

The Colket Center for Academic Excellence 2012-13 Annual Report

The past academic year has been a transitional time for the Colket Center for Academic Excellence, with changes in the Center's administrative structure and staff reporting lines, as well as in personnel. In 2011-12, the academic support services located in the Learning Commons, including the Writing Center, the Quantitative Reasoning Center, the ESL Specialist, and the Reading, Rhetoric, and First Year Programs Specialist, were consolidated under the Colket Center for Academic Excellence. Two positions were created, one full-time position for the Director of the Colket Center (previously a half-time position occupied by Paul Kuerbis), and one full-time position for a Reading, Rhetoric and First Year Programs Specialist (previously the Colket Reading Fellow). Traci Freeman was hired to direct the Colket Center and Jessie Dubrueil was hired as the Reading, Rhetoric, and First Year Programs Specialist. Mid-year, the Writing Center also hired a temporary professional tutor, Nate Siebert. In October, Mark Morgenstern resigned as Director of the Quantitative Reasoning Center, and Traci Freeman served as Interim Director of the QRC throughout the academic year.

During the 2012-13 academic year, the staff of the Colket Center worked to envision our future including:

- Meeting with the staff and tutors to discuss our common work and the principles that inform our approach to academic support services
- Developing goals and initiatives to send to the strategic planning committee
- Developing a comprehensive assessment plan for our services, including the drafting and distribution of faculty and student surveys
- Working with a professional consultant, Laurie Kennedy, on team building and workplace culture
- Working with the Bridge program to develop an academic skills curriculum that will be integral to the program and will continue throughout the year as free-standing academic skills seminars open to all students on campus
- Collaborating with the Crown Center on faculty development workshops
- Designing a new data keeping system for the Center that will sync with Banner
- Developing an e-portfolio system for students to use as an advising tool and for Writing Portfolio management
- Developing strategic budget management processes
- Rewriting job descriptions to reflect the roles that staff play in the Center and on campus

During the 2013-14 academic year, we will continue much of the work that we began during the past academic year. Specifically, we will focus on:

- Further developing and refining our vision for academic support services on campus
- Cultivating our workplace culture
- Welcoming a new Director of the QRC
- Seeking funding for a permanent professional tutor in the Writing Center
- Seeking additional funding to support tutoring in the QRC
- Implementing academic skills workshops
- Defining the Colket Center's role in pre-major academic advising
- Coordinating our efforts more intentionally with Summer Programs

The following report represents the work of the individual academic support units in the Colket Center during the 2012-13 academic year and suggests future directions for the services.

Writing Center and ESL

Core Staff

Carol Emmer (ESL Specialist), Molly Gross (Assistant Director of the Writing Center), Sarah Milteer (Staff Assistant for Tutoring Services), Tracy Santa (Director of the Writing Program/Writing Center), Nate Siebert (Professional Tutor, .50 FTE), Jessie Dubreuil (Reading, Rhetoric and First Year Programs Coordinator .25 FTE Writing Center)

Writing Center Usage 2012-2013

The CC Writing Center is open 62 hours a week during our regular academic schedule. This academic year, into Block 8 (5/2/13), the Writing Center had:

- Tutored 704 students
- Held 2330 appointments.

Although these do not represent year-end totals, to date the Writing Center has held tutorials with over 36% of enrolled CC undergraduates. Writing Center use as measured in tutorials increased 9% this year based in comparison with figures drawn from the 2011-2012 academic year.

Disciplinary Use

Tutorials were held most frequently in 2012-2013 with CC students working in the following disciplines: English (190), History (139), Sociology (134), Political Science (133), Art History (102), Religion (89), Music (70), and Environmental Science (70). Of appointments identified to discipline, 43% accrued to the Humanities, 41% to Social Sciences, and 16% to Natural Sciences.

FYE (Blocks 1-2) first-year student traffic: Records of first-year student visits during FYE in 2011 indicate that in Blocks 1 and 2, the Writing Center

- Tutored 263 first-year students
- Held 689 appointments with first-year students.

Year-to-date tutorials by Class/Year

- First-years: 1070
- Sophomores: 332
- Juniors: 308
- Seniors: 503
- Graduate: 84

Tutorials recorded to date (2330) in the Writing Center have only been exceeded in the last seven years by tutorials recorded in 2006-2007 (2336). The number of tutorials among first-year students rose sharply (34%); the number of tutorials among seniors, while remaining high, declined 18% from 2011-12. Additional teaching and administrative responsibilities among existing staff may preclude an increase in professional staff support for senior writers.

Student Consultants

The Writing Center employed 36 student consultants trained to assist writers at any stage of the writing process. In 2012-2013, student consultants:

- Offered 1427 tutorials
- Staffed and administered the Writing Center during evening hours and Sundays
- Contributed to professional development through presentations at weekly staff meetings
- Mentored tutors in training during GS 300 *Theory and Practice of Peer Tutoring*.

As has been customary, the Writing Center was well-represented at Academic Honors Convocation, where current and oncoming members of our peer staff were recognized as top students in Biology (Hannah Wellman), English/Creative Writing (Robert Heald and Heather Ezell) Italian (Sophie Tirado), Physics (Nick Lammers), Psychology (Jenny Wool), and Sociology (Sara Bodner).

Professional Staff

The professional staff of the Writing Center tutors students, offers extended format adjunct courses in writing, trains new tutors, and supports ongoing student tutor staff development. Into Block 8 (5/02/13), the Writing Center professional staff have:

- Worked with students in 903 tutoring sessions
- Provided ongoing support for students with long-term assistance needs, serious writing issues, learning disabilities, and second language challenges
- Coordinated outreach efforts by organizing referrals and consulting with faculty and advisors to determine outreach needs and appropriate methods
- Reviewed faculty Writing Evaluations in F'12, identifying struggling students
- Provided classroom visits and workshops to promote the Writing Center to students and faculty
- Observed, mentored, and supervised 36 student tutors
- Presented twelve senior peer staff with College Reading and Learning Association tutor certification
- Fashioned rigorous tutor training courses (GS 300/395) and managed the tutor apprenticeship over the course of the spring semester for 18 new tutors
- Served as voting and ex-officio members of the Writing Committee, the FYE Committee, the Learning Commons, and the ADA Committee
- Facilitated the work of the CC Writing Program Director and Chair of the FYE Committee
- Contributed to a better understanding of the Writing Proficiency requirement among students and faculty
- Oriented faculty and students to the FYE portfolio
- Hosted the 2013 Colorado-Wyoming Writing Tutors Conference
- Offered workshops and consultations for local K-12 initiatives

Full-time members of the Writing Center staff (Carol Emmer, Molly Gross, and Tracy Santa) held 765 tutorials overall, including 249 tutorials with ESL writers, 178 tutorials with seniors working on thesis or capstone projects, and 57 tutorials with students drafting Watson and Venture Grant proposals—work in this regard offered by part-time Writing Center professional staff cannot be disaggregated from all-staff totals with our current database.

After a 32% upward spike in tutorials offered by professional staff in 2011-12, tutorials held with all members of the professional Writing Center staff—full and part-time—decreased this year by 18%. The shifting of a greater proportion of tutoring to our peer staff was in part intentional, but was also driven by additional adjunct teaching, maintenance of the First Year Portfolio and Writing Proficiency requirement, and a re-envisioning of our Reading and Rhetoric Specialist position. Although part-time professional tutor Nate Siebert has offered 99 tutorials to date, a trend toward peer over professional consultation is unlikely to be reversed without additional staffing, resulting in fewer opportunities for professional staff to advise and tutor senior capstone writers, mentor fellowship candidates, and work with and advise entering and ongoing students challenged by our writing-rich curriculum.

Summer Use

The Writing Center functioned in support of regular summer block courses, the MAT and Bridge programs, and College Ahead. Peer tutoring was offered on a limited basis (20 hours/wk) during blocks A, B, and C, as was classroom, admission essay workshopping, and tutoring support for high school College Ahead programs in June and July. During the summer of 2012, the Writing Center offered in excess of 60 tutorials not accounted for in the current academic year total of tutorials.

Future Directions

- Offer pre-semester support for international and Bridge Program students
- Meet with all FYE classes to introduce Writing Center Services and the Writing Portfolio and proficiency requirements
- Engage in ongoing assessment of the Writing Center services as we develop capacity for online client response
- Seek funding in support of President Tiefenthaler's vision for a Center for Engaged Teaching and Immersive Learning

Reading, Rhetoric and First Year Programs

The Reading, Rhetoric, and First Year Programs Specialist works with students and faculty across disciplines to enhance and support critical reading and writing across the curriculum, offering workshops, courses, and individual consultation on rhetoric, composition, and academic argument and analysis.

Usage Data

- The RRFYPS conducted an average of 1-2 independently scheduled, one-on-one critical reading sessions per block. Current usage of appointment-based instruction suggests that demand for private reading consultation hovers at about 12-15 visits per year. Referrals from professors, the ESL Specialist, and Disability Services were the most common reasons students cited for seeking out specialized reading advice.
- Four sections of the Reading Practicum Adjunct were offered over the course of the 2012-2013 academic year. Blocks 1-2 (≈11 students), 3-4 (≈7 students) 5-6 (4 students) and 7-8 (1 student).

Reading and Rhetoric Initiatives

This year, the Reading, Rhetoric and First Year Programs specialist undertook the following initiatives:

- Three new adjunct classes on rhetoric, and critical reading-related topics and practices.
- New half-block course on the Rhetoric of Health and Illness
- Writing and Critical-Reading Intensive block classes in Block 8 and Block B of Summer Session.
- Worked with students and faculty across disciplines to enhance and support critical reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Individual consultation on rhetoric, composition, and academic argument and analysis.
- Two new FYE block courses for 2013-2014
- Ongoing work with the FYE Committee and courses to provide program support and assessment.
- Curriculum for Bridge Program workshops to support rhetoric and critical reading.

Future Directions

The following bullets represent plans for the 2013-14 academic year:

- Based on the greater numbers of students we are able to reach in either a single-session or a class setting, we are enthusiastic about transitioning to offering workshops on various specific topics and techniques throughout the year.
- In the coming academic year, we plan to experiment with offering self-contained workshops addressing curriculum from the Reading Practicum to try to make the resource available to more students. Part of our goal is to target specific challenges of reading on the block or in a new discipline to provide students with a way of talking about, and addressing, challenges of reading that they may not currently know how to describe or approach.
- Depending on demand, we are scheduled to run 1-2 sections of the Reading Practicum Adjunct.

- In Block 4, the half-block Reading and Rhetoric in the Liberal Arts course “The Rhetoric of Illness and Health” will run as a full-block course.

Quantitative Reasoning Center

The Quantitative Reasoning Center offers tutorial assistance Sunday through Thursday for students enrolled in mathematics, science, social science, and other quantitative classes. Services offered in the QRC include:

- Drop-in tutorials and group problem solving sessions
- One-on-one tutorials for students who seek more sustained academic support
- Course-based supplemental instruction through our Learning Assistants program
- Review Sessions before exams
- Assistance with data analysis
- Assessments for students prior to enrolling in quantitatively demanding classes
- Information about tutoring elsewhere on campus

2012-13 Academic Year: An Overview

This year has been a transitional one for the Quantitative Reasoning Center (QRC), with changes in the leadership, the growth of individual tutoring, and the re-envisioning of the Learning Assistants Program.

In block 2, Mark Morgenstern resigned his position as Director of the QRC. The Director of the Colket Center hired a recent graduate to coordinate scheduling and communications in the QRC and then met with math, science, and select social science departments to discuss the future of the Center and the director's position. After consulting with departments, the Director of the Colket Center drafted a job description for the QRC Director and constituted a QRC steering committee to vet the job description. The position was posted in February, candidates were brought to campus during block 7, and Steve Getty, PhD, was hired and will be joining the Colket Center on August 12, 2013, as Director of the QRC.

As in previous years, the QRC has offered students enrolled in math, science, and select quantitative social science courses academic support on a drop-in basis in the center. During blocks 1 through 4, the QRC was open from Sunday through Friday every week. Because students did not make sufficient use of Friday drop-in hours, these hours were cut during block 5.

This year the QRC also expanded its tutoring options by offering one-on-one tutoring to students who submitted requests. To a certain extent, the QRC has always offered one-on-one tutoring, but tutors were assigned on an *ad hoc* basis. This year, we made our process for requesting one-on-one tutoring more transparent and created an online form, so that any student can request an individual tutor. In our new system for assigning individual tutors, each student who applies for individual tutoring is guaranteed three hours of tutoring each week. If students create study groups, they can pool their hours for more time with a dedicated tutor. While many students benefit from the collaborative environment of the QRC, some students find more individualized support critical for their success. Going forward, we will continue to offer one-on-one tutoring support for students who make requests.

This year, the QRC also worked to redefine its Learning Assistants program, so that the focus of the program is offering students supplemental instruction in their coursework. (Previously, the program had been conceived primarily as enrichment for the tutors, rather than as a means for supporting students.) In an effort to create a more flexible program, beginning in block 5, Learning Assistants were paid hourly rather than by a stipend, and the total number of hours that students could work in a given block was

reduced. As a result, students did not have to commit to working thirty-nine hours in a block in order to be Learning Assistants, and we could stretch our budget further and offer more faculty opportunities to work with Learning Assistants. Of all of the programs that we offer in the QRC, faculty members report the most satisfaction with the Learning Assistants program, as evidenced by our recent faculty survey. We will continue to refine this program through the next year and offer training to students who will work as Learning Assistants.

Staffing and Training

In addition to hiring a new Director, the QRC also instituted a new competitive interviewing process for tutor selection. During block 5, the QRC hired 15 new tutors out of 24 interviewed. The tutors who were selected represented disciplines from across the College. The acting Director of the QRC and at least two peer tutors participated in all of the interviews, and students who were not selected were offered constructive feedback on their interview performance. During block break of block 6, half of the tutors who were hired also participated in a two-day training. The other half of the tutors who were hired will participate in training offered by the new Director before the beginning of the fall semester.

Usage Data

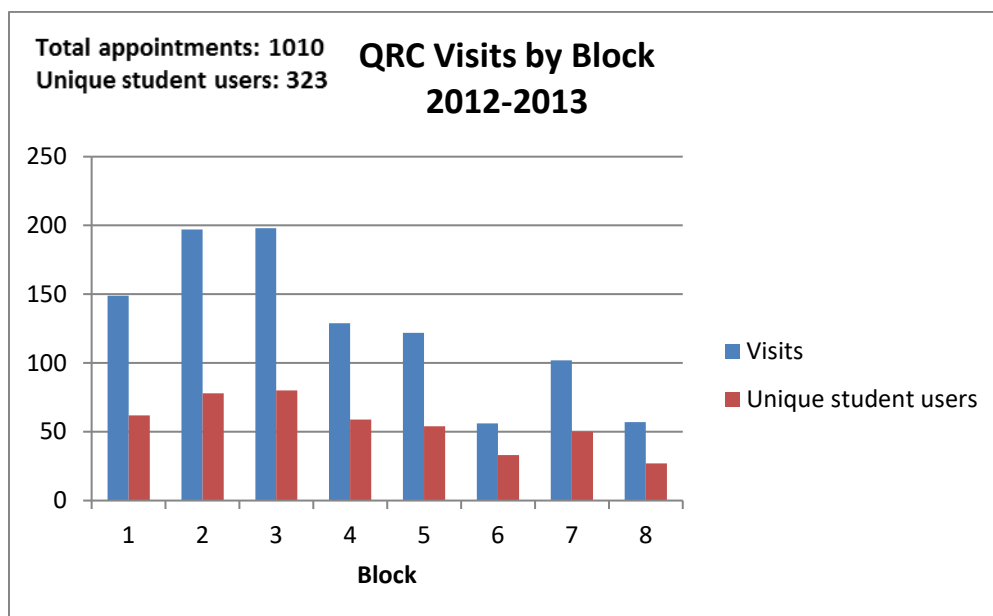
Drop- in Tutoring

The QRC tracks students' drop-in visits through a voluntary sign-in sheet. Unlike the Writing Center, which works only on an individual basis with students who must check-in before their appointments at a centralized front desk, the tutors in the QRC are not assigned to work individually with students, and tutors may be responsible for tutoring many students at once. Moreover, unlike tutoring in the Writing Center, tutoring in the QRC does not happen in a central space but instead takes place throughout the Learning Commons, so there is no obvious place to sign-in to use the services. Unfortunately, until we have a space that will facilitate students' signing in, or, perhaps, have a budget to hire a greeter whose job is to ensure that students, wherever they are working, sign in and do so completely, we can have little confidence in our records for drop-in tutoring.

While we face significant difficulties ensuring that students who seek drop-in tutoring support at the QRC sign in, such challenges are not new for the QRC. With an understanding that our numbers are not reliable, we should note that we experienced a 23% decrease in the number of students who signed in for drop-in hours during the 2012-13 academic year. This decrease in student use might reflect the broader transitions that took place in the QRC during the year with Mark Morgenstern's departure and the absence of a full-time director. This decrease could also reflect changes in service options, with more students seeking out individual tutoring and working with Learning Assistants, and fewer seeking drop-in tutorial support. (Students who worked individually with tutors or with Learning Assistants are not represented in these numbers.) Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the QRC, so it does not seem likely that the quality of tutoring was a factor in the decrease in numbers.

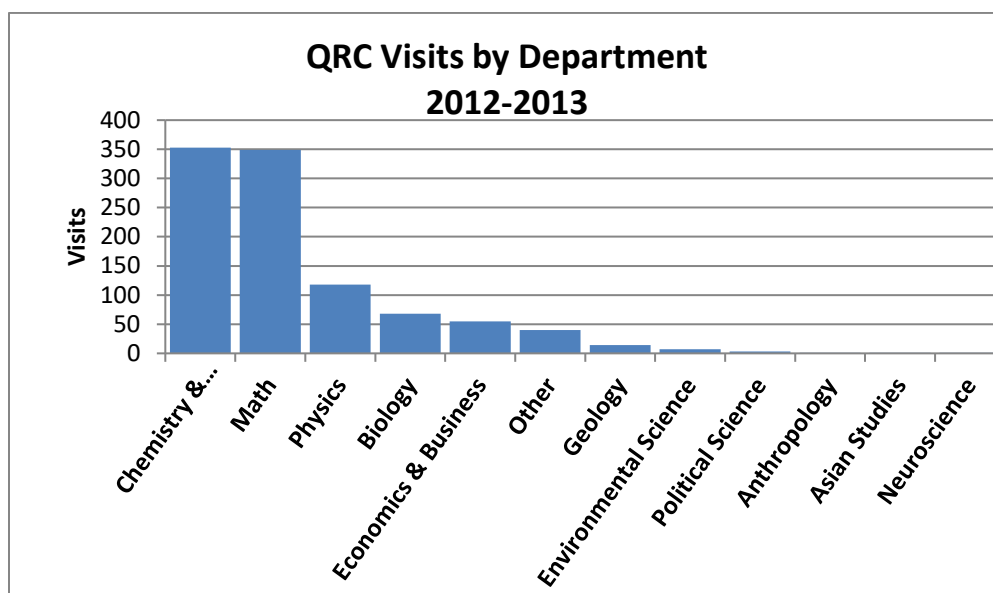
Figure A shows by block the number of students who signed in during drop-in hours. The QRC recorded 1010 student visits with 323 unique users. Blocks two and three were our busiest blocks, while blocks 6 and 8 were our least busy. Learning Centers nationally report greater student usage during fall semesters than they do during spring semesters, so this trend is not surprising.

Figure A



As figure B indicates, most of our drop-in students were seeking support for their chemistry and math courses, and to a lesser degree, they sought drop-in tutoring in physics, biology, and economics. These disciplinary usage trends are consistent with trends in previous years, with a slight increase in the number of visits from students in Economics.

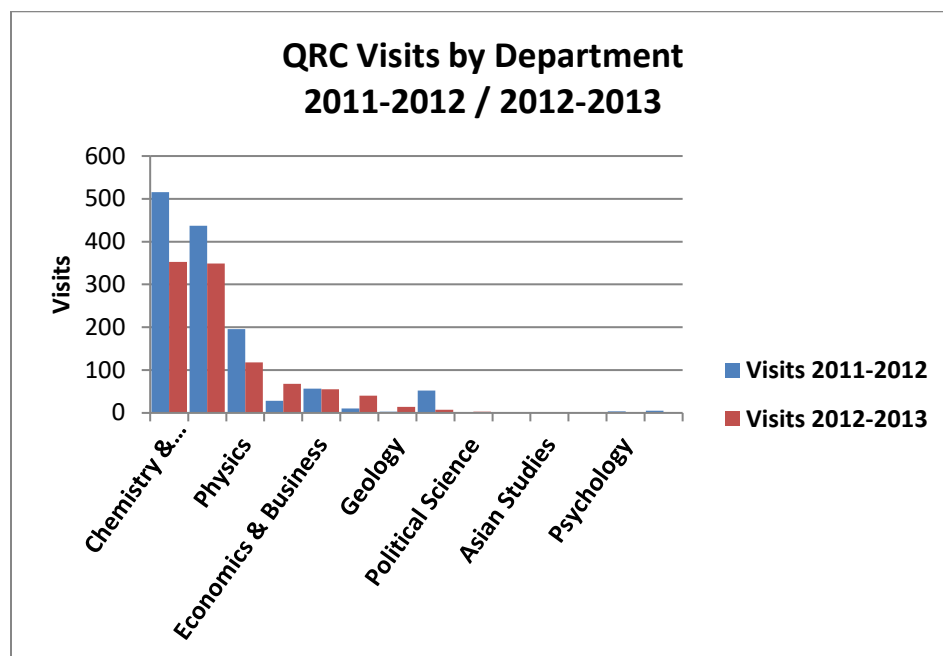
Figure B



As Figure C indicates, the QRC experienced an overall decrease in drop-in visits recorded, with a 23% decrease in number of student visits and 2% decrease in unique student users. The most striking decrease

in student visits took place during block 6, though we saw a decrease in student visits every block except block 3. We can find no immediate or obvious reasons for the decrease in students visiting the QRC. Next year, with the arrival of a new QRC director, we may consider surveying students through focus groups to ascertain their needs for drop-in tutoring.

Figure C



Students at all levels of their education used the QRC drop-in services in the following percentages:

Year	Percentage
First year students	9%
Sophomores	20%
Juniors	23%
Seniors	45%
Other (MAT, Exchange, etc.)	3%

We were surprised to see that we served so few first-year students in the QRC and will seek opportunities in the future to reach out to this population of students, who can benefit from using our services throughout their time at CC.

Among the students who sign in to use the QRC, the average grade point is 3.4547, which is higher than the average GPA of the total population of CC students, which is 3.3556. A comparison between the average GPAs of QRC users and non-users suggests that students who use the QRC are not, by and large, struggling students, and they may in fact be students who are striving for excellence. In other words, the QRC is not a center for remedial support.

Individual Tutoring by Appointment

During the 2012-13 academic year, the QRC supported 40 students enrolled in a number of courses through individual tutoring sessions. In several cases, students recruited other students from their classes to pool their time and form study groups. In the past, the QRC was reluctant to offer individual tutoring because it worked against the community ethos of the Center. The previous director was also concerned that he would be overwhelmed by students requesting individual tutors. Despite past concerns, we were not overwhelmed by requests for individual tutoring, and we averaged 5 requests per block—a manageable number—and one that we could afford to support. Since many students also pooled their tutoring hours and worked together, we also were able to create communities of students working together in individual classes.

Department	Number of Students Requesting One-on-one Tutoring*
Biology	1
Chemistry	12
Economics	10
Environmental Programs	2
Geology	1
Math/Computer Science	9
Physics	5
	40

*This number does not reflect the number of students who may have worked with an individual tutor in a study group.

Learning Assistants Program

During the 2012-13 academic year, the QRC supported Learning Assistants in 29 classes. This number represents a 45% increase in the number of Learning Assistants. The breakdown by department of classes with Learning Assistants is as follows:

Department	Learning Assistants Assigned to Classes*
Biology	9
Chemistry	11
Environmental Programs	1
Math and Computer Science	4
Psychology	1
Physics	1
Sociology	2
	29

*This number does not represent the number of students served by Learning Assistants, only the number of Learning Assistants assigned to classes.

Given the pace and intensity of the block plan and the challenges of predicting student usage patterns for drop-in tutoring, the Learning Assistants Program represents one of our most successful means for supporting students in their coursework. Faculty members enjoy the relationships they have with the tutors who are supporting their classes, and students feel confident that tutors who are assigned to their classes are familiar with the material and the specific expectations of their professors. Because the

Learning Assistants model is such an effective means for supporting students, the QRC will continue to develop this model in the future.

Future Directions

With the hire of a new Director and a year's worth of outreach to faculty, I anticipate that the coming year will be a dynamic one for the QRC. Specifically, the new Director will have as his priorities:

- Assessing the needs of students enrolled in quantitatively challenging classes
- Evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of our current service models, especially drop-in tutoring
- Developing a robust tutor training curriculum for QRC tutors
- Developing more accurate ways of tracking the number of students served
- Developing online modules in support of quantitative reasoning for students and faculty use
- Conducting outreach to faculty and students

Pre-major advising (FYE and Sophomore Jump)

During the 2011-12 academic year, as the College was deciding the future administrative structure of the Colket Center, the administration elected to dissolve the position of Director of First Year and Sophomore Studies, previously held by Julie Tetley. The administrative work related to FYE was reassigned to the new Reading, Rhetoric, and First Year Programs Specialist, while the responsibility for sophomore programming was assumed by the Director of the Colket Center. Although both the RRFYP Specialist and the Director of the Colket Center had responsibilities for pre-major advising written into their job descriptions, they were asked to avoid engaging in academic advising.

Work Undertaken

During the 2012-13 academic year, the Colket Center accomplished the following in support of the First Year Experience and Sophomore Jump Programs:

- Coordinated a Choosing a Major dinner series for first-year and sophomore students
- Hosted 6 dinners with select faculty and up to twenty sophomore students
- Co-hosted 12 events with the career center targeting sophomores
- Hosted a climbing night for sophomores
- Sponsored a sophomore (SOOT) trip with outdoor education. Student discussions focused on the sophomore year and choosing a major
- Designed an e-portfolio system for advising, which is currently being developed by Ideal-Logic
- Revised the advising questionnaire
- Updated and improved the all-college and prerequisites information
- Refined processes for streamlining the collection and posting of FYE courses
- Developed a more robust and appealing Website for marketing FYE classes
- Helped coordinate and facilitate two FYE faculty retreats, in August 2012 and April 2013
- Collaborated with Miro Kummel to draft and submit FYE Program-related Initiatives to the Strategic Planning Committee
- Developed and proposed two FYE courses for the 2013-14 academic year

Future Directions

Goals for the 2013-14 academic year include:

- Attending an intensive, week-long NACADA summer institute to learn more about best practices in advising
- Participating in campus-wide discussions about advising
- Collaborating with the Associate Dean of the College, representatives from the FEC, and the Crown Center to Coordinate faculty development opportunities around advising
- Clarifying the Colket Center's role in pre-major advising
- Rethinking programming for the Sophomore Jump Program