

Fall 2012

## ASC Newsletter

Academic Success Center, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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*Expect Success*

## Message from the Dean

**"O**rdinary people can achieve extraordinary things!" (Christina M. Hixson) is the underlying philosophy and spirit of the new Hixson-Lied Success scholarships funded by the Lied Foundation Trust. Named after Ms. Christina M. Hixson and Mr. Ernst F. Lied, the ASC is proud to launch this program for ten scholars this Fall. The Hixson-Lied Success Scholars will receive up to eight semesters of support and give back to UNLV students by acting as peer mentors and volunteers at the Academic Success Center. The ASC is proud of our first class of scholars and grateful to Ms. Hixson, the Lied Foundation Trust and the UNLV Foundation!

Another exciting new development was the launch of our Expect Success Summer Bridge Program offered during Summer Session III. ASC Tutoring implemented a transitional Math and College Success skills experience for nearly 150 incoming Freshmen, and we look forward to expanding this program and helping our new Freshmen gain the tools to be successful at UNLV.

You will also notice in our newsletter that several new professionals have joined our team, and we continue to be very proud of the academic excellence of our student-athletes! Many thanks to our campus partners who work with us to help our students "achieve extraordinary things!"



**Dr. Ann McDonough**

## ASC Launches the Hixson-Lied Success Scholars Program

Thousands of Nevada students face challenging obstacles, which are often academic or economic, that inhibit their opportunity to earn a college degree. Unfortunately, there are relatively few programs in place to help these students. The Hixson-Lied Success Scholars Program, hosted by the Academic Success Center, will impact the lives of these students by providing financial and academic support. ASC Dean Ann McDonough explains, "As Ms. Christina Hixson emphasizes, 'Ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things!' These wonderful scholarships will go a long way in supporting students to meet their academic goals, and support their role in making a positive impact on their respective communities and society at large." The Program's scholarship amount

equates to \$1,250 per semester (\$2,500 per year) and can be awarded a maximum of eight successive semesters. Along with the scholarship, the Hixson-Lied Success Scholars are expected to give back through peer-to-peer service. "The Hixson-Lied Success Scholars will be given an exceptional opportunity worth reciprocating to other students. Thus, the Scholars will be provided a platform to serve their peers - who may also be facing challenges in their academic journeys - to capture the true essence of the Program," explains Hixson-Lied Faculty Mentor, Dr. Dan Gianoutsos. The ASC will usher in its inaugural Hixson-Lied Success Scholars cohort this Fall. For more information on the Program, please contact Mary Ritacca at (702)774-4619 or [mary.ritacca@unlv.edu](mailto:mary.ritacca@unlv.edu).

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The presenter engages the crowd at the Life Skills *Ultimate Money Skills* presentation

## UNLV Athletics Life Skills Program Scores Big During Spring 2012

The NCAA Life Skills Program, sponsored by Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) enjoyed a prosperous and impactful Spring 2012 semester. The semester began with a financial literacy presentation for the student-athletes sponsored by The Making it Count Program, a partnership with Monster and Bank of America. The presentation was centered around essential money skills including how to use credit appropriately, the basics of banking, investing for the future, taking control of student loan debt and identity protection. The Making it Count program teaches students how to succeed in college and best prepare themselves to maximize their opportunities upon graduation; the program has reached 20 million students in more than 650 colleges in all 50 states.

The Prepare to Compete: Life After Sport workshop hosted in February was a joint effort from many key individuals both on and off campus. Career Services, UNLV Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) and outside corporations, such as Target and Enterprise Rent-A-Car, joined together to create a dynamic workshop for the

student-athlete population. The student-athletes engaged in creating resumes, editing existing resumes, partaking in mock interviews with various employers, and career fair preparation for the campus-wide Spring Career Fair in March.

Finally, the major event for the Spring 2012 semester included a presentation by Janet Judge, Esq. and President of Sport Law and Associates. In this one-hour presentation to student-athletes, Judge utilized the lens of social media to address a variety of risky behaviors, including drug and alcohol use and abuse, liability for providing alcohol to minors, hazing, bullying, and sexting. Student-athletes were provided the information needed to conduct a personal cost-benefit analysis when engaging in certain behaviors and when posting information online. A full discussion of Facebook privacy settings and the dangers of online postings were also discussed. Ms. Judge used a combination of photos, videos, and humor to engage students to think about their online brand and its impact on their team, their school, and their future.

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## Early & Often is Our New Motto

The data is in for our coaching program and it shows that students who meet with an Academic Success Coach early in the Fall semester, and at least 3 times before midterms in October, have better grade point averages than students who wait until later in the semester.

In October 2011, coaching became mandatory for first-year students who were conditionally admitted to UNLV. After the Fall 2011 semester, we compared the students who came in voluntarily for coaching versus the students who were required to come in. Students who came in voluntarily to meet with their Academic Success Coach

tended to have their first face-to-face meeting by October. If they did this, their Fall 2011 grade point average was higher than students who came in during any other month in the semester. The later a student waited, the lower his or her final grade point average.

We also found that the more proactive students, those students who came in for meetings with their Coach before October midterms, had Fall, Spring, and Cumulative grade point averages that were higher than students who waited until after midterms.

# ASC Summer Bridge Program Sees Positive Results

During Summer Session III the ASC hosted the Summer Bridge Program, a five-week program designed to prepare students who have placed in remedial math for the Math Placement Exam so they may enroll in a college-level math course. One hundred and forty-one students joined us for the program this year. After completion of the program, 113 students took the Math Placement Exam. Of the students

that took the Math Placement Exam, 85% placed into college-level math, with 42% placing into MATH 120 and 43% placing into MATH 124 or higher. As a result of these scores, students will save over \$125,000 in tuition and fees by not having to take remedial courses. The ASC plans to monitor and support the Summer Bridge students through the successful completion of their math courses.

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## UNLV Summer Program Aims to Tackle Growing Math Remediation Rates

*The following is an excerpt from an article printed in the Las Vegas Sun (July 19, 2012) written by Paul Takahashi:*

The goal of the Summer Bridge program is to give students a refresher course in math, filling in the missing holes in their education from second grade math on up. "Math is a big foundational goal for college," said Ann McDonough, dean of UNLV's Academic Success Center, which is sponsoring the \$60,000 program. "We're hoping this type of bridge will give students the confidence they need for college math."

The program relies heavily on Knewton, an online course that helps students get up to speed on college-level math. It's a course that's seen success at Arizona State University and is being used at large public universities such as Penn State and Washington State. Knewton allows the students enrolled in the bridge program to work at their own pace, learning elementary math concepts such as fractions and decimals to more complex algebra and geometry concepts.

A crew of 14 tutors rotates through three classrooms, teaching tricky concepts in group and individual settings. The tutors also teach organizational, note-taking and time-management skills to incoming freshmen to prepare them

for college life as well as lead new students through tours of the library and other campus resources.

Nearly 150 students are enrolled in the inaugural Summer Bridge program, which offers three-hour classes for five weeks between July 9 and Aug. 10, said David Forgues, director of learning support at the Academic Success Center.

Most UNLV students work summer jobs to finance their education, so it became paramount to offer multiple tutoring sessions throughout the day: mornings, afternoons and evenings, Forgues said. "We want to be flexible," he said. "We'll make this program work for (students)."

Students were referred to the Summer Bridge program by how well they performed on standardized college entrance exams, either the ACT or SAT. Students who scored below a 22 on the 36-point ACT or below a 520 on the 800-point math section of the SAT were automatically referred to the program by UNLV's Academic Success Center, which offers a variety of supplemental instruction and tutoring sessions throughout the year to help undergraduate students succeed in college.



Rimi Marwah, Chyna Miller and Megan Bavaro

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## ASC Tutoring & Lied Library Partnership Breaks New Records

Last school year, 1,622 students took advantage of free tutoring for a variety of 100-200 general education UNLV courses. This is a record breaking 37% increase from the previous year. Through a partnership with Lied Library, tutorial services were available 53 hours/six days a week (Sunday – Friday). Tutors conducted 10,255 tutoring sessions last year, which is also an increase of 31% from the year before. Subjects tutored ranged from science and math to business and foreign languages. The addition of new laptops for students to use while getting tutoring was a great asset. Staff also took advantage of this resource as they also use a lot of online resources during the tutoring process. Tutoring for Fall 2012 will be available from September 4 – December 7, 2012. We look forward to working with more students in the upcoming school year.

## ASC NEW STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

# Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) Welcomes Two New Staff Members

**Johnna Strenchock** was hired as Assistant Director of SAAS in April of 2012. Prior to arriving on campus, she served as an Academic Advisor for the Florida State University football team.

In her role, Johnna's primary responsibility is to provide academic advisement and support services for the men's football and golf teams, while assisting the Director with the daily administration and oversight of the athletic department's academic support program.

Johnna earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in 2008, and her master's degree in sport administration from Florida State University in December of 2010.

Johnna is excited to be a part of the UNLV athletics family.

**Ashley White** was hired as a member of the SAAS staff in July of 2012 and will work as one of the Athletic Academic Advisors. Prior to that she served as the Athletic Academic Advisor at Austin Peay State University since June 2009.

In her role, Ashley's primary responsibility is to provide academic advisement and support services for the men's basketball and the men's and women's swimming teams. Ashley earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh in movement science in 2005, and a master's degree from Xavier University in education-sports administration in 2008.

Ashley looks forward to working with the UNLV student-athletes and is excited to be a part of the Rebel Nation.

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## ASC Welcomes New Director of Academic Advising

**Aaron Brown** was hired as the Director of Academic Advising for the ASC and started in July 2012. Aaron previously served over seven years as Director of Eastern Washington University's (EWU) Academic Success Center, home of the EWU TRIO Student Support Services Program (SSS). Aaron has over 14 years of experience working in higher education in a variety of roles including small group facilitator, coordinator of tutorial services, FYE instructor, and academic advisor.

While working at Eastern Washington University, Aaron authored and co-authored educational grants totaling over 2.4 million dollars and established an endowed student scholarship in memory of a World War II Veteran.

In 2007, Aaron partnered with the

governor's office and other state directors to design and implement the Washington TRIO Expansion Program (WaTEP), the first-ever state funded expansion of TRIO. In addition, Aaron was a founding member and past president of the Washington State TRIO Association.

Aaron has also received professional awards and recognitions which include the Student Leadership Excellence Award for Advisors (2012), Washington State TRIO Association Advocacy Award (2011), and Excellence in Quality Service Award (2007).



Aaron Brown

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## ASC Welcomes its Newest Addition

**Heather Thomas** was hired as an Academic Advisor for Exploring Majors and started on September 10. Heather earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from UNLV, as well as her master's degree in school counseling. During her graduate work, she

served as an Academic Success Coach for the ASC. Heather is a National Certified Counselor and, prior to this position, she served as an Academic Counselor for the Upward Bound program through CAEO.



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