

# THE SARC TIMES

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## SUCCESS STARTS AT SARC

The Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) had another year of 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), and learning assistance. During the 2006-2007 academic year, SARC experienced an increase in the quality and quantity of its services.

### Below are some of SARC's accomplishments for the year 2006-2007:

- A total of 24,960 students (duplicated headcount) visited the SARC lab. This number represents tutoring contacts, General Knowledge math workshops, 24 hour usage, and final exam review sessions.
- Tutorial services were provided to 21,815 students (duplicated headcount) in 24 different subject areas.
- The Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program recorded a total of 30,295 student contacts (duplicated headcount). 1,557 SI sessions were held for 58 class sections.
- SARC received the Outstanding First-Year Advocate Award – Learning and Interacting with New Knights (LINK) at annual SDES breakfast
- T.A.S.K. participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Association of Tutoring Professional (ATP) conference conducting the poster session “How to Create a Tutor Club.” SI Leaders presented the poster session “Creating Magic in SI Sessions.”
- SARC held its third annual Learning Fair, with 681 students in attendance. Over 78% of the participants were FTIC students.
- Faculty supported tutorial services and the SI

program, offering students the opportunity to receive extra credit by attending tutorial and SI sessions for BSC 2010, AST 2002, PCB 3063, PCB 3707, and GLY 1030.

- SARC facilitated 144 academic success workshops reaching 6,860 students.
- SARC's Peer Mentoring Program connected with 1614 students through academic advising sessions, academic workshops, emails, and fundraising activities.
- SARC partnered with SGA in “Cram for the Exam” by providing tutoring and offering six academic workshops.
- SARC was open 24 hours during final exam week, connecting with 3,707 students who either attended a final review session or studied in the SARC Lab.

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## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN **IF** THE PEGASUS SUCCESS PROGRAM...

The Pegasus Essay is a mandatory reflective writing component of the Pegasus Success Program; a specialized 6-week summer bridge program, administered by the Student Academic Resource Center, and offered to selected students during the summer B term prior to their freshmen year. The program is designed to assist students in pursuing and achieving academic goals, and has been recognized by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) for outstanding institutional advising, and in 2006 received the prestigious Noel-Levitz Retention Excellence Award.

This year the Pegasus Program, coordinated by Sandra Macaulay Leon-Barth, was the recipient of a UCF Quality Enhancement Plan Initiative Information Fluency (IF) Grant. The proposal was written to include analysis of the Pegasus Essay, wherein students will gather, evaluate, and use the elements of their summer experience (academic advising, study skills, tutoring, workshops, and seminars) to thoroughly process their transition from high school to college.

In previous years the Pegasus Essay has taken on a memoir format whereby students wrote about their summer bridge experience. The IF principles of

## YOUR CAMPUS, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR DECISION

On Wednesday July 11<sup>th</sup>, the third annual Summer Motivational Event was back with a bang, bigger and better than ever. To kick off the event SGA President Brandie Hollinger gave a warm welcome and served as a shining example of campus and community-wide involvement and student success. This year's theme –Your Campus, Your Community, Your Decision–



Motivational speaker Jimmy Moore addresses summer students.

was echoed loudly in the message relayed by Jimmy Moore, motivational speaker and member of the UCF community. Jimmy challenged students to realize they are the architects of their own future, and they decide whether or not to succeed and make their time here at UCF count. In keeping with the global mindset, the audience was divided into seven sections, each representing a continent. Students were encouraged to bring a recyclable bottle or can- to keep recycling and global warming a topic at the forefront of students' minds-to show students they can make an impact on our world. This was also included as a

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## STUDENT LEADERS ALSO GROW WITH SI

While SI leaders have a tremendous impact in student learning, they gain valuable skills in their involvement in the SI program. The training and experience of being SI leaders allow them to become better students and acquire more confidence and better preparation for graduate school and job interviews. Because of these benefits Donelan (1999) has referred to SI leaders as "the real winners."

The benefits of being an SI leader have been reported by Fleming (2007) and other SI supervisors who have gathered feedback from SI leaders through interviews, informal conversations, focus groups, and evaluations. At UCF, SI leaders have conveyed their perception on the benefits and skills they have gained in their job through a questionnaire included in their semester evaluation. Below are some of the skills reported by UCF SI leaders in evaluations conducted between 2006 and 2007:

Confidence speaking in front of a group / Communication skills

*"I was very shy when I started in the SI program. Now I feel more confident, even in front of large groups."*

Listening skills

*"I am now more aware of differences in student learning styles and am able to relate to more types of individuals."*

Study skills for other classes / became effective student

*"Thanks to the opportunity of going over the organic chemistry material again, I performed very well on the DAT diagnostic test."*

*"I am now more organized and strategic in my own learning."*

*Continued on p. 4*

## NEW FRESHMEN LEARN HOW TO MASTER COLLEGE LEVEL COURSEWORK

What does it take to master college level coursework? Over 300 new freshmen discovered the answer to this question through participation in a four hour pre-college seminar facilitated by the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC). This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year SARC has been offered these seminars. Two seminars were conducted prior to the start of the summer B term and three were conducted prior to the start of the fall 2007 semester. Students were introduced to how to manage a semester of college-level coursework, how to relate to college professors, and how to take effective notes. Students also completed exercises in time management and goal setting. According to Jennifer Wright, Associate Director of SARC, "We want students to leave these seminars with confidence and proper decision-making skills to make it through their first experience in college."



Guest speaker, Dr. Cherie Geiger, discusses faculty expectations in the classroom.

Students received great advice from Dr. Cherie L. Geiger, Associate Chair and Associate Professor of Chemistry, regarding faculty expectations of college students. She left a memorable impression on students to feel reassured that faculty want to partner with students in the learning process. Further words came from a student panel comprised of SARC peer tutors and supplemental instruction leaders. These UCF upperclassmen assisted students in knowing whatever their nervousness and anxiety levels might be, that they had the same feelings when they started at UCF. According to DeLaine Priest, Assistant Vice-President of the Student Success Center, "Through the expertise and resources that SARC and the Student Success Center can offer freshmen specifically, we feel we are assisting in bridging the transition from high school to college." A student who participated in one of the summer seminars sent the following email message. "I just wanted to let you know how much I already appreciate all of the helpful advice you gave and also how much I appreciate how you made the seminar many times more interesting than I expected. After just two days of classes I know that it was because of your seminar that I feel organized and prepared. I am very glad to have had the opportunity to attend the seminar and would do it over again if given the chance, thanks again!"

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## FACULTY VOICES - DR. PEDRO PATINO - CHEMISTRY

Dr. Pedro Patino has been teaching chemistry at UCF for a little over a year. His courses range from CHM 2040 & CHM 2041 to CHM 2045—all of which encompass large class capacities. For many large lecture classes, it is quite frequent for some students to get lost in the mix. However, Dr. Patino has a secret weapon for these students—Supplemental Instruction (SI). Dr. Patino has received Supplemental Instruction (SI) for his classes throughout the entirety of his stay here at UCF. SI has been available at UCF through the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) for nine years, resulting in grade improvement and student retention for historically difficult academic courses such as General Chemistry I and II, Organic Chemistry I and II, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Genetics, General Biology, General Physics I, Physical Science, College Algebra, and Geology.



*Interview by Bryan Senisi  
(SI Leader)*

Supplemental Instruction (SI) uses regularly scheduled study sessions led by peers called SI leaders. They undergo continuous training in proactive strategies to conduct effective SI sessions. “During SI sessions, SI leaders help students apply study strategies to the course content”, says Dr. Ana Mack, coordinator of the SI program. “The integration of study skills with course content is what sets the SI program apart from other forms of collaborative learning. When students attend SI sessions regularly, the result is improved learning and higher final course grades.”

### THE 2007 LEARNING FAIR

This fall semester of 2007, SARC will hold its fourth 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 17, 2006** in the **Student Union, Key West, Room 218AB**. Please encourage your students to attend the Learning Fair!

Dr. Patino thinks highly of the SI program. He believes that students benefit from SI by finding answers to questions they cannot get in class, “because of the tight time schedule or just because of their shame to ask questions before others in a large classroom.” According to Dr. Patino, having SI sessions available in his class is a nice complement to his lectures and advice during office hours. “During SI sessions, students receive face-to-face assistance in a smaller environment, where they are not fettered by the fear of speaking out in a large lecture hall.”

According to Dr. Patino, the reason why many students do not succeed in a college chemistry course is because, “many students either do not have a strong background in chemistry, or don’t have any at all.” Furthermore, he postulates that a large percentage of his students “do not realize how different college and high school are, particularly with respect to the amount of study time necessary to succeed in a college level course.” Fortunately, SI acts as a beacon of refuge for these students, by fostering their learning and study skills. The study skills learned and practiced in SI sessions will remain with them throughout their college life.

In only three semesters, Dr. Patino has witnessed many success stories of students who struggled at first, but, with “the help they get from SI”, later went on to pass the class with satisfactory grades. He is currently creating a file for these students. Dr. Patino suggests that all students, especially those who are new to the college setting, should “remain focused in every class and ATTEND AS MANY SI SESSIONS AS POSSIBLE.”

### WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ... CONT’D

gather, evaluate, and use will be applied to the Pegasus essay, encouraging students to have a more comprehensive approach to this assignment.

Students will describe, in detail, at least three (3) different things they have learned as a result of being a part of the Pegasus Success Program, giving specific examples and citing certain elements of the program, which have caused them to either think differently or which have enlightened them about their collegiate experience to date. They must also cite one scholarly source on the topic of transition from high school to college, and compare whether or not their experience was similar to their findings. This additional requirement to the Pegasus essay will help instill the IF principles, making this cohort of students effective, lifelong learners early on in their college careers.

When asked about her intended findings, Mrs. Leon-Barth stated “I hope to learn what three main program components are strongly impacting students, and I hope that summer bridge programs are normalized in their eyes through the references they find through the information gathering process.”



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## SARC WEEKLY: A STUDENT NEWSLETTER

This past spring semester the SARC peers implemented a new initiative with the SARC Weekly. The SARC Weekly is an online newsletter that was sent to all Pegasus, College Achievement Program, and Supporting Teacher Education Pre-Professionals students. The newsletter was published 13 times this past spring semester and emailed to 1,757 students (duplicated head-count). Students found the online newsletter to be very beneficial in regards to reminding them about upcoming deadlines, study tips, and campus resources. The newsletter can be accessed on the SARC website .

## YOUR CAMPUS... CONT'D

direct tie-in with the General Education unifying theme for the next two years, which will focus on the environment.

The Summer Motivational event was initially designed and facilitated in July 2004 by the Student Academic Resource Center as a seminar for students participating in the Pegasus Success Program during the summer B semester. Thanks to a warm reception by students, with over four hundred in attendance, this event has earned its place on the calendar. It now encompasses all summer B students, particularly those in special programs, helping to fill the void that exists in summer programming. Every year a dynamic speaker is selected to bring a pertinent message of student success, campus involvement, and leadership right at the midpoint of the summer term, when students tend to need that extra jolt of energy.

Sponsors for the event included the Student Academic Resource Center, with Phi-Eta Sigma, Student Government Association, and Multicultural Academic and Support Services as co-sponsors. SARC looks forward to future collaborations and continued success motivating our summer students!

## FALL 2007 ACADEMIC SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

SARC prides itself on sending a message to UCF students about taking charge of their academic learning. Below are some of the academic workshops SARC will offer this Fall 2007 semester:

<b>Classroom/Campus Etiquette</b>	Wednesday, August 29
<b>How to Get an Easy "A" this Semester</b>	Tuesday, September 4
<b>Goal Setting/Motivation</b>	Wednesday, September 6
<b>Note Taking/Textbook Reading</b>	Tuesday, September 25
<b>POWER Studying</b>	Wednesday, October 10
<b>Finding your Learning Style</b>	Tuesday, October 23
<b>How Not to Procrastinate</b>	Wednesday, October 24
<b>Reality Check on your Semester Goals</b>	Thursday, November 1
<b>Memory &amp; Concentration</b>	Wednesday, November 7
<b>Final Exam Preparation—21 Days and Counting</b>	Tuesday, November 13
<b>Final Exam Preparation—20 Days and Counting</b>	Wednesday, November 14
<b>Power Studying for Final Exams</b>	Thursday, November 29

*Please contact SARC for times, locations, and for a complete workshop schedule!*

## STUDENT LEADERS... CONT'D

### Leadership

*"I have enhanced my ability to lead groups of individuals to work together and solve problems."*

### Teamwork

*"I have learned to work with others in a professional setting."*

### Resume / interviewing skills

*"During my interview for osteopathic medicine school, which uses Problem-Based Learning, I was able to discuss what I have learned as an SI leader in terms of group discussions and questioning strategies. Now that I am admitted in the program, I will be able to utilize these strategies."*

### Ability to make a difference in others

*"I enjoy encouraging the SI participants to be the best they can be."*

*"I enjoy being a mentor to other students."*

### Employability skills

*"My training and experience in the SI program allowed me to obtain a science teaching position."*

*"I have changed my mind about what I want to do in life. Now I look forward to teaching as a career."*

### Other Skills

*"Being an SI leader has helped me build self-confidence, integrity, personal reliability, critical thinking, and social interaction skills."*

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