

MILESTONES

1950 – Reading Laboratory

1963 – Reading and Study Clinic

1970 – Learning Development Center (LDC)

1999 – *LDC Lately*

2004 – Academic Support Center (ASC)

2004 – *ASC Quarterly*

Q. When is it time for a name change?

A. When the name no longer fits the organization or when it becomes confusing to the people it serves.

During its long history at RIT, the organization most recently known as the Learning Development Center has adapted several times to shifts in the culture and the RIT structure. In the early years, medical terms like laboratory and clinic suggested a popular educational model based on diagnosis and prescriptive treatment. The 70's change incorporated a reference to the burgeoning field of developmental education, making a clear statement of cutting-edge practice.

Now, in 2004, a reorganization in the Division of Student Affairs has presented a welcome opportunity to revise a name that we have outgrown and that puzzles people trying to find us. We receive phone calls for the Development Office, the Monroe Developmental Center, and the Learning Disabilities Center. Our favorite was the inquiry about developing film! After much soul-searching and debate, we have chosen ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER as a more appropriate name. It's clear and it's accurate. Our work supports students' academic pursuits, the academic missions of the colleges and the Institute, and our faculty and staff colleagues in their work with students. Parents can now find us easily in the phone book, and students can clearly identify where to go for help. To reflect the change, the LDC newsletter has been renamed the *ASC Quarterly*.

We retire the LDC name with fondness and with gratitude for serving us so well for more than thirty years. We expect the transition to take a while, as we all get acquainted with the new name. Rest assured that we're still on the second floor of the Eastman Building; most of the same faculty and staff are still here; and the Academic Support Center remains dedicated to the academic success of all students at RIT.

Where We Have Come From, Where We Are Going

By Susan Donovan

The history of academic support at RIT includes the tale of a department that flourished in an unlikely environment to become a leader in an emerging educational field. The story includes heroes, villains, lofty goals, deep disappointments, and rejuvenation. Even after the fifty-year mark, the journey continues with the promise of future challenges and adventures.

IN THE BEGINNING

In the 1950's, shortly after The Mechanics Institute became the Rochester Institute of Technology, A. B. Herr established a Reading Laboratory as an outreach to children in the school's downtown Rochester community. The project became popular and quite successful, so successful, in fact, that leaders of the Institute wondered if similar instruction would benefit its college students, who tended to be strong in math, but weaker in language skills. In 1963, as part of the Counseling Center, the Reading and Study Clinic was established to serve two student populations: K-12 in the existing Community Program, and RIT students in the new College Program.

MOVING TO A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

In 1969, a year after RIT moved to the new Henrietta campus, Dr. Paul Kazmierski became director of the Reading and Study Clinic. The College Program added mathematics to its curriculum for the first time. The Community Program extended its services to children and adults in the Rochester community on a fee basis. As part of RIT's good neighbor policy with the town of Henrietta, the Community Program offered academic assessment and instruction to 40 students in the Rush-Henrietta schools each year. Community Program services also became a benefit for RIT employees and their dependents.

LEADERS IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

In 1970, the Reading and Study Clinic was renamed the Learning Development Center. At that time, the new professional field of developmental education was gaining national attention. Unlike remedial education, which addresses extreme educational deficiencies, developmental education focuses on students who are at or near grade level in their skills. Through careful assessment and diagnosis, factors blocking students' progress are identified and addressed, enabling students to perform academic tasks successfully. The community college movement of the 1970's triggered the growth of developmental education within higher education, and colleges all over the country were developing learning centers. Adopting the name of Learning Development Center acknowledged that developmental education had been the philosophical approach at RIT from the beginning, long before other schools. The new name appropriately confirmed that the LDC was at the vanguard of its field.

THE GROWTH YEARS

The next twenty years were a period of expansion and creativity for the LDC. In 1970, the College Restoration Program (CRP) was created for RIT students on academic suspension. Based on careful diagnosis of difficulties, individual programs were developed for each CRP student. In addition, the College Anticipation Program (CAP), a five-week summer program for pre-freshmen, offered an opportunity for eager, capable students to start their college experience early with a credit course, an on-campus living experience, and a curriculum that introduced them to study strategies.

During that period, the LDC broadened its scope. The center contracted with the Educational Testing Service to become a national testing center for standardized tests,

ASC Time Line

1950's

1950 - Reading Laboratory established for children in the neighborhood of the downtown RIT campus

1960's

1963 - Renamed Reading and Study Clinic; Marion L'Amoreaux heads new College Program, Helen Wheeler heads Community Program

1968 - RIT moves to Henrietta

1969 - Dr. Paul Kazmierski becomes director of the Reading and Study Clinic

1970's

1970 - Clinic renamed the Learning Development Center; Irene Payne develops College Restoration Program and College Anticipation Program

1973 - LDC becomes national test center for Educational Testing Services

1978 - Dr. Barbara Allardice joins the LDC Community Program; establishes math program and diagnostic teaching.

such as SAT, GRE, and GMAT. By 1980, Paul Kazmierski was appointed Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, and the LDC had grown to include the Adult Program, the Higher Education Opportunity Program, the Office of Special Services, the English Language Center, and International Student Affairs. The Community Program moved to the Racquet Club to alleviate the space crunch created by the new programs.

In 1982, reflecting its expanding vision of academic support, the LDC moved from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs in the Division of Student Academic Development (SAD), and Dr. Paul Kazmierski became Assistant Vice President of SAD in addition to his position as Director of the Learning Development Center. LDC growth continued with the addition of Academic Assessment, Institute Testing, the Exit Interview Office, and the Center for Assessment and Institute Support. The Study Skills Department, including the Lunch 'n' Learning study skills workshop series, started in 1986.

The LDC was honored as a leader in the field of developmental education at local, state, and national levels. Awards included the College Reading Association A. B. Herr Award for outstanding contributions in the area of college reading and a listing in the National Directory of Exemplary Programs in Developmental Education. In addition, the LDC was instrumental in organizing the New York College Learning Skills Association and played key leadership roles in its growth.

LOSS AND UNCERTAINTY

In 1991, RIT hired the Deloitte & Touche Consulting Firm to study the Institute's organization. The report's recommendations had a dramatic impact on the LDC. Academic Assessment, the Exit Interview Office, and the Center for Assessment and Institute Support were cut, and five and a half positions were eliminated. Irene Payne became Acting Director of the LDC College and Community Programs, and the LDC was moved back to Student Affairs. ESOL, HEOP, and the Office of Special Services became independent entities within the division. Abruptly, close colleagues disappeared, organizational structure changed, and leadership shifted. A proud department was suddenly adrift, uncertain about its future and its identity.

RIT will remember the mid-90's as an anxious period of financial and philosophical self-examination, downsizing, managed attrition, and salary freezes. Academic and administrative program reviews evaluated the role of every program and department on campus in an effort to streamline operations and clarify RIT's purpose. Out of those studies came the recommendation to close the LDC Community Program, eventually ending the program that had been the origin of the LDC and eliminating five more positions.

MEETING NEW NEEDS

Several laws passed in the last quarter of the 20th century created unprecedented opportunities for students with physical, emotional, psychological, and learning disabilities, forever changing the American educational system. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required post-secondary institutions receiving federal funds to extend civil rights protection to students with disabilities, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 required elementary and secondary schools to provide special education services. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) broadened protection to the workplace. Children with disabilities who were receiving appropriate early intervention and support were progressing through and beyond high school. They started to arrive at colleges all over the country, and RIT was no exception. This new wave of students expected support systems to be in place, but few colleges and universities were prepared for the new challenge. RIT's Office of Special Services had been providing support to the small population of students with documented disabilities, but the rapid demographic changes in the mid-90's created a situation beyond the scope of that small, grant-supported program. RIT responded in 1993 by adding the Alternative Learning Department to the

(continued on page 6)

1970's (cont'd)

1979 - Rhona Genzel develops English to Speakers of Other Languages program

1979 - New York College Learning Skills Association (NYCLSA) founded

1980's

1980 - LDC Community Program moves to Racquet Club

1982 - LDC moves to Academic Affairs; Dr. Paul Kazmierski is named Assistant VP and Director of LDC

1985 - Study Skills Department/Lunch 'n' Learning series begins

1986 - Marcia Birken serves as NYCLSA's 7th president

1990's

1991 - Deloitte and Touche submits recommendations; programs and positions cut; Irene Payne becomes LDC Director

1992 - Alternative Learning Department created; ELC separates from LDC and becomes a center within Student Affairs

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ASC Quick Reference Guide

■ The **ASC Academic Accommodations Office (AAO)** provides academic support services to students with documented disabilities. Three major areas of support services are provided to students: note taking, testing services, and textbooks in alternative format. *Accommodations must be approved by the Disability Services Office.*

Contact: Bernadette Lynch, x5-5538

■ The **ASC Academic Assessment Program (AAP)** analyzes possible sources of student academic difficulty by using interviews, surveys, and tests to gather background information. Recommendations are then made for strategies to address performance issues. If a disability is suspected, students may be referred off campus for further testing.

Contact: Rhonda Laskoski, x5-2487

■ The **ASC College Restoration Program (CRP)** is a specialized program of instruction for students who have experienced academic difficulty and/or suspension. Suspensions are waived for one quarter, during which each participant follows a prescribed program of instruction. Successful completion of CRP qualifies students to apply for readmission to the college or department of their choice.

Contact: Belinda Bryce, x5-7818

■ The **ASC Institute Testing Service** provides group testing programs for the RIT community including CRP, HEOP and academic departments. The Institute Testing Service is also responsible for RIT's role as a National Test Center site and supervises the administration of standardized tests including the GRE subject exams, SAT, LSAT, NBCC certification exam and DANTES examinations.

Contact: Linda Garfinkel, x5-5728

■ The **ASC Learning Support Services (LSS)** provides students with regularly scheduled check-ins with a learning support specialist. This academic coaching addresses organizational skills, study strategies, and advocacy. Structured monitoring is intended for students who anticipate difficulty navigating the college environment due to learning differences or other factors. *Structured monitoring is a fee-based service.*

Contact: Lisa Fraser, x5-5296

■ The **ASC Mathematics Department** offers direct support for RIT math courses through its Math Lab, mathematics assessment, general skill instruction, and tutor training. The free, drop-in Math Lab is staffed by ASC faculty and trained tutors.

Contact: Ruth Jones, x5-6940

■ The **ASC Reading and Writing Department** offers assessment and instruction in college reading and writing through its Writing Lab, courses, and workshops. The free, drop-in Writing Lab is staffed by ASC faculty. Several instructors are proficient in sign language.

Contact: Sora Sachs, x5-6945

■ The **ASC Study Skills Department** focuses on the development of sound study strategies which promote academic success. Topics include time management, lecture note taking, text reading and test preparation. This department oversees the popular "Lunch 'n' Learning" workshop series and the "Learning Power Online" web site.

Contact: Jane Munt, x5-6947

LDC College Program to serve students with learning disabilities. In 1995, the first Coordinator of Disability Services was hired. The number of RIT students with disabilities increased by 100 students each year between 1997 and 2000. In the 1997-98 academic year, 300 students were approved for disability services; by 2000-2001, the number had jumped to 650.

REORGANIZATION AND REBUILDING

Susan Donovan stepped into the directorship of the LDC in 1995. HEOP and the Office of Special Services were moved back into the LDC, along with the new Disability Services Coordinator, and the College Program. The Community Program remained in the LDC until the recommendation to close it was implemented in 1997. At first, the newly configured center had trouble seeing itself as a cohesive unit, resulting in duplication of services and unclear responsibilities. Gradually, the LDC streamlined its operations, reaffirmed its adherence to basic principles of sound educational practice, and redefined its core themes of supporting student success in the new LDC context.

In response to increasing demand, disability services were consolidated, with the Disability Services Coordinator receiving and evaluating applications for ALL students requesting accommodations. A separate office, the Academic Accommodations Office, was set up to provide audio texts, note taking, and extended testing time for students approved by the Disability Services Office. Secure systems were established for delivery of exams and proctoring of the testing room, and eventually class notes were delivered online.

When RIT increased its emphasis on retention, the College Restoration Program's success in rescuing academically suspended or probationary students attracted the attention of academic departments. With the addition of a new position line and a cadre of carefully trained adjunct instructors, CRP was able to double its quarterly enrollment, increasing its enrollment to more than 130 students each year. In addition to providing timely academic intervention for students, CRP increasingly became an experimental venue for LDC faculty to apply current pedagogical theory and research in their teaching and mentoring.

The summer College Anticipation Program, which ended in 1994 due to declining enrollment, was replaced by the Academic Success in College Conference. ASCC was an innovative, four-day college experience which combined academic and social experiences in a model similar to professional conferences, offering students choices of concurrent workshops. Starting with one session of 25 students in 1995, ASCC grew to 150 students and two sessions in 2001, its last year. ASCC was discontinued when fall orientation and First Year Enrichment were introduced as extended services to RIT freshmen.

Direct academic support continued as a staple of LDC services. The Math Lab and Writing Lab modified hours in response to student requests, Lunch 'n' Learning updated the study skills curriculum, and new calculus review workshops were developed. The LDC began to experiment with the use of technology for the delivery of instruction. Learning Power Online (<http://www.rit.edu/lponline>) was designed as an interactive web site with modules on time management, textbook reading, lecture note taking, and test taking. The Writing Lab engaged in a pilot online writing support program, in collaboration with the Online Learning Department.

All along, the LDC has made concerted efforts to establish meaningful connections with faculty and RIT colleges. LDC faculty have continued their long-standing practices of teaching credit courses, serving on Academic Senate and Institute committees, and consulting with faculty. New initiatives have included the Institute Effective Teaching Committee, faculty workshops, and collaborations with the Teaching and Learning Center. *LDC Lately*, the center's newsletter, started in 1995 as a vehicle for sharing pedagogical theory and application with faculty and staff.

1990's (cont'd)

1995 - Susan Donovan becomes LDC Director; Disability Services Office created; Academic Success in College Conference established

1997 - Community Program closes

1999 - *LDC Lately* publishes first issue

2000's

2000 - Learning Power Online web site created; ASCC ends

2002 - LDC Advisory Board formed; OSS becomes TRiO Student Support Services

2004 - LDC name retired; College Program renamed Academic Support Center; *LDC Lately* becomes *ASC Quarterly*; Coordinator of Tutor Training hired

Administrative cluster includes: ASC, HEOP, TRiO SSS, DSO, English Language Center, International Student Services; Susan Donovan is Interim Coordinator of Academic Support and Special Programs

In its five years, *LDC Lately* covered a wide range of topics, including learning styles, motivation, and resilience.

The current edition is the debut of the *ASC Quarterly*, retitled to acknowledge the Academic Support Center's new name. The *ASC Quarterly* will carry on the exploration of issues related to student development, teaching and learning.

REDEFINING AND AFFIRMING

In the spring of 2004, a reorganization of the Division of Student Affairs grouped programs and centers by their functions. The name Learning Development Center was retired, and the old LDC College Program changed its name to the Academic Support Center. ASC is currently in a new administrative reporting structure which includes six related centers and programs: the Academic Support Center, TRiO Student Support Services, Higher Education Opportunity Program, Disability Services Office, the English Language Center, and International Student Services. Susan Donovan is serving as Interim Coordinator of Academic Support and Special Programs. This year's task will be to assess the new SA structure, with the possibility of future modifications.

The Academic Support Center is approaching the 2004-2005 academic year with excitement. Two new faculty will join the ASC – Birgit Coffey, Mathematics Instructor, and Julie Cammeron, Coordinator of Tutor Training (see pp. 7 and 8). Plans are under way for improvements in services and for initiatives related to the Strategic Plan. Pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *ASC Quarterly* provide an overview of current ASC services and contacts. We are looking forward to the next stage of our journey!

P. S. We have told our story as we know it. However, as with other tales passed from one generation to another, details tend to disappear or become distorted. If you have additions, corrections, or variations to this story, we would appreciate hearing from you.

ASC Profiles

Birgit Coffey, Math Instructor Academic Support Center



Birgit joined the Academic Support Center at RIT on July 1, 2004 after working in public schools as a mathematics teacher since 1996. She most recently worked at Marcus Whitman Central School in Rushville, NY. Previously, she was a mathematics teacher at Fairport High School. Birgit has also worked as an adjunct instructor at numerous area colleges including Saint John Fisher College, Keuka College and Medaille College.

A native of the Rochester region, Birgit graduated from high school in Spencerport, NY. She continued her education at SUNY Oswego where she studied both German and mathematics and later earned her Master's in Teaching and Curriculum from the Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the University of Rochester. Birgit has permanent NYS teaching certifications in Secondary German, Secondary Mathematics and Driver and Traffic Safety. She lives in Ionia, a hamlet of West Bloomfield, with her husband Michael and daughters Erica (4) and Allison (2). Birgit enjoys spending time with her family and friends.

Birgit's responsibilities in the Academic Support Center include teaching the Individualized Math classes, Calculus Workshops, tutoring in the Math Lab and mentoring students enrolled in CRP. Birgit's first teaching assignment was for the 2004 summer HEOP program. She was impressed with the quality of both the students and her colleagues. Birgit appreciates the warm welcome she has received from the Academic Support Center faculty and staff and looks forward to a rewarding career at RIT.

Julie Cammeron, Tutor Training Coordinator Academic Support Center



The Academic Support Center is excited to have Julie Cammeron join its faculty. Julie comes to the ASC after a long and successful career as an Associate Professor at NTID. She most recently taught in the Department of Cultural and Creative Studies. In 1995, she published two books titled *The Human Experience: American Families in Crisis* and *Issues in Parenting Early Childhood*. Julie received the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching at RIT in 1979. She also was the coordinator of the NTID Special Speaker Series and brought such notable speakers as Peter Jennings, Simon Wiesenthal and Mikhail Baryshnikov to the RIT campus.

Julie lives in Henrietta. Her daughter, Brenna, will be a freshman at RIT this fall. Julie has many interests but takes greatest pride in her weekly volunteer work for Alternatives for Battered Women. She looks forward to her new position in the Academic Support Center and thinks she will very much enjoy the camaraderie of the ASC.

Julie's responsibilities in the ASC include establishing a campus-wide training program for student tutors, setting up a website listing up-to-date information about available campus-wide tutoring, and consulting with peer tutoring programs and centers. Within the next quarter, Julie will be contacting many individuals on campus as she works to build a new Peer Tutoring Program for the entire campus. She welcomes suggestions, so please stop in and see her in 2155 Eastman or call her at 5-6467 with your ideas.

Watch your inter-office mail for your "sticky notes"!

R • I • T

Check out the Academic Support Center!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Accommodations | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch 'n' Learning Series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Math Lab |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Power Online | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Support Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Lab |

Comments: _____

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Many thanks to Mike Floeser, Information Technology, for the idea to design "sticky notes" that professors, advisors, and support staff can attach to student work or give to students to direct them to ASC services. We love to "steal" a great idea and run with it!

Any and all further suggestions are welcome. Jane Munt, Chair, Study Skills Department

ASC Quarterly Editorial Board

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