Comerica Scholars:
A closer look at the freshman transition

by Angela Zawadski, zawadski@wayne.edu, Graduate Student Assistant-Academic Success Center

I had the chance to meet with three of the freshman Comerica Scholars to get the scoop on their transition from high school to college. Crystal Jolly, 19, Sheniq Penn, 18, and Amir Amiri, 18, all shared their thoughts and ideas about the Comerica program and college life in general.

Comerica Scholars are the Wade McCree and Detroit Compact Scholars from the Detroit Public Schools. These are some of the brightest students to graduate from Detroit public schools and Wayne State University is fortunate enough to be the college to help further their education.

When asked what adjustments she had to make from high school to college life, Crystal replied, “Mostly taking initiative and responsibility for yourself in classes and socially. In high school, you have teachers telling you what to do and when it’s due. It’s up to you to know in college.”

Shenis stated, “Making time to study as much as you need to is the biggest issue. You learn a lot about time-management.”

Amiri’s response to the same question was, “The biggest adjustment was disciplining myself to adjust to a new schedule. You think you’ll have more free time in college but you actually have less.” Amiri is right. An often common misconception about college is that you’ll have more time since you take less classes. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The work load for each class increases as well as the level of difficulty is higher in college courses.

Now in their first semester at Wayne State, the group acts as a cohort taking some courses together. This grouping of students is intended to offer students several benefits such as networking, study groups, and social support. I asked Crystal how being in a group with the Comerica Scholars has helped her adjust to college life and she said, “The group is like support. If I’m going through something, someone else is likely to be going through the same thing.” Well said. Life as a freshman can bring up many new struggles that students fear they are going through alone. It is always

Remember Me?
I’m In Your Class that Meets On...

by Oumar Jackson, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Academic Success Center, omurajackson@wayne.edu

Is your course material difficult? Are you on the right track with assignments? How often do you provide your instructor with feedback? How’s your relationship with instructors?

As we all know, Wayne State University is a large institution of higher education. Each of these questions is the result of attending a large university. You, as the student, have to take responsibility for your education and be a much more proactive student. At WSU you may be enrolled in course sections that may sit anywhere from 100 to 150 students. It is the norm for the professor not to know your name or face so get used to it! Or do you have to get used to it? You don’t!

Visiting your professor is necessary to benefit your education. Taking advantage of office hours can help with difficult material. Many times material is unclear or there may be information

Never allow the feeling of intimidation to prevail over you.
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that is missing in your notes. A one-on-one visit with the professor may help to clear up this information so that you can thoroughly understand lecture notes or course information.

How many times have you had an assignment and said, “Oh I didn’t know they wanted me to do this?” If the instructions are not clear or very detailed, you should seek advice from the professor. The question of whether or not you are on the right track should take place during the writing process. This is where you would schedule a meeting with the professor and discuss your problems or concerns. Doing so ensures that you are able to complete the assignment to the professor’s preference.

Not only are you able to seek help with your academics, but visiting a professor gives you a chance to give your professor feedback. The evaluation that you complete at the end of the course is only helpful to students that take the course after you. Why not give the professor feedback that can help you? Of course, this feedback should be given in a respectful manner. In fact, many times the questions and concerns that you raise about course material will send a hint to the professors that they are not being clear. Accordingly, you may inform the professor that it is difficult for you to learn in an auditory fashion. This may prompt the professors to incorporate visual learning into their lectures.

Increasing your connection with professors is important as well. Considering the majority of us plan to attend graduate school or enter the workforce after graduating from WSU, which require letters of recommendation. These letters play a vital role in the admissions’ hiring process. Additionally, professors may know of job opportunities or may be able to equip you with some skill that may improve your resume. This type of interaction cannot take place during class.

The benefits of visiting and building relationships with professors are endless. Your college experience should be a practice ground for life. Never allow the feeling of intimidation to prevail over you. How can you talk to your employer if you are apprehensive about talking to your professor?

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important to develop some type of social support to discuss the issues that we are faced with our first years of college. Often times, this support is what creates lifelong friendships.

While talking to these three students, it sounded as if they are wise beyond their...well...semester. It made me wonder what advice these students would have for other students who may be struggling with their transition from high school to college, so I asked.

Amir said, “Always attend class. It can never hurt you, it will only help.” Shena had a few words of wisdom herself. She said, “Don’t get discouraged, and if you do, don’t keep a negative attitude. Also, if you need help go to the Academic Success Center. It makes everything easier.” I couldn’t agree more. Negative attitudes never help and the Academic Success Center is a great place for all of your learning needs. It’s packed with tutors and learning specialists and even runs the supplemental instruction program that is utilized by a great number of students. Check them out at www.success.wayne.edu if you are interested in their services.

I was curious to know how the Comerica Scholars program helped the students with their postsecondary goals. I got my answer when I asked this question to Amir who answered by saying, “I wouldn’t have gone to college without the financial support of the Detroit Compact program.” This says it all. To make this big of a difference in a student’s life shows the true success of the Comerica Scholars program.

It sounds as though these students are well on their way to becoming successful in their collegiate pursuit. Their words of wisdom are inspirational, and evidence that the Comerica Scholars program is quite beneficial. Again, we are fortunate to have such positive students with us at Wayne State University thanks to the Comerica scholars program. I appreciate them for sharing with the university their valuable words.

It’s More than Just a Paycheck

We are seeking new St leaders to help support an expanded course list in Winter 2007. You must have attended WSU for at least one year, and maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA, having earned an A or B in the course you wish to support. In order to apply for a position, please submit the application form, a pipeline transcript, and two letters of recommendation from Wayne State professors. Our staff also interviews potential candidates.

Supplemental instruction is a well-known national program, and being an SI leader looks great on your resume/CV. In addition, the position gives you an opportunity to network with professors, students, and professional staff. You will gain teaching and public speaking experience, and know that you have helped your fellow students succeed. Stop by the ASC today to pick up an application form!

“I wouldn’t have gone to college without the financial support of the Detroit Compact program.”
Supplemental Instruction—What’s That?

by Melodie Dutka, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Academic Success Center, mndutka@wayne.edu

As you walk around campus, you might notice signs and flyers announcing Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions. Perhaps a student may have made an announcement in one of your lectures. You may be asking yourself, “What is Supplemental Instruction?”

In 1973, Dr. Deanna Martin started SI at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. The early focus of the program was to help minority students and women become more successful in their medical, dental, and pharmacy courses (Zerger & McDaniel, 2004). Since then, the program has flourished, and now many universities throughout the country have SI.

Here at Wayne State, the Academic Success Center (ASC) coordinates the SI program. The peer-led review sessions are designed to help students become independent learners, and provide a forum for collaborative learning and study skills improvement. Research shows that regular attendance at SI can improve your grade up to one full letter grade. At an SI session, you can learn new tips for exam preparation, work in a group to figure out the main concepts of a chapter, take practice quizzes, or play a review game such as Jeopardy.

SI Leaders are highly qualified, veteran students. They have taken the course previously and received an A or B, and are faculty recommended. The SI leader attends lecture daily, meets with the professor weekly, and holds 3-5 SI sessions each week. Each SI leader is trained by ASC staff, and attends bi-weekly training in-services to build his/her skills. An SI leader is not like a professor or teaching assistant, and will not lecture or provide help with homework. SI leaders are your guide through the class, and provide you with an opportunity to learn course material more effectively and become a better student.

To find out more about SI, visit the Academic Success Center website: www.success.wayne.edu, or visit our office in 1600 USL.

Reference


Spring/Summer 2006 Learning Group Pilot is a Success

by Luana Keitie, Graduate Student Assistant, Academic Success Center, ak8333@wayne.edu

During the 2006 Spring/Summer semester, the Academic Success Center (ASC) implemented its pilot of the Learning Group program. The pilot was tested on BIO 1510, an introductory level Biology course required for all Biology majors. This course was chosen primarily because of its large enrollment rate.

The Learning Group program combines the expertise of one Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader, one tutor, and the professor of the course to maximize the students' learning experience. This collaborative approach provides greater academic support for students, as well as offering in-depth instruction on course content.

Initially, student attendance in the tutoring portion of the program was low, while attendance in the SI portion was within the average range for the standard SI program during Spring/Summer semester. Near mid-semester, tutoring attendance increased along with students' grades. During a mid-semester meeting, the BIO 1510 professor reported students' test scores were higher for the Learning Group course than during previous semesters.

The analysis of the course grades of the participants (those who attended SI and/or tutoring) versus the non-participants, lead to positive findings. Thirty percent of the participants received an A grade, while only 8.6% of the non-participants received an A.

Also, 17% of the non-participants withdrew or did not complete the course, while only 7.1% of the participants withdrew or did not finish the course.

Overall, 82% of SI and tutoring attendees passed the class, while the passing rate for non-attendees was only 60%. Of those students who attended tutoring, particularly those who utilized both components of the program, most earned a B or higher.

By all appearances, the Learning Group program had a positive impact on the students involved. The data substantiates the theory of students' ability to thrive in a classroom setting that offers a variety of learning tools, just as many students thrive in a traditional classroom setting. Increased interaction between the components of the Learning Group can only improve the classroom experience for students.

Students thrive in a classroom setting that offers a variety of learning tools.
Mission Statement

The mission of the Academic Success Center is to assist undergraduate students to become self-determined, motivated, and independent learners. The ASC provides instruction and services that will support students in the development of skills to promote academic excellence and foster student retention.

Services offered:

- Tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction
- Individual Support by a Learning Specialist
- Study Skill Enhancing Workshops

Thank you to our editorial board:
Bernard Jackson, Comerica Scholar, Angela Zanardelli, Graduate Assistant; Omari Jackson, Graduate Teaching Assistant; Chad Claybourne-Bey, Learning Specialist; and Laura Woodward, Learning Specialist/Chair.

ASC’s TOP TEN:
Keeping you up to date on campus life

Cheap Eats on and Around Campus

by Angela Zanardelli, Graduate Student Assistant, Academic Success Center, azanardelli@wayne.edu

1. Potato Place (loaded baked potato, your style)- On Warren across from Barnes and Noble
2. Olympic Grill (American coney-style)- On Warren across from Barnes and Noble
3. Campus Coney (cones, burgers and more)- On Cass across from the Cohn building
4. Epicurus Place (Mediterranean and American cuisine)- On Warren across from Barnes and Noble
5. Towers Café (all types of food-buffet style)- First floor of the Towers
6. Byblos (Mid-Eastern cuisine)- Cass and Palmer
7. Circa 1890 Saloon (great pizzas, and sandwiches)- On Cass across from the Cohn building
8. Small World Café (Indian Cuisine)- Kirby and John R. basement of International Institute
9. Dynasty Chinese Food (University Plaza)- On Warren and the Lodge (M-10) in the plaza with University Foods and Blockbuster
10. American Masala (Indian cuisine)- Hancock and Woodward behind the Indian grocery store