

## **The Academic Skills Center - Expanded: 1993-2005**

In the fall of 1993, the Academic Skills Center moved to Collis Center, a central hub on campus for students. This location was very accessible to students, and became more frequented by students as the years progressed. During these years, the ASC has dramatically increased its services for Dartmouth students. It has seen a reciprocal interest on campus. Since 1993, the ASC experienced a substantial rise in programming and interest for most areas it provides support in (e.g. personal academic skills advising, tutoring, disabilities, student-athletes, workshops, community outreach). This is largely due to the futuristic vision Carl Thum invented to span the 1990's. This vision, captured in the ASC mission statement, is that "all students who wish to improve their academic skills and ability to learn" would find more than adequate assistance through workshops, tutoring, study groups, and personal advising sessions.

### 1993-1994

The administrative assistant position, formerly held by Sarah Spiegel, was filled by Mary Amico. Newly located in Collis Center in the heart of campus, the ASC enjoyed an increase in one-to-one academic skills advising and disability prescreenings. As Nancy Pompian's time was increasingly focused on providing support for students with disabilities, the combined efforts of Mary Amico and Gail Zimmerman helped to stabilize academic support for students.

In an effort to build good relations between deans and coaches, Gail began meeting with coaches individually. She provided a series of roadshows, and met with students individually, half of whom were athletes. In addition, work on an Academic Enrichment Library commenced. While total contact fell again during the 1993-1994 year (dropping to 2164), both the Tutor Clearinghouse and Study Group program experienced a rise to 687 and 722, respectively, as students were seeking academic assistance more than ever. Disabilities Services also saw a dramatic increase in prescreenings, increasing by at least forty from the year before. Thirty two language waivers were issued, and twenty three physical disabilities were accommodated.

### 1994-1995

The Academic Skills Center saw great change during the 1994-1995 academic year. Although the full-time staff remained the same, all ASC programs experienced a substantial rise in student participation. Carl Thum, taking advantage of such a central and accessible location in the new Collis Center, continued his promotion of the ASC's availability to every Dartmouth student. As a result, Learning at Dartmouth, a course designed for first-year, first-term students to learn important study and time management skills, was implemented. A new mini-course called Power Learning was offered during winter and spring terms, and two "Strategic Learning" videos, Learning and Time Management, were produced. In addition, the ASC created the website from which you are currently reading.

The Tutor Clearinghouse, Study Groups, and one-on-one counseling sessions, as well as pre-screenings for learning disabilities, all reached a new peak from 1994-1995. Total contact increased from 2,164 to 3,005. The Tutor Clearinghouse continued to provide tutors primarily in chemistry, economics, physics, engineering, psychology, math, and biology. 730 students were

tutored in 83 courses. Study Groups had 783 students participate in 118 groups, a rise from 722 students the previous year. Academic skills advising sessions also rose dramatically from 255 to 523 contacts. Student disability counseling received sixty-three inquiries for learning disabilities, and twenty-six students with physical disabilities.

The ASC also increased and improved its communication with the Dartmouth College Athletic Department. Gail Zimmerman worked with students, coaches, and deans to build bonds of integrity amidst the groups. She began to meet with first-year members of fall sports teams, continuing team workshops, and increasing individual counseling sessions. The Peer Advisor Program (emerging during the 1993-1994 years) merged with the Upperclass Dean's program to provide student-to-student support.

### 1995-1996

During the 1995-1996 school year, the Academic Skills Center experienced an improvement in programming, but this coincided with a decrease in total student contacts. Learning at Dartmouth, during its second year, received credit as a P.E. course and enrolled forty students in the fall term. In addition, greater numbers of minorities—particularly African-Americans and Latino/Hispanic students—made use of the ASC. A third "Strategic Learning" video, Reading Improvement, was produced, and the ASC increased its collaboration with the Student Associates to the Dean program. In addition, the ASC stepped up on-campus marketing through posters and blitz bulletins.

Total contact dropped from 3,005 to 2,534, but underneath this decrease were encouraging trends. Disability contacts more than doubled. In addition, the Tutor Clearinghouse, although experiencing 771 contacts as opposed to 804 the year before, matched an astounding 96% of all tutor requests with tutors, far exceeding numbers in the past. Study Groups experienced a drop of 235 students, as the cost increased from \$25 to \$30, but, once again, attendance for each group session increased overall.

Attention to athletes was further enhanced through the work of Gail Zimmerman and NCAA funding. During the summer and fall terms, the ASC implemented a learning style assessment for all first-year recruited athletes. On campus, 16 workshops were provided, and 231 students attended. The Academic Enrichment Library increased in holdings and was utilized increasingly more by students. Most importantly, however, was the genesis of the NCAA laptop program, in which two laptops were made available on a checkout basis to varsity athletes. This program began as an effort to accommodate the traveling athlete, giving him/her the same advantages as if he or she was on campus. Full funding was provided through the NCAA.

Important developments took place in Disabilities Services. Nancy Pompian worked with the Association of American Medical Colleges, in which she began teaching about disabilities. The ASC saw a substantial rise in psychiatric disabilities (a trend to continue in the future) and worked with 140 LD/ADD students and forty-five students with physical disabilities.

### 1996-1997

In the 1996-1997 year, the ASC welcomed Amanda Malone as its new, full-time administrative assistant. Mary Amico left to become Associate Director of Admissions at the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York (meanwhile Karen Rice briefly filled this position until Mary Amico was hired). The year also brought a great increase in student contact and services. Learning at Dartmouth completed its third year and received positive evaluations. The fourth video in the Strategic Learning series, Note-taking, was completed as well. Carl Thum made a presentation about this video series to the College Reading and Learning Association, and this promoted video sales. The ASC continued its success in attracting Latino/Hispanic students and continued its commitment to developing peer advising and support through the Dean's Office Student Consultants (DOSC) program. Finally, in an outreach effort to the regional community, Carl Thum taught the College Learning Strategies Course to high school students in the area.

Total student contact reached a record high (3,509) an increase of nearly 26%. Workshops and roadshows saw an increase in participation of a remarkable 46%. The ASC continued its commitment to one-on-one academic skills advising, and likewise, saw a rise in students desiring personal study skills tutoring. The Tutor Clearinghouse program saw a slight decline, from 771 to 754 contacts, and a tapering of the abnormally high matching percentage (drop from 96% to 88%) seen the year before. Study Groups saw the greatest decline, however, as total contact dropped from 548 to 437. This, in large part, reflects the Chemistry Department's change in programming to sponsor individual tutoring rather than study groups as it had in the past.

The NCAA program continued providing support through the laptop checkout service. Five new laptops were purchased; a total of seven available. Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Statements such as, "Great Service" and "If I couldn't have a laptop last week I would have had a miserable exam period" were received. Gail continued meeting with students, mostly athletes, in personal academic skills advising sessions. She also continued work on her doctorate through the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Nancy Pompian relinquished direct involvement with the Tutor Clearinghouse and Study Group programs, as the demands of disabilities support had increased dramatically over the years. Amanda Malone took direct supervision, while Nancy concentrated on the 135 students with LD/ADD, forty five with physical disability, and eighteen students with psychiatric disability. This 200% rise in psychiatric disabilities reflects collaboration with Counseling Services as well as a growing trend in higher education. Nancy also served on the committee to develop national guidelines for documenting a learning disability, published by AHEAD.

Student contact was inhibited during the 1996-1997 school year by the unfortunate legal conflict instigated by a Dartmouth student who claimed he was not given a language waiver he deserved. The Office of Civil Rights began an investigation to uncover possible discrimination. The ASC successfully fought the complaint in court, providing appropriate and accurate documentation. Although everyone at the office was sensitized to the necessity of accurate records and the possibility of future legal conflict, the real tragedy came at the expense of other students, who were sapped of valuable support through the ASC during this time.

1997-1998

Throughout his time at the ASC, Carl Thum has worked with every part of the college to present the ASC as a valuable resource for any Dartmouth student. During the 1997-1998 school year, the ASC increased its promotion to both students and faculty. Films for the Humanities and Sciences (Princeton, NJ) was contracted to market the Strategic Learning video series that had been producing over the past few years. The series achieved wide-spread national recognition and placed the office in high esteem among college officials. In addition, the ASC saw an increase in the use of its website and the ASC "blitzmail" bulletin. A new ASC brochure describing the center's services was published as well. Learning at Dartmouth received positive evaluations once again. The Dean's Office Student Consultants likewise played a large role in extending these resources to students. The presence of Amanda Malone added increased stability to the office, as both the Tutor Clearinghouse and Study Groups were ably run.

In addition to such major increases in marketing, Carl Thum worked in collaboration with Bruce Baker (Counseling Services) and Lisa Thum (Senior Class Dean) to develop an Academic Discussion Group, for those students in danger of academic probation. In an outreach effort to the Upper Valley community, Carl once again offered the summer course for high school students. He and Gail Zimmerman continued meeting with students in personal academic skills advising sessions. Finally, the NCAA provided the means for three new laptops, as the ASC continued its laptop program for varsity athletes.

The ASC enjoyed a record high of 3,878 contacts this year, an increase of over 10%. Academic counseling remained stable. The Tutor Clearinghouse received 979 requests, and matched over 92% of these requests. Study Groups saw the greatest increase, however, rising from 437, 1996-1997, to 744, a 28% increase.

Disabilities Services at Dartmouth was surprised in 1997-1998 to receive a donation of \$5,000 and a matching donation of \$5,000 from the donor's company. The donor was a Dartmouth alumnus with dyslexic children. The money was deposited into a fund to provide Dragon Naturally Speaking (a voice recognition computer program) for students with dyslexia and physical disabilities. In addition, another donor gave \$15,000 to increase support for students with learning disabilities.

### 1998-1999

This year, the ASC enjoyed continued success of the Strategic Learning video series. Revenue reached \$4,000 and was used to produce a fifth video on stress management. Learning at Dartmouth continued to reach students early in their Dartmouth careers. Through close communication and involvement with the Dean's Office Student Consultants, the ASC again saw a record number of contacts. Carl Thum continued the summer program for high school students as well. Daniel Stulac '01 assembled "The Sophomore Major Advising Guide". It was distributed to all sophomores, and received positive evaluations, though it was discontinued in years to come.

During this year 4,206 students were contacted, and the ASC saw a dramatic rise (33%) in the number of students who attended ASC-sponsored programs. Personal academic skills advising sessions also rose (9%), but the Tutor Clearinghouse experienced a dramatic drop to only 555

requests. The Tutor Clearinghouse was able to match 81% of these tutees with a tutor. The Study Group program also experienced a drop to 546, but this number is more in line with the two previous years. Minority students were well contacted this year, making up 56% of the contacts in which the optional ethnicity question is asked.

Nancy Pompian served 154 students with learning disabilities and ADD, seventy eight with physical disabilities, and a remarkable twenty two with psychiatric disabilities. This statistic represents a 75% increase in psychiatric disabilities. Pompian and Thum recognized this growing trend in higher education, and so the ASC began work on a psychiatric disabilities symposium, to be held in March of 2000. In addition, students initiated a chronic disease support group. Nancy became a consultant for the Educational Testing Service. Finally, Daniel Stulac researched the feasibility of purchasing a computer to run Dragon NaturallySpeaking, a location for the program, and the expense in training students. The ASC purchased a computer and found a location in the Baker Library stacks. After being professionally trained, Daniel began training students with learning and physical disabilities to use the program.

(NCAA monies allowed for an expansion of the laptop program, as two of the older computers were replaced with G3 PowerBooks.)

### 1999-2000

The ASC saw a great deal of change and accomplishment during the 1999-2000 school year. In September, the center welcomed Amy Ashcraft as the new, full-time administrative assistant, continuing the role of Tutor Clearinghouse Coordinator, Office Manager, and Administrative Assistant. The year's highlight came in March, as the ASC hosted an invitational psychiatric disabilities symposium. Thirty-six institutions were represented (mostly COFHE schools). Kay Redfield Jamison spoke to a crowd of over 400 (comprised of students, faculty, symposium attendees, and community members) about her personal journey through bi-polar disorder. The symposium planning committee consisted of Carl Thum, Nancy Pompian, Gail Zimmerman, Amy Ashcraft, Corynn Gilbert, Erika Wygonik '99, and Daniel Stulac '01. Daniel Stulac organized many of the event's logistics, as well as directing a group of student volunteers. The event placed Dartmouth at the forefront of selective schools that are dealing seriously with this growing trend in higher education. In addition, the ASC once again saw a rise in psychiatric disabilities this year.

The ASC continued to reach first-year, first-term students through Learning at Dartmouth, which enrolled fifty students this year and received positive evaluations. "Stress Management", the fifth video in the Strategic Learning video series, was completed. By gift of a donor, the videos were digitized and made available online. Collaboration with DOSCs continued, as well as another successful year of community outreach through the high school course.

Total contact reached a record high this year of 4,886, with a remarkable 2,594 of these coming through roadshows and various workshops. Personal counseling sessions and the Study Group program also saw slight increases. The Tutor Clearinghouse experienced a dramatic rise to 834. The low number of 555 the year before appeared to be a fluke.

As Disabilities Services experienced a great deal of recognition through the symposium, the NCAA program likewise changed and improved dramatically. Gail Zimmerman took her present position as Dean of First-Year Students, and the ASC welcomed Corynn Gilbert as a new academic counselor. Although Corynn only stayed for the 1999-2000 year, her presence revolutionized support for athletes at Dartmouth. The laptop program, then in its fourth year, replaced three old computers with I-Mac PowerBooks. In addition, Corynn's enthusiasm brought an increase in student athlete workshops, and more importantly, a great increase in communication between coaches, deans, and the ASC. Corynn established relationships by organizing a reception for deans and coaches, and began meeting with coaches individually. She also attended award ceremonies and banquets for athletes.

### 2000-2001

This year saw the addition of Sue Stuebner '93 to the ASC staff, as the new Academic Counselor. Sue focused mainly on advising student-athletes and continuing to improve relations between coaches, deans, and faculty. Sue also presented multiple workshops on study skills and time management, and worked with Amy Ashcraft in training new tutors for the Tutor Clearinghouse. She also created a training manual for tutors and study group leaders. Amy Ashcraft continued her work as the Tutor Clearinghouse and Study Group Coordinator, recruiting students as tutors and study group leaders and improving training techniques. Amy completely redesigned the study group handbook, and the new version received praise from study group leaders and professors.

In July 2001, Nancy Pompian gave a national presentation "Overcoming Barriers to Collaboration" between her office and Counseling (Mark Reed, co-presenter) at AHEAD. She also consulted for Educational Testing Services on disabilities for the third year running. 273 students registered for services with Nancy: 180 learning disabled/ADHD students, 50 physically disabled students, and 43 students with psychiatric disabilities. Dartmouth was in a consortium of five highly selective colleges (Harvard, Stanford, Brown, Columbia) to get a federal grant on invisible disabilities/Universal Instruction of Design. Professors and Dick's House counselors increased referrals for psychiatric disabilities. All five of the Academic Success videotapes became available on the website, and an alumnus donated money to market and distribute CD's of the videos.

The Learning at Dartmouth course saw its seventh year, with an enrollment of over fifty-two freshmen. The course received very positive evaluations for its content and presenter, Carl Thum. Carl's "Reading Improvement Miniversity" course was also well-received, with an enrollment of twenty-five for the four-session course. The "College Learning Strategies Course," a summer course led by Carl for high school students entering college in the fall, continued its success, with an enrollment of thirty. He also served as advisor and main supporter of the newly created Dartmouth chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Meghan Fitzgerald '04 created a new office assistant manual for her position, allowing her successors to work more efficiently with all necessary information at their fingertips. Overall, total student contact decreased slightly from the previous year, with 4,742 contacts (a decrease of 3%).

## 2001-2002

The new, updated ASC website was coordinated this year by Sue Stuebner '93. The website received an improved design, making it more accessible for all students and the general public. Sue also worked with the CHAMPS Life Skills Intern in the Athletic Department to initiate the CHAMPS (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success) Life Skills program at Dartmouth, an NCAA program designed to promote intellectual and personal growth among student-athletes.

Learning at Dartmouth continued into its eighth year, with positive reviews from the forty-nine students who were enrolled. Nancy Pompian served 168 learning disabled / ADHD students, thirty-five students with physical disabilities, and thirty-nine students with psychiatric disabilities this year, a slight decrease from the previous year's totals. Many more students were self-identified as having learning disabilities upon entering Dartmouth, but counselors, deans, and faculty increasingly refer students for suspected disabilities, so pre-screenings continued to be numerous.

Dartmouth received the five-college Department of Education Universal Instructional Design grant (the other colleges were Brown, Harvard, Stanford and Columbia). With funds from the grant, Nancy coordinated a workshop in December 2001 for twenty-seven faculty members. The workshop covered teaching techniques geared to reach all students, including those with disabilities, and ways in which to minimize the need for individual accommodations. Some of these techniques include providing a highly detailed syllabus, enunciating the learning goals for the course, and making course material available over the web.

In May 2002, the ASC welcomed Holly Potter as its new full-time administrative assistant. Holly brought strong experience with student affairs after five years of work in the Upperclass Deans' Office, and was an enthusiastic and capable addition to the ASC team. Holly coordinates the Tutor Clearinghouse and Study Group programs, manages the ASC budget, and oversees the office. She made valuable improvements to the training programs for tutors and study group leaders by expanding the training session to include experiential activities that emphasize communication and different learning styles.

As part of an institution-wide effort towards uniformity in computer operating systems, the ASC switched from Macintosh OS to Windows XP. Petra Halsema '03, the ASC Student Intern, helped smooth the transition by sorting through the old files on all ASC computers. She also updated and improved Carl's study skills presentations using Microsoft Powerpoint. Fall 2001 saw the highest number of student contacts on record, with 2,617 contacts. Total student contacts for 2001-02 reached 5,193, a 10% rise from the previous year which is mainly due to the increase in attendance at workshops, roadshows, and presentations.

## 2002-2003

Carl Thum's Learning at Dartmouth course continued into its ninth year, but only thirty-one students enrolled, versus the previous year's total of forty-nine. The reason for the dip is unclear. The previous years showed a decline of enrollment in ASC study skills workshops, and, as the decline continued, thoughts to discontinue the program ensued. The Dean's Office Student

Consultants (DOSCs) program, a joint effort between the ASC, the Upperclass Dean's Office, and the First Year Office, continued. DOSCs received training in academic advising and study skills and conducted outreach programs in residential halls.

In August, Nancy Pompian was interviewed by Madge Kaplan of National Public Radio on the subject of college students with depression. In December of 2002, Nancy oversaw a workshop covering Universal Instructional Design for Latin instruction. She also served in the Web Accessibility Group at Dartmouth, a committee that is working to make the College's web sites accessible to people of all abilities.

The number of prescreenings had decreased this year, as more entering students were self-identified for disabilities. The 2002 year also marked the inauguration of the NCAA /CHAMPS Life Skills Program, a cooperative program run by the ASC and the Athletic Department. Carl Thum, Nancy Pompian, and representatives from the two departments conducted a nationwide search for the new Academic Counselor and sifted through over one hundred applications before settling on Rob Morrissey. Rob joined the ASC in July after working on compliance and event management in the Athletics Department for two years. As the first full-time Academic Advisor/CHAMPS Life Skills Coordinator, Rob raised awareness among athletes about campus resources, through individual meetings with students, service on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and collaboration with coaches, deans, and faculty. Rob also managed the ASC website and the NCAA laptop program for student-athletes.

#### 2003-2004

The ASC saw another increase in overall student contact during the 2003-2004 school year, reaching 5,424 student contacts: the highest total ever recorded. The tutoring and study group programs continued to attract many participants with a 16% increase in the number of study groups offered. Specific emphasis was placed on improving the recruiting and training of tutors as well as marketing of services.

Carl Thum worked in cooperation with the chemistry department to begin the development of the newest addition to the line of Learning Videos. The video is a guide to succeeding in general chemistry. Campus-wide academic skills workshops had been discontinued in order to avoid competition with similar programs offered by various other areas of the college and increase the focus placed on other ASC programs. Learning at Dartmouth was moved to a time slot in the late afternoon and saw an increase in participation as a result of this change, with the enrollment of forty-seven first-year students.

In September of 2003, two deaf students and one who received hard-of-hearing remote-real-time captioning services (CART) enrolled at Dartmouth. Although Dartmouth had deaf students previously, this was the first time interpreting services had been requested. Janice was hired as the interpreter coordinator in order to coordinate and schedule contract interpreters as well as to provide interpreting services. She also put on a number of workshops to help faculty to understand the concept and process of interpreting. Several campus-wide education programs were conducted through First Friday and the OPAL office to educate the community.



Additionally, the ASC was able to find a reliable remote CART provider, CaptionFirst, although finding technical assistance in the classroom had been difficult.

Nancy announced her retirement plans and the position was changed from Student Disability Coordinator to Director of Student Disability Services. At the same time, Nancy relinquished the title of Section 504 Coordinator, which she had held for eighteen years, to the Office Institution of Diversity and Equity Deputy Director Kate Burke. A search for her replacement was planned for the 2004-2005 year. During the 2003-2004 school year, Nancy served 133 LD or ADHD students, forty-three physically disabled, and twenty-eight students with psychiatric disabilities.

Although faculty advising to the athletic teams had been in place at Dartmouth for some time, there was not much structure to the program. Hoping to establish parameters for the program in order to create more effective advising for student athletes, Rob and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee created the "Handbook for Team Faculty Advisors." At the close of the fall term, the ASC hosted a dinner for first-year student-athletes in Collis Commonground in order to celebrate their accomplishments throughout their first year as well as to emphasize the importance of the balance between sports and academics. Invited speakers included First Year Dean Zimmerman, Professor Kang, and Professor Emeritus Daniel.

(The 2003-2004 year also saw a proliferation of prospective student-athlete workshops which attempted to depict classroom life at Dartmouth and stressed the importance of time management. The ASC acquired eight new Dell Laptops with funds from the Ivy Opportunity Fund for the NCAA Laptop checkout program.)

### 2004-2005

In the Fall of 2004, Kate Eifler began as a full-time staff interpreter, thereby significantly lessening the need for contract interpreters. In the winter, Kate took over CART services as well. Rob left the ASC in the Fall term to take a new position as the Assistant Director of Corporate and Venture Initiatives at Dartmouth's Development Office. A search to fill this position culminated with the hiring of Michelle Smith, who joined the ASC staff at the end of the fall term.

Nancy was able to find donor money to pay for two unique evaluations: one for a student whose native language is Mandarin which was performed by the Mandarin Learning Disability evaluator at MIT, and the other for a neurological test for a student who had memory loss as a result of previous seizures. Nancy also donated an unused print enlarging machine to a medical student with low vision and assisted a group of students with manic-depressive illness in forming a discussion group regarding the social aspects of being manic-depressive at Dartmouth. The Learning at Dartmouth course instituted a winter session for the first time, enrolling an additional eleven students. It was hoped that with increased marketing, the winter term offering of the course will have greater participation in the future.