

# THE SARC TIMES

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SARC'S ANNUAL REPORT

The mission of the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) is to strengthen comprehensive learning, enhance retention, and promote student success by providing academic support and testing services to UCF students and the surrounding community. This is accomplished through campus and community outreach, academic advising, tutoring, supplemental instruction, academic and standardized testing, and learning assistance.

The Student Academic Resource Center staff worked diligently to enhance the University's achievement of its goals for the year 2003-2004.

### Below are some of SARC's accomplishments for the year 2003-2004:

- SARC celebrated 15 years of providing academic excellence through delivery of academic support services to students at the University of Central Florida. Since the inception of SARC, over 130,000 students have utilized a cadre of programs and services provided by the department.
- A total of 19,693 students (duplicated headcount) visited the SARC lab during the academic year 2003-2004.
- Tutorial services were provided to 8,425 students (duplicated headcount) during the academic year 2003-2004.
- The Supplemental Instruction Program recorded a total of 14,264 (duplicated headcount) student contacts. SI supported 47 class sections and 1,363 SI sessions

were held during the academic year 2003-2004.

- The Supplemental Instruction program partnered with Residence Life to provide weekly BSC 2010 SI sessions in the Hercules Community of the Academic Village during the spring 2004 semester. A total of 386 students participated.
- Faculty supported tutorial services and the SI program through referrals and offering students the opportunity to receive extra credit by attending BSC 2010, GLY 1030 and AST 2002 tutorial and SI sessions.
- SARC facilitated 77 academic success workshops and 2,273 students attended these sessions.
- SARC was open 24 hours during final exam week (fall 2003/spring 2004) and 1,424 students (duplicated headcount) utilized this service.
- SARC offered for the second year, four (4) Mastering College Level Coursework seminars to incoming FTIC students. A total of 213 students participated in these pre-college seminars.
- SARC provided outreach programming to over 20,000 students.
- The 2003 Pegasus Success Program maintained an overall retention rate of 91% summer 2003 through spring 2004 term.
- The University Testing Center administered 20,347 tests.

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"Much I have learned  
from my teachers, more  
from my colleagues,  
but most from my  
students".

- Talmud

## HOW FACULTY CAN ENCOURAGE STUDENT RETENTION

According to Vincent Tinto, the single most important reason why students leave college is lack of student involvement. The ability to make connections with other students, faculty and administrators during the first year of college seems to be an important predictor of student persistence. Colleges and universities have addressed this issue with retention programs such as academic advising, orientation services, freshman courses, peer mentoring and many other programs to help students develop an affiliation with the institution. Tinto argues that, "while many of these retention efforts have helped students complete their college education, their long term impact on retention has been limited" (1) because they have not changed the quality of the academic experience. To enhance the first year experience, faculty and administrators must work together to create engaging educational settings. This could translate to the development of learning communities, but also student/faculty interaction and classroom management that is conducive to student engagement. **Below are some ideas faculty can implement to enhance student connection with the institution:**

1. Learn the name of each student as quickly as possible and use the student's name in class.
2. Send students an email if they are absent. Make an appointment with them to discuss attendance, make-up work, etc.
3. Get feedback periodically from students (perhaps a select few) on their perceptions of your attitudes toward them, your personal involvement, etc.
4. Socialize with students as your "style" permits by attending their clubs or social activities, by having lunch with them, by walking with them between classes, etc.
5. Provide positive reinforcement whenever possible; give students a respectful answer to any question they might ask.
6. Give your students your office telephone number, email address, and the location of your office.
7. Have the students establish a "buddy" system for absences, work missed, assignments, tutoring, study groups, etc. Exchange telephone numbers; pair them by majors or geographical proximity.
8. Circulate around the class as you talk or ask questions. This movement creates a physical closeness to the students. Avoid standing behind the lectern or sitting behind the desk for the entire period.
9. Give each student a mid-term grade and indicate what each student must do to improve.
10. Tell the students (orally and in writing) what your attendance policy is.
11. Announce tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI) frequently in class. Post SI sessions times and locations before class begins. Make these activities mandatory, especially for students who are not performing as expected.
12. Let students know that the learning resources you use in class (slides, tapes, films) are available to them outside of class. Explain the procedures to secure the material, and take them to the area.
13. Get to class before the students arrive; be the last one to leave.
14. Use familiar examples in presenting materials. If you teach rules, principles, definitions, and theorems, explicate these with concrete examples that students can understand.
15. Clarify and have students understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a classroom. Be consistent in enforcing your rules.
16. Good eye contact with students is extremely important both in and out of class.
17. Ask students to submit sample test questions (objective or subjective) prior to a test. The class itself can compose a test or quiz based on your objectives.
18. Utilize small group discussions in class whenever feasible.
19. Take the initiative to contact and meet with students who are not performing as expected. Be especially cognizant of the "passive" student; one who comes to class, sits quietly, does not participate, but does poorly on tests, quizzes, etc.
20. Use your imagination to devise ways to reinforce positively student accomplishments. Try to avoid placing students in embarrassing situations, particularly in class.
21. Use your background, experience, and knowledge to inter-relate your subject matter with other academic disciplines.

### References

Tinto, V. *Rethinking the first year of college*. <http://soeweb.syr.edu/Faculty/Vtinto/>

Tinto, V. *Student Success and the building of involving educational communities*. <http://soeweb.syr.edu/Faculty/Vtinto/>

*Ideas to encourage student retention. Honolulu Community College Faculty Development Website:* <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/index.htm>

## FACULTY VOICES

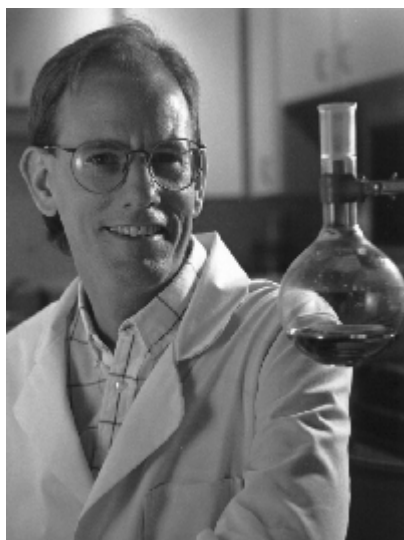
### DR. SETH ELSHEIMER

#### ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

Dr. Seth Elsheimer teaches Organic Chemistry, Applied Molecular Spectroscopy, and Honors Chemistry. For about four years, his large Organic Chemistry classes have received Supplemental Instruction (SI) support. Dr. Elsheimer feels fortunate to have had this support available to his students. "Our classes have gotten so big that it is just not possible for me to interact with every student. SI helps students who have questions and are not able to come to my office hours or stay after class."

There is a lot of material in Organic Chemistry classes.

Dr. Elsheimer recommends students to start studying early and to complete all assignments. In addition, he encourages students to attend SI sessions. Dr. Elsheimer announces SI in class every day, refers to it during class, and includes information on SI sessions in the syllabus. Because of his continuous encouragement, SI sessions in his classes usually have excellent attendance.



*Interview by Justin McMullen (SI Leader)*

*Photo by Robert G.S. Reed*

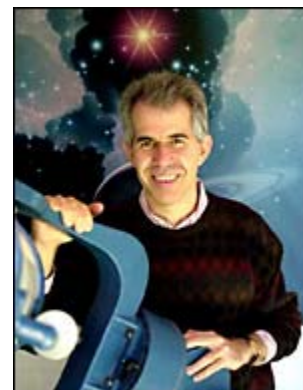
In Dr. Elsheimer's organic chemistry classes, differences in final grades between SI and non SI participants are usually statistically significant. Even though many of the students who attend SI are the "good students", many are borderline. Without SI, they could fall in the "at risk" group. SI support is particularly helpful to these students. Dr. Elsheimer wishes more students in the "at risk" group would take advantage of SI.

Dr. Elsheimer recommends SI support to other faculty. "There are students who are just intimidated by faculty; they won't ask the professor but they will ask another student. To have peer SI leaders is a nice touch. I have been fortunate to have had good SI leaders available for my classes."

### DR. HUMBERTO CAMPINS

#### ASTRONOMY

Dr. Humberto Campins is a Professor of Physics and Astronomy and head of the Planetary and Space Science Group at UCF. He teaches Astronomy (AST 2002). This class has been supported with tutoring since fall of 2003. Dr. Campins sees many advantages to having tutoring support in his astronomy course. Students have additional hours when they can ask for help. They are much more comfortable asking a peer than a professor. In addition, "SARC offers a quiet environment dedicated to tutoring where teaching resources (such as celestial spheres) are available for them to have "hands-on" experience".



According to Dr. Campins, the main reason students don't do well in Astronomy is that the classes are too large. Another reason is their fear and preconceptions of math and science. Dr. Campins suggests students who struggle in his classes to attend all the lectures, read the material before the lecture, review the notes the same day, come to his office hours, go to the tutors at SARC, do all the homework, and do all the extra credit activities.

"For these large classes, having SARC tutors available is a blessing. I highly recommend it."

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#### QUOTES FROM STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED SI LAST SPRING

*"In SI we were able to come up with solutions to problems and help each other..."*

*"The SI leader helped us put the material in a simpler way."*

*"My grades improved dramatically since I started attending SI every week."*

*"Great learning environment. The SI leader helped us discuss many difficult concepts that were barely touched on in class lectures."*



STUDENT ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER

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## 2004 LEARNING FAIR: SARC'S NEW INITIATIVE

This fall semester of 2004, SARC will hold UCF's first "Learning Fair". This new initiative will have the participation of numerous offices and departments that support learning at UCF.

The Learning Fair will provide a venue to showcase the different and excellent academic support services available to our students at UCF. This event was created to foster academic success and retain students through the development of relevant personal and academic skills, and through increased awareness and use of learning support services on campus.

The Learning Fair will feature academic skills workshops on topics that include reading strategies, test-taking skills, time management, note taking, stress management, goal setting, discipline-specific learning strategies (e.g. chemistry and math), learning styles, library research skills, and many others. The workshops will be conducted by staff members from academic support centers on campus, faculty from selected disciplines, and student leaders who are experienced in tutoring and Supplemental Instruction.

The Learning Fair will also include interactive display tables from different campus programs and organizations that promote learning skills and academic skills workshops. These information tables will not only offer brochures and materials on learning skills but also interactive displays where students will have the opportunity to engage in activities such as games, puzzles, and demonstrations.

The Learning Fair will take place on **Tuesday, September 14, 2004** in the **Student Union, Key West, Room 218AB**.

**Please encourage your students to attend this event!**

## FALL 2004 ACADEMIC SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

SARC prides itself on sending a message to UCF students about taking charge of their academic learning. Many first-time-in-college and even some transfer students have a difficult time adjusting to the rigors of academic responsibilities at the college level. To assist students in making this transition, SARC provides a semester workshop series devoted to improving learning and study skill techniques.

Faculty members interested in a study skills workshop for their classes can contact SARC at 407-823-5130.

Below are the academic workshops SARC will offer this Fall 2004 semester.

<b>Large Class—Big Campus</b>	Wednesday, September 1
<b>Goal Setting and Motivation</b>	Tuesday, September 6
<b>Time Management</b>	Tuesday, September 14
<b>Note Taking / Textbook Reading</b>	Tuesday, September 21
<b>Memory and Concentration</b>	Tuesday, September 28
<b>Power Studying</b>	Wednesday, September 29
<b>Strategies for taking different types of tests</b>	Wednesday, October 6
<b>Stress Management</b>	Tuesday, October 12
<b>Reality Check</b>	Tuesday, October 19
<b>NOW I need to get serious</b>	Tuesday, October 26
<b>Getting to the rest of the semester</b>	Wednesday, November 17
<b>Still trying to get to the rest of the semester</b>	Thursday, November 18

*Please contact SARC for time and place!*