

THE SARC TIMES

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ANOTHER YEAR STANDING FOR OPPORTUNITY

The Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) had another year of student success. The SARC staff worked diligently to enhance retention and promote student success. Much of this work was accomplished through campus and community outreach, academic advising, tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), academic and standardized testing, and learning assistance. During the 2005-2006 academic year, SARC experienced an increase in the quality and quantity of its services.

Below are some of SARC's accomplishments for the year 2005-2006:

- A total of 20,745 students (duplicated headcount) visited the SARC lab. This number represents tutoring contacts, CLAST math and General Knowledge math workshop series and review sessions, 24 hour usage, and final exam review sessions. This represents an increase of 57% with respect to the 2004-2005 academic year.
- Tutorial services were provided to 15,208 students (duplicated headcount) in 25 different subject areas.
- The Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program recorded a total of 23,919 student contacts (duplicated headcount). 1,205 SI sessions were held for 44 class sections. This represents an increase of 42% with respect to the 2004-2005 academic year.
- SARC offered 42 SI sessions in College Algebra at the Rosen College of

Hospitality Management.

- T.A.S.K. Club (Tutors Advancing Student Knowledge), comprised of SARC tutors and SI leaders, became an officially recognized student club by UCF. The club completed a fundraising project and held three social functions.
- SARC held the second annual Learning Fair, with 361 students in attendance. Over 80% of the participants were FTIC students.
- Faculty supported tutorial services and the SI program through referrals and offered students the opportunity to receive extra credit by attending tutorial and SI sessions for BSC 2010, AST 2002, PCB 3063, GLY 1030, and CHM 2045.

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SARC AND THE IF INITIATIVE

UCF's new Information Fluency (IF) initiative has been developed to improve students' ability to gather, evaluate, and use information effectively. Students are expected to use technology effectively, improve their research and communication skills, and develop better understanding of quantitative and qualitative information presented to them. These skills are essential for success in college and beyond the university as students move into the workplace.

Faculty, staff, and student mentors have a pivotal role in the development of these important skills, as they incorporate information fluency components into their courses, study groups, training sessions, and other student-related activities. Two important aspects of IF are mastering new content and becoming a master student. Our SARC tutors, Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders, peer mentors, and learning skills professionals can work in partnership with faculty to support the IF initiative in your courses, enhancing student development of study skills, problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making.

SARC staff can collaborate with faculty to enhance teaching and learning and to support the IF initiative.

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SUMMER MOTIVATIONAL EVENT: UCF IDOL

It was a night like no other! Five hundred students filled the Pegasus ballroom in the Student Union on Wednesday July 5th for a night of motivation and fun-filled student entertainment. The Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) and Multicultural Academic and Support Services (MASS) put on a memorable event that has become an annual partnership with SGA in an effort to increase freshmen summer programming. Motivational speaker, Professor Joe



Motivational speaker
Professor Joe Martin

Martin, gripped the audience with his inspirational message and personal “against all odds” success story. One student who attended was quoted as saying “the motivational speaker was amazing – best speaker I have ever seen in my life. His trials and tribulations were horrific but the fact that he survived and was successful was a motivator in itself.” Another student said “Joe Martin made me think about what kind of person I am, and made me want to change some things about myself. Very inspiring message.”

The “UCF Idol” talent show had the audience laughing hysterically, especially after each act when the judges shared their opinions in true “Idol” fashion. Darren Skinner, FYAE advisor, took on the role of Simon Cowell; Patricia Cuadra,

Pegasus Summer Advisor, played Paula Abdul; and Jeremi Cheeks, SARC Peer mentor, was Randi Jackson. Each of them stayed in character and Simon delivered piercing criticisms such as “you sounded like an over-glorified wedding singer.” Performers included Swing Knights, the KAPPA & Phi Beta Sigma step groups, Kevin Alan, Katie Beraha, Stephanie Trilli, Justincredible and Casino. This was definitely a summer event not to be missed! Special thanks went to the SARC Peers, with outstanding leadership from Abby Riggenbach, for their hard work in coordinating the event.



Professor Martin addresses students in the Pegasus Ballroom

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION: A WIN-WIN FOR STUDENTS AND SI LEADERS

By Kathleen Harowitz

As a pre-med student, I have had Supplemental Instruction (SI) in many of my science classes. The SI program offers study sessions for historically difficult courses. Each session – include discussion of important concepts, development of study strategies, and test review – is led by a student (the SI leader) who was previously successful in the class. Inspired by the sessions offered for several of my pre-med courses, I decided to get involved with the program as an SI leader in Dr Elsheimer’s Organic Chemistry I course.

Approximately 20 students arrived on the day of my first SI session. Due to the difficult nature of the day’s lecture, we reviewed the material slowly, continuously verifying that all the students were comfortable, and checking for understanding. At the end of the session, feedback was positive – students indicated they found SI helpful, and expressed gratitude for my paying equal attention to questions.

In preparation for the session preceding the first exam, I assembled a practice test – however, I was unprepared for the estimated 80 students the session attracted. Although addressing each student’s individual needs was a challenge, I was pleased to discover that interaction between them resulted in advanced problem solving – in some cases, beyond what I would have thought to offer on my own.

At the session following the return of their test scores, it was uplifting to witness several students running into the room and proudly flashing their exams. In our post-test review, we created a game plan to determine how we would alter our study methods to do even better on the next test.

Positive results were obtained throughout the semester. The number of students that achieved their test goals increased with each exam. One student informed me that her understanding of the material was now so thorough she was

FACULTY VOICES - DR. THOMAS BRUECKNER - PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Physical Science (PSC 1121) is one of the courses many UCF students take to fulfill their General Education science requirement. Although this applied physics course was designed for non-science majors, its content is rigorous and, to be successful in it, students require college-level study skills that work for science courses. Dr. Thomas Brueckner understands this and, last spring, his large physical science class sections began receiving Supplemental Instruction (SI) support. Dr. Brueckner believes students benefit from attending SI sessions because they can interact in small groups with the SI leader, someone who has seen the course from the student perspective, completed the course successfully, and is enthusiastic about the subject.



*Interview by
Priscilla Alzamora
(SI Leader)*

According to Dr. Brueckner, the main reason students don't do well in Physical Science is their fear and preconceptions of math and science and their dependence on the instructor "to feed them all the information." Regular attendance to SI sessions help students break this dependence. Under the guidance of the SI leader Priscilla Alzamora, students work together to solve problems, compare notes, discuss concepts, and review to prepare for exams. This exposure to active learning strategies and to the course material from the

student perspective promotes better performance on tests.

Dr. Brueckner regularly announces SI in class and includes information on SI sessions in the syllabus. Because of his continuous encouragement SI sessions in his classes had excellent attendance last spring semester. In both PSC 1121 class sections, differences in final grades between SI and non-SI participants were statistically significant, differing by as much as two letter grades.

Dr. Brueckner recommends SI support to other faculty. He also recommends they participate in the selection of and work closely with SI Leaders. "SI has been an enhancement in my classes. The students who have had faithful attendance at SI sessions have had higher exam scores. SI support helps me teach my large sections of PSC1121 more efficiently. My only regret is that I did not have SI in my classes for previous semesters. But now that I have got it going, I will keep using it for sure. SI rocks!"

SARC AND IF INITIATIVE... CONT'D

Below are some ways in which this collaboration can be accomplished:

- SARC can bring a workshop to your class. SARC offers interactive academic workshops in topics such as time management, goal setting, note taking, test-taking skills, stress management, and preparation for final exams.
- If you teach large classes with high rates of D and F grades and withdrawals, contact us to discuss the possibility of offering Supplemental Instruction (SI) or peer tutoring.
- If SARC offers Supplemental Instruction (SI) or peer tutoring in your class, please make regular announcements in class and encourage students to use these services.
- Be a faculty guest speaker at one of our events. Instructors have spoken to our freshman students on faculty expectations.
- Offer a workshop on study strategies specific to your discipline at the Learning Fair or as part of our academic success workshop series.
- If students in your class are having difficulty with the course and need to develop better college-level study skills, you may refer them to SARC's Learning Skills Specialist.
- Incorporate our learning skills handouts in your curriculum. We have 89 handouts on topics such as time management, test preparation, test taking, reading textbooks, goal setting, self-testing, concentration, memorization, vocabulary, and study skills diagnosis.

THE 2006 LEARNING FAIR

This fall semester of 2006, SARC will hold its third Learning Fair. This event, now a SARC tradition, gathers in one place all the different and excellent academic support services available to our students at UCF.

The Learning Fair features interactive display tables from different campus programs and organizations that promote learning skills. 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 games, puzzles, and demonstrations. The event will also include academic skills workshops on topics that include test-taking skills, time management, note taking, stress management, math anxiety, and strategies to study science.

The Learning Fair will take place on **Wednesday, September 13, 2006** in the **Student Union, Key West, Room 218AB**.

Please encourage your students to attend the Learning Fair!



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A WIN-WIN ... CONT'D

considering a career in pharmaceutical research. When I fell ill one week, the students held their own session in the library, leading me to believe I had made a difference in how they approached college work and how they took charge of their own learning.

Being an SI leader was a fabulous experience academically and personally. The best part of working as an SI leader last semester was the happiness I felt when I saw students succeed in organic chemistry. I also enjoyed attending Dr. Elsheimer's class again and sharing knowledge and academic success.

ANOTHER SEMESTER... CONT'D

- SARC facilitated 117 academic success workshops reaching 5,475 students, a 63% increase with respect to the 2004-2005 academic year.
- SARC's Peer Mentoring Program connected with 1,156 students.
- SARC was open 24 hours during final exam week, connecting with 3,481 students who either attended a final review session or studied in the SARC Lab.
- SARC received re-certification of the tutor training program through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) for the next five years.
- Peer Tutors and SI Leaders attended a tutor training at Rollins College to discuss tutoring techniques with Rollins College tutors and tutors from Muhlenberg College.
- Two SI Leaders attended the 3rd Annual NCSI Peer Leader Conference.

FALL 2006 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.

This Fall 2006 semester, SARC will offer the following academic workshops:

Classroom/Campus Etiquette	Tuesday, August 29
Goal Setting/Motivation	Wednesday, September 6
Classroom/Campus Etiquette ("Encore")	Monday, September 11
Note Taking/Textbook Reading	Tuesday, September 12
SARC Annual Learning Fair	Wednesday, September 13
The Freshmen Survival Kit	Wednesday, September 13
POWER Studying	Wednesday, September 20
Memory & Concentration	Tuesday, September 26
How Not to Procrastinate	Wednesday, October 4
Stress Management	Tuesday, October 10
Goal Achievement vs. Goal Setting	Thursday, October 12
Surviving Until the End—Get Your Act Together	Wednesday, October 18
Time Management	Monday, October 23
Ready, Set, Go: Design a Study Calendar for the End of the Semester	Wednesday, October 25
Final Exam Preparation—19 Days and Counting	Wednesday, November 15

Please contact SARC for time and place!