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THE SALT JOURNAL

Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques Center at The University of Arizona

Maximizing Success for Students with Learning and Attention Challenges

SALT CENTER

25
Years

Proud Past
Ambitious Future

Special 25th Anniversary Issue



A Tribute



Dr. Peter Likins



Dr. Saundra Taylor

And Special Thanks

University of Arizona President, Peter Likins, and Sr. Vice-President of Campus Life, Saundra Taylor, will retire from the University in June 2006. The SALT Center wishes to express its deep appreciation for the commitment they have made to the success of our program.

Upon coming to the University in 1992, “Saunie”, as she is affectionately known to those of us that work with her, became an instant advocate for SALT services. Her work with SALT parents became the driving force in SALT’s growth and development. It was Saunie’s advocacy that led to the designation of the SALT building plan as a campus priority. We owe much of the early idea of our spectacular home to her commitment to SALT student success.

President Likins, “Pete” came to the University in 1997 and immediately began referring to the SALT Center as one of the University’s many “points of excellence.” His unwavering commitment to students has been instrumental in fostering the University’s unique cluster of services that support the success of those who experience learning challenges. His pride in the SALT Center and its students is strikingly evident during the many public addresses in which he openly proclaims our accomplishments. With Pete’s help, we were able to raise the private funds necessary to build our home.

The SALT Center is proud to have experienced the leadership of these two champions. Their commitment to students with learning and attention challenges has been a transformational force for our program and a legacy for each student to come.

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From the Director

THE EVOLUTION OF OUR MODEL: SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING AND ATTENTION CHALLENGES



Dr. Diane C. Quinn

by Diane C. Quinn, Ed.D.
Director

Our Proud Past

Infancy for the SALT Center began during the 1980–81 academic year. Much like a handful of colleges and universities in the late 1970s, the University of Arizona began providing individualized support to undergraduate students with learning disabilities, and what was to become the SALT program was born. Those early days were marked by a small but determined number of students receiving one-on-one academic assistance by the program's founder, Eleanor Harner. Over the course of the next few years, those first students were followed by others, all seeking assistance as they struggled to be among the first success stories of a program based on intensive, personalized support for students who had been diagnosed as learning disabled.

When this program was just a toddler it developed a strong reputation. In fact, it was one of the few programs of its kind west of the Mississippi. Its unique status among major universities helped it grow quickly, and by 1990, roughly 300 students had enrolled at UA and were part of what had become known as the SALT program. The name seemed particularly descriptive of its goals – Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques.

In 1993, SALT was entering its adolescence as part of the University's Learning Center. Encouraged by the program's popularity and success, a visionary group of parents approached the University with two goals: recognition of the program as an autonomous department, and the approval of a SALT capital campaign to raise funds to build a permanent home for the department. Like any rebellious adolescent, the SALT program was anxious to become independent and to prove exactly what it was capable of accomplishing!

Much like any department in its early years, the SALT Center went through growing pains. In what some might call the identity crisis phase, the SALT Center clarified its purpose as an enhanced service for students with learning disabilities and removed itself completely from the provision of academic accommodations. That latter role became the sole responsibility of the department now known as the Disability Resource Center.

At the age of 21, the SALT Center truly entered adulthood. Having raised nearly \$4 million, the department moved into its newly constructed home. With this move, the SALT Center became one of the few programs of its kind to be housed in a facility that was designed specifically to meet the needs

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of students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Yet another outstanding accomplishment had been achieved. Students, who had often been discouraged from dreaming of higher education success, now had a specific location where they could pursue their dreams.

When moving into its new home in fall 2001, the SALT Center enrolled 514 students. Those students represented 37 states and two countries. Fifty-seven percent (57%) were males, and 7% were minority students. Our professional staff totaled 24, and we offered 15,000 hours of tutoring that year in 100 different courses.

Four years later, we begin our 25th Anniversary year with 560 students, 60% of whom are male, and minority enrollment has risen to 9.5%. Our staff now totals 26 professionals and one graduate assistant. The SALT computer lab has expanded from 23 to 31 workstations. We offer both a Writers and Math lab, and we expect to top last year's record of 19,000 tutor hours in over 900 classes. A small number of graduate students now also enroll in our new services. It seems the SALT Center is finally an adult.

With all these changes in program size, staffing and location, one thing has remained – our primary mission – to support the success of students who learn differently. What began as a core group of students who were defined as learning disabled has become a population of UA students with a history of learning or attention challenges. Some are still designated as having learning disabilities. Others experience ADHD or a range of cognitive challenges that make them seek alternative approaches to acquiring and mastering learning at the university level. Through the years, many of our students have succeeded and moved on to impressive careers; and they keep coming!

Current program milestones

Beginning with the enrolling class for fall 2005, the SALT Center invoked a new process for applying to and qualifying for SALT participation. Our prior application procedures required that students provide current documentation of a specific disability. However, such a requirement clearly prevented many students with a history of learning challenge but no current diagnosis from qualifying for SALT services.

In a barrier-breaking decision, the SALT Center eliminated the requirement that students demonstrate a current diagnosis and instead asked for demonstration of a history of learning or attention challenge. This change has been heralded by education professionals throughout the country. School psychologist, special educators, and guidance professionals have applauded SALT's willingness to respond to the needs of students without burdening students and schools to provide costly and often controversial documentation. Furthermore, students and their families have openly commented on the value of new SALT application procedures that force the student to seriously reflect upon their education and their needs within the university environment. SALT admissions teams have felt confident that we know more about our new freshmen than any previous class. We are happy to continue this groundbreaking method of evaluating and admitting future SALT students.

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Education & Counseling

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: CHANGING HOW STUDENTS THINK ABOUT LEARNING

By Jeff Orgera, Associate Director

Looking back on the past year at the SALT Center produces a vivid sequence of memories involving the interactions of our students as they engaged with our team of professionals. Throughout the academic year, students collaborate with Learning Specialists to develop education plans, review course content with tutors, use the computer lab for assignments, and attend workshops and programs. In the process they begin to experience success in learning and academics. The SALT Center views each activity, event, or interaction we develop as an opportunity for students to begin thinking about learning as something interesting, stimulating, and even fun rather than something to avoid. Our overriding mission within the department is to identify and provide diverse resources through both structured and informal learning opportunities. The ultimate goal is to support and challenge our students while they transition to the university environment because each student's personality, style, and approach will be a factor in how effectively this happens.

The past year has included the addition of many new opportunities for students, including the addition of personal counseling opportunities, new workshops for graduating seniors, intramural sports teams, services for graduate students, and a wide range of unique social and educational events. In essence, the people delivering information, the resources offered in our facility, and most importantly our students combine to create a community of learners with the same outcome in mind...success as a university student. Over the years we have learned so much about students facing learning and attention challenges: their successes, frustrations, good decisions, and less than optimal choices. We strive to use these experiences to design innovative resources, services, and opportunities that meet the needs of our students while we also encourage them to stretch and challenge themselves as independent college students. Bottom line is that in SALT we want students to experience a community of professionals that are responsive, available, and knowledgeable while they engage our services to transition seamlessly to the university environment.

Looking back on the outcomes of the last academic year, it seems clear that as a department we are accomplishing our goals. Below you will see some highlighted outcomes from the past year.

- Our Fall 2004 freshmen returned to the university for their sophomore year at a rate of 90% (13% percent higher than all university freshmen)
- Upon completion of their freshmen year, 80% of Fall 2004 admits had cumulative GPAs above a 2.0

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- Based upon cumulative grade point averages following Spring 2005, SALT students are performing well academically with 87% of all students being in good academic standing.
- Almost one third of SALT students had GPA's of 3.0 or higher for the Spring 2005 term.
- SALT Tutoring provided almost 19,000 hours of individual content tutoring throughout the past academic year.
- Students using SALT tutoring have significantly higher GPA's than students not using tutors.

These types of outcomes for SALT students are the result of the high quality and individualized nature of the services we offer. Our services are extremely comprehensive, and students can access everything from individualized education planning with their learning specialist, to individual or group tutoring through an appointment or drop-in basis, leadership and mentoring opportunities, internships, workshops, and a range of other unique programs and services.

In the coming year our goal is to continue refining existing services and programs while incorporating new instructional resources for the exclusive benefit of program students. Included among the initiatives for this year is the development of instructional scaffolds or specialized study guides that will offer students new structures for learning college-level content in a range of subjects. We also plan to launch some new resources within writing and math support by creating customized writing plans for students and modules targeted on developing math skills. As a department the SALT Center is committed to providing our students with the very best services and resources to facilitate success at the University of Arizona and beyond. We encourage you to keep watching our department; there is no limit to our commitment, dedication, and initiative when it comes to the success of our students. ♦

PSYCHOLOGIST JOINS SALT TEAM

The SALT Center is fortunate to have acquired the services of a certified Clinical Psychologist to support SALT students within our own facility. Dr. Brian Ramirez joined the department in January of 2005 and enabled one of the department's longstanding goals, in-house psychological services, to become a reality. Dr. Ramirez provides counseling opportunities to program students for ten hours each week of the semester. Students can be referred directly from their Learning Specialist.

Students who are facing persistent struggles with anxiety, depression, or other psychological concerns can meet with Dr. Ramirez to develop improved strategies for facing these challenges. Our psychological services supplement the academic counseling provided from Learning Specialists. During the spring semester, SALT provided over 130 individual hours of counseling support to over twenty-five students. Of this group of students, over 95% are planning to return this academic year with more techniques for coping with the challenges of managing their life as college students. We look forward to another successful semester of providing these services for SALT students in order for them to have an even better chance to reach their academic and personal goals. ♦

FRESHMAN RETENTION GROUP (FRG)

by Michelle Mathews

In fall 2004 I had the privilege of teaching Success Express, a higher education course. The goal of this class was to help incoming freshman make a successful transition into college. Hence, the general idea of the SALT Center Freshman Retention Group (FRG – “frog”) was conceived. The purpose of FRG is to target and support incoming SALT freshman with their unique transition experiences and academic challenges.

Higher education research has shown that students who are involved in extracurricular activities, such as a club, intramural athletics, or campus activities, have higher success rates of graduation. Understanding this, SALT consistently surveys our students, both formally and informally, about the services they receive, and asks for feedback to gain their insights into their needs and interests. As an enhanced support service, we continue to support our students academically and sponsor structured departmental activities.

FRG evolved as fellow Learning Specialist Lupe Thompson came on board and explained her desire to provide a low-key, social “safe place” for her students. As we sorted out timing and topics we realized that, ideally, everything needed to be covered in the first few weeks. Of course that was unrealistic; so we settled on a solution that would address personal adjustment issues first. We reasoned that until our students had found personal balance it was useless to try to teach them anything else.

The second segment of meetings of FRG focus on metacognitive awareness and cover specific learning strategies. Some of the topics and presenters for this segment were chosen from the Steps to Success workshop series offered last spring. The last segment is a self-descriptive discussion section entitled “Putting it All Together.” FRG meets once a week in the SALT classroom. Each group meeting is structured around a facilitated discussion and short instructional piece based on the topic of the week. Ideally, students attend all sessions, but they may feel free to drop in as well. Topics include:

Part 1 Balance & Expectations (Weeks 1-6)

Topics: Expectations; Success; Balance; Time, Organization; Purpose & Goals

Part 2 Learning (Weeks 7-11)

Topics: Reading, Writing, Memory, Test-Taking 1, Test Taking 2

Part 3 Putting It All Together (Week 12)

Topic: Connections

Our vision is that FRG will seem less structured to the students. We want the students to be relaxed and open. We do not want to place more demands on them or make them feel like they are just in another class, lecture, or workshop. Instead we will foster a free exchange of ideas and guided self-discovery. We would rather have the students walk away with a few positive ideas and understandings of themselves and their new environment, than to overwhelm them with ideas and paperwork. We want students to want to come – not to *have* to come to FRG.

We hope that FRG will help students avoid some common pitfalls that put them in academic jeopardy during their first semester. Further we strive to create social bonding and unity among our incoming freshman class. We would like to help all of our incoming “Frogs,” transform into successful and happy young adults.



SALT SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

by Rudy M. Molina, Jr.

The SALT Center is pleased to offer graduate students the support they need in striving for success at the Master and Doctoral level.

Goals of SALT Graduate Services

SALT conducted a survey to assess graduate student needs and found, when given the opportunity, that students are honest, speak from their heart, and are candid about what works for them. They told us that their academic experience is much more independent compared to an undergraduate experience. They suggested that at times they found it difficult to manage the many roles they played as a graduate student for their department. For some, responsibilities included: grant proposals, teaching responsibilities, ad hoc academic advising, professional responsibilities, publishing commitments, continuous professional development, and so on. Due to the significance of the above responsibilities and their commitment to their lead faculty member, their department, and the University, many graduate students found themselves overwhelmed, and they eventually placed personal academic commitments lower on their priority list.

SALT's goal for graduate students is based on three major components: academic success, balance of the graduate role, and development of professional skills and responsibilities. This balance can be achieved in many ways and is unique to each student's experience. To guide each student through his/her experience, SALT offers a set of core services.

Learning Specialists

Each Learning Specialist is dedicated to assisting students as they navigate through their academic career at the University of Arizona. Learning Specialists coordinate numerous resources and assist students in understanding how individual strengths and weaknesses impact learning and processing information in the university setting. Working with their specialist, students learn new strategies and become effective, efficient learners in the University environment.

Writing Support

Writing is an integral part of graduate studies, and the SALT Center is committed to providing comprehensive support for its students. Developing research plans, writing academic papers using the correct style, and composing research proposals can all be supported within SALT. Services include a Writers Lab with individual appointments available daily, individualized consultations with the Writing Skills Coordinator, and workshops on topics relevant to graduate level writing expectations.

Personal Counseling Services

Life as a graduate student often involves managing multiple responsibilities in limited amounts of time. Taking classes, working with faculty, doing research and having an assistantship can greatly impact health, relationships, and personal satisfaction. SALT students have limited opportunities to meet with a professional psychologist in order to find healthy and effective ways to cope with stress and academic expectations.

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SENIOR WORKSHOPS: TAKING THE “NEXT STEPS”

by Rose Wilhite

SALT piloted “Next Steps Senior Workshop,” for our senior students in the fall of 2004. Seniors with 85 college units or more were targeted for participation in the workshop. The goal of the workshop was to provide useful information to the students on resume writing, interviewing skills, job searches, transitioning to the world of work, and graduate school exams and applications. In the fall workshop, we also focused on the UA Alumni Association and how students can utilize resources as new alumni. In the spring, we added a Student Perspective by bringing in a recent SALT/UA graduate to share his experiences with life after college graduation.

The committee members for the workshops included Rudy Molina, Rhonda Ormsby and Rose Wilhite. Both workshops were held in the SALT Classroom.

Each workshop opened with staff introductions and an icebreaker. The icebreaker asked students to answer a question on a 3x5 card about their feelings regarding life after graduation. All the responses were read aloud to the group. Students responded well to the icebreaker question as it generated productive discussions regarding their future hopes and plans and gave them an opportunity to see and hear others who had similar concerns and fears.

The student evaluations for the two workshops were very positive with resume writing and career information receiving particularly high ratings. SALT will continue to offer these workshops each semester and is planning to involve more recent SALT/UA graduates. Whether the students are planning job searches or continuing their education, it is good to bring them together to share their experiences, and give them some tools to help them take the “next steps” in their life’s journey. ♦

SALT OUTDOORS

by Ashley Klein



SALT students hike along the Aspen Trail in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

SALT Outdoors, is an exciting new activity program for students offered at SALT this semester. The purpose of this program is to provide SALT students with the opportunity to engage in active outdoor activities with a group of peers and experienced outdoor leaders- basically to get them outdoors and active!

Tucson is surrounded by a ring of National and State Parks and boasts an amazing 360 days of sunshine a year, allowing a quick retreat to the mountains almost any day of the year! *SALT Outdoors* provides an opportunity to take advantage of this valuable resource.

For all students, and particularly for those with learning and attention challenges, physical exercise in outdoor settings can help relieve stress, restore focus, and regain a sense of balance in life. Additionally, SALT students often excel in environments outside of the classroom and learn through experiences.

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Tutoring

THE NEW EXPERIENCE OF COLLEGE TUTORING

by Melissa Koosmann

As they prepare to transition from high school to college, students are often warned that college-level assignments take more time and effort. However, few are told that their tutoring experiences will be different as well. Most college assignments require analytical or evaluative thinking, so tutors cannot simply give students information and help them comprehend it. Instead, they must spend considerable time coaching and questioning their students, trying to guide them to develop their own ideas.

For students, this process can be bewildering. Accustomed to being passive in learning situations, they often have trouble adjusting to tutors who expect them to do most of the talking. Some suspect that their tutors ask questions because they lack the knowledge to answer them. Others feel paralyzed because they believe that each question must have one correct answer, and they are not sure which is right. After their first few sessions, however, most students realize that they are gaining new skills and thinking in new ways, and they change their expectations, becoming more willing to volunteer ideas and discuss them.

As tutors help students develop ideas, they inevitably come up with thoughts of their own. At SALT, we train our tutors to be willing to shift gears at any moment during sessions, focusing on the ideas that appeal to their students and letting their own thoughts go—even if they seem better. Tutors must

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NEED TUTORING...HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

By Norma C. Carrillo

In order to provide SALT students with the form of academic support that meets their unique needs, the department offers a wide range of services within tutoring. Flexibility and opportunities are key themes within our unit. These themes exist because our program is structured to provide different learning opportunities for students while allowing for adjustments to each tutoring plan when necessary. Who is the right tutor for a particular academic subject? Is a group review, individual tutoring session, or a visit to the Writers Lab or Math & Science Lab what I need? The possibilities are endless. Students can decide what the best tutoring resource is for them at the time depending on when they need to know the material and their current level of understanding. SALT tutors have strengths in a range of different academic areas just as our students do, and we are committed to finding the best fit for students and tutors.

A snapshot of tutoring services available in the past year shows:

- Nearly 19,000 hours of individual tutoring offered
- Over 2,000 visits to the Writers Lab for over 350 courses
- Over 500 students served by the Math and Science Lab
- Over 100 group reviews in 25 of the most highly enrolled courses on campus

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Spotlight on Success

A LEARNING SPECIALISTS GUIDE TO STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

by Lupe Thompson

What happens when new students arrive on the college campus? Are they ready for the expectations the campus has of them? Many students have been in supportive learning environments that have given them so much guidance expectations were clear. The college environment doesn't operate that way, and many of the expectations are hidden. Students need to work hard to understand how to succeed in the college environment. So how can a new student ensure success?

As a Learning Specialist, I query all of my students about their approaches to academic adjustment, and I usually do it in October. Why October? Because October is a perfect time of the year; students have made their transition to the UofA. They have been exposed to their college courses, they have experienced class room lectures, their first exam, social events, and they are in their comfort zone. They are becoming accustomed to the routine. They are getting ready to make decisions about and register for the spring semester courses. They are also coming to understand and are able to reflect on the ways that they can help themselves to ensure a successful college experience during a very busy time.

I ask my new freshmen to reflect upon useful advice they would give to a friend or sibling still in high school about how to be a successful student. The responses are consistent:

1. Go to class.
2. Study your course materials.
3. Meet and discuss progress with professors
4. Manage your time.
5. Use the SALT Center resources.

Although most students are pleased with the successful transition they made in the fall, a small handful will not be pleased with their fall performance. We have all had times in our lives when we experience hindsight. "If only I could do it over again..." or "I should have done this differently..." Students are no different.

January is a new beginning, a new opportunity to improve their habits, behaviors and performance. Maybe some students did just OK and are hoping to improve their grades. Some may have been placed on probation due to having a GPA below 2.000. Aside from all of the required University workshops to help them get off of probation, I ask them to reflect again and think about what led to their being placed on probation. The responses are again, consistent:

1. I didn't go to class.
2. I didn't study as much as I should have.
3. I never went to see my professor during office hours.
4. I didn't manage my time.
5. I didn't use the resources offered to me by the SALT Center.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS...

Staying Active is this Student's Key to Success

Sean Mazanec defines the word "initiative". He can always be seen around SALT, making the most of the program resources from meetings with his Learning Specialist, tutoring or attending the latest workshop offerings. Sean's goal has been to become a Communications major, a difficult task in this increasingly competitive program. Having now been accepted into that major, Sean has made progress on his career path doing radio shows for KAMP radio and completing an internship with Sidewinders Baseball. Sean is an active supporter of the SALT Center, helping with SALT Orientation. He is also the social director for his fraternity. Sean is the perfect example of a student who knows that he is more productive when he stays busy and involved.

Commitment and Personal Drive Lead to Accomplishment

Jackie Buckert can be described as a student who is mature, responsible, motivated and driven to the highest level of success. Her commitment and dedication to school along with her willingness to engage in SALT services has played an important role in her success. Jackie is also an individual who puts in long hours, particularly in this last year, doing the things necessary for achieving her own personal academic goals. When Jackie was admitted to SALT in the spring of 2004, her GPA was a 2.68. After taking advantage of many of the services offered by SALT, her GPA improved to a 3.7 the following semester. This raised her cumulative GPA to a 3.23. This upward trend continued into the fall of 2004 as she earned a perfect 4.00 and a 3.69 in the spring 2005 semester. In each of the last two semesters, Jackie made the Dean's List in the College of Education. Jackie now hopes to be accepted into the Honors College, having achieved the grades that will earn her consideration through her effective use of SALT services.

Jackie was accepted into the College of Education during the spring 2005 semester and has her sights set on earning a degree in Elementary Education. There is no doubt Jackie will not only succeed in this program but also flourish as a future educator. Her abilities, skills and talents are ideally suited for this profession and will be a major asset in her career.

Letting His Talent Shine While Achieving Academic Greatness

Weston Myers is a kind, thoughtful, and creative student, but he truly stands out among other students for his desire to connect and his willingness to contribute to his community. During the school year, he volunteered his time to make a display to advertise the private showing of an Ansel Adams photography exhibit for SALT students. It seemed a natural match for this student who has recently declared his major in Studio Art, concentrating on photography. Weston has used his photographic talents to help the SALT Center in other ways. It is Weston's work that will be seen in many of the new publicity photos we are using during upcoming events. In fact, the cover shot on this year's SALT Journal was taken by Weston.

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SALT STUDENT WINS MURRAY DEARMOND MIND, BODY, SPIRIT AWARD

by Michelle Mathews

Jonathan Siegel, a SALT student and recent graduate of the University of Arizona, received the 2005 **Murray DeArmond Mind, Body, Spirit Award**. This award is given annually to students who have demonstrated a sustained and continuous effort to improve the campus community.

Jonathan majored in Retailing and Consumer Sciences with a cumulative GPA of 3.1109. Over the past four years, he was continually involved with the campus organization Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) - a marketing-based, internationally known organization. During Jonathan's freshman and sophomore years he held the positions of fundraising and marketing VPs, respectively.



Jonathan Siegel

During his junior year Jonathan was the Logistics Coordinator for UA Career Expo 2004, and in his senior year he was the Marketing Coordinator for UA Career Expo 2005. Both of these experiences gave him marketable skills as well as provided the UA student body an opportunity to network with prospective employers and gain valuable career information and insight

Jonathan was also a member of the Kappa Alpha fraternity. In conjunction with his fraternity he participated in several charity and volunteer events to include: MDA, city clean-ups, Race for the Cure, and CAT WALK. He held the positions of historian, standards committee member, and Spring Fling chair for two years 2004 & 2005. Jonathan has also attended two summer leadership conferences for his fraternity.

In addition, Jonathan was a member for the Student Advisory Board for the Center for Retailing. He served as liaison for the Corporate Advisory Board, which included national Fortune 500 retailers. Jonathan helped these companies connect with retailing students as well as provided a connection between student advising and career services.

Jonathan was an active participant in the SALT Center during his entire undergraduate career. He became an Ambassador for SALT and spoke to new and prospective students about his experiences at the UA and SALT. His insight and success inspired other SALT students to achieve their personal goals. We are proud to count Jonathan as another successful SALT Alumni. Congratulations!



TAKING IT ALL IN: STUDY ABROAD

By David Perreira

After several months of being back in "The States" returning from my 5 month stay in Italy, I have constantly been thinking back upon my experiences in the place that I (for too short of a time) called home. When I think about all of the people that I met, the places I visited, and the things that I learned, this experience was, without a doubt, well worth the ridiculous amount of money that it takes to fund such a trip. The extra time that I will spend in school making up for a semester break from reality and the few credits that did not transfer will be time spent without regret.

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I feel as if this trip was an opportunity to expand on my life experiences before graduating and going off into the real world. Time abroad was also a great chance for me to take a semester from the sometimes stressful environment that is the University, and still get credit for it. Let's be honest; when college is over, life begins, and party life ends. By studying abroad, I was able to expose myself to new places and new ways of life. I was given the chance to travel to a place where you and I may visit, but we will rarely live. This experience gave me the opportunity to receive a more global education, and a chance to live it up with hundreds of people in my program, all making the same adjustment to the Italian way.

The program with which I studied in Florence was called AIFS (American Institute for Foreign Studies). I decided to do this because the University of Arizona did not have a program going to Florence in the spring of 2005. Picking a program is a task in itself, but it is helpful to read reviews online and consult the University's Study Abroad Office. The classes that I took in this particular program opened my mind to the Italian culture. They taught me about religion, art, Leonardo da Vinci, and most important to me, Italian. All of the courses except for my Italian language course were taught in English by qualified professors, and the onsite lectures were outstanding. During periodic organized trips to different cities within Italy like Rome, Vinci, and Venice, we attended toured lectures from our professors by day, and in the cases of Rome and Venice, we were free to truly experience the city by night. Very conveniently the classes were 4 days a week, allowing for time to hop from country to country on the weekends.



Colosseum in Rome, Italy

Time in Europe as well as in many other study abroad landmarks gives a student the opportunity to have endless memories along with some crazy stories. During my trip one of my favorite experiences was being able to snowboard in the Swiss Alps with a large group of new-found close friends. Together many of us also hiked the high peak of the Island of Capri, walked up a volcano in Sicily, watched professional soccer matches, attended wine tasting and cooking classes, and took in the nightlife everywhere we went. I cannot stress the traveling part of this experience enough. During spring break I even met a friend studying in Ireland where we spent three days before leaving for Athens, Greece.

Studying abroad is a unique experience that gives an individual the opportunity to take in the atmosphere of a completely different culture. I couldn't think of a better place to learn Italian than in Italy. By putting it to use every day I was learning more outside of the classroom than I actually was in the classroom. Whether experiencing the language barrier or studying in an English speaking country outside of the US, it's the experience of taking in the culture and immersing oneself in a foreign environment that will change anyone's life forever.



The River Arno in Florence, Italy

For me this is what studying abroad was all about: meeting new people, sharing experiences, and learning how every person is a unique individual.

The people all over Europe are diverse within themselves. Strong patriotism flourishes and is backed up with more history than one can imagine. Open mindedness is found all over, but people are not afraid to express their opinions.

My opinion of the study abroad experience and what I personally got from it may not be how everyone studying abroad will describe their time away. One must go into this experience willing to take every moment for what it is worth, and find out within his/her own experience, what it is to him/her personally. ♦

IN APPRECIATION

The SALT Center gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions of the following friends from September 2004 through August 2005. We feel fortunate to receive these expressions of respect and appreciation for our program and will use these gifts in support of both programming and scholarships.

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Dr. & Mrs. Steven Bard
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Barker
Dennis & Ahuva Barlow
Bruce & Patricia Bartlett
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Tyler & Pamela Berding
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Brian & Nancy Quint
Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Rabinowitz

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WHERE ARE THE SALT ALUMNI? Thriving In The Professional World!

The SALT Center recently participated in a research study sponsored through the University of Connecticut. The purpose of the study was to understand more about the post graduation outcomes and work experiences of college students identified as using some form of an academic support program. Among a sample of over 2,000 respondents from six postsecondary institutions, the SALT Center alumni composed over 300 of the study participants. We discovered many positive outcomes when looking at our graduates:

- Over 60% of SALT alumni have continued their education to the graduate level
- Over 20% have earned Masters level, Law or Doctoral Degrees
- 75% are currently employed in full-time, benefits eligible positions
- 60% are earning above \$30,000 a year and 20% are earning over \$90,000
- About 50% are employed in the fields of business or education
- Another 20% are employed in technology, media, or health care
- Only 11% requested formal accommodations from their employer
- 64% stated there was no need or reason to disclose their learning challenge to their employer

In summary, it is clear to see that SALT Alumni are doing exceptionally well in the professional world. The majority are employed, earning competitive incomes, and not finding their learning challenge as a major obstacle for success in their work. Although we know that learning challenges do not disappear with age, SALT alumni have found that the transition to the professional world is manageable while using some basic strategies. Getting to work early, setting clear goals and priorities, and proactively problem solving with colleagues have all led to positive outcomes for these professionals. The SALT Center is proud of the many accomplishments of our alumni and looks forward to sharing more of their successes in the future!

SALT ALUMNI - WE NEED YOU

Let us know what you are up to! Go to the SALT website and complete the online form to let us know what you are doing. Are you interested in being an alumni ambassador? SALT wants to hear from you. Please contact Diane Quinn at dcquinn@u.arizona.edu if you are willing to be a resource to current prospective SALT students by sharing your experience after UA.

(In Appreciation... continued from previous page)

Bradley & Susan Rawlins
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Reynard
Robert & Rosemary Riesenfeld
Jose de Jesus & Nina Rivera
Paul & Sheri Robbins
Bill & Amy Rogers
Mrs. Jane Rosenbloom
Matthew Howard Rosenmayer
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Frank & Sue Scerbo
Sylvia Schick Young
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael Seedman
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Larry & Vickie Yamaoka
Allen & Gerri Zabusky
Jill Zalben
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Zamarripa
Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Zieky

SALT Technology

PROJECT DELTA: A NEW HIGH-TECH EXPLORATION FOR SALT STUDENTS

by Matt Harmon

There's a continuing Catch-22 for students searching for their first job after graduation: Every employer wants some evidence of experience and achievement, but how can you show that on your resume if you've never had the experience to actually get a job? In the past, some magic combination of fast-talking, connections and sheer blind luck would be the recipe to convince an employer to "take a chance" and give that fresh graduate his or her first big break.

While the ability to perform well during an interview and finding mentors (as well as blind luck) are still priceless in landing that first big break, we are offering students an opportunity to develop some "real world" experience working in a team environment. Project Delta @ The SALT Center will be a continuing technology project during which students will design, plan and build an electronic device of their own choosing. Initially, the project scheduled for the fall semester, could last into the spring, depending on the complexity of the project the students choose.

Some project examples might be a weather station (deployed at the SALT Center) or a coffee maker capable of reporting the freshness and current status of its coffee. All devices will be designed so that the information they collect will be available via internet. The project will cover all aspects of the development of an electronic device: specification, research, planning, design, implementation, testing (and correction of any portions of the device that don't make it past Quality Assurance) and documentation. Much of the device will have to be developed from scratch (especially the software) by the students participating in the project. As such, everyone involved will learn about how computers work at their most basic and intrinsic levels.

In addition to learning about how computers and technology work, there will be opportunities for students to develop their skills working in a fast-moving team environment and working with others to achieve a common goal. As such, it would be the ideal activity for a student to showcase his or her abilities in an environment that will be as close to "real world" as possible. Once the project is complete, the device will serve as tangible (and internet addressable) evidence of their achievement.

While the specific subjects covered would be of great interest to students pursuing an engineering or computer science major, participation is not limited to students involved in highly technical disciplines. The only real "qualification" is an interest in technology and a willingness to participate. The project has been carefully designed not to interfere with students' coursework.

Matt Harmon from the CRL team and Laurel Grigg from the E & C team are facilitating this exciting new effort. ◆

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMPUTER RESOURCE LAB (CRL)

by Matt Harmon

This past year has been one of transformation for the SALT Center's Computer Resource Lab (CRL). With respect to hardware, we've added an additional "solo" workstation area, modernized our monitor technology and upgraded nearly all of our machines. We've expanded students' access to our more successful assistive technologies and have continued to search for and pilot new (and more advanced) assistive technologies. We've also implemented some technologies to help us deliver technical support to our students in more efficient ways – each station in the lab, for example, can initiate a "chat" with a member of our support staff. In addition to these more apparent support structures, we've also taken steps to "close the window" as much as possible to data loss in the lab through the implementation of automated backups that occur while students are working at our stations.



One of our strategic goals is to continue to further coordinate and integrate our efforts with those of the Education and Counseling team. To this end, we've added an additional workstation and a printer in the Writers Lab. Students will now be able to access their work on the CRL's student server from the Writers Lab and print drafts of their work without having to travel to the CRL to pull their printout. The stations in the Writers Lab will also have an instant messaging capability so that CRL support staff will be able to respond to technical issues in a more efficient manner. We've also deployed a Linux based scientific workstation in the Math Lab. This machine has a variety of Math and Science software to support the work of our tutors in the Math Lab. And like all of the other machines the CRL support staff are responsible for, it too has an instant messaging capability to reach support staff.

Thanks to a generous donation, we were able to add seven new workstations, primarily in our "solo" workstation area to bring the total machines available for student use in the CRL to 31 stations. All of the student feedback regarding this area has been overwhelmingly positive. In terms of responding to students requests, we've taken steps to ensure a more consistent experience – all machines are equipped with a "standard" suite of academic and personal productivity software. We've also provided a facility for students to discretely identify which machines are equipped with assistive technology. All of our machines are now equipped with 17-inch color LCD monitors.

In terms of support staff, we've implemented monthly training sessions during which student support staff share their experiences and "tips and tricks" with one another. We've also instituted more rigorous standards in terms of hiring and retaining our student staff to ensure that our students are receiving world-class technical support.

Our goal is to become **the** premier technical support resource for students on campus – available exclusively to SALT students – a challenge that will continue to evolve as the UA's Office of Student Computing Resources and Residential Computing continue to evolve, improve their services and expand their staffing. We believe, however, that "small is beautiful" and that our knowledge, strong customer service orientation, and aptitude for caring are what distinguish us above and beyond the larger campus technical support community.



VAULT'S FIRST YEAR: SPRINGING INTO ACTION

by Rose Wilhite

VAULT (Volunteer Activities Utilizing Learners' Talents) was piloted in the Fall of 2004 to all SALT students. The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for SALT students to volunteer with their peers and others in the community. SALT organized two opportunities for students to volunteer last fall. In the spring, a SALT student suggested an event idea, and SALT organized participation in the event.

In October 2004, VAULT attended the Southern Arizona AIDS WALK with 17 volunteers. The volunteers consisted of 11 SALT students, 1 non-SALT UA student, 2 high school students, 1 middle school student and 2 SALT staff members. We helped in the KidZone with a jumping castle and baseball pitch and helped at the massage table handing out tickets. Some of the students also went on the walk. We received a group photo and a thank you letter from Southern Arizona Aids Foundation.

Also in October, a couple of SALT students helped out with a Special Olympics Bowling Competition at a local bowling alley. One staff member and a middle school student also volunteered. Even though we were a small group, we were very helpful while working with the adult bowlers.

In the spring, SALT took on the monumental task of organizing a team for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. This is an overnight event with at least one walker from each team on the track at all times, signifying that



SALT students, staff and friends showing team spirit at Relay for Life.

"Cancer Never Sleeps." SALT had a total of 21 participants consisting of 11 SALT students, 6 non-SALT students, 3 SALT staff members and 1 non-SALT UA staff member. The SALT team raised the third highest fundraising total for this American Cancer Society event! We had an incredible "camp" set up with a canopy, a banner, tents, games and plenty of food and water for our walkers. One of the highlights of our night was the "luminaria" ceremony in which the whole track was lit up by candles passed from one participant to another all the way around. It was quite emotional for all of us. Several SALT staff members and their families

stopped by to give us their support, and we had a core group that lasted throughout the night. We concluded our relay with the final lap and we all went home for some much-needed rest!

This fall, VAULT will participate in the Annual Asthma Walk on Sunday, November 6th. In the spring, we may be involved in the Relay for Life again, as that was our biggest turnout and several people expressed interest in participating as a "seasoned" team.

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VAULT is still evolving but has gotten off to a healthy and ambitious start. The students involved get many rewards and give so much to the community. It is exciting to see the level of commitment and learning in SALT (and other!) students taking place “outside” of the classroom. ◆

(The Evolution... continued from page 5)

Our Ambitious Future

The academic success of students enrolled in SALT services has been one of the hallmarks of our program. Though it is always a challenge to maintain both quality service and strong student performance, SALT is committed to both. We are focused on identifying new program elements that will ensure a smooth transition from each student’s previous academic site, thus paving the way for swift success.

After many years of growth, we have identified an ideal program size. We are nearly at that level, seeking a maximum enrollment of 575 students each fall. By maintaining a consistent level of student enrollment, we can assure consistent program quality while continuing to improve student performance.

Promoting the development of independent learning strategies is one of our greatest ambitions. Therefore, among our strategic goals in the coming years is the development of instructional scaffolds that will allow students to follow instructional support guides that are matched to each class in which they are enrolled. Students will use specialized learning tools that are designed to be used with tutors and then used during independent study by any SALT student. It is hoped that what we learn from these models will be transferable to other university programs serving students with learning and attention challenges, thus assuring the broadest possible impact of SALT’s success and expertise.

There is no lack of evidence that students with learning challenges struggle with a number of psychological issues, many of which are believed to be exacerbated by the presence of learning and attention challenges. Students who struggle in school lose confidence and self-esteem. Many have been diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorders. Still others have issues with substance abuse or with eating disorders. The list of co-existing disorders is endless. These issues present life-long struggles that accompany the learning and attention challenges. These issues follow students to the university.

To meet these students’ needs, the SALT Center is committed to expanding its counseling services for participating students. We are proud to offer the services we have introduced in recent years, but these services must expand if we are to continue to assure students an opportunity to succeed within a competitive university environment.

To succeed within a university that demands student excellence, each student must have access to resources, within SALT, that will allow them to function independently. True independence is gained by providing access to assistive learning tools that let students use technology to their advantage. Consequently, another strategic goal of the SALT Center is the constant growth and development of our technology resources. We have committed our program to constant change of our computing and other technologies to best meet student needs. We are also committed to upgrading our structural environment to allow ease of access to SALT services, regardless of the size of our program.

Throughout our 25 years we have kept one mission - to promote the success of students with learning and attention challenges. We are a program of constant change, always striving to be the very best resource to students. Our future is ambitious...our mission remains constant. ◆

SALT Admissions

QUICK TIPS FROM ADMISSIONS

by Wendy Robinson

The beginning of the school year is a busy time for most of the University of Arizona community, and the Admissions Office at SALT is no exception. As the days get shorter and the weather gets cooler, we get busier as new applications start rolling in. We are always excited to review applications and to begin getting to know future students. From time to time, however, there are some applications that commit one of the following “pet peeves” and cause more frustration than excitement. So, in no particular order, a list of admissions pet peeves that can be easily avoided:

1. Illegible email addresses: We use email to contact our prospective students all the time. If we can't tell if a letter is a “c” or an “e” or if 0 is a number or a letter, we can't reach you! We'd hate for you to miss an important piece of information.
2. Embarrassing emails: Sometimes email addresses can fall in the category of “too much information”. Before you put an email address on your application, please ask yourself if it is going to make someone blush to read it.
3. Sending in a lot of extra information: Sometimes an extra letter of recommendation is helpful, but 15 extra letters is never that helpful! The same thing goes with pictures. We don't mind seeing your senior picture attached to your application, but one picture is more than enough. All of your school pictures are more than we need. Yes, you were cute in 1st grade, but that won't help us make a decision on your admission!
4. Calling us the wrong school: We know you are probably applying to other schools, so it is important that you double check that you aren't writing a great essay about wanting to go to that *other* school with Arizona in the title!
5. Bad handwriting: Bottom line: if we can't read it, it won't help you be admitted! Use a computer or typewriter if you have any doubts about your legibility.

We can't wait to get to know you, so please do:

1. Let your personality shine through! We want to get to know the real you.
2. Tell us how we can best support you as a future SALT Student. Don't be afraid to call and ask us questions. We are here to help.
3. Let us know if you would like to speak with a current SALT student. We have plenty of students who would love to give you the inside scoop on life at the University of Arizona.



SALT ORIENTATION - HELPING PARENTS CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

by Autumn Palmer & Jeff Orgera

How does the SALT Center engage with over 550 students a year? How do students know how to access their resources within SALT? How does the SALT Center communicate with parents of SALT students? The answer to these and many other questions is found by attending SALT Center New Student Orientation. This critical program helps students and their parents get a jump-start with SALT.

Parents and students both know that New Student Orientation is an exciting and nerve-wracking time. The SALT Center has provided a separate, full day, SALT New Student Orientation since 1995. SALT Orientation was built and designed as a transition program to aid both students and parents. Its role is multifaceted and involves preparing the student for the upcoming semester, defining what services each student will receive, and helping parents trust the SALT Center with the development and educational process for their students. The SALT Center has a diverse group of students who are admitted and attend the program each year. Many students and parents have a variety of expectations and assumptions as to what SALT will provide for them. The majority, if not all of these expectations and assumptions, are addressed during SALT New Student Orientation. We start from scratch building every incoming student and parents' knowledge about the SALT Center and our role within the University and the students' education.

Every orientation starts with a presentation called "Changes and Challenges" by SALT Director, Dr. Diane Quinn. Here families start thinking about their upcoming changes associated with starting college: academically, socially, personally, and even financially. Then we shift into "Engaging Opportunities for Success," presented by Associate Director, Jeff Orgera. Both of these presentations set the tone for the day and get orientation off to a running start. Parents come to SALT Orientation with concerns about the size of the UA, how their student will access services and what SALT does, as well as what their role in this whole transition is or should be. All of these are valid concerns that we work hard to address throughout the day.

Parents and students are separated after these two presentations in order to address each group's specific needs and concerns. At this time students go to the SALT Center where they will meet the SALT staff and are oriented with the services and facility. Throughout the day, the parents have time to learn about what the differences are between the SALT Center and the Disability Resource Center as well as what they are paying for when their student participates in SALT. During this time parents are also free to ask questions from both the Director and Associate Director to develop a trusting relationship with SALT and feel connected. A panel of veteran SALT students speak with the parents during the afternoon so that they can ask the hard questions from "Were you homesick your first year?" to "How does SALT provide help to you as a student?" It is always important for parents to connect with our current students in order to better understand how their own student may

Did You See?

SALT Center mentioned in...

- ▶ Newsweek Magazine
- ▶ US News & World Report
- ▶ Phoenix Magazine
- ▶ Arizona Daily Star
- ▶ UA Journal/UA Channel

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(SALT Orientation.. continued from page 23)

manage this transition. The student panel is often the favorite session for many parents because they can see their student within each of our panelists.

The SALT Center Orientation not only helps students and parents better understand the services and programs offered but also aids in the transition from high school to college. We pride ourselves in helping parents understand their students' journey into college and also in helping them understand their parental role within this journey. SALT Center New Student Orientation aids parents with these concerns by allowing them to meet and bond with the SALT Staff and their student's Learning Specialist. Essentially, the SALT Center breaks down the large size of the university into a smaller, more comfortable and trusting community setting.

WHY CHOOSE SALT? DON'T LET DISTANCE KEEP YOU AWAY

Many families are concerned about the distance their students will have to travel in order to attend college. SALT Admissions often hears from families in other parts of the country who say, "It is just too far away," or "I want them to stay closer to home." Some students stay closer to home for many logistical reasons, but for other students who decided to plunge into the college environment far away from home it is a good decision.

The following three students and their parents agreed to share their perspective for this year's SALT Journal. While no one can make the decision to go away to school any easier, we hope their experiences may help some people deal with the anxiety created by concerns about distance.

A Student's Perspective...

I am Zak Jacoby, a junior at The University of Arizona and SALT Center. I grew up in a small town in the state of New Jersey where I attended the local middle school and a small private high school in New York. Besides being a student at the SALT center, I am deeply involved in many facets of campus life.

So how did I find out about the SALT Center? I had just finished eighth grade when I first heard about the SALT Center at The University of Arizona from a stranger when I was on an airplane flying home to New Jersey. I left my small town's middle school when it was time to move on to high school where I chose, with my parent's push, to attend a small private school that focused in students with learning disabilities. It was located in New York, about an hour drive from home. I was a bit nervous and scared the first day, but somehow, four years later, I would start my college career at The University of Arizona. I began my high school career with just twenty-two students in my grade and that would change to just fifteen by the time I graduated. I went from fifteen students in my graduating class and less than one hundred students in the high school to about six thousand freshmen and about thirty thousand undergraduates. Was it tough? I would be lying if I said no, but I

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did it. I applied to the UA and the SALT Center and went to the SALT Orientation, which was the day before New Student Orientation, with my dad, where I met the SALT Center professionals who are here to help me succeed at the university. They taught me the resources I would need to get my education.

Most of my family lives in the Northeastern section of the US, but I still see them often. My freshmen year, I saw them every other month or so. In August they came to Arizona to help me move into my residence hall and were back five weeks later for Family Weekend, and then I flew home three weeks after that for Thanksgiving. Only a few weeks later, I was then home for winter break. I felt like I saw my family often for being so far away at school. In the spring of my freshmen year, I saw them every other month as well. I left them in January, but both my parents flew out in February for Father's weekend at my fraternity. Only four weeks later, I was home for Spring Break and then it would be only about six more weeks until I would be back in New Jersey for summer! Thoughts about living far from school may bring upon stress but it is not that bad. I talk to my parents regularly on the phone, and really it is almost the same if I went to school back on the east coast. I would probably not go home any more often or call more. My mom once said, "I will miss you the same, no matter if you go to school in Arizona or a school around the corner." I thought about it, and it's true. I love my family the same, no matter where I am. I always just can call home whenever.

Zak Jacoby

A Parent's Perspective...

Sending our son 2000 miles from New Jersey to attend the SALT program at the University of Arizona was a big decision for our family, but one that has turned out beyond all of our expectations, especially Zak's. Being that far from home has helped a young man mature and take on more responsibility than just going to classes. Coming from a very small high school to UA has given him the experience of meeting kids from all over the world and getting to explore the southwest. The SALT program is a huge help for kids with learning and attention challenges and a place where they can get the benefits of a personal learning specialist and tutoring as well. SALT made the transition to college much less intimidating and helpful. It also makes a large public university feel much smaller.

Elliot Jacoby, Zak's Father

A Student's Perspective...

When it was time to choose which college to attend as a freshman I had a hard decision between the University of Arizona and Washington State University. I was born and raised a die-hard Cougar and knew that I would have an amazing time at WSU. When I heard about the SALT program, I also knew that being a part of it would help me in my college career. SALT offers so many tools that make academics easier. When it was time to make the final decision, I knew exactly where I was going. If I was admitted into SALT, I would attend the University of Arizona, and if I were not, I would attend Washington State University. I was admitted and am now starting my senior year at the U of A.

(continued on page 26)

SALT Admissions Trends:

- ▶ Applications from New York quadrupled for Fall 2005
- ▶ Applications from Illinois tripled for Fall 2005
- ▶ Applications have increased from Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts
- ▶ 58% of the incoming students for Fall 2005 were interviewed
- ▶ SALT conducted 207 interviews from February through April of 2005
- ▶ SALT visited over 20 Arizona schools during the 2004-2005 academic year
- ▶ SALT visited over 50 out-of-state schools during the 2004-2005 academic year

(Student Perspective.. continued from page 25)

If it were not for SALT, I honestly believe that I would not have made it through college, and if I did I would have struggled more than necessary. SALT offers many things to students. Some of the programs I have used are the wonderful tutors, my Learning Specialist, the Writing Lab, and the Computer Lab. I have been so lucky to have amazing tutors; all know the subjects so well and have an amazing way of breaking it down for students like me to understand. My Learning Specialist has been a savior for me in college. She is someone who is there if I need advice, but most of all she knows a lot about the school and which classes and teachers are good to take. The writing lab and computer lab have also helped in so many ways. From editing papers to starting the writing process, the tutors there are knowledgeable and so willing to help. My overall experience at the University of Arizona was made so much better because of SALT, and I have had such an amazing experience.

Sarah Quint

A Parent's Perspective...

We have a lot of family in Arizona, so when it was time for Sarah to look at colleges we visited U of A and liked the campus and community feeling. However, what made U of A the most appealing for us was the SALT program. All of our worries about Sarah being away from home were completely erased by knowing that she would be successful in college because of the SALT program. We are happy to report that we made the best decision for Sarah! We are thrilled that she is starting her Senior year and will be graduating on time in May.

Our first visits with SALT professionals were so positive that we had confidence right away that Sarah would do well in the program. Then we met her Learning Specialist and we felt that we had hit a home run! She and Sarah connected so well right away and have had a great relationship for these past three years.

One little story to tell: Sarah had always struggled with writing; it just didn't flow for her. I will never forget towards the end of her freshman year she had to write a cover letter for a resume and had asked me for help. We sat down to make an outline and the next thing I knew she had taken our brief notes and created a great letter! At that point I knew the tutoring and writing labs at SALT were working!

Brian and Nancy Quint

A Student's Perspective...

To fully understand why I chose to come to the University of Arizona, I have to explain my high school situation. I attended the Briarwood School in Houston, Texas. It was a school designed for students with learning disabilities, so the class sizes were small. The size of my graduating class was 21 students. The majority of students who graduate from there do not go to "big schools" much less division-one colleges. The colleges that we visited on our junior retreat were in small towns where the only entertainment was a Wal-Mart. I had been going to a high school with a small population, and I didn't want

(continued on next column)

that for my college career. I wanted to go to a big school while knowing that I would need academic support with my learning disabilities.

I heard about the SALT program by fate to be honest. My older sister was here and upon visiting her my parents learned of the SALT program. Now I had applied to several smaller colleges based on the fact that I knew that I could get the academic support I needed. But I wanted to go to a college where it was certain that I wouldn't feel like the only student on campus, that I would need to become responsible for my college career. By meeting with some learning specialists and current students I knew that SALT would provide me with the services that I needed to help my college career grow. I knew that I wouldn't be alone; I would have a learning specialist any time I had a problem on campus. That was something a lot of the other colleges I applied to couldn't give me, and so far that has been the difference in my college life and in my GPA.

David Kemper

A Parent's Perspective...

Our son attended a small high school for students with learning disabilities; we felt he would need strong support in college. We started looking at colleges for our son when he was in 9th grade, attending a program to help parents of college-bound high school students with learning differences gather information about finding an appropriate college. One of the things we were told at these gatherings was to carefully look at colleges that said they offered programs for young people with learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD, because often these programs frequently changed staff and didn't always follow through with what they offered. We found many colleges did have programs for young people with learning disabilities, but they were not well established and did not have the comprehensive program SALT had to offer, and not many addressed ADD/ADHD. Our son wanted to attend a large university; he wanted that kind of experience. We also felt this was an important part of his continuing education as he would be exposed to so much more than if he attended a small college. We had concerns about him attending a large university coming out of a very small high school, but felt that the support he would receive from SALT would help him be successful at the University of Arizona. Conversations with SALT students and their parents confirmed our feelings about SALT and U.of A.

We looked at many schools. We were pleased when our son told us that he felt the SALT program had what he needed to succeed at a university.

The SALT program has delivered more than we had hoped!

Linda and John Kemper



SALT CENTER RECRUITING NEWS

The SALT Center had a busy recruiting year in 2004-05. We visited 21 Arizona schools and 52 out-of-state schools in the East, West and Mid-West. We are also beginning to recruit in Europe and the Far East as opportunities become available. This year we hope to visit the following states:

Florida
New York
New Jersey
Texas
Washington
Ohio
DC
Virginia
Maryland
Illinois
Nevada

To inquire about or to request a visit, please contact Autumn Palmer, Coordinator of Admissions & Outreach, autumn@u.arizona.edu or 520-621-5285.

(A Learning Specialists Guide... continued from page 12)

Going to class is the single most important thing a student can do. A lecture cannot be recreated by reading a book, by reviewing the online notes, by reading their friends' notes or by just going to a tutor. Verbal and non-verbal cues will be missed. Little tidbits will never be heard. A student must be there. *Really* be there, prepared, informed and ready to listen.

Studying the course material and being prepared for class is crucial. Being prepared for exams is crucial. Learning does not involve glancing at a textbook and then saying, "I know this". It does not involve cramming. Information needs to be learned and understood, not just memorized and regurgitated for an exam.

Visiting a professor during office hours is another excellent strategy that all students should use. Students should go to office hours with a plan. They should take their study guides with them. They should ask questions. Professors respond better to students who express interest in the course material. Students should never expect their professor to give them answers to the test, but they can always demonstrate how they have prepared and that they care about their performance in the class.

Time management is the umbrella strategy that makes all of the other academic strategies work. Students with learning challenges often need more time to ensure understanding. They need to allow themselves the opportunity to take advantage of all of the available quality time at their disposal. Yes, they can still make time for their "must-see TV" nights, but they should never neglect this most important skill.

Of course, there is one final strategy for success: use of SALT services. Students who use SALT services effectively greatly increase their chance of success because they take an active role in their own education. They take responsibility for their success. ♦

(The New Experience... continued from page 11)

always bear in mind that even though they are working with students on improving the assignments at hand, their ultimate goal is to help the students develop better writing and thinking skills.

At SALT, we feel that students should leave each session with the ability to do better without the help of a tutor next time they have to complete a similar assignment. After months or years of tutoring, students will still benefit from criticism and feedback, but they should be able to work without the help of tutors if they have to. After all, they won't have tutors after they graduate. In the end, if our tutors have been successful, their help will no longer be necessary. ♦

(Student Spotlights... continued from page 13)

Photography may be Weston's passion, but his academic success is equally strong. Weston regularly meets with tutors, uses Writers Lab support when necessary, and effectively plans ahead using strategies enforced by his Learning Specialist. After a strong first semester start earning a 2.786 GPA, Weston earned a 4.0 in spring 2005. For this accomplishment he earned recognition on the Dean's List with Distinction!

Personal Growth Sparks New Academic Path

Alexandra Francis is a very goal-oriented, determined student. When she arrived as a UA freshman in the fall of 2003, it was evident that her priority was academic success. She strategically incorporated the use of all SALT services into her daily schedule. Alexandra placed particular importance on her tutor appointments and meetings with her learning specialist.

Alexandra's excellent use of her time management and organizational skills encouraged her growth both academically and personally. She joined a sorority, changed to the Eller College of Management for a major in Business, and continued to make short- and long-term goals.

Alexandra has the skills, determination, and dedication to understand the time commitment necessary for success. The challenging requirements of the Business major will demand just such a commitment.



(Need Tutoring... continued from page 11)

Students have a number of unique opportunities to engage with an experienced tutor, and all we ask is that they communicate their needs and invest their efforts productively as a recipe for success.

Students need to request tutors for the classes, arrange and keep appointments, and fully participate in the tutoring session by coming prepared. That means having read their textbooks and notes from lectures, and displaying a genuine willingness to learn their academic material. In our experience, students are often surprised to find that academic success in college is based on the plain hard work of studying and that there is no way around that fact.

Tutoring is not only about learning facts, figures, theories, and how to communicate in writing. Students are encouraged to explore how they learn best and then work with the SALT staff to find the best learning resource. In order to find the best resource, students need guidance and support while being proactive in asking for help in a timely manner. SALT encourages responsibility and taking ownership for academic success and failures.

Overall, SALT students seeking tutoring have a wide range of options and opportunities; their only task is to communicate their needs and decide how they would like it delivered!



(SALT Support for Graduate... continued from page 9)

Technology

The SALT Computer Resource Lab (CRL) provides computer hardware and software exclusively for SALT students. It is a resource that provides access to the latest assistive technologies that can foster the better comprehension of written materials and the process of writing. SALT has over thirty workstations with high-speed Internet connections, standard office software, and quality laser printing.

(SALT Outdoors... continued from page 10)

Overcoming challenges can also foster growth in self-confidence and discovery of new strengths. Having these opportunities can be key to achieving success in the classroom.

SALT Outdoors aims to provide students with these benefits as well as the opportunity to meet other students with similar interests, learn about their new surroundings, and feel more at “home” in Tucson. *SALT Outdoors* is open to all students, regardless of experience level, allowing exploration of new interests and development of new skills, as well as leadership opportunities for hiking veterans. Through pre-trip meetings prior to each hike, participating students will take an active role in the planning of each outing based on student interests and experience levels.

During the fall semester three outings are scheduled, each on a Saturday, and, weather permitting, these will each be day hikes in the Tucson area (i.e., one of the four mountain ranges). As Learning Specialists/Outdoor Enthusiasts, Laurel Grigg and I will be guiding these hikes and may be joined by other staff and community members. We look forward to sharing our love for the outdoors and hope to be able to pass this on to some of our students!

For further information about SALT Outdoors, contact Ashley Klein at aeklein@email.arizona.edu or Laurel Grigg at lgrigg@email.arizona.edu. ♦



Hikers stopped to reflect on their day and enjoyed simply listening to the mountain breeze and stream below.

SAVE THE DATE

April 8, 2006

SALT Center

25th Anniversary

Gala Celebration

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