

Auburn University  
**ACADEMIC SUPPORT**



**AUBURN**  
Office of the Provost

May 2019 – August 2020  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

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**MISSION**

Academic Support contributes to retention and degree completion for Auburn University undergraduate students. The office hosts a variety of academic skill development programs that promote self-directed learning strategies and student success.



# OVERVIEW

Academic Support services continue to innovate and execute program offerings with the goal of creating opportunities for students' enhanced learning. Our goal is to empower individual students in their own academic success. Academic Support encourages critical thinking, healthy learning processes, and active learning. We aim to help students embrace the difficulties of college, while developing skills that promote growth in their academic and personal lives.

Academic Support staff are committed to the mission of the University and the office while developing equitable and inclusive programs informed in national standards all while responding ethically to the current health crisis in America.

## Inclusive and Equitable Practice

While inclusive and equitable practices have been discussed in the context of national standards for learning centers, it was in fall 2018 that staff in Academic Support openly committed to examining our own practice, gaining new understandings through trainings, and adjusting program design to be inclusive and equitable learning environments. Since then, the staff adjusted program design, removed participation barriers, and audited policies, to create spaces that meet this commitment. Actions taken since fall 2018 include:

- Removed binary pronouns from intake paperwork (2018)
- Organized an accessibility audit of physical and digital spaces in partnership with the Office of Accessibility (2019)
- Developed a gender-neutral dress code (2019)
- Created an identity-hidden application process for hiring both student and professional staff (2019)
- Shifted recruitment of student employees from word-of-mouth to a campus-wide approach (2019)
- Established and shared anti-racist resources with all employees (2020)
- Updated dress code to prohibit divisive and hateful symbology (2020)
- Created a code of representation to address virtual and remote learning environments (2020)


Professional and student staff participate in implicit bias trainings, host discussions on various topics including cultural capital, and question the practices of the office to identify new ways to increase access and inclusion for all students. Ongoing and continued efforts are required of this commitment.

## Responding to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has required an innovative and bold response via remote delivery platforms to prioritize students' health and safety. Beginning in March 2020, Academic Support staff worked to adjust all in-person offerings to remote delivery within two business days, resulting in no delays of services to students the Monday after spring break.

Once established, the staff immediately sought to identify ways to respond effectively to the pandemic for both spring semester and beyond. High-quality remote learning experiences have emerged as a result of this thinking. For example, with faculty partners in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics within the College of Sciences and Mathematics (COSAM), the Plainsmen's Prep program in August 2020 was hosted remotely and used various platforms to support students through the process of learning mathematics concepts. The result of these efforts were unparalleled: 75% of participants increased their math placement for fall 2020 (an increase from 55% in 2019, 61% in 2018).

The staff are optimistic that high-quality remote support can enhance the AU student experience. Remote support can serve as an accessible and convenient way to gain needed course support and build community among peers. Continued training and learning on how to best use technology is necessary, but the positive response from students to these meticulously amended programs and services is promising.



## Informed in National Standards and Practices

Academic Support staff adjust programs and processes informed in national standards and practices.

- Earned the International Peer Educator Training Program Certification (IPTPC) level I via the College Reading Learning Association (CRLA) in 2018; and the highest designation, level III, in 2020 for the Academic Coaching program.
- Completed a full-office program review/audit informed in CAS Standards for Learning Centers (2019).
- Participated in the International Center for Supplemental Instruction (SI) Supervisor Training (2019).
- Awarded the Campus Partner Award in Student Affairs with the Registrar's Office (2019).
- Awarded 2nd Place for the 2019 Website of Excellence at the National College Learning Centers Association (NCLCA).

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT BY THE NUMBERS

IN THE 2019-2020 ACADEMIC YEAR, ACADEMIC SUPPORT

HOSTED  
**21,872**  
Total visits

**50%**  
of first-year students  
interacted with at least  
one of the programs

SERVED  
**5,336**  
Unique students



# ACADEMIC COACHING

**Academic Coaching** is a personalized partnership designed to support students in meeting their academic goals. A student and their coach work together to develop realistic and workable plans to achieve their vision of success in college. Coaching is a year-round service for enrolled students at Auburn University.

**1,042**  
VISITS

Academic Coaches empower students to improve in areas such as academic workload management, academic goal setting, note taking, textbook reading, online learning, memory strategies, test preparation, concentration, and navigating the college experience.

**287**  
STUDENTS

During a coaching appointment, students work one-on-one with a trained coach to explore habits, interests, skills, concerns, and intentions that guide this goal driven process. Students can expect to learn strategies for academic success, general learning habits applicable across all subject areas, and greater connection to resources at Auburn University.

## What students have to say...

*"I learned how often I should be studying, and I learned that writing study time into my schedule is a good way to hold myself accountable."*

*"I learned how to maintain motivation through the whole semester."*

*"Thanks for being the help that students need."*

*"Super helpful. It is a great resource for anyone trying to excel in (their) academic degree."*

*"Academic coaching has helped me immensely that past semesters I have gone. Everyone I have worked with is awesome."*

*"I appreciate how kind and helpful (the coach) was; it made me feel more comfortable talking with her about my struggles this semester."*

### Campus Partner Highlight:

Academic Coaching and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity partnered to support Tiger Excellence Scholars Program (TESP) participants. Students who complied with the 4+ session mandate showed, on average, the following gains:

- An improved cumulative GPA
- Higher earned GPA for their attending term when compared to peers
- Increased course completion rates

### Earned Training Program Certification



International Peer Educator Training Program Certification (IPTPC) via College Reading Learning Association (CRLA)  
(August 27, 2020 – December 31, 2025)



# Outcomes of Mandated Academic Coaching

*Partnership between Academic Support and Tiger Excellence Scholars Program*

**Summary:** For the 2019 - 2020 academic year, Academic Support partnered with the Office of Inclusion and Diversity to implement a mandated Academic Coaching initiative. Students who had not met GPA requirements for the program scholarship in fall 2019 were mandated to attend Academic Coaching, and in spring 2020 students were either mandated or encouraged based on their scholarship type.



**Conclusion:** Following fall 2019 Academic Coaching participation, who met at least 4x with an Academic Coach were more likely to complete their attempted hours with a higher earned course grade and term GPA. In spring 2020 the students who were mandated to participate earned a higher term GPA than their peers with an equal to or better average "hours completion" ratio.

**Would you like to create a mandated coaching partnership with Academic Support?**

Contact Samantha Ansley at [sdb0020@auburn.edu](mailto:sdb0020@auburn.edu) to identify an approach for an upcoming semester.



# PLAINSMEN'S PREP

In partnership with the College of Sciences and Mathematics, Academic Support hosted the **Plainsmen's Prep** program from August 2-11, 2020. This 10-day experience (facilitated online this year) provides qualified incoming first-year students the chance to review mathematics concepts in preparation for a math placement exam. By completing the program, students have an opportunity to potentially increase their math course level for the fall semester.

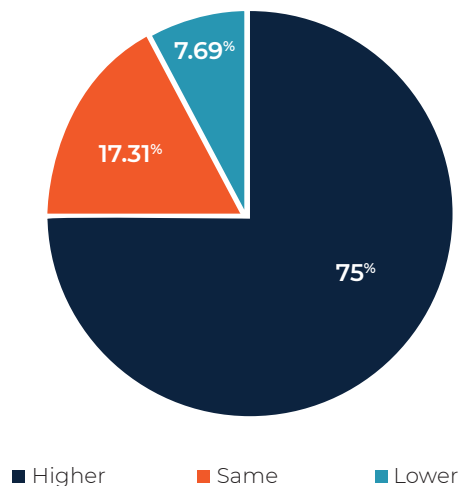
## Math Placement Exam (MPE)

**75%**  
of participants  
increased their  
math placement

**39 participants (75%)** placed into a higher math course than their original ACT/SAT math placement. Of those 39 participants who placed into a higher math course, **30 participants** placed into their major's core math requirement.

Of those 30 participants who placed into their major's core math requirement, 5 participants placed into MATH 1130, 23 participants placed into MATH 1610, and 2 participants placed into MATH 1680.

MPE Score Compared to Original ACT/SAT Math Placement (n=52)



## What Were Students' Favorite Aspects of Plainsmen's Prep?

*"I liked the ability to renew my knowledge in an effective way before the start of classes as well as getting an idea of the way online classes would work in the future."*

*"The ability to prepare myself for college and meeting my other fellow classmates."*

*"I loved the breakout sessions and the live instruction. My group and leaders were great, and the live instruction was very helpful and in-depth."*

*"I appreciated how helpful the [Plainsmen's Prep Leaders] in the group were. I also enjoyed seeing how an actual college class would work, along with the teaching style."*

*"[Plainsmen's Prep] gave me the confidence to enter in my math course."*

**94% of participants reported confidence in using Zoom and Canvas at the end of the program**

(n=52, 100% RR)



# STUDY PARTNERS

**Study Partners** is a program that offers peer tutoring to undergraduate students at Auburn University. The goal is to promote academic excellence through peer-to-peer assistance by helping students develop the study skills necessary to succeed in their core courses and encourage them to grow as confident, self-directed learners.

Students who attended  
**AT LEAST ONE**  
tutoring appointment improved  
**TWICE AS MUCH**  
between their midterm and final  
grade compared to their peers.

Students who attended Study  
Partners tutoring improved their  
midterm to final grade  
**8.1 POINTS**  
on average (100-point scale).

*"I now feel very prepared for my exam. I'll definitely schedule again!"*

*"She was so helpful, kind and super knowledgeable."*

*"He was great explaining complex things in a simple way."*

*"I feel so much better about my upcoming test after this appointment."*

93



Unique Courses Tutored

3,413



Total Visits

1,374



Unique Students

## Campus Partner Highlight

### 100% Pass Rate with Students in Nursing Program

Study Partners coordinates with the **School of Nursing** to host multiple workshops for the required Dose Calc/HESI A2 exam during students' second semester in the nursing program. Eighty five percent (85%) of the eligible nursing students attended either group or individual tutoring in preparation for the exam.





# STUDY SMART

**Study Smart** is a non-credit, 10-week program for students on academic suspension that focuses on the skills, attitudes, and habits required for academic success. The program guides suspended students through an exploration of their responsibilities, motivation, self-awareness, and tools to maintain success. Throughout the program, students are challenged to explore what they want for themselves and from their college, what they are willing to do to achieve their personal dreams, and how they can persevere in the future. Students in the fall 2019 – spring 2020 year participated in a pre- and post-assessment as part of the program (n=20).

**100%**  
increased skills  
and habits in  
every self-  
reported scale.

## Highest average increases:

Organizing Study Materials (115%)  
Developing Emotional Intelligence (96%)  
Gaining Self-Awareness (94%)  
Taking Notes (88%)  
Learning Actively (84%)

Students increased on average 62% in study skill scales and 77% in soft skill scales. Other scales include: Mastering Self-Management (74%), Test Taking (73%), Reading Skills (68%), Rehearsing & Memorizing Materials (67%). While all students increased in every scale, the lowest self-reported gain was Employing Interdependence (41%).

## Participant feedback:

*"I believe my confidence has boosted and most importantly I was able to isolate what I need to change to ensure I don't make the same mistakes again. My eyes were opened to many solutions to my problems and I feel I can go back into school now."*

*"I've become a better student and person. I've learned better communication skills and how to process my emotions and thoughts."*

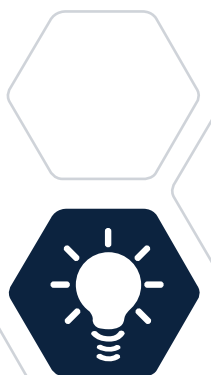
**100%**  
intend to  
enroll in  
college again

**100%**  
would recommend  
the program to  
a friend

*"I will always remember the time I took this semester. I'll always have this to look back on and see how far I have come."*

*"Each subject covered by this class is a vital part to not only a successful college student, but a successful adult. I feel empowered."*

*"I am now a much more situationally aware person. I know I am on the right track with my collegiate and career goals."*



# Supplemental Instruction (SI)

**Supplemental Instruction (SI)** is a non-remedial approach to helping students gain content mastery, make peer connections, and develop skills for academic success. SI offers active-review sessions facilitated by SI Leaders for targeted classes with high rates of student withdrawals and grades of D or F. When a class is supported by SI, access to the sessions are open and encouraged for all students, regardless of their background knowledge in the subject or performance in the class.

SI sessions are on a reoccurring weekly schedule scheduled at the beginning of the semester based on student feedback. SI sessions provide a relaxed, peer-to-peer environment, and are optional to attend. During SI sessions, students engage in active learning to improve knowledge retention, discuss complex topics, and prepare for tests. Students who regularly attend SI sessions usually demonstrate better study habits, stronger connections with other Auburn students, and higher grades.



**17,641**  
TOTAL  
SI VISITS



**4,378**  
UNIQUE  
STUDENTS

Students who attend  
**10 OR MORE**  
SI sessions on average  
earned a  
**0.54 COURSE**  
**GRADE HIGHER**  
on a 4.00 scale than students  
who did not attend any SI  
sessions in Fall 2019.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY (n=359)



**95%** understand course content  
better than on my own



**99%** recommend SI to  
other students

*"My SI leader was always prepared and confident, which helped me feel more confident."*

*"I gained new friends and different study methods!"*

*"I thought my SI leaders' use of Auburn BOX was extremely helpful. Not all of us can make it to SI sessions all the time because a lot of us have jobs (including me) so this allowed us to still benefit from SI, even if we were unable to attend."*

*"(The SI Leader) really helped me better my study habits and to not be afraid to ask questions which really helped me succeed in this course."*

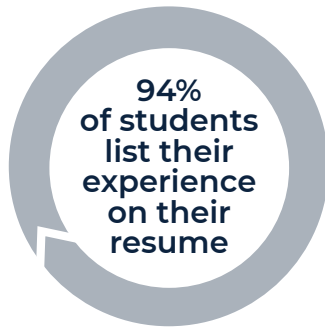


# Academic Support Student Employment

## STUDENT EMPLOYEE CAREER READINESS SURVEY (n=53)

Administered April 2020 to undergraduate and graduate student employees in Academic Support

100% OF STUDENTS REPORTED THEIR EMPLOYMENT **INCREASED THEIR MARKETABILITY** WITH POST-GRADUATION PLANS.



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*"This was an invaluable experience that contributed uniquely to my perspective. I needed to showcase that on my resume."*

*"This is something I am proud of."*

*"It shows what I have been able to accomplish with time management and balancing all the things in the life of a student."*

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### Student employees agreed their employment in the office helped them improve:

- 100% Communication** *"I had to learn to communicate effectively and efficiently to a wide variety of audiences. I had to learn how to be clear and concise."*
- 87% Critical thinking** *"I have been challenged to think critically in order to solve problems, as well as having a critical perspective of my own assumptions and biases."*
- 79% Work ethic** *"The autonomy associated with my role greatly influenced my ability to hold myself accountable for my responsibilities in all facets of life."*
- 72% Collaboration** *"There is an atmosphere of support that is so impactful. We get so much work done, but we have so much fun doing it!"*

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### EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AMONG GRADUATES

The majority of student employees report that they are going to continue their studies at a graduate or professional program, including medical school.

### ROOM FOR GROWTH

- Only 64% of students agreed that this experience helped to improve their technology skills. Efforts among professional staff to infuse technology exposure and experiences into position responsibilities will help increase this valuable competency.
- Nearly 50% of student employees surveyed reported that they have improved their global fluency through their student employment experience. While this is lower than desired, students' reported global fluency has increased drastically since 2018 (27%).

### NEXT STEPS

- Connect survey data to the work of the University Career Center and Office of Academic Assessment to better understand employment outcomes among student employees.
- Offer more opportunities for students to participate in the key features of high-impact practice.

