QMaSC: A Handbook for Directors of Quantitative and Mathematics Support Centers

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03. Responding to Institutional Needs

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Responding To Institutional Needs

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1   Introduction

The needs of each institution of higher education can be extracted from the core mission of
the college. This mission can be expressed in a variety of ways and is usually published online for
the public, and also included in student and faculty handbooks or governance documents. In a
random internet search, institutional missions were found in the form of statements of principles
and practices [1], core beliefs [2], and mission and strategic plans [3]. Each of these statements is
an expression of the institutional values, and the mission of the QMaSC should mirror these values.

Some QMaSC directors have been recruited from within the institution because of their passion
for quantitative literacy and education. Those internal candidates are usually already familiar with
the curriculum, the students, and the administration on their campus. Others, who are recruited
externally, may only know what they have researched about the college and what they learn during
the interview process. This chapter will help external hires as they learn the institutional culture,
and internal recruits as they transition into the administrative capacity of a QMaSC director.

2   QMaSC Placement and Mission

A QMaSC might be housed in one specific department, such as Mathematics or Statistics. A
QMaSC could also be housed in a larger academic support center and report to the director of that

center. Others are completely stand-alone entities that report directly to deans or other academic administrators. As the QMaSC director learns the organizational structure in which the QMaSC resides, it will become easier to focus on very specific goals and a clearly defined mission.

The QMaSC at Vassar College (Quantitative Reasoning Center), established in 2011, is a part of the Learning, Teaching and Research Center with the following mission:

> The Learning, Teaching, and Research Center (LTRC) is dedicated to addressing the needs of Vassar's diverse student body. Our goal is to enable students to maximize their unique educational experiences at Vassar College. We therefore provide an *extensive range of academic resources* that foster the fundamental aim of a liberal arts education: *to facilitate the intellectual and professional growth of ethical, informed, and reflective students* who can engage creatively with important social issues. The LTRC houses a peer-staffed Writing Center and Quantitative Reasoning Center, including a Supplemental Instruction Program for select quantitative analysis (QA) courses. We also offer expert learning support with a focus on developing individual academic skills. [4]

Here are a few programs or initiatives offered by the QMaSC at Vassar that align with the overarching LTRC mission:

- An extensive range of academic resources

    ○ Drop-in tutoring offered Sundays, 1:00 pm–11:00pm, and Monday–Thursday, 3:00 pm – 11:00 pm

    ○ Supplemental Instruction for selected quantitative courses

    ○ Designated tutors   for selected quantitative course

- Facilitate intellectual growth of students

    ○ Opportunities for students to review subjects and experience deep learning by teaching peers

- Facilitate professional growth of students

    ○ Annual training for in-house staff (tutors and supplemental instruction leaders)

    ○ Training for departmental academic interns who tutor for select course

    ○ Collaborations with regional tutoring programs for an annual tutor training conference in which tutors present workshops, preside over sessions, and receive credits towards certification hours where eligible (see Appendix A for the 2014 conference agenda)

If a QMaSC is a stand-alone center or housed in a department that may not have such a clear "mission statement," the director should refer to the faculty governance/handbook, student handbook, or other similar documents to learn the college's values and mission.

3   Inherited Mission(s)

In some cases, the QMaSC is expected to fulfill certain needs that are already identified, which may include the merging or transfer of pre-existing services or programming. For example, one of the purposes of the Vassar Quantitative Reasoning Center (QRC) is to support the quantitative analysis (QA) courses designed to equip all students with quantitative reasoning skills. Vassar defines quantitative reasoning as "the ability to understand and evaluate arguments framed in quantitative or numerical terms; to analyze subject matter using quantitative techniques; to construct and evaluate quantitative arguments of one's own; and to make reasoned judgments about the kinds of questions that can be effectively addressed through quantitative methods" [5]. Various courses across the curriculum are tagged "QA" and are often encountered by students pursuing STEM degrees (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath). In an effort to increase retention of students in the STEM pipeline, Vassar implemented the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program. As the QRC is commissioned to support the QA curriculum, SI is an inherited QRC program.

SI is a nationally renowned program originally established at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) that targets historically difficult courses and provides students the opportunity to engage with their course materials outside the classroom [6]. At Vassar, students voluntarily attend weekly review sessions facilitated by SI Leaders, who are undergraduate peers who have taken the courses and done well.

The QMaSC director should learn about programs or initiatives that should be implemented or sustained upon arrival. Some of these programs, such as SI, offer training that will help the QMaSC director learn more about the programs' mission and structure. The SI Supervisor training is offered annually at UMKC and is an invaluable resource for those QMaSC directors who supervise SI, or for QMaSC directors who plan to implement SI to support the established mission of their center [7].

4   Identifying And Responding to Institutional Needs

The QRC at Vassar came about as a result of a series of faculty conversations regarding ways to support and improve the QA program. An article published prior to the opening of the QMaSC highlights the foundational mission of the QRC (see Appendix B). Some QMaSC directors may not have such a template to follow, but as evident in the push for the Vassar QRC, there is usually a cohort of faculty and administrators who could offer guidance.

The following template for Vassar identifies the main categories that embody the institutional needs of any college/institution–students, staff, faculty, and the administration:

Student Needs

Responding to student needs takes many forms. At Vassar, the QRC is charged with supporting the courses that have been tagged as QA. In order to graduate, a student must take at least one QA designated course, which include many introductory courses required for STEM majors and medical school. This requirement can be taken at any time, but the majority of students enrolled in these courses are freshman who have to adjust to the new amount of schedule freedom, the culture of the institution, and expectations of different faculty, while balancing social and extracurricular interests. The SI program connected to many of these courses is a great way to support freshman as they transition into traditionally difficult STEM courses (including General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Calculus, and Physics) and to college life. SI offers a way for freshman (and other students) to meet their classmates in an informal environment with emphasis on collaborative learning and study skills.

Student Populations Served

A QMaSC director should determine if there are certain student populations that will require specific types of support. Based on the mission of the institution, these populations will vary. The spectrum of students a QMaSC might support include:

- High-achieving/honor students

- Underprepared Students

- Minority/Underrepresented Students

- Students with Disabilities

- Veterans

- Adult/non-traditional students

- First generation students

- Students with math anxieties

The above list is not all-inclusive, but does cover the spectrum of students that might be supported by a QMaSC. Depending on the student population at the institution, the QMaSC could support students as early as pre-admission or even post-graduation. For instance, a community college QMaSC might offer pre-admission support for college placement tests, such as ACT® Compass or Accuplacer. The Math Center at Holyoke Community College offers math prep classes that prepare students for the Accuplacer test [8].

Staffing Needs

In defining ways to respond to the needs of each and all students groups, the director will need to determine what support will be provided for the QMaSC to implement and sustain its initiatives.

At Vassar, peer educators staff the main QRC programs with financial support from the LTRC and one of the dean's offices. Research and discussions about additional support mechanisms are currently underway (including alumni donations/gifts and grant-funding).

A QMaSC could be staffed with peer educators and/or professional peer tutors or instructors. The staffing will determine what types of programs or support the QMaSC will offer. It is common for professional QMaSC staff to teach courses designed to target students needing more review of foundational math topics (from arithmetic to precalculus). Community colleges, which often serve underprepared students or adult students who have been out of school for extended periods, offer a variety of these developmental courses in math or statistics. Small highly selective liberal arts colleges also offer courses to groups of students who might not have the skills they need to transition smoothly into the standard quantitative courses. The Quantitative Reasoning program at Wellesley College, for example, administers a quantitative skills assessment at orientation, and if students do not pass, they enroll in the QR Basic Skills Course (QR 140), which is taught by a professional staff member [9].

Staff Recruitment

The QMaSC director, when responsible for hiring staff, is responsible for ensuring that they are trained and have support to do the job(s) for which they are hired. At Vassar, the SI leaders and tutors participate in a pre-semester training program each fall. Returning staff members are called upon to lead and mentor the new/junior staff members, and other campus offices are invited to inform staff where to direct students when they are not able to meet their needs. Appendix C includes a copy of the most recent two-day training agenda for the fall of 2013. Because the QRC at Vassar supports quantitative courses across the curriculum, the training is open to students within departments who also serve as peer tutors for quantitative courses not supported by QRC staff.

The QMaSC director should rely on faculty and peer educators to help recruit students who have done well in their quantitative and math courses and who show potential to serve as model students and peer educators.

In addition to recruiting staff who have the content mastery and communication skills required, it is important to have a diverse staff. Diversity in a QMaSC is not always easy to achieve or sustain, since the qualifications are restricted to a select pool of candidates. The campus offices of affirmative action and human resources may help with strategies to ensure that the hiring process is accessible and equitable for all candidates.

A QMaSC that houses a service where students are offered assistance with homework or in preparation for graded work must take care to ensure that the institutional guidelines for academic integrity are upheld [10]. Time should be spent in QMaSC staff training discussing academic honesty and how to uphold it when supporting students with course work. The published statement of the college's honor code could be included in a staff handbook.

Academic Use of Technology

Institutions of higher education use many forms of technology to recruit, market, advertise, and support their mission. Students are often required to use these various types of technology in quantitative and math courses, some of which they are savvy with and others where they might have some challenges [11]. A QMaSC with a mission to support specific courses should be aware of programs students are expected to utilize. QMaSC staff working with these students should be proficient in these programs, and the QMaSC should have the software available when appropriate.

Technology support could present itself as more of an academic support need especially for students in distance education programs; therefore the QMaSC director should make sure all staff are given the appropriate access and training [12].

Numerous course management programs are online (e.g., Moodle or Blackboard), and students should learn those systems to find lecture notes and assignments, and sometimes to interact with the instructor and or classmates. The technical support teams on each campus usually offer basic support for such programs, however, some quantitative and math courses use specialized programs or software for online coursework (i.e. Mastering Physics) or for data analysis (i.e. SPSS or R). Select Q-Tutors at Vassar can help with content in various quantitative courses and are given some teaching assistant privileges for respective online course programs.

Microsoft Excel is also a common tool used in quantitative and math courses. The Vassar Q-Center usually employs a few peer tutors who can help students with their basic Excel questions in addition to specific subject areas. Many of the students at Vassar have their own laptops and the software needed for their courses, so the Vassar QRC does not offer a computer lab with these programs. At other institutions, the QMaSC might provide a computer lab with these programs for students who do not have access on their own.

Technology Used in Outreach

A QMaSC can be a hidden treasure on a college campus. Students are bombarded with lots of information when they arrive. And even when students have been on a campus for several semesters, they may be unaware of all of the resources that are available to them.

A QMaSC should take advantage of the technology that students are socially drawn to, such as Facebook and Twitter. These social media outlets can connect students to the QMaSC in a less intimidating way and allow students to communicate freely with each other. The Vassar QRC uses Facebook to advertise center hours, schedule changes, closures, and special events. Students who have a Facebook account can see the most up-to-date feeds, managed by a senior peer tutor selected by the QMaSC director (see Appendix F for Vassar Q-Center Facebook Sample).

In addition to the Facebook page, the Vassar QRC has an institutionally supported website (`ltrc.vassar.edu/qrc`) for prospective students, other departments, and other institutions or

community members who may want to learn more about the Vassar QRC. The QRC staff is also added to a "Vassar QRC" course Moodle Page where they share resources, particularly session review materials from previous SI leaders.

Faculty Needs

Faculty needs are often intertwined with the student needs. With growing course enrollments, departmental staffing constraints, and varying preparation of enrolled students, faculty may rely heavily on support from the QMaSC. Some Math or Statistics departments house courses taught by QMaSC staff, connecting the QMaSC more intimately to the curriculum.

Alternatively, a QMaSC may host workshops that offer review of materials that courses do not dedicate class time to covering. Faculty may require some students to attend, whereas in some cases they may also be strictly voluntary. SI or other peer-led review/study sessions housed in a QMaSC can be built in to a course and bear weight on the final course grade.

The QMaSC director should meet with appropriate department chairs or course coordinators frequently to stay in tune with their needs. A great way to strengthen the relationship between the QMaSC and the faculty is to share the QMaSC vision at faculty departmental or divisional meetings so they know which needs the QMaSC can address.

Communication of the QMaSC vision is particularly important for new faculty as they are transitioning into new responsibilities and often have other pressing demands that keep their focus on teaching and/or research. A great place to connect with new faculty is during their orientation because they will get to meet the QMaSC director and find ways to collaborate with the QMaSC to in turn help meet student needs.

Returning faculty may be interested in QMaSC-sponsored sessions or workshops that address their needs regarding teaching pedagogy for quantitative and math courses, or even ways to incorporate technology. This type of faculty development may not be in the mission of the QMaSC. If another center or office hosts such faculty development programming, a QMaSC director could collaborate or participate as an opportunity to learn more about the faculty needs, challenges, and current best practices.

Administration Needs

A QMaSC director may report to a dean or other administrative director in student affairs, or the chair of a Mathematics or Statistics department. Many of these reporting structures require a type of report, in the form of progress report, quarterly reviews, or annual reports. These reports help administrators stay in tune with what is happening in the departments/programs they oversee, evaluate budgetary needs, measure program effectiveness, and monitor if programming is meeting expectations as stated in the mission or vision statement. There are various ways in which QMaSC programs and initiatives can be assessed. An office of institutional research is also a good reference

point for QMaSC directors seeking to implement the appropriate assessment tools.

At Vassar, the QRC reports directly to the director of the Learning, Teaching and Research Center (LTRC). Reports to the LTRC director are also shared with the dean in the Office of the Dean of Studies, which is a part of the larger Dean of the College division and the Office of the Dean of the Faculty. Since these offices currently fund the majority of the QRC programs, the reports usually highlight the use of services and the growth and/or development of programs that support the mission of the institution.

Assessment data at Vassar, which would include more feedback from faculty, the staff, and a peer tutor self-review, serves as a professional development tool. This will allow the QMaSC director to better support staff as they grow in their roles as peer educators, and to respond appropriately to the needs of the institution.

The Vassar SI program provides an end-of-term survey that is administered in class along with the course evaluations (which provides a high response rate). In the fall semester of 2012, the QRC invested in the Remark Software by Gravic, Inc [14]. Paper forms are created so that selected fields can be scanned, then transferred to a spreadsheet and analyzed by Remark (sample SI evaluation form in Appendix E). In addition to SI program evaluations, the SI leaders are observed in the form of a teaching observation each semester by the QMaSC director and separately by another peer SI leader. SI leaders also take attendance at each session and during their office hours in the Q-Center. Attendance data is then compared to final grades, but to date, no significant correlation has been found between session attendance and grades. The Vassar QRC is collaborating with a faculty statistician to do more extensive analysis of the collected data, possibly correlating it with admissions data for high school GPA and standardized test scores.

5   Responding to Changing Institutional Needs

It is impossible to meet every institutional need, especially because they change so often. Departments add, modify, and discontinue quantitative and math courses based on departmental and larger curricular needs. Faculty who are hired may have short-term or adjunct appointments, making faculty development initiatives unproductive. Since students are only at the institution for about four years (two years at community colleges), staffing a QMaSC requires constant recruitment and training. The pre-college skill sets of each admitted class of students vary, requiring more attention to these ever-changing needs. Staffing and resource needs can be stifled by budgetary constraints. Most importantly, if the mission of an institution evolves, the mission of QMaSC should follow suit.

QMaSC directors should maintain regular communications with their reporting directors and administrative or faculty governing bodies to learn about the evolving institutional changes. Professional organizations are also a great resource for strategies to address institutional changes, for in

higher education they seem to follow current trends. And finally, a QMaSC director should utilize the appropriate assessment tools that will best inform the development of current strategic plans.

As the QMaSC director begins to launch or further develop programs, further training or certification may be required. The QMaSC director will also be assessed in the form of an administrative review of some sort; therefore, an additional mission of the QMaSC should be to keep all staff equipped to do their jobs effectively. Peer tutoring staff can be trained in-house or sent to other trainings or conferences (such as the MATE conference for tutors, see Appendix A). The QMaSC director should stay connected with professional organizations, such as Mathematics Association of America, Northeast Consortium on Quantitative Literacy, and the National Numeracy Network, to name a few. Membership and participation in these organizations will keep the QMaSC director connected to the larger QMaSC community, network with peers, and often learn of best practices that will help achieve the QMaSC mission.

6   QMaSC Intersections

Given the breadth of needs in a given student population, a QMaSC director should stay informed about resources available on campus that intersect with the daily work of the QMaSC. Below is a sample list of offices that can offer support to a variety of students who may also use QMaSC resources:

- First Year Programs

- Career Development

- Disability Services

- Other tutoring/academic support spaces (i.e. departmental)

- Psychological Counseling Services

- Dean of Studies

- Programs designed for first generation, low-income, or underrepresented students

- Veterans Support Services

The QMaSC director might network with these offices by nature of the organizational structure, or perhaps by just meeting with representatives individually to share the work of the QMaSC and learn about the work of the respective offices. The challenges that students face on each campus are often quite similar, but can vary within populations. Open communication with various offices is a great way to learn of ways to reach students who may otherwise not reach out independently for support from the QMaSC.

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8   Appendix A: Mid-Hudson Tutor Educators (MATE) 2014

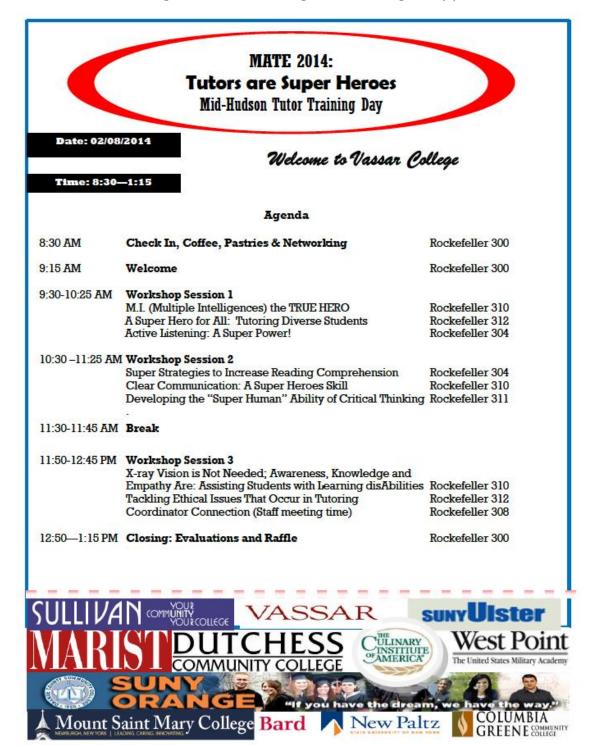Figure 1: Tutor Training Conference Agenda (1)

Figure 2: Tutor Training Conference Agenda (2)

Workshop Descriptions

*Required for CRLA Level 1 certification

M.I. (Multiple Intelligences) the TRUE HERO— Are you a HERO of the Multiple Intelligences? Well if you need more assistance this workshop will help you fight for the civilians (our tutees) to surpass these Villains (classes). This workshop will provide a broader understanding discussing different learning styles among tutees. We will discuss how each style "likes" to learn and which style preference and modes in which particular tutees learn best to maximize their learning potential. So our tutees can successfully "fight" through their exams.   *Heather Breittholz, SUNY Orange*

A Super Hero for All: Tutoring Diverse Students—This presentation will help student tutors develop new strategies and techniques to deal with the challenges of tutoring students from diverse cultural, academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although many student tutors themselves come from diverse backgrounds; there are common tutoring and proofreading issues that student tutors will encounter and should be prepared to face in order to successfully become a Super Hero to their tutee.   *Karen Tomkins-Tinch, Richard Cusano, Julius Cox, Elizabeth Hamberger, Marist College*

Active Listening: A Super Power!*– How well do you really listen? Do you show the tutee that you care about being there with them? This workshop is designed to develop necessary skills in active listening. Techniques discussed and practiced will include paraphrasing, minimal encouragements, use of "I" statements, emotional labeling, open ended questions, effective pauses, and mirroring.   *Cynthia Worrad, Dutchess Community College*

Super Strategies to Increase Comprehension When Reading Texts—Just opening a textbook and reading without proper preparation does not increase retention and recall in the classroom or during tests. Be a hero: Learn how to help students increase comprehension when reading texts. Pre-reading preparation includes organization, activating schema, "diagramming the question," and reading actively. Workshop will focus on "diagramming the question," which applies best to humanities courses such as history, psychology, or sociology. Learn by doing with opportunities for hands-on application.   *Kathleen Eagan, West Point*

Clear Communication: A Super Hero's Skill— Ever try to teach someone how to tie your shoe? At first it may seem to be an easy task, but when actually explaining the steps as someone is following your verbal instructions, you may feel you need super human powers! This interactive workshop highlights the importance of carefully choosing how you communicate when explaining content or giving instructions. Participants will explore different ways to communicate as teams try to construct a tool needed to survive on an island.   *Jennifer Wrage, Dutchess Community College*

Developing the "Super Human" Ability of Critical Thinking*— Good thinking skills are a must in college as well as in life. To conquer life's hurdles, students need to be able to reason, apply, evaluate and problem solve. Learn how to help your tutees develop their critical thinking skills.   *Joseph Dunstan, Dutchess Community College*

Tackling Ethical Issues That Occur in Tutoring—Situations arise in tutoring that require tutors to call upon ethical standards of conduct in order to support "truth and justice". In this workshop tutors discuss situations they have encountered or expect to occur. Frequent ethical issues may include responsibility, respect, fairness, professionalism, and confidentiality. Identifying and dealing with appropriate boundaries is a common issue.   *Bianca Keesler, Dutchess Community College*

X-ray Vision is Not Needed; Awareness, Knowledge and Empathy Are: Assisting Students with Learning disAbilities—Many students "battle" learning disabilities. Super tutors "see" the signs of these "invisible disabilities" and are equipped to help their tutees "win" the learning battle. This presentation will introduce the tutor to common indicators of learning disabilities and provide strategies for assisting tutees. Clips from Richard Lavoie's video "How Difficult Can This Be?" will provide an awareness as to what it is like to be temporarily learning disabled.   *Sally Weglinski, Dutchess Community College*

Coordinator Connection—A time for coordinators to meet and discuss issues and best practices

9   Appendix B: Articles highlighting the need for a QMaSC at Vassar College

NEWS

April 15, 2010

Vassar to create Quantitative Reasoning Center

CENTER *continued from page 1*

structure as it becomes part of the proposed Quantitative Reasoning Center.

Applicants for the director position of the Center will be interviewing over the next two weeks. "We hope to make a hire this month and for this person to begin in the fall," said Friedman in an e-mailed statement, "but like all hiring searches, we don't yet know if it will be successful or not—we're keeping our fingers crossed."

The director's duties, as listed on the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium website, will include overseeing a system of student peer tutors based on the existing SI program and consulting with faculty members who teach courses applicable to the College's quantitative reasoning requirement.

However, "what exactly this Quantitative Reasoning Center looks like will depend on the vision also of the person who's hired," explained Shanley. "We do have a vision or an understanding. We do want the Writing Center and the Quantitative Reasoning Center to be equal and parallel structures."

Both the Writing Center and the Quantitative Reasoning Center, explained Shanley, will incorporate peer-to-peer mentoring and workshops. Both writing and quantitative analysis are core requirements at Vassar. And both centers' focuses extend beyond the English and Math Departments respectively. "The freshman writing course requirement is across the curriculum; it's not just offered by the English Department...[because of] our belief that good writing is important in every department," said Shanley. "Similarly, with this Quantitative Resource Center, it's not simply to support the quantitative analysis courses. It's to encourage facility with quantitative reasoning across the curriculum."

Aside from this, the director will also teach one or two classes per year. "Probably the courses [to be taught by the director] will have a multidisciplinary aspect to them," she said, but declined to speculate, emphasizing

that the courses' topic and content will be at the director's discretion.

The director will be an administrator, not a faculty member, and therefore these are not tenure track appointments and will not affect other faculty employment decisions, explained Shanley.

Plans to create the Quantitative Reasoning Center have been underway until Fall 2008, when the economic downturn forced the LTRC to halt the planning process. However, in the fall of 2009, the then-Director of the SI program, Doris Haas, took the retirement incentive that the administration offered. Although most positions vacated by those who took this retirement incentive were left empty to reduce budgetary costs, the administration, said Shanley, "[did]n't want to shrink the LTRC... [or] lose support for quantitative reasoning."

So, instead of replacing Haas as SI director, planning for the Quantitative Reasoning Center and a director for the new institution were renewed. "Our goal," wrote Friedmann,

"is to find someone to do more than simply fill in for [Haas]."

"We are asking the director to engage in curriculum development and faculty teaching development," said Shanley, "so our experience is that it's very important that they be teachers."

"Several years ago a task force was created to assess the short term and long term needs of the Learning Teaching and Research Center," wrote Roelke, in part because "the Committee on Curricular Policies has been discussing the quantitative reasoning requirement at Vassar and also supported enhancing what the College has to offer in terms of assisting students in quantitative areas of the curriculum."

"I am very pleased that the continued development of the Learning Teaching and Research Center has included Supplemental Instruction... Our quantitative reasoning center holds much promise in supporting students and faculty in important intellectual pursuits," wrote Roelke.

Vassar's New Quantitative Reasoning Center

As with the current Writing Center, the Quantitative Reasoning Center will aim to

- enhance students' quantitative reasoning abilities
- provide peer-to-peer tutoring for quantitative classes
- contribute to faculty development initiatives for teaching quantitative reasoning across the curriculum

The director of the Center will

- train and oversee student peer tutors
- meet with individual students
- consult with faculty teaching courses that fulfill the College's Quantitative Reasoning requirement
- teach one or two courses each year

News **Briefs**

Lost his V-Card

Security officers received a report that a student's V-Card was reported stolen from his bag after leaving it unattended for 20 minutes on April 9.

—Aashim Usgaonkar, Caitlin Clevenger
Assistant News Editors

Flying off the shelves

Library staff members reported "suspicious male individuals" in the Thompson Memorial Library on April 9. The individuals, who reportedly carried empty backpacks and are suspected of larceny, were escorted off campus by Poughkeepsie police officers.

—A.U. and C.C.

Hipster hunt

A student reported his Ray Ban sunglasses stolen from his bag on April 10. The sunglasses are valued at $180.

—A.U. and C.C.

Gone phishing

The theft of a laptop was reported to Security on April 11. Valued at $1,000, the laptop was left unattended in an unlocked car. —A.U. and C.C.

Game over

A student resident of Main House reported a stolen Xbox on April 11. The console was allegedly stolen from the student's room while he or she was sleeping and left the room unlocked.

—A.U. and C.C.

We didn't start the fire

A small fire was reported in the Blodgett Hall parking lot at 8:38 p.m. on April 11. Dried pine cones were set on fire, which prompted a faculty member to call Security.

—A.U. and C.C.

Teachers focus on new media

Caitlin Clevenger
Assistant News Editor

This weekend, Vassar College hosted the third annual Teachers, Teaching and the Movies, a multi-disciplinary conference focusing on the use of new media as educational tools. The conference included workshops on Hip-Hop Theatre and The Power of Facebook and Powerpoint in Teaching, as well as screenings of youth-produced films. Assistant Professor of Education Colette Cann, who helped to coordinate the conference, said in an e-mailed statement, "I asked that we host the conference here at Vassar College so that undergraduates and their families could be involved in an academic conference that overlapped with the interests of students in Media Studies, Film, and Education."

The highlights of the conference was the keynote address, "Cosmopolitan Imaginings of Self and Other: Global Youth Go Online" given by New York University Professor of English Education Dr. Glynda Hull. Hull discussed her ongoing projects on using digital media and social networking as a pedagogical tool. She is one of the creators of SPACE2CREE, an international program that connects middle school children across cultures.

Hull was adamant that even early education needs to include media literacy, saying, "There's a revolution going on around the Internet and information and globalization. We don't just read and write anymore." Social networking in particular has changed the way that people are connected, and children have not been untouched by the movement.

According to Hull, most children that use the Internet regularly have a profile on Facebook or MySpace. The question remains: how can social networking be used in a safe and educational way? Hull and a team from the University of California at Berkeley are attempting to answer that question with SPACE2CREE, the after-school program centered on a private social networking site of the same name. Designed as both an educational tool and a research project, the program connects children in drastically different situations from four locations.

The first location is an urban school in Oakland, Calif. Children there connect with children from a rural town in South Africa who have had no prior experience with computers, with girls at an afternoon school in India who work as domestic servants in the mornings and with the children of North African and Middle Eastern immigrants at a school in Oslo, Norway. Plans are underway for sites in New York City and Australia as well.

The students in the program, under the supervision of teachers and undergraduate interns, learn to represent themselves by building profile pages and creating digital stories that juxtapose text with music, video and pictures. The students comment on posts and participate in discussions that address cultural differences. The site records all the actions of its members so that researchers working on the project can better understand how children communicate with each other in online settings.

Many of the researcher's insights have come from miscommunications, which were often resolved by the students themselves. Adults were concerned when one of the girls from Oakland used a Sketch ers ad featuring a scantily clad nurse as her profile picture. However, one of the students in India commented, "I think she wants to be a nurse and a model," correctly identifying the girl's motive for using the picture.

Online interactions that use slang or unclear English often seem rude to the recipients, but are met with diplomatic attempts to find a mutual understanding and build a respectful rapport.

One of the most influential stories on the site has been that of Babli, a student at the India site who works cleaning seven homes each morning before school to support her sister and father. Babli's digital story, which shows photographs of her daily life, has inspired students at the other sites to share their own lives. Babli enjoys her popularity, saying, "You get happiness when you share your life experience with others. I want to keep on making friends until I make the whole world my friend."

Hull is happy with the progress that the program has made so far and hopes to expand it. She thinks that it effectively "illustrates the process of learning how to be hospitable readers and writers." According to Hull, "To be literate in today's world, you have to know how to read the testimonies of others whose lives are very different from yours."

Vassar plans carbon analysis

Matthew Brock, Jillian Scharr
Aashim Usgaonkar
Assistant News Editors

Sarah Gyory '10, a student intern for the Vassar College Sustainability Committee, brought a proposal to the Environmental Research Institute before the Vassar Student Association (VSA) on April 11 for its endorsement, designed to make the school more sustainable.

Last year, Vassar hired Sightlines, a company that specializes in analyzing colleges and universities' carbon footprints, to assess Vassar's current greenhouse gas emissions and make suggestions as to how they could be reduced, as reported in The Miscellany News ("CSS to measure sustainability of Vassar buildings," 2.25.10).

Two weeks ago, Sightlines Director of Business Development and Vassar graduate Jay Pearlman '98 returned to campus to train students in Professor of Economics Paul Ruud's Environmental and Natural Resource Economics class to perform the carbon footprint analysis in the future. The training took one full day and cost the College $4,000.

These students will perform the analysis for the 2009 year this spring, and will continue to do so "from here on out," said Walker in a telephone interview. "There are several people in that class who will probably be continuing with the Sustainability Committee." They will, in turn, train further members of the Committee who "will coordinate [the carbon footprint analysis] from now on."

Vassar has managed to reduce its emissions by 13 percent in the past five years, said Chair of the Sustainability Committee and Professor of Geology Jeffrey Walker. This is in part because, said Walker, Vassar "[has] made our buildings and our steam heat system more efficient, so we use less fuel, so we emit less carbon." This saves the College money as well as reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Doing the carbon footprint analysis entails gathering data from the campus' utility costs for each building, as well as gas consumption for transportation such as fieldwork cars, student abroad programs and faculty travel. "It's actually knowing what to ask for in terms of sustainability data," said Walker of the training process.

However, according to Gyory, the Sustainability Committee wants to refine Sightlines to perform a second analysis to find the College's emissions levels for the year 1996. "We want to do a baseline for 1996, so we know how low to aim for," she said. This date has been chosen as the baseline by which to set goals because it is the furthest back that the College has reliable utility data, said Walker in a Feb. 23 telephone interview. Previously, Sightlines had done analysis going back as far as 2005.

Although the proposal will not come to a vote until next Sunday, it was met with widespread support from the Council, and VSA President Caitlin Ly '10 predicted that it should pass.

Environmentalism at Vassar continues with a lecture by Vassar alumnus and Chief Scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) Steve Hamburg '75, will deliver a lecture, entitled "Getting the Science Right in a Highly Politicized World: Bioenergy, Carbon Offsets, Greenplanering, and Anthropogenic N" on Thursday, April 11.

Educated at Vassar (B.A. Biology) and Yale (Ph. D. and M.F.S.), Hamburg has published widely on topics that include C biogeochemistry, climate change impacts on forests and land-use history. He has been awarded the Environmental Merit Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency twice for his pioneering work in the field of environmental change.

10   Appendix C: Fall 2013 Peer Educator Training Agenda, Vassar College

QRC PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING 2013

TRAINING SCHEDULE
Friday, August 30
(WITH NOTES FOR TRAINER/DIRECTOR)

9:00 am	Welcome
	Introductions
9:30 am	Opening Activity
9:45 am	Peer Educators
	About the QRC
10:00 am	Know Your Value
10:10 am	Role Overview
10:20 am	Powerful Learning Experiences - (Group Activity)
11:00 am	Differentiated Instruction: One Size Does Not Fit All (Neva Lozada)
12:00 pm	Lunch Break (one wrap/cookie per person)
12:45 pm	Video Clips (Key Components To Effective Tutor)
1:00 pm	Video Reflection
1:10	Staff Handbook
	Responsibilities
	General Guidelines
1:20	Opening and Closing a Session
1:40	Video – Remain Professional
	(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oT5WJ0hM5A)
	Video Reflection
1:50	Tutor Session Guidelines Continued
2:00	Scenario Discussions (Led by Returning Tutors)
2:10	Exercise Summary – Visit Overall Goals of Tutoring/Handbook
2:20	Staff Handbook
	Policies/Procedures – End with Scheduling
2:40	PAPERWORK
	Student Employment Forms
	Confidentiality Agreement
	Employment Agreement
2:50 pm	Scheduling!
3:20 pm	Closing Remarks
	Class Visits (template email for Faculty from Paige)
	POSSE VETERANS
	WEBSITES (ltrc and FB)

QRC PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING 2013

DAY 2: SI LEADERS
Saturday, August 31

Agenda Outline

Meet Your Peers

Personal Goals

The SI Program (p.10-11)

Class Introductions

Tasks of the SI Leader (p.12-13)

SI leader and Professor (p.16-17)

SI Leader and Student (p.27-28)

Opening the SI Session (p.29)

Conducting the Session (p.30)

Helpful Resources

Nuts & Bolts

Policies & Procedures

11   Appendix D. Vassar College Peer Educator Application

VASSAR COLLEGE   Quantitative Reasoning Center
                                                     Q-Tutor Job Application

Please return the completed application form to Susan Ward, Library 122 (her desk is in
the front of the Writing Center/Q-Center space in the Library). She is usually at her desk
between 9am-12pm and 2-5pm, Monday-Friday. Applications are due by Friday, January
31 at 4:30 pm.

General Information

Last _____   First _____

Student ID Number (999): _____

Cellular phone number: _____

Current Classification (circle one):   Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior

Which course(s) are you applying to be a Q-Tutor for? (*i.e. Econ 100, Math 220, Math 221...*)
Preference will be given to students who can work full time (8hrs/week)

_____

_____

Academic Information

Major (s): _____   Correlate(s): _____

Cumulative GPA: _____

Please list grades received in the course(s) for which you are applying to tutor. If you did not
take the course at Vassar, please list grades for courses in the subject area(s) you are
interested in

	Course	When	Grade
Example	*Chem 108*	*SP-2011*	*A*
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

VASSAR COLLEGE

Experience

Please provide brief answers to the following questions.

1. Why do you want to be a Q-Tutor?

2. What academic, work, or personal experiences do you see as potentially helpful in preparing you to be an effective peer tutor?

3. Did you visit the Q-Center when taking the course for which you are applying to be a tutor?

4. If you answered yes to #3, please describe your experience. If you answered no, please share your reasons for not attending.

5. What would you like to gain from the experience of being a Q-Tutor?

 VASSAR COLLEGE

References

List as references two members of the Vassar faculty; at least one should be for the subject in which you would like to be an SI Leader. If both are in the same department, that is fine.

Name _____ Dept. _____

Name _____ Dept. _____

Scheduling In the space below please provide your **SPRING 2014 CLASS SCHEDULE**

Course (*Chem 244*)   Time (*12:00-12:50pm*)   Days (*MWF*)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

****In the space below note any commitments I should be aware of (i.e soccer, EMT) and the days/times you are committed. I will compare all of the selected Q-Tutors' schedules to set our regular group meeting time for the semester.

****Special notes below (anything else I need to know??)

12   Appendix E. Vassar Supplemental Instruction Evaluation for Remark

Fall 2013 Supplemental Instruction Evaluation

Please Provide Your Name and Session Information (Omit Any Non-Letter Characters in Your Name)

FILL IN THE OVALS (DO NOT CIRCLE THEM!!!):

CORRECT ●   INCORRECT ⊘

Your Name								Session Information
First Name (first 4 letters)				Last Name (first 4 letters)				
O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	O A O B O C O D O E O F O G O H O I O J O K O L O M O N O O O P O Q O R O S O T O U O V O W O X O Y O Z	CHEM-108-31 MWF 0930AM-1020AM Haley Merritt O CHEM-108-33 MWF 1200PM-1250PM Natalie DiCenzo O CHEM-125-31 TR 0900AM-1015AM Mohammed Abdelaziz O CHEM-125-32 TR 1030AM-1145AM Mohammed Abdelaziz O CHEM-244-31 MWF 1030AM-1120AM Colin White-Dzuro O CHEM-244-32 MWF 0930AM-1020AM Marcos Vargas O CHEM-244-33 MWF 0830AM-0920AM Anthony Khoudary O CHEM-244-34 MWF 1200PM-1250PM Colin White-Dzuro O MATH-121-01 MWF 0930AM-1020AM Noelle Sawyer* O MATH-121-02 MWF 1030AM-1120AM Noelle Sawyer* O MATH-125-01 MWF 0930AM-1020AM Laura Schachter O MATH-125-02 MWF 1030AM-1120AM Christopher Brown O

PLEASE FILL IN THE CIRCLE THAT **BEST** REPRESENTS YOUR RESPONSE.

Your class year:		Are you pre-med?	
Freshman	O		
Sophomore	O	Yes	O
Junior	O	No	O
Senior	O		

Please evaluate your SI leader and the SI sessions you attended.						
1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The class instructor encouraged students to attend SI:	O	O	O	O	O	O
SI sessions helped me understand this subject better:	O	O	O	O	O	O
SI helped improve my problem-solving skills:	O	O	O	O	O	O
My grades improved because I attended SI sessions:	O	O	O	O	O	O
Attending SI encouraged me to study with s:	O	O	O	O	O	O
SI sessions have made me confident in my own abilities:	O	O	O	O	O	O
The SI leader was organized and prepared for each session:	O	O	O	O	O	O
The SI leader used the time well:	O	O	O	O	O	O
The SI leader made me feel welcome and at ease:	O	O	O	O	O	O
The SI leader was confident and knowledgeable of the subject:	O	O	O	O	O	O

Please provide reasons for not attending some or all of the SI sessions offered for your class.			
	Yes	No	N/A
I did not need the extra sessions	O	O	O
I needed more one-on-one help	O	O	O
I prefer individual study time only	O	O	O
The times/days were inconvenient	O	O	O
I felt uncomfortable asking for help	O	O	O
Sessions frequently canceled/rescheduled	O	O	O

Did you visit your professor during office hours?		Did you visit your SI Leader during office hours?		Did you visit department interns during office hours?		Did you use the Q-Tutors in the Q-Center?	
Yes	O	Yes	O	Yes	O	Yes	O
No	O	No	O	No	O	No	O

Any Comments or Feedback?

13   Appendix F. Vassar College Q-Center on Facebook