Message from the Dean

“Success is achieved and maintained by those who try and keep trying,” as W. Clement Stone once said. It is this spirit of perseverance that permeates the development and expansion of the initiatives that you’ll review in our latest newsletter. For instance, our academic success coaches, who constantly encourage students to persevere in their studies at UNLV, now have a new home called “The Coaching Spot,” located in SSC-A 254. In a user-friendly environment, students can gain time management skills, connections to the right Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction and advising resources and get direction on key areas like managing test-taking.

Perseverance also permeates the holistic approach of our academic advisors, who will now be encompassing a larger group of Exploring Majors. Our newest cohorts of Exploring Majors will find unique support in areas like the ASC Math Bridge Program while they review degree options that best suit their interests and abilities.

Our Advising unit has also been busy engaging a wide range of campus players to revitalize and offer Major Madness—our major exploration event.

Academic Transitions continues to offer the largest First-Year Seminar program at UNLV and has effectively launched an online delivery of our First-Year Seminar, COLA 100E, offered in partnership with our good colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts. Additionally, Academic Transitions continues to encourage and mentor our Hixson-Lied Success Scholars and high-achieving high school students in our Early Studies program.

Our student athletes have been busy on and off the fields, courts and courses. Over 150 student-athletes were academic award honorees this past year, with the awards ranging from Academic All-Conference to Academic All-American. UNLV Men’s and Women’s Swimming & Diving teams were both recently recognized as Scholar All-American Teams for the Spring 2015 semester.

187 student-athletes were named to the Dean’s List for the last two semesters (Spring 2015/Fall 2015).

Hanging in there and being directed to the right professionals and services on campus can be just the thing a student needs to persevere, and we look forward to continue encouraging students to “try and keep trying” until they graduate!

From Exploring Majors to Declared Majors to Honors College

By Carly Barforth, Sasha Scott, Nicole Stella, and Debbie Pattni

Meet three Exploring Students: Ishmael, Tyree, and Michael

Not everyone enters college with a specific major in mind. Some students may want to engage in a process advising professionals call exploring. As cited in the article, Changing majors is no big deal if the timing is right, studies find, Foraker found that “students who entered the university without a major but declared one before the end of their sophomore year had the highest graduation rate, 83.4 percent.” According to Berrett (2012), Foraker surmised that students who enter college undeclared and choose a major in the first two years take the time to gather information and pick a field that best suits them.

Ishmael Caramanzana admitted he was a little afraid to settle on a specific major and not finish it due to financial concerns or from a lack of direction. He approached health care professionals and dentists to find out what their jobs entailed and gained insight into their typical day on the job. His Academic Advisor, Sasha Scott, had suggested volunteering as a part of his exploring process, and she provided him with what he calls the right mindset to search and declare his major in Comprehensive Medical Imaging with a focus on ultrasound. Oh yes, Ishmael is also now an Honors College student!

Tyree Fry explains that his excitement to be an Exploring Major stemmed from the opportunity to explore different subjects to see what he liked the most. He had heard that students changed majors five or more times, and with help from his Academic Advisor, Sasha Scott, he narrowed his interests down to Finance.

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Being a Finance (Business Major) would meet two important needs: understanding money and making a lot of money! Tyree was also accepted as an Honors College student and is a Pre-Business Major.

Michael Lehavi admits that he viewed being an Exploring Major as a sign of immaturity and indecisiveness. Michael is anything but immature! Several ASC advisors helped him with the launch of Rebel Model United Nations. He also assisted the Philosophy Department with the Ethics Bowl, and in the process Michael found his passion. He declared Philosophy as his major, and, guess what? He was also accepted to the Honors College!

All three of these Exploring Majors conquered their fears of what others might think about the exploring process. Each one experienced this process in different ways: job shadowing, volunteering, taking an interest inventory, and meeting with professors and staff to start clubs. What do they have in common? Each one also met with an Academic Advisor in the Academic Success Center. Some even met with faculty, staff, and other advisors. Just like Neil Armstrong and Amerigo Vespucci, explorers do not always know what they will discover until they begin the journey. Ishmael, Tyree, and Michael took the challenge, and each one navigated from Exploratory Majors to Declared Majors to the Honors College, and their Academic Advisors provided the map to help them along the way.

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**SI Specialist - Chris Perez**

*By Elle House*

This year, we brought on a new S.I. Specialist for our Supplemental Instruction program, Chris Perez. He has worked in two of our Learning Support programs thus far: Tutoring - working as a front desk manager in both Engineering and Lied Library, and now in Supplemental Instruction.

As Chris joined our S.I. Leadership team, he took on a new role with a tremendous amount of increased responsibility.

As an S.I. Specialist, Chris oversees the intake of lesson plans, attendance sheets, and observation schedules of our S.I. sessions. He also assists in S.I. Mentor and Leader training by leading group exercises and helping to explain how the requirements for S.I. are beneficial for students. He is familiar with these training initiatives as he has utilized the S.I. program for his own academic assistance.

S.I. has a goal of bringing concepts to life and making material relatable to students. Chris assists new S.I. Leaders with putting together lesson plans and keeping track of attendance for the S.I. sessions, which can be quite the juggling act. Some of our S.I. sessions are twice a week and other sessions, due to scheduling conflicts with labs, meet once a week for a two hour session. It is important that our students obtain the maximum benefit from the S.I. session that we are able to offer. We want to ensure that we are offering the greatest form of assistance to both the students and S.I. Leaders. Thus, Chris works with the mentors to schedule and conduct observations of the S.I. sessions.

Follow-up meetings and feedback after session observations are the keys to S.I. Leader improvement. By having a mentor assist the S.I. Specialist with observations, the S.I. Leaders are getting a well-rounded view of what is expected of them. They are also shown how to take feedback from questions asked during their sessions to put together lesson plans that better aide students with understanding the content presented in class.

It takes a strong team in place to foster program growth. Chris has done a phenomenal job with assisting in the expansion of the S.I. program. Without his assistance we would not have been able to grow in such a smooth transition. Chris has done a wonderful job juggling many hats while keeping up with his own classes. He is a dedicated and effective staff member and student.

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**ASC Coaching Spot**

*By Woody Hoshibata*

ASC Academic Success Coaching Mission Statement: To help students realize their abilities to learn and grow while challenging and supporting them through their college transition.

The Academic Success Center's new Coaching Spot is conveniently located in the Student Services Complex Building A, room 254. The Academic Success Coaches in the Coaching Spot offer assistance to all degree-seeking UNLV undergraduate students seeking success skills. The Coaches will partner with you to develop skills to address barriers in certain courses, establish attainable education goals, improve time management and organization, prepare for exams, and learn about the different resources on campus.

Here at the Coaching Spot, we offer individual and group coaching and a success series that students are welcome to join. Our cozy atmosphere makes it a great environment to develop rapport with your coach and build upon your skills. We encourage students to set up one-on-one appointments or attend one of our workshops where you will have the opportunity to collaborate with other students.
We highly recommend students “shoot for 3s.” Meet with your Academic Success Coach three times throughout the semester and aim for a 3.0 GPA.

Keep on the lookout for our upcoming Academic Success Series located at multiple times and locations on campus. We will cover interesting topics such as: Help iProcrastinate, Reading for Success, Go for the Goal, and more! Be prepared to bring your planner, syllabi for all courses, notebook, and an open mind to learn about the skills to conquer this semester. Feel free to stop by the Coaching Spot and learn more about the services that we can offer you!

Meet our new and returning coaches, staff, and intern!

We are proud to introduce several new coaches on the block this semester, two concierge staff, and an intern.

Coaching Coordinator: Heather Hatch
Coaching Specialist: Valentina Pishchanskaya-Cayan

Returning Coaches:
Barbara Cornejo
Brenna Wilkerson
Katie Yeaton

New Coaches:
Emma Kotso
Montana Wooden
Oliver Sangalang
Travis Tyler

Concierge Staff:
Emily Pattni
Melissa Bartshe

Intern:
Woody Hoshibata

Making Math Matter
By Megan Bavaro and Katie Woods

Summer 2015 marked new strides for the ASC Expect Success Math Bridge Program. The program provided freshmen who placed into Math 95 or Math 96 with a free opportunity to refresh their math skills while introducing them to UNLV and college expectations. In collaboration with the Math Learning Center, ALEKS PPL was implemented at UNLV. The Bridge program utilized ALEKS for the first time to help prepare students to retest into a college level math course. ALEKS allowed us to group students by gateway math requirements and majors.

Students were able to meet and interact with their peers before classes began. Katie Woods, Math Bridge GA, successfully implemented a new initiative called "Math in the Real World" to engage students with the content. Math in the Real World focused on having students take pictures and explain a math concept related to its subject. Katie and the team leaders led the charge to make math relevant to the students, which provided the opportunity for fun, interactive, and engaged learning. Through the initiative and platform, students gained knowledge and confidence in their math abilities. One student commented,

"I truly loved being able to take this program to improve my math skills and place into the class I need. This program is a great opportunity not only to improve our skills and place higher but also to be able to socialize with others who are sharing the same experience. I feel it’s like a step towards actually attending college classes and the college environment; which is completely different than the high school environment." – 2015 Math Bridge Participant

As we prepare for Bridge in summer 2016, we are working to make the program more robust for students and staff members. This includes creating a Math Bridge Program for STEM majors and allowing each room to focus on the unique needs of its majors. We look forward to Math Bridge in summer 2016 as it is an opportunity to continue to serve our students and help them with a difficult and often avoided subject.

The Secret Ingredients to Major Exploration
By Ashley Lucas

COLA 100E: First-Year Seminar for Exploring Majors has long been giving exploring majors the skills and information needed to decide on a path for their college careers. Many students come into their freshman year struggling to decide between two interests or to hone their interests into a more specific major.
Then there are the students who come into college without a clear picture of their aptitudes and how those translate into a career path. This is where the FOCUS2 becomes an invaluable resource.

The FOCUS2 is a career assessment that takes students through several preference and aptitude exams and compiles a final report based off of this and information from the Myers-Briggs. The FOCUS2 bases its career inventory off of Holland Occupation Themes, a theory of vocational choices based upon similar questions to the Myers-Briggs that sorts people into six categories: Doers (realistic), thinkers (investigative), creators (artistic), helpers (social), persuaders (enterprising), and organizers (conventional). The FOCUS2 breaks these categories down and gives students the percentage of their answers for each category.

The Myers-Briggs type indicator is a practical application of Carl Jung’s theory of psychological types. After answering 93 specialized questions, test-takers are sorted into sixteen types using four letters that indicate preferences: extraversion or introversion, sensing or intuition, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. Each four-letter type is given a two word descriptor, for example, ISTJs are known as the “responsible executors,” while ENFPs are the “impassioned catalysts.” Once someone has been sorted into their four-letter type, they can research common hobbies, careers, and even celebrities with their personality type.

Early in the class, COLA 100E students are assigned the task of take these tests and then writing a 2-3 page paper detailing their results, what surprised them, and what careers seem to be a good fit for them. Aptitude tests are a frequent tool in career counseling, but the personal style and occupational inventories do something more than point out possible careers; the results delve into how those of each type are motivated, their strengths, their flaws, and generally what makes them tick. This type of information is more subtle than an aptitude test, but it provides crucial input to what specific environments and careers in which a student could excel.

Brenna is in her second year with the Hixson-Lied Success Scholars Program. In addition to excelling academically, Brenna has really stood out in her role as a scholar. As part of her service hours, she has contributed to the program’s monthly newsletter, engaged in outreach at our satellite table, and most recently has served as a peer mentor for a section of COLA 100E, First-Year Seminar for Exploring Majors. Being a peer mentor allows scholars to put their knowledge to use, identify with peers, and provides an outlet to give first-year students their best advice. Brenna explained that being a Hixson-Lied Success Scholar has allowed her to gain a sense of belonging on campus and has made her accountable for more than herself. Brenna added that being a peer mentor makes her “feel important.”

As a peer mentor, she is able to create and facilitate mini lesson plans to supplement the content prepared for class. Brenna brings to the classroom her creativity, and enjoys utilizing different styles of learning to create lessons that get students interested. She integrates her own interests into the classroom such as podcasts and photography to encourage student participation and present material using a variety of mediums. This role has allowed her to analyze curriculum differently and become aware of how activities are created for her own classes in order to initiate student responses and engagement.

Brenna explained that she is able to approach her studies with more open-mindedness as she extends her critical thinking skills, her understanding of defining values, and furthers her understanding of the University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (UULOs). Being a peer mentor has also made her feel much more comfortable with speaking in front of classes and more conscious of verbal organization so that her presentations flow clearly.