the important role Freshman Seminar plays in the adjustment of new students. Therefore, we have chosen to maintain a face to face component to the course and have instruction occur in the largest space in the 2nd floor of the center. Although success coaches will meet with LC students online, ensuring COAD was a face to face experience is fundamental to building campus connection and belonging. Students will sit with a minimum of 6 feet from each other and staff will thoroughly clean tables and chairs prior to the beginning of tutoring services each day. In addition, LC students will receive an individual supply kit free of charge for the year. This kit will include supplies normally used in class but needed to be for personal use. COAD instructors are ready to convert the class to online instruction if the need arises.

**Implementing the THRIVE model**

Virtual Student Service Initiative funding from the UNC system office is allowing for tutoring service modifications and the expansion of existing tutoring and academic success coaching. The THRIVE model changes service delivery with the goal of increasing student use of tutoring services for high demand introductory courses. Implementing a holistic academic tutor/success coach team intervention, the model integrates high impact practices and focuses efforts to support the academic success of students. Specifically, the model leverages amplified support for students enrolled in courses with historically high D/F/W rates or have historically high student usage rates at the PASC. This funding allows for model
implementation during the summer 2 session with a significant expansion in the Fall 2020 semester.

Transitioning STEM courses to virtual delivery only can be problematic for some students. Online instruction demands different learning skills for academic success. Large lecture formats transitioned to virtual platforms may not be ideal for some and may limit a student’s opportunity to clarify lecture material and ask questions. Poor performance in these early courses can damage a student’s overall GPA and academic confidence. Students seek services from the PASC when their academic confidence is in question. Decreased feelings of academic confidence, combined with rapid progression of key STEM courses, can lead to critical challenges for students. Students who do not progress academically face financial concerns, have trouble progressing in their major, have trouble mastering higher level course work, and are impacted negatively in their pursuit of advanced degrees. They begin to wonder if they even belong on campus.

Comprehensive tutorial services and strategic course coaching are proven retention tools that can prevent the snowball effect that results after students lose academic confidence. 

*Implementing the THRIVE model expands support resources to better virtually tutor course concepts in a rapid pace environment, coach students in strategic learning approaches, and incorporate call center outreach and recruitment practices.* We believe combining these resource practices will establish stronger student connectivity to support services and will foster the development of the academic skills needed to go beyond the basic content of one specific course and can be applied for use in future classes and other online learning environments.
Responding to an Uncertain Campus

All the best planning for services in a face to face campus environment can change rapidly as COVID related situations occur. We can be called upon to leave campus and return to teleworking at any time. *If campus returns to all online instruction, all PASC services will be maintained virtually on the TEAMS platform.* Equipment will be provided for student staff to use at home if needed. Personal equipment kits will be used from home and touchscreen devices will be assigned for at home use.

As we begin a new semester, PASC staff will continue to respond to and support ECU student success. Working in collaboration with our campus partners, we are committed to the academic success of every student. We will work with faculty to provide smooth transitions to changing instructional environments. We will continue to engage campus partners in advising, tutoring, Student Affairs, Campus Living, and Administration in order to provide a learning environment in which ECU students can thrive.

For more information about the Protect the PASC plan, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Coghill at coghille@ecu.edu.