A Note From the Director: Jennifer Wrage

After graduating high school, my favorite teacher and mentor shared a bit of wisdom with me as I prepared to go to college. He said that college is a lot of work but it is also a lot of fun. After my first year I realized he was so right! In contrast to high school, college required much more reading and homework; also I was expected to study much more outside of class. Quickly, I had to learn how to be more organized and manage my time better. The key to my success was attending the academic success events my college offered. I was given tips and strategies that I used to improve my study habits and time management. The skills I developed in college, I continue to use in my professional life today.

The AS&T Office offers a number of Academic Success Events similar to those I attended when I was a student. The Academic Success Events here at Dutchess can help you become a better student by teaching you How to Succeed on Exams or How to Overcome Math Anxiety. There are other events for intellectual and career enrichment such as the Book Club and Real People Real World. This semester the Book Club featured Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom. Attendees received a copy of the book at our first meeting in the beginning of the semester. Then after four weeks, we gathered together to discuss our impressions of the story. At our Real People Real World events, students are able to speak with professionals about their careers. This opportunity allows students to explore career paths, define their goals and create professional networks.

College is not all work; it is also a lot of fun, especially if you get involved on campus. Getting involved on campus is very important to your overall college and job success. During interviews many times employers will ask you about your special interests or clubs that you participated in during college. By meeting people on campus and making connections, you create future network opportunities which may get your foot in the door to your dream job. Many times the friends that you make on campus will become your life-long friends.

As my mentor shared with me, college is a lot work and a lot of fun. Utilize the resources on campus to work hard and get involved. The time you spend will reap many rewards now and in your future.
Cindy Worrad,  
Student Academic Success Coordinator  
Interview by Sally Weglinski

Background: Cindy Worrad began her role as Student Academic Success Center Coordinator in July of 2012.

Tell me a little about yourself and what you did before you got here.

Well, I am a Dutchess Community College (DCC) alumnus with an Associate's Degree in Accounting. After graduating from DCC, I transferred and earned a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and a Master's in Teaching.

My professional work experience, prior to coming to DCC, has varied from technical positions in industry to teaching in the public school system to operating my own business. I began working at DCC in 2009, in a wide range of positions; including instructing for Accounting, College Study Skills and Math courses as well as in SmartStart, Reclaim My Math and Math Burst programs. I have tutored math and accounting professionally for both AS&T and EOP, served as an academic advisor, SASC Professional and Test Proctor. All these experiences have prepared me for my current position as Student Academic Success Coordinator.

What do you like most about your position as Student Academic Success Center Coordinator?

I love working with such a wide variety of people each day: office staff, students, tutors and tutees. I enjoy setting a positive tone with the people with whom I work. I strive to ensure everyone has a positive experience with our program. I like that each day is different, rewarding, challenging and unique.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging part of my job is managing the quantity of work associated with the number of students served each semester. Approximately 700 to 1000 tutoring requests are received each semester. Most students are matched one-to-one with a tutor for the entire semester, but small group appointments and “walk-in group” tutoring sessions are also scheduled. It is my responsibility to ensure enough tutors are available to meet the needs of the various requests in a timely manner. I continually recruit and train tutors each semester to meet the tutoring requests.

What do you see happening in the future in your position?

I see the services we provide growing! We are encouraging more and more students to use our services as “the successful way to study at the college level.” I am looking forward to acquiring a more efficient computerized system for making appointments, tracking tutor requests and appointments. Our current appointment making process is labor intensive, I want to be able to focus my energies on building a quality tutoring program.

The DCC Book Club makes reading fun one book at a time!

The best form of escapism is reading. A good novel can introduce you to new ideas and challenge your perspectives. Past selections have included Randy Pausch’s The Last Lecture, The Alchemist by Paolo Coelho, and The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. Our latest selection, Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom, gave us the amazing opportunity to spend time with Ernest Giglo, an actor who had the privilege of playing Morrie in a theater performance of Tuesdays with Morrie.

Our next Book Club launch is in late September and we are looking for book ideas so send them in!

DCCLearningcenter@sunydutchess.edu

Congratulations to our Tutoring Program on Earning and Maintaining CRLA Certification!

The Office of Academic Services and Testing is proud to announce that the tutoring program has been awarded the College Reading and Learning Association International Tutor Training Program Certification for the next three years.

In order to earn certification the tutoring team offered tutor training and evaluations elevating the quality of tutors available through the Office. The individual tutors work to earn certification by attending tutor training on various topics and gain tutor experience by assisting students with skill improvement. Tutors also need to satisfy the requirements of three evaluations.
The Fab Five
by Wendy Maragh-Taylor

In fall 2011, twenty-two students embarked on a journey together. They began their college education by applying and being accepted into the Bridges to Excellence (B2E) program. Now, five of those students are on track to graduate this spring and begin Marist College in fall 2013.

B2E is an innovative, cutting edge program administered by our office. The program is designed to facilitate transfer to and success at Marist by working with qualifying students throughout their two years at DCC. Successful B2E participants will receive the academic and personal support necessary to graduate from DCC in two years and from Marist in another two years – earning a bachelor’s degree in four years. This is more than one year faster than the national average for today’s entering college freshmen.

“The Fabulous (Fab) Five” – as I’ve named them – have remained motivated, maintained the program’s required GPA, attended necessary events and meetings, and stayed focused. There is no doubt that they are working hard to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Staff, peers and family alike are proud of them. Take a look at their stories:

Nassima Chanoui was born in Rabat, Morocco and came to the United States as a small child. She graduated from Poughkeepsie High School. Nassima is concentrating in the LAH curriculum; she has received Academic Citations twice and been on the Dean’s List once. Two years ago, when she was interviewed for the B2E program, Nassima reported she would be successful because she, “doesn’t give up” and “I strive for what I want.” Indeed, Nassima has done this. She lives by the words: “Life has a certain je ne sais quoi about it. But what I do know is … it must embrace the three L’s … Love much, Laugh often, and Learn to the fullest, and voila! C’est la vie.”

Jessica Dominguez was born in Greenwich, Connecticut. She is a graduate of Arlington High School. Jessica is in the Human Services program of study and has received an Academic Citation twice. During her admission interview for the B2E program, Jessica shared that she “wants to prepare for a good life,” and recognized the importance of an education for that purpose. Though she was both “nervous” and “excited” about starting college, it’s been clear that she has let her enthusiasm win out and keep her driven. What Jessica knows for sure is: “One of the most valuable things no one can ever take away from you is your ability to learn and your knowledge. In life you can never ever get enough knowledge, because it’s infinite.”

Ryleigh Loughran was born in Poughkeepsie, New York. She graduated from FDR. Ryleigh is a Criminal Justice major; she has received an Academic Citation once, been on the Dean’s List twice and on the President’s List once. Self-described during her B2E interview as “extremely determined,” she has proven herself to be destined for success – because of her own hard work. Ryleigh embraces the motto: “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”

Lucia Mercado was born in Mendoza, Argentina and came to the United State as a little girl. She is a graduate of Spackenkill High School. Lucia is in the LAH curriculum; she has received Academic Citations twice and been on the Dean’s List once. During her B2E interview in 2011, she stated that she “likes learning” and was “very motivated” to go to college. Her enjoyment of learning and motivation has no doubt paid off. Lucia identifies with the following adage: “Success Seems To Be Largely A Matter Of Hanging On After Others Have Let Go.”

Shannon Stotz was born in Poughkeepsie, New York. She is a graduate of Beacon High School. Shannon is in the Business Administration program of study; she has received an Academic Citation once and been on the President’s List once. When she was interviewed for the B2E program two years ago, Shannon shared that she “wants to give herself more opportunities by going to college.” Indeed, she has consistently remained focused on each of the prospects that come her way. Shannon lives by the saying: “I came to win, to fight, to conquer, to thrive. I came to win, to survive, to prosper, to rise.”

These students have been particularly dear to me. Not only do they display tremendous determination, they have also remained motivated and enthusiastic through whatever challenges have come their way over the last two years. College has by no means been easy for any of them. They work – a few of them have two jobs; they have family obligations; they have personal struggles; and they have dealt with the loss of loved ones. And yet, these students do the work that it takes to reach their goals. They continue to inspire me, and no doubt, you too.

If you happen to encounter Nassima, Jessica, Ryleigh, Lucia or Shannon on campus, do yourself a favor and take a moment to talk to them – perhaps a little of their determination will rub off on you. Then, please do me a favor and congratulate them on being one of the “Fab Five!”

Applause to the following students….

Ryleigh Loughran, one of our 2011 Bridges to Excellence students, set to graduate this spring, received the Sheriff’s Association Criminal Justice Scholarship on Feb. 6, 2013.

Kaelin Farmer, one of our SmartStart 2012 students, received a Millennium Scholarship for $1000 presented by the New York State Federation of Republican Women.
Peers Helping Peers
By Mary Canto Rice & Kate Collins

- “My teacher said I have an assignment on ANGEL. What is that?”
- “How can I find out when classes are being held next semester?”
- “Can I get a job on campus?”
- “I’m worried about failing my class. Where can I get some tutoring help?”

These are just a few of the questions that our skilled Peer Mentors can help answer for students in the SmartStart or FOCUS Learning Communities. The Peer Mentor program within the Office of Academic Services and Testing began as a pilot just a few short years ago; it has been evolving and growing since.

The Peer Mentors have all participated as new students in the Learning Communities themselves. As a result, they have first-hand knowledge and experience with fulfilling program requirements and expectations designed to ensure student success. In addition, they are selected for their strong academic performance, their interpersonal skills, and their potential for leadership.

Peer Mentors are always part of our program events. They introduce themselves and get to know the students at the SmartStart Orientation and FOCUS Kick-off. They facilitate other program events such as the Fun and Games activity, the Student Roundtable, the Student Festival and Student Reunions. Peer Mentors assist students during the Group Advising and Registration process too. After students meet with their advisor, the Peer Mentors can help students navigate through the course selection search and share their own academic experiences. In addition, they greet and sign-in students at other Academic Success Events offered through our Office.

Peer Mentors receive training on how to effectively develop relationships, plan and facilitate events, and other procedural tasks. These are critical skills they will use not only for this role but for their lifetime. Ultimately, one of our goals is that everyone involved (Peer Mentors and Learning Community students) grows and develops skills that will help them to be successful during their time at DCC and beyond.

DCC SOUTH

DID YOU KNOW that The Office of Academic Services and Testing offers Peer and Professional tutoring at Dutchess South? Whether you are looking for one-on-one tutoring or walk-in tutoring, our Office can accommodate your needs. Please note our Spring 2013 Walk-In Tutoring hours:

Math (Math Lab) Tuesdays 3pm – 6pm & Wednesdays 1pm-4pm
English Tuesdays 10am – 11am & Thursdays 3:30pm – 4:30pm
Accounting Mondays 1pm – 3:30pm and Thursdays 1pm – 2:30pm
Bio 030/130 Fridays 1pm – 3pm and Saturdays 1pm – 3pm
Writing Center Mondays 2pm – 5pm and Wednesdays 1pm – 5pm

If walk-in tutoring doesn’t fit your schedule, please stop by our Office (DS 131) and fill out an application for individual peer tutoring sessions. Our office offers tutoring in most subjects.

Staff:
Jennifer Wrage, Director
Sally Weglinski, Assistant Director
Lori Anderson, Assistant Director
Mary Canto Rice, Retention Coordinator
Kathleen Collins, Student Academic Support Specialist
Cindy Worrad, Student Academic Success Center Coordinator
Jean Pomarico, Coordinator of Services at DCC South
Patricia D’Amato, Bridges to Excellence Coordinator
Keith Tombrello, Bridges to College Liaison
Nancy Geer, Office Secretary
Debbie Scardaci, Clerical Support
Eileen Cultrera, Clerical Support