

All About Student Success

Building Relationships on Campus for Student Success

September 2016

Letter from the Manager, Lauren Smith

Welcome to Fall Term! As this is our very first newsletter, I thought I would answer one question I hear often: What is the difference between the AVID Center and The Learning Success Center (LSC)?

While both centers are part of one department, located on the third floor above the library, each provides a specific service to students. It's the difference between the "what" of learning and the "how" of learning.

The Learning Success Center (AC 3300), serving the college since the early 80's, addresses the "what." If a student is struggling with a concept in their math class, unsure about a particular term in their biology lab, or confused about a tricky process in their chemistry course, they would go to one of our "content coaches" working in the Learning Success Center.

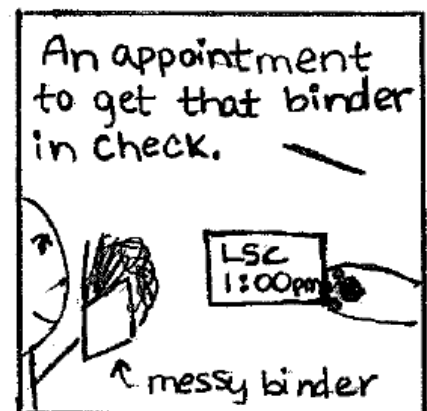
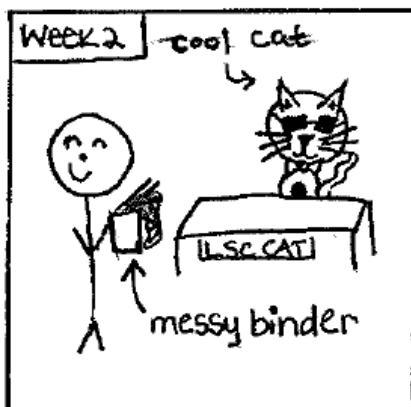
Many of the staff members in the LSC are current or former MHCC students and all show a fierce love for their content area(s).

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AVID|LSC Cat By: Audrey Fisher



Summer Bridge Makes it Easy

Starting college can be frightening, lonely, confusing, and overwhelming. But it's much less so for students who take the Summer Bridge Program, coordinated by AVID|Learning Success Center and sponsored by East County Pathways.

This summer, interested incoming students chose a two-day bridge program: either September 8 – 9 or September 14 – 15. A total of 144 participated in the highly interactive workshops designed to make them feel informed, supported, and welcomed into the MHCC Community.

Coordinator Sarah Aimone, assisted by many staff, helped students learn about financial aid options, get trained on the Portal and college website, learn how to manage time and set goals, and prepare to navigate the campus, meet teacher expectations, adjust their attitudes for success, and avoid common first-term pitfalls.



Afterwards, students wrote: “It was a mix of fun and good info. We were able to start friendships before school started.” “Because of the information and the relationships I formed, I feel more prepared.” “The staff made me feel that they are really there for me.”

Because of East County Pathways funding support, students received notebooks and planners filled with valuable information. Some won prizes of school supplies, calculators, and even lap-top computers.

In addition to the fun and good feelings, statistics show that participants in the Bridge program, begun in 2014 with 20 students, are being retained by MHCC in high numbers: Whereas the percentage retained from an AVID|Learning Success Center Learning Community (students in a cohort group, taking RD & Wr 90 and HD 100C) is at 70% retained, a number already far beyond the college average (46% and 54% for RD 90 and Wr 90 respectively), those in the Learning Community who also did the Bridge Program have been retained at 78%.

Bridge programming is not just for summer, but continues through the year. Incoming students for winter and spring will have a chance at one-day workshops to welcome them and set them on the path to college success.

Photo top right: Sarah Aimone (center) and manager Lauren Smith with student Hussein Alhamzah. Bottom: Darla Hauskins wins a Dell!





Student Spotlight: Rus-T Foyle

Life challenges: Rus-T Foyle dropped out of school in 9th grade in Fairbanks, Alaska. Addicted to drugs, he became a frequent visitor to jail. At age 34, he moved to Portland to be near his brother, but soon became homeless in the Portland area, sleeping beneath bridges.

The way out: Rus-T experienced a series of people who believed in him. The first was the Portland officer who arrested him for car theft. She looked at him in the back of the squad car and said, “You don’t belong out here.” He replied, “You’re right.” When she asked why he was living this way, he said, “I don’t know any other way to live.” She brought him in, but on reduced charges. The judge also showed mercy with a light sentence and encouraging words.

He soon got work and a place to live near Mt. Hood Community College. His mother, from whom he’d been distant, gave him some interesting advice: “I know you have an artistic eye. You used to re-design your grandmother’s house when she’d leave for the day. You can make things beautiful.” Rus-T thought of returning to school. When a friend told him that MHCC had a remarkable tutoring center with tons of great support, Rus-T decided to go for it.

The AVID/LSC impact: Summer of 2016: Rus-T became a student again, taking Wr 115, Math 60 and Speech 111. He became a daily visitor to the AVID Center, where he got help in writing from Karla Farr, Katie Shevchenko, and Audrey Fisher. “They speak my language,” he thought. They understood him and made writing progress possible. In math, he thought, “There’s no way I can get through.” Nothing seemed to make sense. He frequented the math drop-in area, and math Learning Specialist Tim Bradley found him. Tim started pushing him hard, forcing him to focus, and coaching him. Even when Tim saw Rus-T in the hallway, he’d stop him and check his memory of what they’d last talked about. One day, Tim pulled him into his office for an impromptu quiz. “Oh, I can see you’re beginning to get it,” he said. In fact, Rus-T was solving math problems he never believed he could solve. He soon earned “B”s in both writing and in math—the highest grades he’s ever earned in his life.

Next Steps: Rus-T enjoys going downtown occasionally to check in on his old homeless buddies to make sure they’re doing o.k. One of them looked at him and said, “Rus-T, what’s up?—you look so great. The woman was so stunned at his good appearance, she quit drugs the same day, and has stayed clean. He’s is now committed to his goal of attaining a BA with a major in interior design and a minor in fashion design. He’s stunned sometimes himself by a thought that’s taken hold: “Nothing is going to stop me.”

Did You Know?

We can facilitate study groups for your students! We can come to your classroom to help students organize, and then meet with the group early-on to coach it on Socratic-style questioning and other strategies for group success.

For info, contact Tim Bradley at ext. 7645 or by email at Tim.Bradley@mhcc.edu or contact Mike Hein at ext. 7108.

(At right, students from Michael McAfee’s Math 111, summer, 2016.)



Important Dates

October 14: ELL Strategies Training, open to all faculty. Part I: 9—Noon; Part II: 12:30—3:30. Each section unique; attend one or both. For more info: Teachingandlearningcenter@mhcc.edu

November 17: FAFSA Completion Night at MHCC Gresham 5—9 p.m. Watch campus emails for more info.

Manager's Letter (*Continued from p 1*)

With ample study space, textbooks, calculators, computer lab, and materials available for check out, and staff ready to help (even online through eTutoring), students with questions on the "what" should start in the LSC.

If a student is having trouble figuring out the "how," their first stop on the third floor should be the **AVID Center** in AC3315. Serving all MHCC students since 2012, the AVID Center and Program is focused on student skill development and ensuring that all students have the college readiness skills needed for success at MHCC and beyond. While a student with a question on a math problem or concept would go to the LSC, a student who can't find time to study their math coursework or who lacks confidence in themselves as a math student would be directed to the AVID Center.

The AVID Center is staffed by Learning Specialists, many of whom hold advanced degrees in Adult Education or Teaching, and who are knowledgeable about the "hidden curriculum" of college, including goal setting, time management, campus awareness, self-management and personal responsibility, and general MHCC info like how to access Saints Email and the MyMHCC Portal.

Students can drop-in to the AVID Center at any time, get help with any of these issues or get help with their reading, writing, or grammar skills. If needed, they can also schedule an hour-long appointment with a Learning Specialist to tackle a specific issue. In many ways, the AVID Center is a "one-stop shop", and if we can't help the student, we'll walk them to who can, including to the LSC for specific content support.

Together, both the Learning Success Center and the AVID Center create a holistic student support program providing students with free and accessible services that promote persistence, retention, and completion at Mt. Hood. Our staff look forward to welcoming students to the third floor this fall! *Lauren*

Tech Tip: Consider your Password Safety

By: Lance Lannigan

Are you worried about your passwords and identity when online? You're not alone. In a recent study, 80% of internet users shared these concerns. Despite this, more than half of web surfers employ five passwords or fewer throughout their entire online life, instead of generating unique passwords for each site as security experts advise.

Of course, this level of password complexity requires a system, made much easier with a password manager such as LastPass or Dashlane, which use one master password to access your other individual passwords. Lastpass is free on one type of device, and costs only \$12/year for the premium version to sync passwords across all your devices. Once installed on a computer browser or as an app, these programs will remember and organize your passwords and personal information, autofill passwords, help you generate secure passwords, audit your passwords for vulnerability to hackers, store other digital records and notes, and save your encrypted information on your local device.

Stay safe and stay tuned for more tech-tips!



Staff Spotlight: Vu Tong

Subjects tutored: biology, chemistry, physics, math

Chief life struggles: When Vu was growing up in Vietnam, his village had no electricity until he was in middle school; he read by oil lamp. Two hundred students attended middle school nearby, but only 40 went on to high school, and only half of those graduated. Most everyone dropped out to help their families with farm work. Vu also helped his family on the farm, but managed to graduate high school and attend college in Vietnam, majoring in computer science.

In his third year, a new round of challenges began. Vu's grandfather had been an officer in the South Vietnamese military during the war. After, he'd been imprisoned, but then allowed to move to the U.S. in 1992. In 2008, Vu's parents chose to move from Vietnam to join their parents in the U.S., and Vu chose to move with them. None of them spoke a word of English, and Vu would have to not only learn English, but begin his college education all over again in a new language.

Tutoring Philosophy: To study well, you must be enthusiastic. "I try to help students find fun and enthusiasm and to focus on understanding above all else," he says. "A student once asked me how she could possibly memorize all the new concepts in biology. I spoke one of the concepts to her in a simple sentence in Vietnamese, and I asked her to repeat it. She stared at me confused. Then I repeated it in English; it made perfect sense to her, and she could easily repeat it. 'Don't worry so much about memorizing,' I told her. 'Once you understand well, you will remember.'" Vu took inspiration from his own LSC tutors when he was a student—people like Kevin Booth, the LSC's Master Tutor, who helped bring Vu to his own deep understandings in physics and math.

What's ahead: While studying chemistry and biology at MHCC (after ESL and IECC), Vu began to think of a career in medicine. He remembered his boyhood in Vietnam without good medical care and almost no dental care. He remembers being reluctant to smile for fear of showing his bad teeth. He knows a lot of others feel the same fear. Vu recently graduated PSU with a BA in Biology on his way to Dental School admissions, aided by a score on the Dental School Admissions test that places him in the top 99.9% of applicants. He will continue to tutor at MHCC in the 2016-17 school year.



Contact Us

We'd love to hear your comments, questions, or success stories about using our services!

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www.mhcc.edu/lsc