

STAY@FAU

OFFICE FOR STUDENT RETENTION NEWSLETTER • UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Retention Staff Growing!

We are Pleased to Welcome Three Wonderful Additions to the Retention Team:



Originally from Ottawa Canada, **Alana Barnes** joined the retention team immediately after graduating from Western Illinois University's College Student Personnel program in May 2007. She is excited to start her professional career with the FAU community and is already actively involved in coordinating many retention programs.

As the Coordinator in the Office for Student Retention, Alana oversees the Living Learning Community (LLC) programs, develops and maintains the departmental websites (Retention, Tutoring and Success Series), coordinates the Heritage Park Support Center and reinvigorated the Student Success Series initiative. Alana also serves as co-advisor for the Learning Community Liaison student group. Alana is passionate about helping new FAU students successfully transition into their college environment – and

she believes that students should make the most of their FAU experience. Her favorite quote (from the famous Canadian, Wayne Gretzky) is "You miss 100% of the shots that you never take." Alana encourages students to access resources, make connections and get what they came for (an education!). She also enjoys teaching a section of SLS1503 for the Explore FLC students!

Alana is excited to create new programs and refine existing initiatives and services through collaborations with academic and student affairs groups in order to best support and retain FAU students. Alana can be reached at abarne18@fau.edu, 561-297-3013 and can be found in UC 131.



Brooke Crossman joined FAU in July 2007 as the assistant director for student retention. Brooke comes to us with an extensive background in

academic support services, advising and residential life. Over the past few years, she coordinated advising, academic support services and the Honors Program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Brooke has a strong affinity for public institutions of higher education and is excited to be a part of the FAU community. In her spare time she enjoys running and playing with her two mini dachshunds.

Brooke completed a double major in sociology and criminal justice at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and received her master of education in higher education Administration degree from Suffolk University in Boston.

At FAU, Brooke is helping to further develop the Freshman Learning Community programs and incorporate new components including the organization of study groups and development of initiatives to increase the success of learning community students beyond the freshman year. She is also working on marketing efforts and programs and workshops to increase student success. Brooke can be reached at bcrossm1@fau.edu or (561) 297-2243.



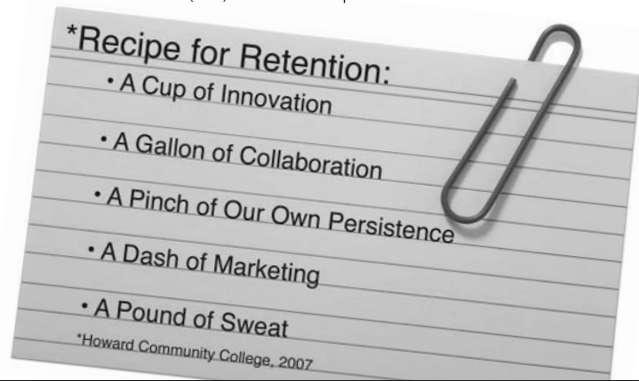
Finally, **Alex Kisselev** joined the retention team this fall as a graduate assistant working with FAU's new Supplemental Instruction (SI) program (see SI article "The Greatest Program on Earth" for more information). Originally from Russia, Alex completed his bachelor's degree in psychology at FAU and will complete his master's in social work here in May 2008.

Eddie and Jennifer are excited to work with this great team.



Farewell to Malikah Pitts!

We said a tearful good-bye to Malikah this June as she left FAU to serve as the director of first-year and campus programs at Texas Lutheran University. We wish Malikah the best in her new role – and know that she truly made an impact on so many students at FAU!



The Greatest Program on Earth!

No, FAU isn't joining the circus – but we are stepping into the ring to join a program that has had enormous success at other colleges and universities around the world – it is **SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION (or SI)**.

What is SI?

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a series of weekly study sessions for students taking historically difficult courses. SI was developed at the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) in the 1970s and focuses on “killer” or “gateway” courses. SI helps provide students the tools to succeed in these courses – which traditionally have high rates of student failure or withdrawal (commonly referred to as a “DFW” rate).

SI uses a peer-assisted instruction model and is open to all students who want to improve their understanding of course material and improve their grades. Students who were successful in the course (earned A's) previously are selected and trained to lead these weekly study sessions. In the sessions, students get together with others in their class to compare notes, discuss important concepts and develop strategies for studying and learning the subject.

Students who attend SI sessions on a regular basis usually average one or more letter grades higher than those who do not attend SI sessions. Students develop a better understanding of course content as well as more effective ways to learn it. The college-level study skills that are learned in SI will help students earn higher grades in other classes.

SI at FAU:

FAU is piloting SI in the Math for Liberal Arts I (MGF 1106) courses this semester. Eight SI leaders, one to work with each section of the course, are leading 24 one-hour study sessions each week. During the first two weeks of SI this semester, 97 students (out of 577 registered for the course) attended SI.

We hope to increase opportunities for SI in other Boca Raton campus, “high-risk” courses this spring and move to SI sessions in historically difficult courses on FAU's other campuses by 2008-09.

Drs. Fred Hoffman (mathematics) and Jennifer Bebergal (student retention) attended SI training at UMKC in September. Faculty who are interested in more information, or to have SI offered within their courses, should contact Bebergal at Bebergal@fau.edu or x72432.

Thank you to the Lifelong Learning Society for their generous donation to support Supplemental Instruction and other initiatives to increase student success in mathematics at FAU.

The fall 2007 SI leaders for Math for Liberal Arts: Alex Colville, Chris Rucco, Jessica Elam and Katie Biernacki; Kelly French, Lauren Andrews, Marcus Nielsen and Vanessa Van Dyke.



Living Learning Communities Provide a “Home” for Students

The Living Learning Community program at FAU kicked off its third year with nearly 100 students enrolled in five different LLCs. These students are all a part of a unique FAU experience and they have been actively engaged in establishing a strong support network, creating campus connections, and a path to academic success.

The current LLCs being offered are: Explore (3rd year), Engineering (2nd year), Music (1st year), Healthy Owls (1st year) and Women's Leadership (2nd year).

This cohort of students living in the Heritage Park North Tower are an energetic and involved group. They have participated in LLC co-curricular events and activities including: rock climbing, a “Get Money W!\$e” workshop, a 9/11 service project, an “Amazing Race FAU” program, retreats, mentoring programs, study sessions, and more. The LLC encourages students to be active in their college experience as they travel the road to success at FAU.

A steering committee was recently established to provide guidance and structure to FAU's growing LLC program. Members of this committee include both academic and student affairs staff. Currently, the steering committee is accepting proposals for new LLCs to be started for the upcoming 2008-2009 academic year. These proposal forms (as well as additional LLC resources and information) are available online at www.fau.edu/retention/LLCSteering.php. The LLC Steering Committee welcomes any and all proposals as we look to expand both the richness and reach of the LLCs to incoming FAU students.

Karen Fisher – Saving Students

We are pleased to announce that Karen Fisher, University Advancement, became the 10th recipient of the “Save a Student” award from the Office for Student Retention. The students that are referred to Fisher often have significant issues that are impeding their success. By going the extra mile to help these students she has helped many to “stay at FAU.”

The student who nominated Fisher stated “Karen has truly gone above and beyond to ensure my success here at FAU... Karen took an immediate interest in me and did all she could to get me the support I needed. I will never forget getting that first letter from her in the mail and realizing that I would be able to continue my studies after all...I can honestly say that Karen's concern and help is the sole reason I have been able to continue my studies, and I am truly blessed for having met her.

If you know someone who has gone “above and beyond” to help a student “stay@FAU”, please send a nomination letter to Bebergal@fau.edu.



Motivating Students to Succeed

 (borrowed with permission from the Faculty Development Center, UMBC)

At the start of each semester students are often enthusiastic and eager to get started in new pursuits. At the same time, instructors energetically outline plans for their courses and explain to students what must be done to succeed. But as the semester progresses and coursework settles into a demanding routine, students' interest sometimes begins to wane. For many students, meeting academic goals can start to seem less certain as complexity and ambiguity set in. Are there ways to ensure that motivation will remain high throughout the semester and that students will continue to be engaged in a course?

Research shows that professors can do a variety of things to help sustain student motivation. For example,

- Set clear goals for the course and explain these goals to students
- Make frequent assignments and give timely feedback to students
- Use examples that show the relevance of the material.

These actions are, of course, entwined. Goals need to be

revisited during the semester, and need to be related explicitly to the assignments. Relevant examples should help students understand their progress toward larger objectives.

But one crucial way to help students maintain motivation is to help them see that they are succeeding not just in learning the material, but in learning how to learn better. Student success doesn't depend simply on hard work and long hours. Students also need to understand how to work effectively, and develop skills to meet academic challenges, many of which are new. While basic study skills are transferable, there are also discipline-specific strategies that help students master course content and some discussion of these strategies can be built into all courses. In short, another way to keep students motivated is to suggest learning strategies that help students master the specific material in the course. If students see themselves becoming better at mastering material (and more efficient at it), they are likely to invest more time and energy in a class.

Some students – especially freshmen – may need to commit significant time to learning academic study skills. For these students resources exist on campus to help them focus on and hone their skills. Encourage these students to meet with a freshman advisor, get a tutor or mentor through multicultural affairs, visit the retention office or participate in a “Success Series” workshop.

But even experienced students will benefit from explicit guidance in improving their academic skills. For example, students proficient in reading fiction and poetry may need help in understanding better ways to read and study a research article in chemistry or psychology, while a skilled physics student might struggle to figure out how to take notes on Locke or Kant. Paying some attention to learning strategies by building a discussion of them into a course-and then developing assignments that require students to test their abilities-can motivate students to become more effective learners. Academic skills need constant revisiting as students (indeed all of us)

move into greater and greater complexity in our work; rarely do we encounter anyone who claims to have mastered time-management sufficiently to never have to think about it again.

There are dozens of books that students can use to help them improve their basic skills. Examples include, the book used in the “Learning Strategies and Human Development” SLS 1503 course *Your College Experience* by Gardner, Jewler and Barefoot, Skip Downing's *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*; or the latest edition of a classic text, *How to Study in College*, by Walter Pauk. Students can also be encouraged to find help on the web.

For more suggestions on Motivating Students, see:

“Motivating Students,” in *Tools for Teaching*, Barbara Gross Davis at <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/motivate.htm> / or “Motivating Students,” Idea Paper No. 1 by William E. Cashin at www.idea.ksu.edu/resources/index.html

“How can I help?”

A frequent question we hear in the Office for Student Retention is: “What can I do as a member of the FAU community to enhance student satisfaction and retention?” To address this question, each Stay@FAU newsletter contains “how can I help” tips for faculty and staff — things that you can do to help to retain students and promote student success.

DON'T WORRY...IT'S ONLY HELP!

Remove the “Tutoring Scare” and Encourage Students to Seek Assistance

The 18th Annual Teaching Academic Survival Skills (TASS) Conference was held on March 5-7, 2007 at Palm Beach Atlantic University. One thing that stood out was the number of conversations surrounding academic/student service resource centers and the difficulties many institutions are facing to get students to take advantage of the on-campus services.

Some have found that many students are reluctant to take advantage of services because of the negative stigma (typically developed in high school) of getting tutoring or asking someone for help. Some institutional representatives commented that their students were afraid to seek help due to fear of what their peers and parents may say.

So what do you do?

We want our students at FAU to not only stay@fau, but also become successful college students. In an effort to do so, it is important that students know where to go for assistance. Here are just a few suggestions you can offer your students:

1. A tutoring website is maintained by the Office for Student Retention. The website lists FAU services that provide free academic assistance as well as independent tutors who are FAU faculty, staff and students. Some independent tutors offer free services and many can help students on a variety of FAU's campuses. For more information, visit www.fau.edu/tutoring.
2. The Office of Multicultural Affairs offers tutoring as well. The office is located on the 2nd floor of the Student Services Building (above the Breezeway Cafeteria). You can also call them at (561) 297-3959 to see if the tutors available for your requested subject areas. Tutoring is available on the Jupiter campus as part of the Learning Resource Center under Student Affairs. The Center provides tutoring for writing in partnership with the UCEW and individual course tutoring as possible. Students on other FAU campuses should contact the Student Affairs Office for academic support.
3. The College of Engineering and Computer Science offers free tutoring for engineering and computer science majors. Visit www.dess.eng.fau.edu/about.htm for more information.
4. The math department offers tutoring through its math labs for classes

including College Algebra, Math for Liberal Arts, Statistics, Precalculus, Trigonometry and all levels of Calculus. Schedules are available at www.math.fau.edu/web/Students/Students.htm. Students in Math for Liberal Arts may also participate in Supplemental Instruction (SI). See www.fau.edu/retention/SIStudents.php for the current schedule.

5. The University Center for Excellence in Writing (UCEW) provides free assistance with all aspects of writing at five locations – three on the Boca Raton campus, one in Davie and one in Jupiter. Online assistance is also available. For more information or to schedule an appointment visit www.fau.edu/UCEW.

6. The Heritage Park Support Center (HPSC) provides a variety of support services where students live. Located on the first floor of Heritage Park Towers residence hall, the HPSC is open to FAU students – residential and commuter. Through the HPSC, students can find a variety of staff, tutors and consultants waiting to help. In addition to getting help from a writing consultant from the UCEW or tutoring from an engineering graduate student, office hours are held by several departments including: the Career Development Center, the Counseling Center, Freshman Academic Advising Services and the Office for Student Retention. Students who are struggling in any way can seek help through this convenient location.

Retention is a University-wide initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding campus resources or if you or a student you know is having any problems at FAU at 561-297-0906 or stay@fau.edu.



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the University's retention newsletter is published bi-annually. Please look for future issues that will go in-depth with some of the key services that enhance student persistence and how YOU can help increase student excellence and graduation rates of our students.