

# OVERVIEW

College of Charleston: 2014-2015  
CENTER FOR STUDENT LEARNING

## MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the CSL is two-fold: to provide comprehensive academic support programs for College of Charleston students as they strive for excellence in learning, while promoting student leadership and development through peer education experiences. Our vision is to uphold our key values of excellence, commitment, integrity, confidence, and compassion.

## STUDENT IMPACT

CSL defines and measures the impact of services using metrics commonly adopted by learning centers around the country: (a) overall contacts and number of students utilizing CSL services; (b) frequency of use of CSL services; (c) comparisons between students using CSL resources and the general student population (for example, retention rates, academic standing, or term GPA); and (d) comparisons between students using CSL resources and specific student populations (for example, entering first-year cohort, classification, or ethnicity). Additionally, each service area has set student learning outcomes that were measured for the first time this year.

## CSL CONTACTS

This past year saw a slight decrease in overall students and targeted growth in several programs that saw additional resources pushed their way, such as Supplemental Instruction, Science Lab, Speaking Lab, and Peer Academic Coaching. 4,569 individual students were seen in core CSL services, which was a small decrease from 4,599 in 2013-2014. This number represents the unduplicated number of students using CSL services. What follows is a duplicated breakdown of student contacts and students served across semesters, services, and courses.

CSL Contacts	2014-2015
	Contacts/ # Served
Supplemental Instruction	13212 / 2394
Tutoring	16131 / 5762
Study Strategies Appointments	635 / 303
Peer Academic Coaching	1995 / 164
Study Strategies Seminars	1020 / 860
North Campus	283 / 95
Cougar Countdown	NA / 4676
<b>Year End Totals</b>	<b>33276 / 14254</b>

The CSL continued its collaborative efforts for outreach such as Accepted Students Weekend, AALANA Preview Day, community events, and local high schools for a total of 11,913 additional contacts.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

North Campus continues to present the CSL with opportunities and challenges as we learn to serve new populations, such as BPS and Lowcountry Graduate Center students, within current staffing levels. North Campus and LGC contributed to the hiring of a writing tutor at the North Campus for 7 hours per week in 2014-2015 as a pilot. We interim staffed the North Campus CSL offices with professional staff that rotated there on a weekly basis.

The CSL celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary which was bookended with two major events: an open house on September 1<sup>st</sup> and a tent at Charleston Affair (May 2015) to draw back alumni who worked at the CSL. Further cultivation of alumni and donors will follow.

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# DEMOGRAPHICS & IMPACT

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## CLASSIFICATION

According to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, there were 2,166 first-year students in the Fall 2014 cohort. Each fall since 2012, a greater percentage of entering first year students use CSL services. Just over 50% of fall 2014 entering students participated in CSL programs.. Beyond the first year, there is an inverse relationship between class standing and CSL use. As class standing increases, CSL use declines.

## RACE and ETHNICITY

A total of 4,569 individual students utilized CSL services in 2014-2015. Of that number, 9% were African American students. Underrepresented student populations are regularly overrepresented as CSL program participants. This is partly due to partnerships across campus with programs such as MSPS, SPECTRA, and ROAR.

## STUDENT IMPACT: AVERAGE GPA

As seen below, first year students who use CSL services earn higher GPAs than first year students who do not.

### First Year Student GPAs (2014-2015)

	# of Non-CSL First Year Students	Non-CSL First Year Average GPA	# of CSL First Year Students	CSL First Year Average GPA
Fall 2014 semester GPA	1073	2.88	1093	3.03
Spring 2015 semester GPA	991	2.84	1030	3.06

Additionally, when looking at the impact of multiple visits to the CSL, students who visit 5 or more times during their first year on campus have significantly higher first year GPAs than those who visit only 1-4 times over their first year at the College. This is part of our new marketing push to faculty, staff, parents, and students: *come early, come often.*

### First Year Student GPAs by CSL Attendance

	CSL 1-4 First Year Visits Average GPA	CSL 5-14 First Year Visits Average GPA	CSL 15+ First Year Visits Average GPA
Fall 2014 semester GPA	2.97	3.10	3.24
Spring 2015 semester GPA	3.01	3.12	3.27

## STUDENT IMPACT: RETENTION RATES

Retention data is calculated once the fall census has occurred; thus, data for the Fall 2014 cohort is not yet complete. The Fall 2013 cohort data is complete and promising, especially for African-American CSL users. 76.55% of African-American CSL users were retained while only 57.45% of African-American non CSL users were retained from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014. 76.58% of all CSL users were retained at the College while only 60.44% of non-CSL users were retained. This means that not only do CSL services impact student achievement but they also impact student persistence.



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# SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a proven student success program aimed at historically difficult core courses where at least 1/4 to 1/3 of the students in the course either withdraw or receive a grade of “D” or “F” in the course. SI Leaders are students who have taken the course before, successfully completed it, and received a faculty recommendation. They are trained in collaborative learning techniques, attend the course again, model exemplary classroom behavior, and lead three study sessions per week. Currently the CSL supports ten courses (BIOL 111, BIOL 112, BIOL 201, BIOL 202, CHEM 111, CHEM 112, CHEM 231, CHEM 232, PHIL 120, PSYC 213, and various HONS) with 60 sections of SI.

SI experienced a 16% increase in session attendance as we continued our expansion into high DFW rate courses. Additionally, the new distributed supervision model, with more certified SI staff supervisors matched with more Senior SI leaders, led to better sessions and higher satisfaction with SI.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

These three student learning outcomes are measured currently:

- 1) The student will use more diverse study strategies than if they had not attended SI.
- 2) The student will perceive the grade benefit of attending SI.
- 3) The student will show increased satisfaction in their course grade than non-attendees.

## STUDENT IMPACT

A duplicated count of students who utilized SI in 2015-2015 is 2,394 for 13,212 visits. Supplemental instruction has several goals including high attendance at sessions, reducing the number of students receiving a grade of D or F, or withdrawing

from a course, and a higher mean course grade for attendees.

For 2014-2015 the average SI attendance was 65% of the enrolled students, which is well above the national goal of 40%. There was an overall 13% reduction in the DFW rate of attendees over non-attendees. Additionally, all courses had a higher mean grade for SI attendees than non-attendees with SI attendees earning an average course grade 0.43 points above non-attendees.

Below can be seen the positive effects of regular SI session attendance on graded students, which is a continued strategic marketing goal for our SI program.

<b>Effects of SI Attendance</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	<b>1-4 visits</b>	<b>5-7 visits</b>	<b>8 or + visits</b>
A	260	125	176
B	421	174	224
C	321	120	130
D	117	42	27
W/F	177	38	21
Total: 2373	1296	499	578
<b>Course Grade:</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>2.95</b>

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The largest challenge we face is adequate leader supervision. With the program director taking another faculty appointment this year we moved the supervision of the program to a full-time staff position. It will be important to see if overall student satisfaction with the program changes with this decision.

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# TUTORING

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The majority of the CSL's tutoring is provided through six labs, some of which have a faculty lab director (Writing Lab, Math Lab, Foreign Languages Tutoring Lab, Accounting Lab, Science Lab, and Speaking Lab). These labs represent a commitment between the departments and the CSL to support students in their academic endeavors. Some labs (Math, Foreign Languages, Science, and Accounting) are course specific whereas other labs (Writing and Speaking) support courses across the curriculum in an effort to boost the communication skills of our students.

Individual tutoring is provided each semester for select courses. These courses are chosen due to their high DFW rate or based on collaboration between departmental faculty and CSL staff.

## STUDENT IMPACT

478 courses were covered by tutoring services this past year for a total of 16,131 visits by 3,220 individual students. Labs, the math lab in particular, is reaching capacity.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The first three CSL student learning outcomes are that the student will develop strategies and appropriate use of the lab and CSL resources to succeed in his/her academic course, as demonstrated by his/her ability to:

- 1) Be prepared with book and notes
- 2) Have made an attempt on the task before the session, and
- 3) Come to the CSL with sufficient time.

The final student learning outcome is that the student will then be able to attempt this task independently in the future as a result of their session.

In Fall 2014 student tutors assessed their tutee's learning outcomes during a one week time period at the end of September (with 306 visits assessed). We tried to administer another round of this tutor lead assessment in November but found that the tutors were too overwhelmed

by student traffic to adequately focus on the assessment. In Spring 2015 we measured if students perceived themselves differently than the tutors, so the student learning outcome questions were required upon log-out. This resulted in a yield of 6,666 assessed visits.

A comparison of the results shows that although students have an inflated sense of preparation and time as compared to the tutors' assessment, they and the tutors agreed that 95% of them were ready to attempt this task on their own as a result of their session in the CSL.

	Were you prepared for today's session (book, notes, assignment)?	Did you make an attempt on today's task before you came?	Did you come with sufficient time?	As a result of today, are you ready to attempt this task by yourself?
% Yes Fall 2014 (Tutor Surveyed)	88%	95%	88%	95%
% Yes Spring 2015 (Student surveyed)	98%	96%	97%	95%

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

This assessment confirmed what we know about college students—they possess inflated senses of preparation and adequate time. This is something that we stress in orientation and across various methods such as email and workshops: students need to come early, often, and prepared in order to get the most out of our services. We will continue to reinforce this message and will target this message directly to students.

On the brighter side, we are encouraged to hear that students find our services effective in helping them tackle their academic tasks on their own. This is the ultimate goal of the Center for Student Learning and was confirmed by student and tutor observations.



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# NORTH CAMPUS

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Center for Student Learning opened a location at the North Area Campus in fall 2014. Without any increase to funding the coverage of this new space was sparse but adequate for the lower traffic patterns at the North Area Campus.

Three professional staff members rotated afternoons there during the week and an additional professional writing tutor was hired to cover 7 hours of drop-in writing tutoring per week. The writing tutor's time was paid for by a 50/50 split between the BPS program and the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC). Additionally, the writing tutor was hired to provide a pilot of online asynchronous tutoring for the Accelerated MBA program (which is physically housed at the downtown campus). The North Area Campus is the perfect location for online or asynchronous student support because we have two small offices that can be used for video and audio taping.

## STUDENT IMPACT

During the 2014-2015 academic year, we tutored 15 students in writing for 21 visits and hosted one workshop that 11 graduate students attended from the LGC. Additionally, one student was seen for study strategies appointments that found the North Area Campus location convenient for her. Finally, we asynchronously reviewed 245 MBA papers for 36 students over the course of the entire year.

Service Type	Visits	Students
Writing Tutoring	21	15
Workshops	11	11
Study Strategies Appointments	6	1
Online Writing Tutoring	245	36
<b>Total Attendance:</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>63</b>

Although the numbers are quite small compared to the traffic our office sees at the downtown campus, in its infancy we served a few students and learned a lot. For instance, some of us see students at the downtown campus for Study Strategies appointments that might prefer to be seen at the North Campus (nontraditional students, working students, etc.). That will be a population to keep in mind when scheduling our permanent staff rotations at the North Area Campus. The APA citation style workshop offered in the fall semester was quite popular and we should continue to partner with the other LGC schools so that we can offer workshops on appropriate topics and at convenient times.

The MBA pilot of online asynchronous writing tutoring revealed some interesting preferences from the students. Many expressed a desire for more direct feedback and did not appreciate the more "guide on the side" philosophy of our writing tutoring. Three different types of communication were tried with this population—all included a rubric that was scored—and then three modalities for feedback were tried: Jing audio feedback, summary comments on the paper, or Word reviewer comments. Students actually rated the Jing audio comments the highest but wished that we had used the "track changes" option in Word as well. This goes against our notions of ownership and plagiarism so this won't be something we try in the future, if this partnership continues. More research into modalities that mesh with our philosophy of tutoring and yet give students what they need will commence.

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# STUDY STRATEGIES

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Study skills has been an integral part of the Center for Student Learning that offers weekly study skills workshops throughout the semester on various topics and one-on-one appointments with a member of the professional staff. This summer marks a rebranding of this service to “Study Strategies.”

There are two levels of scheduled workshops for Study Strategies (101 and 201). The 101 level workshops offer students general learning strategies such as time management, effective study habits, and finals preparation. The 201 level workshops, co-sponsored by the Library, host guest speakers from around campus who focused on higher level skills such as Google Drive and apps, motivation for writing, and brain health.

There are three professional staff members who carry specific case loads of students – graduate school and standardized test preparation (PRAXIS, GRE, LSAT, etc.); dismissed students, students on academic probation, and provisional students; and all other study strategies appointments. The staff members analyze students’ study strengths and weaknesses to help brainstorm new study techniques and strategies.

## LEARNING OUTCOME

A new student learning outcome was created this past year and will be assessed next year: As a result of participating in the CSL study skills programs, students will acquire and apply new academic strategies.

## STUDENT IMPACT

In the 2014-2015 academic year, we met with 241 different students for a total of 635 study skills appointments. This resulted in an 11% decrease but a brief staffing vacancy may account for this slight decline.

	<b>Number of Student Contacts</b>	<b>Number of Students Served</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	707	299
<b>2014-2015</b>	635	241

The Study Strategies Program collaborates with other offices on campus to provide requested workshops such as Greek Life, First Year Experience, Undergraduate Academic Services, New Student Programs, Center for Excellence in Peer Education, ROAR, Higdon Student Leadership Center, Bonner Program, and Athletics. 860 students attended scheduled and requested workshops for a total of 1,020 contacts.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

This past year the Study Skills Coordinator left the College in early December. A plan was put into place to cover the workshop series and any crisis student appointments but there was no expansion of services sought while the office was short-staffed. The position was reclassified to be an Assistant Director and also cover the supervision of the SI program and filled at the end of April. The CSL will work on rebranding the Study Strategies program and all its components this next academic year.

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# PEER ACADEMIC COACHING

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Peer Academic Coaching (PAC) program matches trained peer coaches who possess exceptional time and self-management skills with students who are experiencing significant academic difficulty due to a lack of these skills. The PAC-student relationship operates on two levels. Initially, the coach helps the student set a long term goal, and then works with the student to create daily, weekly, and monthly tasks and strategies for reaching that goal. In addition, the coach acts as the student's accountability partner, meeting weekly to support, encourage, and troubleshoot problems.

A unique feature of the PAC program is the flexibility in types of weekly meetings—face to face or by phone, text, or email—which allow the coaches and students to connect on a consistent basis. This is particularly important for students who lack fundamental time management skills, as it allows for ongoing accountability and problem-solving.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) The PAC student will develop effective time and self-management skills.
- 2) The PAC coach will demonstrate the ability to help coached students create and use time and self-management plans during one semester.

	Students 2013-14	Students 2014-15
<b>Total Students Served</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Academic Standing of Students Pre-Coaching</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>1.54</b>
<b>Academic Standing of Students Post-Coaching</b>	<b>Semester: 2.26 Cum: 1.84</b>	<b>Semester: 2.06 Cum: 1.78</b>
<b># COACHED STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO RETURN</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>% COACHED STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO CONTINUE</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>54%</b>

## STUDENT IMPACT

In the 2014-15 academic year, 6 coaches met weekly with 135 students who were at risk of continued academic probation or dismissal. At the end of the academic year, 54% (73 students) were eligible to continue at the College.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

2014-15 presented new challenges for the PAC program, as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of coached students and a dramatic decrease in the GPA of students pre-coaching. The PAC program has become a resource reserved for students at significant risk for academic dismissal or those who have returned through the re-admit process. In previous years, the mix of coached students has ranged from self-referred students in good academic standing, previously coached students who wanted to continue working with a coach, and high-risk students.

The 2014-15 average post-coaching GPA indicates dramatic improvement and allowed 54% of the students the opportunity to continue, but for the remaining students that increase was not enough to support continued enrollment due to their extremely low starting GPAs.

The PAC program will continue to develop and adapt based on the needs of students, and will continue to align with those offices that work closely with students who are struggling to regain or attain academic good standing.

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# COUGAR COUNTDOWN

College of Charleston: 2014-2015

## CENTER FOR STUDENT LEARNING

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Cougar Countdown is a series of events and activities designed to relieve stress and provide healthy, energizing study breaks for students during Exam Week. Cougar Countdown activities are sponsored by many different offices and departments on campus, as well as a number of community partners. All events are free to students.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Students will experience the benefits of balancing their study time with healthy study breaks.
- 2) On and off-campus partners will recognize the value of Cougar Countdown to students and the entire College community.

A survey will be implemented in Spring 2016 to assess these learning outcomes.

### STUDENT IMPACT

During the 2014-2015 academic year, Cougar Countdown hosted 59 events which were attended by 4,676 students. Students eagerly anticipate the kick-off each semester, and see Cougar Countdown as a positive part of an otherwise stressful week.

Comments and suggestions from the spring 2014 satisfaction survey were utilized when planning events for the 2014-2015 year. Students indicated that they wanted more and varied outlets for stress relief; therefore, a Health and Stress Relief Fair was incorporated into the popular 'Puppies on the Green' event. This also allowed for greater involvement and engagement with community partners such as Roper, MUSC, an art therapist, and a chiropractor.

Events/Total #	Fall 14	Spring 15
Yoga	57	56
Massage	47	45
Zumba	180	220
Pancake Breakfast	350	n/a
Pets for Less Stress	200	300
Cougar Cookout	400	400
Chill on the Green	n/a	300
Coffee/Green	400	500
Ask a Prof	47	58
Holiday/Green	250	n/a
Card Making	n/a	23
Persimmon Café Study Break	150	265
Extended Tutoring	147	168
<b>Total Attendance:</b>	<b>2241</b>	<b>2435</b>

### CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The challenges for the planning team are to seek and plan events that are attractive to students and consistently upgrade publicity and marketing strategies. The planning team will continue to use all forms of social media to inform students and gather relevant data and an annual survey will be conducted to elicit feedback on current and potential events.

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