A New Tutoring Center: Challenges, Opportunities, and Surprises

Hamilton College Reunions
June 8, 2013, 3:00 p.m.
QSR Center, C. A. Johnson 303

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Director of QSR Center
Hamilton College
Hamilton College

- Open curriculum — No distribution requirements

- Graduation requirements:
  - Complete a major
  - 3 writing-intensive courses
  - QSR Requirement (1 course)
  - Physical education requirement
History of Quantitative Literacy at Hamilton College

- 1979  IBM grant to study quantitative literacy
- 1984  Q-Lit Committee developed Q-Skills exam
- 1990  Established the first Quantitative Literacy Center in Silliman Hall (Now Couper Hall)
- 1993  QLit. Center moves to C. A. Johnson
- 1996  Quantitative Literacy Requirement passed by faculty
- 2004  Q-Skills Exam becomes optional
- 2011  Center name changed to QSR Center to reflect support for the new QSR Requirement
- 2012  Center moves to new location in C. A. Johnson
Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (QSR) Requirement and CAP Guidelines

For students in the Class of 2014 and later: Hamilton expects that every student will demonstrate facility in quantitative and symbolic reasoning by completing **one or more courses** in at least one of the following three categories:

1. **Statistical Analysis.** The use of statistical analysis to describe data and to make inferences.
2. **Mathematical Representation.** The use of mathematical models such as those based on graphs, equations and geometric objects to represent patterns, relationships and forms.
3. **Logic and Symbolic Reasoning.** The use of formal logic or symbolic reasoning such as in the following examples: the proper construction of a computer program or a formal proof; the analysis of language in linguistics; or the study of music theory.

This requirement should be fulfilled by the end of the second year at Hamilton College.
Functions of the QSR Center:

• Supports the QSR requirement and faculty
• Offers peer tutoring in introductory level courses containing a math/quantitative/symbolic component
• Students drop in to review a topic, use computers and the printer
• Encourages collaborative learning through group work—students help each other
• Offers review for post-graduate exams such as the GRE, as well as workshops designed to help with specific courses
How Students Use the Center

• Students come in on their own or are referred by their professors
• Help is available beyond office hours
• Center offers a computer lab
• Students sign in, identifying course, professor, and purpose of visit
• Students review past material, returned exams, quizzes, and homework with a tutor
• Students work with other students from their classes
Questions we asked:

• What are the needs of our students?
• What does our faculty need?
• What is our campus culture?
• Where will the center be located?
• How can we match the center’s layout to its mission?
• How will the center fit into the curriculum?
• What budget do we have?
• Who will be working on the planning? Administration? Physical plant? Architects?
• What will make our center unique?
• Who will make the final decisions on design, furniture, décor?
Your Ideal Center: Tutors’ Responses

The Ideal QLIT Center

Lemoy

TABLE

MATH

DIRECTOR

TABLE

Econ/Chem

Phys/Psych

Bookshelf

White board

Computer
Architects’ Rendering of QSR Center

QSR 303 - Looking south

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From this...
... and this!
Surprises in the New Center:

Tutors’ Perspectives
- The larger size enables students to collaborate and learn from each other
- Bright, lively, and spacious
- The whiteboards!
- The rolling chairs
- The added exercise climbing up the two flights of stairs

Director’s Perspective
- The brightness
- The ability to be an observer from the office
- The large conference table
- The success of the Top Topics board
- Able to arrange special topics sessions with “The Math Commons”