

University of Connecticut  
Office of First Year Programs & Learning Communities

# Academic Support Highlights



Fall 2008 ◊ Spring 2009

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<http://web.uconn.edu/uconnconnects/default.htm>

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**Academic Support**

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**Academic Support** within the framework of **First Year Programs** focuses on three components:

- The **INTD 1800/1810/1820** sequence of First Year Experience courses is designed to assist our newest students' transition to the life of a research-extensive university. Specifically, the INTD 1800 and many of the INTD 1810 sections address issues related to the attitudinal and behavioral changes necessary to achieve academic excellence at UConn.
- **UConn Connects**, now 17 years old, invites students on academic probation or subject to dismissal to participate in the program to improve their academic performance by being paired with a staff or student facilitator who can support them, introduce them to the university's resources and help them develop effective academic and personal strategies that will help improve their GPA's. Of note is the number of students in good academic standing who voluntarily join the program.
- The **Academic Achievement Center**, launched this semester, offers process tutoring on a free, walk-in basis to any UConn student. With a focus on how the student will manage their time, stress, or the information from their courses, undergraduate coaches assist students with the development of intentional, effective, efficient ways to produce consistently high levels of academic excellence.

### **INTD 1800/1810/1820**

Every course in the INTD 1800/1820 sequence is preloaded with our FYE HuskyCT template, which includes a collection of proven approaches that positively impact academic performance. Step-by step explanations, videos, mp3's, worksheets, and examples of effective management of course notes, reading assignments, comprehension and storage strategies, as well as time and stress management tuition is available to both students and instructors. For instructors, there are also rationales, appropriate theory, lesson plans, and exercises needed for classroom presentation of this material.

## UConn Connects

The UConn Connects Program is an academic intervention service for students who feel they need extra academic support and guidance. Program participants are paired with a trained staff or student facilitator who will meet with them regularly to discuss course work and academic progress.

Extensive support and instruction is provided for undergraduate students who facilitate UConn Connects participants. Student facilitators are required to enroll in HDFS 3080, Helping Students in Higher Education. This three-credit course incorporates a fieldwork experience in which students are assigned a caseload of six UConn Connects participants. Class meets weekly to discuss the academic, social and personal challenges facing college students today while also introducing current research on college student development. The intent of this course is to better prepare our student facilitators so that they more effectively serve program participants who are struggling at the University of Connecticut.

<b>Facilitators</b>			
	<i>Fall 2008</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>	
<b>Staff Facilitators</b>	53	58	
<b>Undergraduate Student Facilitators</b>	58	60	
<b>Graduate Student Facilitators</b>	6	16	
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>134</b>	

<b>Invitations to Participate vs. Responses</b>			
	<i>Fall 2008</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>	
<b>Students Invited to Participate</b>	470	752	
<b>Students Who Responded</b>	197	329	
<b>Percentage of Students Who Responded</b>	42%	44%	

<b>Probationary Status Upon Entering UConn Connects</b>			
	<i>Fall 2008</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>	
<b>Subject to Dismissal</b>	61	17	
<b>Scholastic Probation</b>	133	239	
<b>Scholastic Warning</b>	3	119	
<b>Volunteer</b>	51	59	

<b>Participation Status in UConn Connects</b>			
	<i>Fall 2008</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>	
<b>Full Participation (invited respondents + volunteers)</b>	122	178*	
<b>Percentage of Initial Sign-ups</b>	49%	46%*	

\* This number will increase by the end of the semester

## Academic Achievement Center

During the fall '08 semester HDFS 3080 course, student and staff facilitators developed the basic structure for the Academic Achievement Center. The AAC opened for its first semester of full operation during the spring 2009 semester. Current HDFS 3080 student facilitators and continuing student coaches staff the center, which is open sixteen hours a week, Monday through Thursday, 5-9PM. The AAC, which has been accessed by more than one hundred students so far this semester\*, provides the kind of academic process coaching to all students that has previously been available to UConn Connects participants. Students accessing the resources and coaching provided by the AAC need not be on academic probation or warning. In fact, many have been in good academic standing, but are seeking help to become more efficient and effective students.

When students visit the Academic Achievement Center, they are paired with student coaches for a personal meeting. The coaches assess the areas that the students need help in based on the students' accounts of their academic performance and routine. When necessary, a coach may choose to use one of several inventories to facilitate this process.

The AAC coaches will often work with students by highlighting specific information processing techniques designed to increase focus and aid the marriage of understanding and storage, in order to be able to use the new learning. A coach may make use of journal articles or specifically designed worksheets that are available in the AAC to help students improve essential skills like note taking, reading, and preparing for exams. Coaches are also trained to help their peers better manage time and stress, as this is often a presenting problem that inhibits students' success. During subsequent visits to the AAC, students may elect to meet with the same coach, or work with a different coach.

Students who visit the AAC initially benefit from the individualized strategies for success that they develop through working with a coach, but also are positively impacted by the discovery that ineffective or inefficient performance in the past was often due to how they were conducting their academic tasks. Student coaches gain mentoring and one-on-one helping experience, while heightening their own self-awareness and reinforcing their intentionality as students.

\* This number will increase by the end of the semester