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The Versatile Learning Center: Promoting Student Success in Times of Change

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Tampa, Florida

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Objectives

1. Provide an overview of the University of Central Florida (UCF) and the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC).
2. Provide examples of initiatives that allowed SARC to serve more students with great success through partnerships, collaborations, and technology.
3. Emphasize the importance of relationships, data collection, and assessment to validate the effectiveness of our programs and secure additional funding.

UCFacts

- 4-Year, Public, Doctoral, Research Intensive
- 2nd largest university in the country: 63,002 students (2015-2016)
 - 54,513 undergraduate enrollment
- 6,618 Freshman; 7,981 Transfer
- Ten Regional Campuses
- Top 5 Entering Majors:
 - Psychology
 - Biomedical Sciences
 - Nursing
 - Health Sciences
 - Mechanical Engineering



SARC at a Glance

- Peer Tutoring (three campus locations)
- Supplemental Instruction (SI)
- Learning Skills Consultations
- Academic Coaching and Engagement (ACE)
- Academic Workshops and Outreach
- Access Programs
- Online Academic Support
 - OPAL (Online Peer-Assisted Learning)
 - SARC Online (sarconline.sdes.ucf.edu)

SARC at a Glance

SARC Staff

- 6 professional staff
- 4 graduate assistants
- 105 student staff



- During 2015-2016, SARC had over **112,142 student contacts** through peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), learning consultation, Access, and outreach services.

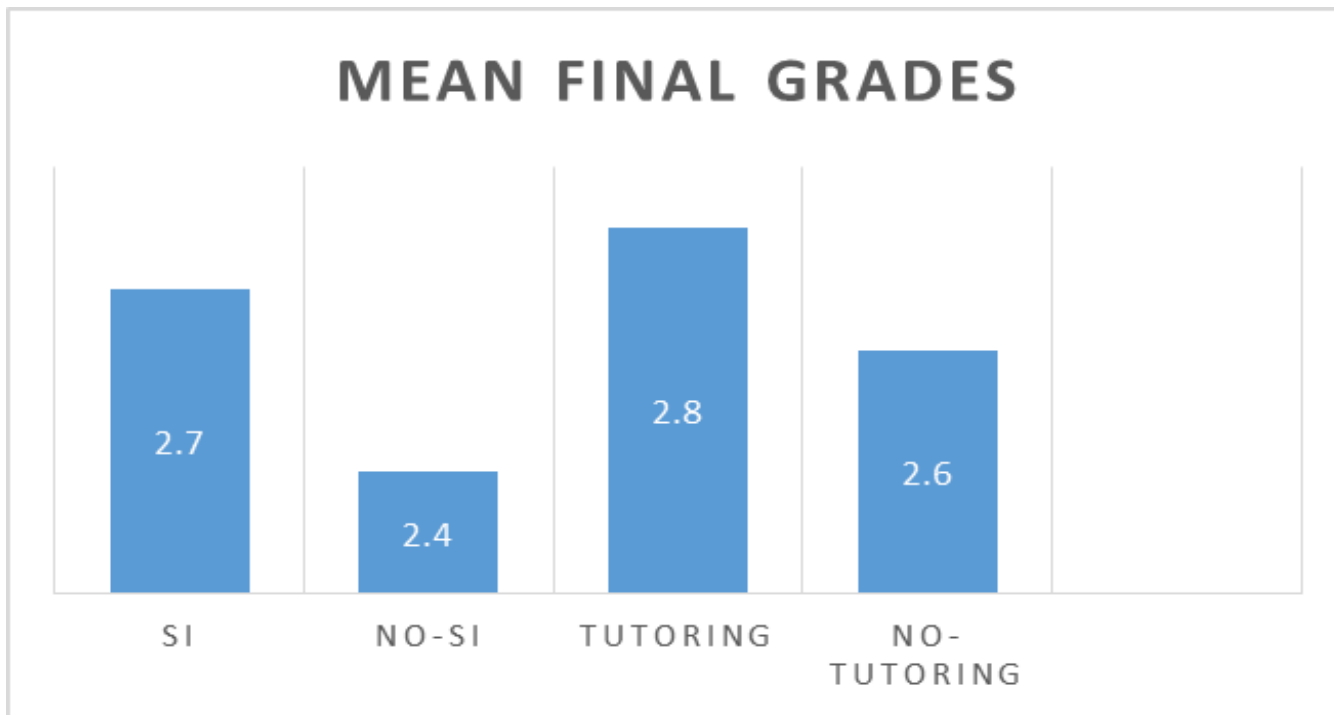
SARC Student Profile

- Gender
 - Female: 58%
 - Male: 42%
- Ethnicity
 - White: 43%
 - Hispanic: 28% (23%)
 - Afr. Am.: 15% (11%)
 - Asian: 10% (6%)
 - Multiracial: 3%
 - Other: 1%
- 67% FTIC
- 28% FC Transfer
- 24% First Generation
- 34% Low Income



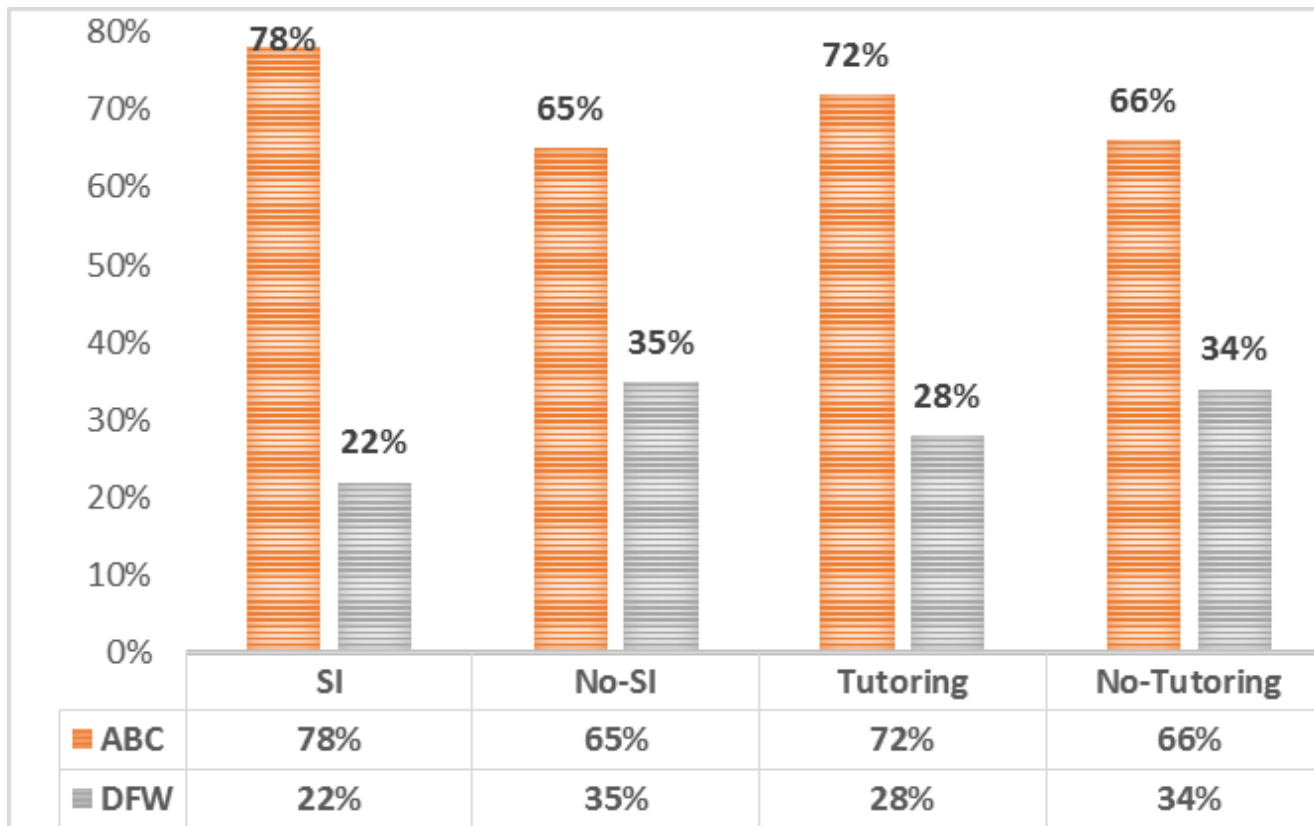
Student Success

- Impact on Average Final Grades
 - Significantly higher average final grades for tutoring and SI attendees.



Student Success

- Impact on % ABC/DFW grades



IMPACT ON STUDENT RETENTION

- Persistence
 - SARC participants (6+ hours): 91.63%
 - Non-participants: 81.78%
- FTIC Retention
 - SARC Participants (6+ hours): 96.2%
 - Non-participants: 86.5%
 - UCF: 88.9% (goal is 92%)
- FC Transfer Retention
 - SARC Participants: 90.1%
 - Non-participants: 78.6%
- FC Transfer Graduation Rate
 - SARC Participants: 81.3%
 - Non-participants: 64.3%
 - UCF overall: 40.4% (4-yr); 70.6% (6-yr.)

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTS

- Program/Service Reports
- Monthly, semester and annual reports for Division
- SARC Annual Report at a Glance
- Retention Reports to departments/colleges
- Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Plans
 - Received “Accomplished” for 8 consecutive years

CHALLENGES

- Last 10 years → Growth
- Demands for new services
- Institutional demands for new initiatives
- No additional staff or resources
- Solution
 - Partnerships
 - Funding Opportunities
 - Working with existing resources (Online Initiative)

EXPANSION OF TUTORING SERVICES

- VARC – Veteran Academic Resource Center (2011)
 - Lab space
 - Graduate Assistant – Outreach
 - 30 hours of tutoring per week in courses with high veteran enrollment plus tutor training
- CECS – College of Engineering and Computer Science (2010)
 - Lab space
 - Funding for 100 hours per week of tutoring
 - We hire, train, and manage the peer tutors

STUDY UNION

- Started Fall 2008
- Parent and Family Fund grant (institutionalized after the first year)
- Final review sessions in a safe and quiet space (24 hours)
- Partnerships
 - SARC: tutors / SI leaders; over 88 review sessions
 - Student Union/SGA: free snacks, shirts, giveaways, free scantrons & blue books, free printing
 - Free coffee with mug (vendor)
 - Office of Student Involvement (OSI)
 - Equipment for Livestreaming
 - Video enhancement grants awarded in 2015 and 2016

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

- Regional Campuses
 - Livestreaming for academic workshops and events
- Access: Pegasus and SOAR
 - SARC – academic support (SI, peer mentoring)
 - FYAE – academic advising
 - MASS – leadership development / engagement
 - Improved outcomes with each office providing services in their area of expertise
 - Cost savings and additional funding through EOAA office

ONLINE INITIATIVE - OPAL

- OPAL – Online Peer-Assisted Learning
 - Pilot project started in 2012 with small amount of non-recurring funds, then funded with SI budget
 - Online tutoring / SI sessions
 - Uses Adobe Connect Pro (institutional license)
 - Interactive sessions
 - Supports mostly STEM courses associated with SI sessions
 - Successful → exceptional funding awarded
 - Courses supported increased from 8 to 20!

ACADEMIC SUCCESS VIDEOS

- Academic videos to support SARC learning skills repository
- Three videos produced:
 - SARC Overview
 - Time Management
 - Study Skills and Test Preparation
- Funding received through the Parent and Family Fund grant for 3 consecutive years
- Additional grant received this year for a fourth video
- Partnerships with Center for Distributed Learning Video Team, faculty, UCF Housing, and more.

LIVESTREAMING

- Partnership with the Office of Student Involvement (OSI)
- SARC provides the staffing; OSI provides the equipment
- Study Union
 - Livestreaming final reviews for the past five years
 - 2015-16: half of the total review sessions streamed live and saved for later viewing
 - Spring 2016: 10,460 contacts – all time high, surpassing in-person attendance
- Academic Workshops
 - 2 workshops per semester are livestreamed
- Video Enhancement grant: additional funding for streaming and sound equipment.

SARC ONLINE

- Sarconline.sdes.ucf.edu (available 24/7)
- Collaboration with Center for Distributed Learning

Live Sessions

- Online Peer-Assisted Learning (OPAL) Sessions
- Online Learning Skills Consultations
- Academic workshops livestreamed and recorded

Learning Skills Resources

- Academic Success Modules
- “How to” videos
- Study Skills Handouts and Inventories

Content-Specific Materials

- Modules and videos on discipline-specific topics (in progress)
- Handouts, materials, external links

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Project A+

- Three years: AY 2010-2013
- Undergraduate Education – STEM retention and persistence
- Funding to increase SI from 18 to 50 SI leaders
 - Additional supervisory staff (GAs)
- SI offered in multiple course sections and expanded to new STEM disciplines – e.g., engineering, computer science, mathematics
- Success → funding continued after 2013 through division and exceptional funding requests

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

SI for Computer Science and Engineering (2013)

- College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS)
- MOU SARC-CECS
 - CECS: Funding to support SI in key courses for Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Information Technology
 - SI leaders/SI mentor
 - Textbooks
 - Program management / staff training
 - SARC: SI leader hiring, training, evaluation. Program management.
- CECS also supports peer tutoring as mentioned before

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Exceptional Funding (FY 2016-2017)

- Applied for and received \$264K
 - Supplemental Instruction: \$150K
 - Online Initiative: \$30K
 - Academic Coaching and Engagement (ACE): \$45K
 - Summer Bridge Access Program: \$14K
 - Summer Peer Tutoring STEM: \$25K

Fairwinds Credit Union

- Funding for SARC's Annual Learning Fair (\$1,500) and National Tutoring Week (\$2,000)
 - Food, beverages, snacks
 - Giveaways
 - Financial literacy workshops

WHAT'S NEXT?

- UCF Downtown Campus: SARC will have a location
- Goal: 92% FTIC retention
- Align programs and services with new UCF & SDES strategic plan metrics
- Continue identifying opportunities for partnerships that will result in resource sharing (funding, staffing, space)
- UCF Online: supporting fully online classes will require program growth
 - From hybrid SI to fully online
 - Identify “at risk” courses (high DFW rate) for OPAL support

THE TAKEAWAY

- Seek unconventional partnerships / collaborations
 - Develop relationships on campus
 - Seek funding opportunities
- Hire talented students and use them creatively if you have a small staff
- Show your success
 - Data
 - Assessment
 - Reports
- Review your programs and processes
 - Simplify – eliminate redundancy
- Embrace change – be versatile!

Questions?

Thank you!