Greetings from the University of Arizona!

Since 1980 the SALT Center has been at the forefront of developing impactful academic support services for University of Arizona students with learning and attention differences. As its director, it is my honor to continue this legacy as I lead an unrivaled team of professionals committed to helping each and every student find their unique path to success.

While our primary goal is to ensure that students are academically successful, we recognize that the needs of each student are different and every individual lies on a spectrum of neurological diversity, physical ability and human experience, which grows and changes over time. In this issue of the SALT Center Journal I invite you to discover more about how our programming, both new and ongoing, is designed to help students develop a range of healthy life habits, increase their resiliency, discover the richness of the universe, and gain a greater sense of who they are, and what they can accomplish.

Lastly, I’d like to acknowledge the immeasurable impact that our donors and strategic partners have on the SALT Center. Through their support, these friends of the program enable us to provide vitally needed scholarships, psychological services, professional development and other innovative programming designed specifically to support University of Arizona students with learning and attention challenges.

I look forward to meeting all of you and invite you to stay connected with us throughout the year. We truly value our relationship with students, alumni, parents and other friends and partners and recognize the impact for good you have in the world.

Bear Down!

Gabrielle E. Miller, Ed.D.
We expect that this collaboration will help our students develop healthier life habits and greater resiliency to face their daily challenges. Each of the planned activities is designed to support at least one of what Campus Recreation describes as the eight dimensions of wellness, which are emotional, physical, social, financial, occupational, environmental, intellectual and spiritual. They explain:

“Everything we do, everything we feel and every emotion we have can influence our well-being. Our well-being directly affects our actions, emotions and thoughts. Achieving complete wellness can help diminish stress, mitigate illness and establish positive feelings, valuable interactions and happiness.”

Students can choose to attend any of an array of engaging activities such as hiking through beautiful desert canyons, touring the little-known rooftop garden above the Student Union, attending hands-on cooking demonstrations and going to a real-life job fair to practice interacting with employers.

Lisa Elfring, who has been on our team for several semesters helping to organize previous field trips and hands-on social activities, will be a vital participant at these events. As our Faculty Fellow and an Associate Professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology, Lisa is uniquely positioned to bring her years of higher education experience to help mentor students outside of the formal classroom setting.

The University of Arizona routinely ranks among the most beautiful college campuses in the nation. This gorgeous setting coupled with numerous sporting events, concerts, plays, lectures, museums, poetry readings, clubs and more, can keep any student occupied and comfortable for years. But of course, we’re not in the business of simply keeping students occupied. We want to help students stretch themselves and build their confidence to explore things outside of their comfort zones and to learn more about who they are and what they can accomplish. One of our strategies to address this desire involves a new partnership with the University’s Department of Campus Recreation. With their invaluable assistance, we are crafting unique opportunities for students enrolled in the SALT Center to participate in a variety of wellness activities and professionally supervised outdoor excursions.
Attending a large institution like the University of Arizona can be challenging for many students as they try to adjust to new academic responsibilities, new social experiences and develop greater independence. Other students struggle with learning effective time management skills, being away from home for the first time or deciding which life path to pursue. A significant portion of students also describe struggles with developing friendships and finding ways to feel like they belong. Academic stress and poor self-care habits, such as unhealthy eating, excessive substance use, and lack of sleep are also negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of many college students.³

Students with learning and attention differences also face unique challenges. Students utilizing SALT Center services are often learning how to advocate for themselves, balancing independence with accepting academic help and learning how to best manage their own learning. Students often have to decide if and when to disclose their academic challenges to others and can experience feelings of isolation or shame. Students with learning and attention differences are also at an elevated risk for developing symptoms of anxiety and depression.⁴

Meeting with a mental health provider can often be very helpful for students experiencing distress or those looking to enhance personal growth. Psychological Services at the SALT Center provide students the opportunity to receive on-site, individualized, outpatient mental health services. Students are usually referred by their Strategic Learning Specialist, but can also request services on their own. Our philosophy is to work within an evidence-based, brief and solution-focused model of psychotherapy to help provide the student with the tools needed for greater academic and personal success.

If you have any questions about Psychological Services at the SALT Center, please reach out and contact us. We are here to help. If you are able to support Psychological Services at the SALT Center, please consider making a donation to our Health and Wellness Fund.

REFERENCES

² Nami.org
YOUR GENEROSITY

The SALT Center gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions of the following friends from July 2017 to June 2018. We are fortunate to receive these expressions of respect and appreciation. Your gifts make it possible for us to provide exceptional academic support to hundreds of UA students every year.

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If you prefer to mail a check, please complete the enclosed “Stay Connected” card and return it to us, along with your gift, in the envelope provided (checks should be made payable to the UA Foundation).

3 LEARN MORE
If you are interested in learning more about giving opportunities at the SALT Center, please contact the Director’s Office at (520) 621-1427.

YOUR SUPPORT IS LIFE-CHANGING FOR STUDENTS WHO LEARN DIFFERENTLY!

DONOR REPORT

MOVING US FORWARD

TOTAL DOLLARS DONATED
$239,615

- UNRESTRICTED FUNDS $107,437
- SCHOLARSHIPS $105,808
- HEALTH & WELLNESS FUND $20,050
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT $6,320

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HEALTH & WELLNESS FUND: $20,050
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Since its inception in 1980, the SALT Center has become the global leader in comprehensive academic support for college students who learn differently. For nearly four decades, we’ve helped thousands of Wildcats with learning and attention challenges achieve academic success.

Developing a vibrant community that evolves with the changing needs of our students requires innovative programming and a highly qualified professional team. As a nonprofit that does not receive funding from the state or the University, the SALT Center covers our operational costs by charging a fee for services.

Thank you for your continued support!
Andrew Pribramsky began his freshman year at the University of Arizona with a well thought out plan. He was going to study at the Eller College of Management, receive academic support at the SALT Center, graduate, and then embark on a flourishing career in the exciting field of business. It was a track that many students before him had followed, but for Andrew, things would be different. Even though he tried to stick to the plan he had laid out for himself, he really struggled to find fulfillment as a pre-business student. This all changed when he discovered the Plant Science Club.

Andrew Pribramsky

The university club, which provides students with an opportunity to develop their interests in life sciences, agriculture and environmental stewardship, was exactly what Andrew had been missing. The club gave him a new perspective on his future and he soon changed his major to Agricultural Technology Management & Education. Andrew says that his heart lies in greenhouses and controlled environments. He especially enjoys learning about the technological advances being implemented in agriculture and finding ways to make sure the systems are sustainable. He gained valuable hands-on experience working in the club’s spacious greenhouse on the roof of the UA’s Sixth Street Garage. He also interned on a large potato farm where he worked with cutting-edge GPS technologies and advanced agricultural methods.

Andrew eventually went on to become the president of the Plant Science Club and this year earned his bachelor’s degree from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He also recently began a promising career as an agronomist working for an expansive produce farm in Wisconsin which boasts over 30,000 acres of farmland across the state.

Andrew humbly credits much of his achievement to the network of support he received from his parents, club advisor and especially the consistent partnership he had with Rose Audretsch, his Strategic Learning Specialist at the SALT Center. He says:

“Rose was my savior. She’s been my biggest cheerleader. She helped me formulate correspondences with professors and advisors, helped me find tutors and made sure I was always mindful of tests and grades. I don’t think I could have done it without her.”

The partnership that Andrew enjoyed with Rose is typical of successful students who have come through the SALT Center. Rose says that like many others, Andrew arrived on campus with a lot of strong values and a willingness to work hard. As they met each week, she was able to help him leverage those positive traits as he navigated the ups and downs of college life.

Andrew is a prime example of the SALT Center model in which each student is responsible for choosing their own path in life as we guide them to discover new concepts, to explore solutions to complex challenges and to grow in ways they never thought possible. From the business field to a potato field, Andrew’s personal path to success certainly deviated from its original course and he wouldn’t have it any other way.
Ariane Benedetto, a junior at the University of Arizona who is enrolled at the SALT Center, spent her spring 2018 semester studying abroad in Sydney, Australia at the University of New South Wales. While there, she and her roommates stayed in a house on Bondi Beach enjoying the area’s varied activities and foods. During spring break, Ariane also had the opportunity to travel to Bali, Thailand and Vietnam. Rose Audretsch, Ariane’s Strategic Learning Specialist interviewed her regarding her experiences as a study abroad student:

RA: Did you participate in the SALT Center prepare you in any ways for study abroad?
AB: SALT has given me the support and the confidence to follow through with my journey. SALT has not only had an effect on improving my academics but my people skills as well. Studying abroad and living in a foreign country can be scary at times, but it was nice knowing that there were people back at UA to speak with if needed. I definitely think SALT helped me grow into more of an independent person. I think SALT helped me give me the confidence to push myself to go abroad.

RA: Did you get any assistance with your study abroad research and application?
AB: The process of applying for study abroad can get a bit overwhelming. The study abroad team at the University of Arizona was a tremendous help. Each student is assigned to an advisor for the country where they are planning on studying. My advisor for Australia helped me multiple times through email and meetings.

RA: How would you compare the learning environment studying abroad with the learning environment at Arizona?
AB: The learning environment is completely different when studying abroad. One of the biggest differences between classes at UA and the classes at University of New South Wales is the diversity. I met so many other students from all over the world in my courses at UNSW.

RA: How would you define a successful study abroad experience?
AB: I would define a successful study abroad experience by saying that I fully immersed myself in the culture. Getting good grades was important but so was getting the experience of living in a different country.

The SALT Center is honored to have students like Ariane representing us on the global stage. We know that learning can take many shapes, and we are here to help each student as they choose the unique path of their educational journey.

Jeff Powell, the Associate Director of Development for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Arizona is a man for whom self-worth is a focal point. Powell is not only a UA campus leader, he is a proud SALT Center Alumnus. When asked about his own success, he was quick to respond:

“If I feel that I am contributing value to a broader goal or to making someone’s life better, that is what gives me personal fulfillment and joy, and that lets me know that I am being successful.”

Powell’s university experience was much like that of many other students who are enrolled at the SALT Center. “My learning specialist believed in me, supported me and knew I was going to make it, even when I was unsure. The value of that is immeasurable.” Upon completing his degree in Africana Studies, he was left with memories he will forever cherish.

“Just graduating with a degree that I was proud of ... and having my parents be able to watch me cross the stage after they have been with me throughout my struggles in academia made me incredibly proud.”

Currently, Powell puts great effort into his work at the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. His primary focus is on Major Gifts, which are donations of $25,000 and above. He also manages the Magellan Circle, a program designed to support student scholars by pairing them with specific donors. This innovative program allows students to receive funding for their education and build relationships with those who are supporting their academic success.

The academic path that Powell followed laid the foundation for a professional career which allows him to now support students much in the same way he was supported as a student utilizing SALT Center services. “The SALT Center was a little corner of campus that understood me and wanted to see me succeed.” Now, Powell passes along his insights and professional advice to others who are walking the same path that led him to a successful career in academic services. “Play to your strengths as much as you can, but also don’t forget about your weaknesses; really work on your weaknesses and develop them. Utilize your network. Utilize the people who want to see you succeed.”

F or too often it seems we try to limit the concept of success to things we can quantify. But when you see pride reflected in one’s eyes, hear confidence in their voice or marvel at how they carry themselves with ease and grace, the word success becomes an afterthought. Self-worth becomes the cornerstone by which we define our own measure of success.

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“If I feel that I am contributing value to a broader goal or to making someone’s life better, that is what gives me personal fulfillment and joy, and that lets me know that I am being successful.”
At the SALT Center, we believe it’s important to recognize students and their accomplishments, both big and small. Graduation is the end goal and it is great when students reach it, but a lot happens before those undergraduate years are over, including many ups and downs. In order to recognize those students who are going through the journey and succeeding, the SALT Center recently launched an initiative to recognize them and other key partners at a series of events taking place throughout the year called SALT Center Honors.

SALT Center Honors is a reflection of our belief that students succeed in different ways and celebrates the culmination of their hard work. Every semester we take the time to recognize different groups of students, and not all of them have a 4.0 GPA, but they are still putting forth the effort to make a meaningful connection with their Strategic Learning Specialist, a tutoring staff member or are engaging in other ways. SALT Center Honors is composed of three main pillars for which students are recognized: their academic achievement, engagement with the SALT Center, and career and professional development.

SALT Center Honors originally began as a simple Student of the Month recognition. It was our way to highlight students who didn’t necessarily have a high grade point average but were still doing what they needed to be successful. Honorees received a certificate and their names were displayed for their peers to see.

From its humble beginnings, the Student of the Month idea has grown and evolved to encompass many more of the SALT Center’s constituents. Under the leadership of our director, Dr. Gabrielle Miller, and Sarah Sampe, Senior Coordinator for Student Programs and Services, SALT Center Honors now recognizes outstanding students, graduates and others who support the program such as parents, alumni, community partners and donors.

The SALT Center Honors events are not simply a way to congratulate people for their successes, but also a way to inspire them to carry that momentum forward and do more. At the first Director’s Lunch in the spring of 2018, we recognized students who had earned a 4.0 GPA the previous semester. During the event, we heard an inspiring story of a student whose simple gesture of kindness changed the trajectory of another student who was ready to give up on school. Students were challenged to become everyday leaders among their peers and committed to regularly perform small acts of kindness knowing the immeasurable impact they can have on others.

Some of the events that now fall under SALT Center Honors include our graduation receptions, the recently launched Director’s Lunch, Family Weekend (including a Freshman Parent Breakfast, a Director’s Reception for donors, and our award ceremony) and our original Student of the Month event which now includes a recognition luncheon.

Furthermore, in recognition of their immense impact on the program, members of the SALT Center Director’s Circle will now be invited to attend all SALT Center Honors events throughout the year to see first-hand the good work that our students are doing and take part in the family-like interconnectedness that exists at the SALT Center.

Membership in the Director’s Circle is open to all donors who have contributed $2,500 or more to the program during the preceding fiscal year.

Many students doubt their abilities to be successful in college and some have even been told that college was beyond their reach. The University of Arizona and SALT Center experience can be transformative for these students. A successful class, a helpful tutoring session or a strong relationship with a staff member can make an incremental difference which can keep them moving forward in the college environment with confidence. We realize that every student’s journey is unique and success looks different for each student. That’s why SALT Center Honors strives to celebrate the achievement, engagement and development of those within our community.

Visit our website or contact us for the latest dates and information regarding upcoming SALT Center Honors events! We look forward to seeing you.
At the SALT Center, we know that engagement with campus resources and faculty is key to a successful college experience. While the UA campus may be large, we are well placed to help students navigate the countless opportunities before them. Our team of Strategic Learning Specialists plays a pivotal role in getting students connected and moving forward.

When it comes to helping students discover engagement opportunities, Strategic Learning Specialists often focus most intensely on freshmen since they’ll likely be living on campus during their first year and will have the most need to get connected to resources. For example, we might encourage them to use intensive tutoring during the first couple of semesters to help them get acclimated to the rigors of university-level work. We can push them to develop independent ways of obtaining help such as meeting with instructors or teaching assistants during office hours. We will also help them get in touch with the Disability Resource Center where they can receive academic accommodations they might require.

As students advance past their first year, their needs evolve as they begin to take the upper division classes specific to their majors. During this phase, we consistently reach out to students to remind them of the importance of continuing to engage in every way possible. Some students at the upper division get to benefit from their peers having conversations about how they are engaging. Are they behind the answers? With just getting an answer or do they take engagement a step further and make sure they are understanding the concepts behind the answers?

Our hope is that the principle of engagement will follow our students into the workforce where they will continue to interact with their environment in a confident and inquisitive manner applying what they learned while they were students enrolled in the SALT Center.

Efficient ways of internalizing information is a great way to further engage in their discipline. This new-found knowledge will help them feel more confident and build connections for future team projects.

Throughout all their years on campus, our Strategic Learning Specialists strive to help students discover the best ways for them to engage, which can take many forms. Oftentimes it will develop into an opportunity to work, get an internship or study abroad. Regardless of the path a student takes, the key for us is to continue having conversations about how they are engaging. Are they engaged with their studies? To what degree? Are they fine with just getting an answer or do they take engagement a step further and make sure they are understanding the concepts behind the answers?

The challenges of Old Main promoted creativity, diversity and communication. Old Main has a unique charm to it; it’s the heartbeat of campus.”

“Watching people grow is a big part of what I do, what I like. And having the privilege and the honor of being let into those life experiences that promote growth. I feel that I learn from them [the students] as much as they learn from me.”

Although Caroline takes pride in her professional contributions to the field of learning and attention challenges, it is most notable that she focuses wholeheartedly on the emotional and academic well-being of her students. She stated boldly at the end of our conversation concerning her years at the SALT Center, “Students simply need to allow the rapport between themselves and their learning specialist to grow and flourish. Trust in the relationship being built. The journey is the most important experience. It’s all about how you accomplish the goals you set before you.”

Thank you, Caroline. Thank you for your years of commitment and for yet another friendship founded in professionalism, respect and trust.

Caroline Ragano’s continued service to the SALT Center’s mission, vision, and more than all else, its students. After speaking at length with Caroline about her experiences at the SALT Center, the number of years seems of little consequence. The countless relationships that she has formed over that amount of time seem to define who she has always wanted to be, a professional, a mentor, and a friend.

Caroline is a Strategic Learning Specialist and a great example of someone who gives back to her community. Her involvement with the SALT’s Student Success and Retention Innovation Diversity Committee and the SALT Center Student Event Team are only a couple of ways that she continues to help those around her. Before her years as a Strategic Learning Specialist, Caroline spent three years as a SALT Center tutor of American Sign Language and a specialist working with students placed on academic probation. Her dedication to the students drove her to continue her education in the field of learning and attention challenges where she went on to receive her M.A. in Special Education and Rehabilitation.

The SALT Center was originally housed in the basement of Old Main, the first building constructed on the University of Arizona’s campus. Caroline is one of only three Strategic Learning Specialists still on staff to have worked in this iconic landmark. When asked what it was like to work in the cramped space of Old Main, Caroline answered positively, “The challenges of Old Main promoted creativity, diversity and communication. Old Main has a unique charm to it; it’s the heartbeat of campus.”

The role of the Strategic Learning Specialist has evolved greatly since the creation of the SALT Center in 1996 and throughout Caroline’s years of service to students. “It is a struggle to put a title on all we do for our students. With new diagnoses comes new information, understanding and applications,” said Caroline when considering her own professional progress.

25 YEARS OF COMMITMENT

Caroline Ragano

BY MICHAEL HOLM & ROSE AUDRETSCH

2018 marked the 25th anniversary of Caroline Ragano’s continued service to the SALT Center’s mission, vision, and more than all else, its students. After speaking at length with Caroline about her experiences at the SALT Center, the number of years seems of little consequence. The countless relationships that she has formed over that amount of time seem to define who she has always wanted to be, a professional, a mentor, and a friend.

Caroline’s sheer joy of working with the SALT Center population rings true in nearly all of her commentary.

"Watching people grow is a big part of what I do, what I like. And having the privilege and the honor of being let into those life experiences that promote growth. I feel that I learn from them [the students] as much as they learn from me.”

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