

L.A.C. News

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Meet Our Tutors

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 Kasey Rohling
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 Eric Sundrup
 Brian Sokol
 Valerie Theile
 George Waikem
 Becca Walker
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Co-Head Peer Advisor

Whose side are you on, anyway? University Disability Services

-Sarah Kelly, Director

Recently, a faculty member told me she would never want to have my job. "How do you do it?" she asked. "Whose side are you on?" This is a common question posed to disability

I try to make decisions based on what is best for Xavier University ... students, faculty and administration.

service providers in higher education.

When difficulties arise, there is confusion on all sides. To the student, and especially the parents of that student, I am expected to be a blind advocate, fighting the good fight for the rights of students with disabilities. To the faculty, I am expected to be a defender of academic freedom, protecting them in their classroom decisions. To the administration, I am

expected to have quick answers to questions with profound legal and (sometimes) ethical ramifications. So I've been thinking, whose side *am* I really on?

The framework for decision-making in a position such as mine is highly situational. I am unable to say I have ever been solidly on one "side." I try to make decisions based on what is best for Xavier University. By that I mean the sum total of Xavier University—students, faculty and administration. If a student is requesting something that is unreasonable, or something that fundamentally alters the nature of a course or program of study, I will let that student know that I cannot, in good faith, approach a faculty member with that request. On the other hand, if a faculty member acts in such a way as to endanger the rights of a student with a disability, I will let that faculty member know that he or she may be doing so.

We live in a litigious
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MARIE GASPER, NEW LAC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Valedictorian is New Assistant Director

The LAC is pleased to announce the addition of Marie Gasper to its staff. Marie began as assistant director of the LAC in August, just in time to kick off peer advisor training. The Valedictorian of the class of 2000, Marie graduated *summa cum laude* from Xavier University with a double major in French and Theology.

During the 1998-99 academic year, Marie was a Fredin Scholar studying at the University of Paris, Sorbonne. Marie was the Head Peer Advisor in the Learning Assistance Center last year and brings a wealth of experience to her post. Her primary responsibilities
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Valedictorian is New Assistant Director

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are to oversee the Peer Advising and Tutorial Assistance Programs.

“Marie has already made a huge impact,” says Sarah Kelly, director of the center. “She has the advantage of knowing the students and professional personnel and she’s capitalized on that by making substantive changes that have positively impacted the quality of our services.”

Marie began by conquering her fear of heights in order to participate in a high ropes course during Peer Advisor training. “It was awesome--scary, but awesome. It definitely brought us

together as a group” said Gasper.

Team building has been an area of focus for Marie, and with a student staff approaching 35, that is no small feat. Another area of focus is to increase faculty awareness and use of the program. “I love it when students come in and tell us their professor referred them to us” said Gasper. “It means the word is getting out.”

Gasper will begin working on a Masters in Theology this January. Her goal is to earn her Doctorate in Art History with an emphasis on spirituality in modern art. “Expect great things from Marie,” said Kelly. “She won’t be here for long, but when she leaves XU, she will leave this

Whose side?

(Continued from page 1)

society, leading some people to think that disability service providers make decisions solely on the basis of risk management and case law. While I understand the necessity of this as a *factor* in my decision-making I don’t feel that this is solely how decisions should be made. Time and again, I have been encouraged by faculty and administrators to look at how things *ought* to be in a given situation. This has given greater flexibility to all involved parties and enabled me to reach a compromise in every situation. This is what makes Xavier a unique place. I’m glad no one wants my job, because I love it and intend to keep it!

What are the Peer Advisors up to this year? PA Facts and Figures for Fall 2000

PA Training

- *Team building Ropes Course
- *Brunch with Resident Assistants
- *Volunteered to help with

PA Programs and Workshops

- *Learning Styles
- *Test Anxiety
- *Time Management in conjunction

PA Vital Stats

- *12 Peer Advisors
- *serving 14 Residence Hall Floors
- *675 hours logged in Training

Increased Demand for Tutoring Services

The demand for tutors at the LAC has greatly increased during the Fall 2000 semester. As of the middle of October, tutor requests were up 200% from where they were last October. In all aspects of the tutoring program, services have increased dramatically.

“It’s amazing how many people have been coming in to get tutors,” says Ann Moore, Head Tutor. “I’m very excited that more and more students are using our center as a resource on campus.”

Due to this skyrocketing demand, several new tutors were hired this fall. “We have a lot of strengths in our team of tutors,”

says Marie Gasper, Assistant Director. “Many of our newly-hired tutors are quite strong in the Natural Sciences, for which we always have high demand.”

As always, Math tutors were most frequently requested,

followed closely by Chemistry, Biology, and Spanish.

Tutoring is open to all Xavier students in almost all subject areas; emphasis is put not only on subject matter, but also on good study skills. To sign up for a free tutor, students should stop by the LAC during business

	Academic Year, 1999-2000 (8 mo.)	August 2000- present (3 mo.)
Number of Students Tutored	138	118
Number of Subjects Tutored	24	25
Number of Tutors	25	33
Number of Hours Tutored	771	420

New Cards being sent to Professors

Xavier professors have been finding a new item in their mail box this fall from the Learning Assistance Center: New professor cards (see example at right) allow professors to know which of their students are receiving tutoring through the LAC.

When students sign up for a tutor, they are asked on the intake form, "Could we notify your professor that you are receiving tutoring?" If the answer is yes, a card is sent to the student's professor.

"The response to these cards has been quite positive," says Marie Gasper, LAC Assistant Director. "The goal was to help further involve professors in the tutoring process. Faculty want to be involved with their students who are receiving tutoring."

Often students are afraid to approach their professors, says Gasper.

Dear Professor (*Name*),

This note is simply to inform you that (*student's name*) has signed up to receive tutoring for your class, (*class name*), and has allowed us to share this information with you. We believe that learning begins in the classroom and we wish to be involved with this student's learning process. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to be in contact with this student's tutor, please call the Learning Assistance Center at 745-3280. Thank you for your help and understanding.

Example of Card being

These cards may provide another bridge between a timid, struggling student and their teacher.

Gasper says that a few concerns have been raised about students' privacy. "We assure them that these cards are sent out only with the student's permission." So far, students have overwhelmingly accepted this new practice, with 95% requesting the cards

What else is new at the LAC?

- A new **study tip** graces the window of the LAC each week to remind passers-by about good study habits. Tips have included: "Don't PROCRASTINATE", "Get Organized", "Review, Rewrite, Share Your Notes", "Meet Your Professors" and others. Next time you're near Kuhlman Hall, check it out!
- The LAC also has a new presence in the **Xavier Newswire**. Each edition contains an advertisement for the Center. Past ads have run the gamut from "Do your professors hate you? Find out. Stop by during their office hours." to "If you're

Ask the Director ... Answers to Some Faculty FAQ

Question: *I have a student who says he has A.D.D. but I haven't received a letter from you. What should I do?*

Answer: Refer the student to the LAC. The staff will verify the disability and then notify you. We try to get the word out to students early but a few always fall through the cracks. The faculty is our best source of referrals. Now, should you *accommodate* a student without a letter from the LAC? Ultimately, that is the professor's decision. However, to prevent problems it may be considered good practice to have the student work through the LAC. Doing so protects everyone involved.

Question: *I received a letter at midterm about a student of mine. This student is doing poorly and her midterm grade was a D. She has asked if she can re-write some of her previous work because of her disability. Am I required to allow this?*

Answer: Absolutely not. It is the student's responsibility to seek reasonable accommodations in a timely fashion. Students will sometimes adopt a "wait and see" approach with regard to accommodations. We always counsel students against that approach. There is no retroactivity

with regard to accommodations unless the student was denied accommodations. In this case, the student did not disclose the disability to the professor until after she was in trouble. In this case the decision is entirely up to the professor.

Question: *I have a student who has back-to-back classes on M-W-F and cannot take my Monday test until early Tuesday morning. Can I give her a different test?*

Answer: This is an interesting question and one that was recently addressed by Ken Fowler, University legal counsel. There are two issues at work here. On one hand, we must be concerned with maintaining the integrity of the examination. On the other, we must accommodate the student without altering the standard by which she is assessed. If the test is the standard, then giving the student a different exam brings up concerns about compatibility. Are the two tests compatible? It is possible for them to be? This situation happens so infrequently that Mr. Fowler suggests simply announcing to the class that not everyone has taken the examination and to not discuss it and giving the student the same examination at the very next available time.

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Study Groups and Tables Help with Challenging Courses

The LAC has launched a new program this fall with the formal organization of study groups. Study groups in Biology, Chemistry, and Statistics have been formed and are meeting on a regular basis.

During the 1999-2000 school year, Kristina Jiner, a Biology and Chemistry tutor at the LAC, began meeting with her tutees in a study group format. Her success with the group was phenomenal. This year, Kristina is head of the study group program, coordinating 11 groups under 9 other tutors.

Groups meet regularly at least once a week, and focus on cooperative learning. The tutors who lead the groups are trained to avoid “teaching”, but to guide students’ learning and teaching each other instead.

Support of these groups from the faculty has been strong. Dr. Dottie Engle, Biology, has urged students to join the groups. “Study groups enhance the learning process greatly.” She cautions that “some people think that study groups are a replacement for studying on their

own—but they’re not.”

In addition to study groups, for the third year in a row, the LAC has continued with the Anatomy and Physiology study table. The A&P table is a sort of drop-in group, held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the LAC, when an A&P tutor is available to answer questions and guide the students in their review of the material.

Dr. Timothy Horan, Biology, says, “Students from my A&P class who attend the study tables have uniformly praised them.” Dr. Horan stresses the importance of “getting together with people outside of the class and talking about the material, especially with the guidance of an upperclassman who did well in the course.”

Professors who are interested in having the LAC organize a study group or study table for their class should contact Marie at 745-3280.