

# **The University of Arizona**

## **SALT Center**

Parents & Family Association Grant Application

### **Student Learning Center: Developing Expertise of Staff for New Campus Services**

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## **Overview of Program:**

The SALT Center values the achievement of individuals with learning and attention challenges. Through a holistic approach, the SALT Center provides an array of services that maximize student success and support the UA community. We collaborate with local school and community-based programs that facilitate educational pursuits and enrollment in postsecondary institutions. We initiate and promote advanced research designed to identify, develop, and disseminate practices that support a culturally diverse community of learners.

For almost 30 years, the SALT Center has provided direct services and support to graduate and undergraduate students with learning and attention challenges enrolled at UA. The staff of nearly 30 professionals, graduate assistants, and 100 para-professional tutors serves over 550 students. The SALT Center is a program regarded as a model for service, transition planning, and support for a broad range of students who are regarded as at risk within a traditional education environment.

In recognition of our expertise around developing academic resources, The University of Arizona's Division of Student Affairs has identified the SALT Center as a campus leader in quality academic support services. For the upcoming academic year of 2009/2010, the leadership within the SALT Center has been charged with the task of developing, delivering, and leading the learning support services that will serve the greater campus student body. Under the name of the Student Learning Center, the SALT Center management team will create comprehensive academic support services that include Supplemental Instruction.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic assistance program that utilizes peer-assisted study sessions. SI sessions are regularly-scheduled, informal review sessions in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items. Students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together. The study skills are transferable skills that students may incorporate into all classes. The SI sessions are facilitated by SI Leaders, students who have previously done well in the course and who attend all class lectures, take notes, and act as model students. The SI Leaders are hired and trained to lead the weekly SI sessions.

SI is a free service offered to all students in a targeted course. All students are encouraged to attend SI sessions, as it is a voluntary program. The SI model involves key persons:

1. The SI Coordinator is a trained professional who is responsible for identifying the targeted courses, gaining faculty support, selecting and training SI leaders, as well as marketing and evaluating the program on an ongoing basis.
2. The faculty members of the identified courses support and promote student attendance in SI sessions. Faculty members screen SI leaders for content competency and approve selections as well as collaborate with the SI Leaders and Coordinator on a regular basis.
3. The SI Leaders ("near peers") are students who have been deemed course competent and have been approved by the course instructor and the SI Coordinator. They are trained in proactive learning and study strategies as well as facilitation skills. SI Leaders attend

course lectures, take notes, read all assigned materials, and conduct three to five out-of-class SI sessions a week. The SI Leader is the “model student”, a facilitator who assists students to integrate course content and learning strategies.

4. Students participating in the SI sessions, although mentioned last, are the most crucial component of SI.

## **Abstract**

The SALT Center is requesting the partnership of the Parent and Family Association in the amount of **\$6,500** for the SI training. SI will be implemented in five large lecture style Tier One courses. SI will be made available to all students registered in those classes. SALT requests funding for SI training to implement a quality Supplemental Instruction program for Fall 2009 at UA. SI training is done at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. In this particular case, SALT has hired the SI coordinator who has already participated in the three day workshop, located off-site. Because SALT has well trained management staff the next step is to customize the SI experience for the UA campus. The customized SI course is designed to give university professionals the tools needed to implement a quality SI program. The grant proposal includes on-site course fee, SI instructors’ transportation and per diem, course room rental, and a continental breakfast and lunch for participants. Attendance and participation in the customized SI course would enable UA to implement a quality program.

## **Statement of Need**

*Effectiveness of SI:* Arendale (1997) reports after reviewing data from a fifteen year study of SI and non-SI groups, SI participants earned significantly higher percentage of A & B final course grades (71% vs. 49%), lower percentage of D & F final course grades and withdrawals (29% vs. 51%), and a higher mean final course grade (2.75 vs. 2.47) than non-SI participants<sup>1</sup>. This research study also demonstrated higher institutional reenrollment (90% vs. 81.5%) and increased graduation rates (46% vs. 30.3%) when SI and non-SI participants were compared.

*SI Need at UA:* According to a recent survey facilitated by the Division of Student Affairs at The University of Arizona, more than 75% of undergraduate students indicated that they would use enhanced academic support services<sup>2</sup>.

*Program Impact and Action Plan:* Based on the data presented above, it is apparent that not only is there research that demonstrates a high level of effectiveness impacting student performance

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<sup>1</sup> Arendale, D. (1997). Supplemental Instruction (SI): Review of research concerning the effectiveness of SI from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and other institutions from across the United States. 17th and 18th Annual Institutes for Learning Assistance Professionals (p. 41). Tucson: University Learning Center, The University of Arizona.

<sup>2</sup> The University of Arizona Division of Student Affairs. (2009). *Survey on Learning Services*. Tucson: The University of Arizona.

and graduation, but the UA student population has also indicated they would use such services if given the opportunity. The following outline is the action plan designed to develop professional expertise in enhanced academic support services for The University of Arizona.

- The number of students it will impact/benefit:
  - potentially, 10,000 (5 courses of 2,000 students each)
- How students will be served:
  - Students will be given the opportunity to review course content while learning transferable study skills.
- Program goals and measurable objectives:
  - Goal 1: Approximately twenty UA staff, faculty, and other key personnel will partner with the SLC staff to offer Supplemental Instruction for students enrolled in the large section general education courses.
    - Objective 1: Faculty will be trained in SI materials.
  - Goal 2: Approximately twenty UA staff, faculty, and other key personnel, will be trained in Supplemental Instruction offered on-site at The University of Arizona.
    - Objective 1: Staff will design, facilitate, and evaluate SI programming.
  - Goal 3: All newly hired Supplemental Instruction Leaders (student positions) will be trained to implement SI in their group sessions.
    - Objective 1: Supplemental Instruction Leaders will demonstrate knowledge of the core competencies related to their respective positions.
- Description of activities planned to accomplish the stated goals:
  - The identified staff and faculty will participate in an on-site customized SI course.
  - Upon completion of the on-site customized SI course, staff members will design and implement SI in the five large courses offered.
- Is this a new or ongoing activity: Ongoing with expanded impact on University students

**Itemized budget**

**Supplemental Instruction Budget**

**Customized SI Course**

Location:	Tucson, Arizona
Proposed Dates:	8/4/09 - 8/5/09
Number of Attendees:	20

**Estimated Costs:**

SI Course Fee	\$3,000
SI instructors transportation & per diem	\$1,000
Room rental, continental breakfast & lunch for attendees	\$2,500
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<b>Total of SI Course</b>	<b>\$6,500</b>
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The SLC will be supported by funding and staffing from Student Affairs and the SALT Center. In addition, a Student Services Fee application has been submitted to support the professional staffing and hourly wages needed to deliver Supplemental Instruction.

## **Defining success: measuring effectiveness of SI**

Project assessment will be based upon the following:

- Goal 1: Approximately twenty UA staff, faculty, and other key personnel will partner with the SLC staff to offer Supplemental Instruction for students enrolled in the large section general education courses.
  - Objective 1: Faculty will be trained in SI materials.

Method of assessment: Verification of workshop attendance and faculty training.

- Goal 2: Approximately twenty UA staff, faculty, and other key personnel, will be trained in Supplemental Instruction offered on-site at The University of Arizona.
  - Objective 1: Staff will design, facilitate, and evaluate SI programming.

Method of assessment: The design of the SI program, training calendar developed for SI Leader training and program evaluation will be shared as part of the project's final report.

- Goal 3: All newly hired Supplemental Instruction Leaders (student positions) will be trained to implement SI in their group sessions.
  - Objective 1: Supplemental Instruction Leaders will demonstrate knowledge of the core competencies related to their respective positions

Method of assessment: SI Leaders will submit weekly lesson plans. A file of the lesson plans will be maintained for future reference. The lesson plans will be reviewed by the SI Coordinator to see if the core competencies are being integrated. In addition to the lesson plans, the training calendar and training materials developed will be used to document achievement of the objective.

Additional programmatic assessment:

- Upon completion of each semester, GPAs and retention rates of students participating in the study groups will be compared to those students not participating to determine the effectiveness of the SI.