SAAC Mission & Goals

Mission: The mission of the Student Academic Assistance Center (SAAC) is to enable students to improve their academic performance through a variety of tutorial and learning services, including one on one and group tutoring, supplemental instructional services, and interactive subject area computer programs.

The Student Academic Assistance Center (SAAC) is open to all the students at the National Hispanic University and offers professional and peer tutoring services. It endeavors to provide high-quality learning assistance in math, science, reading comprehension, writing, research and study skills, which are aimed at meeting a variety of learning needs at various ability levels. SAAC works with students to enhance their knowledge and skills by empowering them to become independent learners. SAAC staff and faculty work together in order to offer effective, collaborative, and active learning experiences.

Tutoring

The SAAC tutorial program is designed to assist students with their academic challenges. The program emphasizes faculty interaction and academic support. Tutors will provide assistance in mathematics, reading, writing and study skills to help students develop the necessary skill level to ensure success in college. The role of the SAAC tutor is to guide students in the development of their academic potential and motivate students to become self-directed learners. Furthermore, the SAAC tutorials are incorporated into the curriculum in English 40, 45, and 100 courses as well as Math 40, 45 and 100 in order to provide students with one-on-one support and feedback catered to their individual needs. The tutorials will prepare students for the more rigorous upper division courses. These tutoring services are offered to all enrolled students at NHU free of charge.

Student Referrals

SAAC and academic departments have been working in tandem to identify students with academic difficulties in order to assist them in their learning. Typically, professors are encouraged to identify students who have acute problems in basic literacy and college skills such as reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, writing, grammar, math, and so forth. Upon identifying these students in his/her class, the professor will fill out and submit the SAAC Referral form, which is available online on the NHU website under the SAAC section. The SAAC director will immediately receive the student referral via email and act upon it by assigning a tutor to work with the student.

Students can get help with English, Math and other challenging courses, study skills, Junior Writing Proficiency Test preparation, standardized test preparation, reading, and writing skills. Students can study with a tutor, meet individually with the SAAC Director for advice and information, work in study groups, and use interactive software programs that strengthen academic and learning skills.
Developmental and Freshman Classes

The SAAC activities such as one on one and group tutorials have been incorporated into the developmental and freshman English and Math courses, that is, ENG 40, 45, and 100, as well as Math 40, 45, and 100. As part of the course requirement, students will have to spend approximately 2 hours per week in the Student Academic Assistance Center by working on their assignments, interacting with one another, and the tutors and SAAC personnel. For instance, for the above-cited English classes, students should have their papers and essays proofread and discussed by the English tutors in the SAAC. Additionally, as specified by the professor and the class, students in English classes may be required to complete certain language units of the software installed on the SAAC computers. Each class has a class set with individual folders for the students to write down their hours and tasks accomplished. The tutors must sign on the assignment sheets these in the student folders. The one-to-one tutorials and interactions are usually tailored to the student’s individual needs. As such, they help students improve their reading, writing, and mathematical skills by specifically addressing their needs and areas that they need to improve on. Once the students come to the SAAC and experience the academic support system while taking developmental and freshman classes, they will want to continue coming to the SAAC for their more advanced and upper division courses voluntarily even though it is not a requirement. In fact, the high number of SAAC use, as reflected in the SAAC head-count and individual use, is an indication that the students, by and large, are satisfied and pleased with the academic assistance that they receive in the Student Academic Assistance Center. Furthermore, the results of the SAAC student survey that was conducted in fall 2005 were predominantly positive. Indeed, the students main suggestions were to extend the hours for the tutorials from 8 to 9 pm on weekdays and to extend the hours for the tutor who was tutoring advanced math (geometry, calculus, and trigonometry). The SAAC director made the aforementioned changes to augment and extend the SAAC services to the students.

SAAC Goals

To fulfill its mission, the Student Academic Assistance Center has set out to achieve the following overarching goals:

1. Enhance and facilitate student academic success by providing instructional and tutorial support services to NHU students.
2. Enhance the National Hispanic University by providing quality service in support of student success and retention by working in tandem with other student-centered services, including the First Year Experience Program, Student Success Program, and the Summer Bridge Program.

SAAC Objectives

1. Respect all students' need to seek assistance and to maintain confidentiality regarding their academic and personal concerns.
2. Act upon the belief that each individual is unique and requires a personalized approach for academic success.
3. Respect learner diversity, treat all students fairly, and recognize and promote individual rates of development.
4. Work with students to enhance their knowledge and skills by empowering them to become independent learners.

**Program Review Self Reflection**

After careful consideration, the following areas seem to need reinforcement and improvement:

1. **Website modification** – the SAAC link to NHU’s website need to be altered to include such critical and useful information as mission, goals and objectives.

2. **Close collaboration and coordination with the first year experience program and Student Success program** in terms of student referrals for tutoring and overall student retention as a concentrated effort.

3. **Close collaboration and coordination with Departments especially General Studies Department** in such areas as common writing assignments and departmental finals to ensure uniformity across developmental and freshman English courses and to make sure that students have mastered the basic skills in reading and writing before moving on to the next class.

4. **Expand data collection** to include more quantifiable data and monitor students’ progress. Currently the SAAC collects such data as the number of students served per month and academic year (volume) and student satisfaction surveys. What is additionally needed are the outcomes for developmental and freshman courses such as student grades that will be reviewed by First Year Experience Program Director, SAAC Director, and a Retention Specialist. By reviewing and comparing such data as course grades in developmental and freshman English and Math courses, we can assess the success of the SAAC tutorials and other related services such as First Year Experience and Student Success Program as well.

5. **Hire and train more tutors** in English, Math and other subjects so that there is a good ratio between students and tutors.

6. **Enhance and Expand student study materials and resources** such as English and ESL dictionaries, grammar reference books, and other related materials.

7. **Install new computers in the SAAC** with a back-up server to improve the technology being utilized by students and their subsequent performance.
Program Review Timeline

1. Convening the Program Review Committee – September 2008
   Committee Members:
   George Shamshayooadeh (SAAC Director) – Chair
   Maria Villanueva (First Year Experience Director)
   Patricia Solano (Math Instructor)
   Michael Jordan (General Studies Faculty)

2. Conduct the Self-Study – September 11 – November 12, 2008
   Present Self-Study to the Provost and Institutional Research Director – November 12, 2008
   Host Outside Reviewers – March 2009
   Prepare Plan of Action – April 2009
   Present Plan of Action to Provost – April 15, 2009
   Seek Provost Approval for plan of action – April/May 2009