Auburn University
ACADEMIC SUPPORT

AUBURN
Office of the Provost

2020-2021
ANNUAL REPORT

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)
- Added pronouns to the Academic Support website and program-level forms (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 to inclusive and equitable practice.

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, long-term. 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.
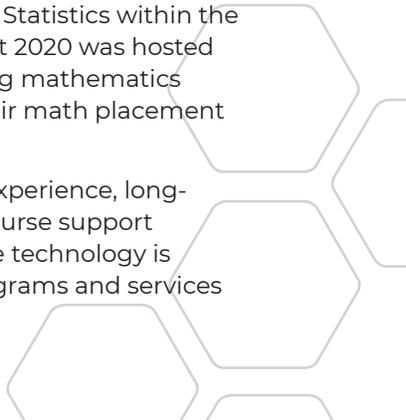
Informed in National Standards and Practices

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 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR, ACADEMIC SUPPORT

HOSTED
18,714
Total visits

60%
of first-year students visited at least one Academic Support program this academic year

SERVED
6,092
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 undergraduate, graduate and professional students enrolled at Auburn University.

508
TOTAL 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.

248
TOTAL UNIQUE 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...

"[My coach] was wonderful. She was able to identify several areas that I was struggling in and help me work through them. Her cheerful demeanor and non-judgmental attitude made me feel like I could be more honest in the ways that I was struggling instead of trying to pretend that I was doing well. I appreciate the advice that she was able to give me and the confidence that she gave me so that everything would be alright."

"At first, I thought, what could she possibly tell me to help me? There's no way she could understand my workload and all of my responsibilities. I was definitely wrong! [My coach] was patient and friendly. She asked a lot of questions and kept working to find tools that would help me with scheduling and time management to balance my life. I appreciate her commitment to helping me achieve my goals."

"My biggest takeaway was to keep going. In this meeting, we rehashed my progress from the time I started this program until now. Last semester, I felt a bit hopeless in my academic journey. Now, for the first time in a long time, I have multiple A's without the stress on my mental health. I think I just kind of changed as a person. It was nice to have genuine support without judgment. Overall, this wasn't the overall improvement I thought it would be. It was just a lot of really small changes over time."

"My biggest takeaway from my meeting is that I need to spend more time preparing and find a way to schedule what to prepare. I also figured that I can make my own study guides or study list; I can be confident with the material of a chapter by the end of it and this way when I study, I will be able to review the things that I don't know instead of all of the material."

CRLA's International Peer Educator Training Program Certification in Academic Coaching

The Academic Coaching program in Academic Support is certified as a Level III program by the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) International Peer Educator Training Program Certification (IPTPC). Auburn students work one-on-one with a trained peer educator academic coach to explore habits, interests, skills, concerns, intentions through this goal driven process. Every Auburn student who attends coaching will meet with a coach who participates in this recognized training.

With a College Reading and Learning Association Level III peer mentor certified training program, Academic Coaches facilitate an inclusive and welcoming environment to support students throughout their academic experience at Auburn University.

Academic Coaches in Academic Support are graduate student peer leaders dedicated to supporting student success. Coaches complete over 35 hours of training each semester, as they earn their level I, II, and III Peer Educator Certifications. This annual training program starts prior to the first day of class and continues throughout their employment. The content of this experience includes areas such as the coaching model and application, learning theories, teaching and counseling skills, and referral strategies. Coaches learn to create goal-driven plans and collaborate with students to achieve their desired outcomes in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Campus Partnership Spotlight – Student Financial Services

Each semester, Student Financial Services staff receive language from Academic Coaching to include in the semesterly letters to students, based on status with Satisfactory Academic Performance. This information is shared with students who are in jeopardy of losing their academic scholarships:

Start your semester off strong by scheduling an Academic Coaching intake!
Academic Coaching in Academic Support is a free resource for enrolled Auburn University students. Appointments start <insert semester> with online scheduling starting <insert date> through Advise Assist. Intake appointments are in-person, with follow-up coaching session appointments offered both in-person and online.

Academic Coaches support students in developing goal-driven action plans to achieve their personalized academic and professional outcomes. Academic Coaches empower student success in a variety of areas including time management, online learning, concentration and memory strategies, textbook reading, test preparation, and test-taking.

You can schedule your first appointment by visiting Advise Assist > Academic Coaching > Academic Coaching Intake > your preferred time

If you have questions about scheduling an appointment or would like more information on all of the Academic Support programs, please visit academicsupport.auburn.edu. Find more Academic Coaching resources at aub.ie/ACresources

Academic Coaching is not a requirement for SAP Appeals.

Expanding Resources - Online Resource Library for Students
Academic Coaching created a centralized location for resources available to Auburn University students regardless if they are attending coaching sessions or not. The How-To Video Series is part of this online resource library. These introductory videos, housed online in Box, show students how to maximize the use of common Auburn technology applications. Resources can be accessed at aub.ie/ACresources.

STUDY PARTNERS

Study Partners Peer Tutoring 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. Peer Tutors are undergraduate students who have excelled in a specific academic course and provide their peers with tutoring services.

116
Different Courses Tutored

2,300
Total Visits

1,082
Unique Students

Study Partners Peer Tutoring – Student
(n=493; RR = 21.4%)

99%
of students planned to meet again in the near future with a Study Partners tutor

92%
of students were "very satisfied" with their tutor's knowledge of the subject

What students have to say about Study Partners Peer Tutoring:

"She was great, very helpful, and found ways to explain the information that made sense to me!"

"I feel a lot better about my test because of [my tutor]."

"She's a wonderful tutor, and is very encouraging (which really helps me!)"

"[The tutor] was so helpful! She asked me questions about how I learned best and gave me study advice based off of my answers. She told me about the resources and habits that helped her be successful in this course."

"[My tutor] was very helpful. She used reviews and PowerPoints that were both current and from when she took the class. She was great about giving study tips and helped me feel much more confident about the class."

"I really liked my session with [my tutor]. She was so nice and helpful and felt like I got as much out of this session as I possibly could. There was not a single question or topic that I asked her about that she did not know how to explain to me."

"The use of examples really helped me connect the dots between concepts and actually applying it in real life."

"[My tutor] was able to answer questions in a relatable way. She was kind when explaining missed problems without making me feel bad about it."

"[My tutor] did a great job of explaining what I needed to go over in detailed steps and offered new ways to look at things that work better for me."

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 2020– spring 2021 year participated in a pre- and post-assessment as part of the program (n=17, RR=67%).

100%
of student respondents reported their expectations of the program were met. Of all student respondents, 76% agreed that their expectations were exceeded

100%
of student respondents are likely to recommend a peer to enroll in Study Smart, should their peers ever be on Academic Suspension

100%
of student respondents who completed Study Smart plan to return to college

"I've learned so much about college and how it works, what it takes to be a successful student, and how to be more honest with myself and take responsibility."

Skill Assessments in Study Smart: Fall 2020

STUDY SKILLS	Taking Notes	↑ **87%** Increase
	Organizing Study Materials	↑ **76%** Increase
	Rehearsing & Memorizing Study Materials	↑ **70%** Increase
SOFT SKILLS	Gaining Self-Awareness	↑ **53%** Increase
	Developing Emotional Intelligence	↑ **48%** Increase

"The skill assessment increases are based on the % increase of students' pre-test compared to the post-test which are conducted at the start and end of the program, respectively."
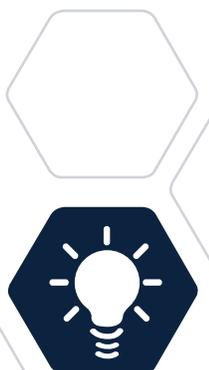
Supplemental Instruction (SI)

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.

15,906
TOTAL
SI VISITS

4,762
UNIQUE
STUDENTS

SPRING 2021 STUDENT GPA OUTCOMES
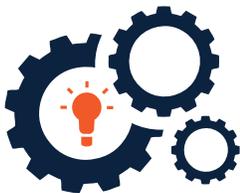
2.709
AVERAGE GPA
In SI-supported classes for students who never attended an SI session

3.1965
AVERAGE GPA
In SI-supported classes for students who attended 10 or more SI sessions

SPRING 2021 END-OF-SEMESTER STUDENT SURVEY

91% of student respondents agreed participating in SI sessions helped them understand course content better than they would have on their own

84% of student responded agreed that they will continue using study skills and strategies they learned in SI sessions

What students have to say about Supplemental Instruction (SI):

"The scheduled [SI Session] times definitely made a positive impact on my habits."

"The most helpful part was practicing the material that we learned in class. [The SI leader] created very good practice problems and review problems, so it helped engrain the information in my brain."

"The worksheets were very representative of what was covered in class that week. This helped me do my other homework and get through my studying easier."

"Weekly sessions and being able to ask questions and working on a study guide in groups the session before a test and then [my tutor] going over each problem after the breakout rooms."

"The most useful part of the sessions were the study guides he made and walked us through. We worked them out together, and that was super helpful."

"Participating in the [activities] that my SI leader made really helped me learn the material and see what I needed to go back and study, while also making studying fun and a competition!"

"[My SI leader] was awesome during SI. She provided many examples during the sessions on both the conceptual and math questions. She posted all of the worksheets, PowerPoints, and answer keys in a timely manner, which I really appreciated."

"The most helpful part of SI is that it is peer-led. Being taught organic chemistry by someone who has recently taken the course is very beneficial because that person has a better understanding of where others are having trouble."

SPRING SI GRADE REPORT

Course Name	Never Attended	1-4 Visits	5-9 Visits	10+ Visits
ACCT	2.495 409	3.079 241	3.057 35	3.786 14
BIOL	2.861 2,021	3.092 695	3.356 91	3.364 33
CHEM	2.617 1,296	2.910 545	2.851 101	2.239 71
HIST	3.144 2,789	3.390 249	3.000 6	3.571 7
MATH	2.490 959	2.711 115	2.808 27	2.933 15
PHYS	2.649 884	2.805 177	2.885 26	2.286 7

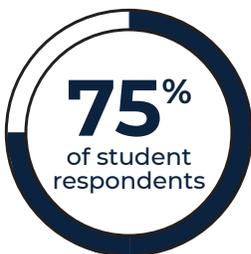# Academic Support
Student Employment

The 2021 Academic Support Student Employee Career Readiness Survey is administered in spring each year. All student employees in Academic Support are encouraged to respond. (n=64, RR=60%)

100%
of student respondents
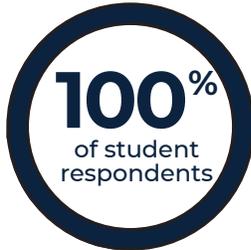
reported their experiences during employment increased their marketability for their anticipated career goals

98%
of student respondents
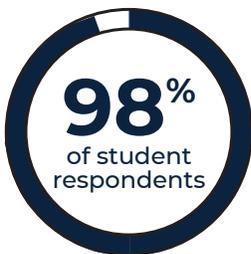
list their student employment experience on their resume

75%
of student respondents

agreed that during their employment with Academic Support they have improved at least four of the seven total National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career competencies agreed their employment in Academic

3.76
AVERAGE GPA
of undergraduate student employees in Academic Support

81% of student respondents agreed their employment in Academic Support helped them improve **COMMUNICATION** skills

"Communication is one of the most essential parts of my job as an SI Leader. Not only do I communicate with the students in my class, but I also work closely with the professor and other SI leaders. Knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say it are all important."

"Through our buddy mentoring program, I feel as though I have been able to learn the ropes of this role as well as 'pay it forward'. I think that our work requires radical transparency in order for precise communication. I feel that I have done so in deliberating and engaging in conversations to the other (student and professional staff) about...what might be going on at Auburn or as a whole that could impact our work."

72% of student respondents agreed their employment in Academic Support helped them improve their **LEADERSHIP** skills

"I've been able to lead my attendees in a systematic way that helps them study efficiently for the class and attain a high grade. By being a SI Leader, I am able to exemplify and work on my capabilities in different areas including: social, critical thinking, etc."

"Being responsible for facilitating sessions effectively and often was the best practice in expertly getting members of a group to transition between activities and trust in my plan for the hour. I became a lot more confident in planning to fill structured time while also remaining flexible in my role as a facilitator. I was able to speak as both an authority on a subject and as a peer helping fellow peers."

69% of student respondents agreed their employment in Academic Support helped them improve their **TECHNOLOGY** skills

"The most powerful learning experience was transitioning to the online workplace at the start of the pandemic. Wielding digital meeting tools, whiteboard equivalents, online game ideas, and simply managing digital files and links are useful for a whole range of professional jobs, and even more now that teleworking is here to stay. Every student employed by academic support is far better equipped than their average peer to navigate the digital workplace post-graduation!"