Counseling Center Helps Students Assess and Improve Learning Skills

There’s a growing body of research on the affective and cognitive processes involved in absorbing and understanding academic material. A key finding is that learning *how* to learn is an important skill in itself. The Counseling Center, located in the Old Gym Building, helps Lehman students assess their individual learning and study habits with an emphasis on developing strategies to improve retention, build skills and relieve anxiety.

“We know that people’s attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about learning are very important to their success,” says Counseling Center Director Annecy Baez, Ph.D. “We try to help our students figure out what they’re doing right—and what they’re doing that’s not working for them.”

Many students these days are taking the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategy Inventory), an online, research-based assessment tool that is available free of charge as part of a pilot program at Lehman. It takes about 15 minutes to complete, after which students meet with a counselor to review the results and develop a plan of action.

These might include a referral to the Instructional Support Services Program for tutoring and/or attending Counseling Center workshops on issues such as time management, procrastination, goal setting, and stress management for test anxiety. Students register in advance for these workshops, which are given Monday evenings and Saturdays.

Faculty/Staff Referrals Welcome

Lehman students may call (718) 960-8761 to schedule a meeting with a student skills counselor, who will instruct them on how to take the LASSI online. Faculty and staff members may also refer students and encourage their participation.

The LASSI is used to improve a person’s learning and study strategies. It is not a diagnostic measure of learning disabilities, ADD, or depression—or a tool that measures intelligence or predicts one’s ability to succeed in college.

Skill, Will & Self Regulation: A ‘Strategic Learning’ Model

The LASSI theoretical framework is based on research by Dr. Carole Weinstein, who uses the term “strategic learning” to describe a three-part model with the following components:

**Skill**
- ✔ Information processing
- ✔ Selecting main ideas
- ✔ Testing strategies

**Will**
- ✔ Attitude
- ✔ Motivation
- ✔ Anxiety

**Self Regulation**
- ✔ Time management
- ✔ Concentration
- ✔ Study aids
- ✔ Self testing
Special Student Services Announces New Voice Recognition Software

When Melinda Morrell-Wilson attended an Office of Special Student Services workshop, she had no idea that she was about to make a major change in the way she would use a computer. A Lehman Accounting major, Morrell-Wilson had difficulty using a traditional computer keyboard because of a hand dysfunction.

The two-day workshop, held at Lehman’s Assistive Technology and Resource Center (Library, Room 215), offered training on a new software program—called Dragon Naturally Speaking—that allows computer access through voice commands. This voice-recognition program has the potential to improve the academic lives of students who are visually impaired or have other difficulties using a traditional keyboard.

Workshop leader Pratik Patel, who uses Dragon on a daily basis, says the program speeds up word processing tasks. “This is enormously helpful, since most of us can speak faster than we can type,” says Patel, who is Director of CUNY’s Assistive Technology Services Project and Vice President of ATHEN, a nationwide group dedicated to ensuring IT access to individuals with disabilities throughout U.S. colleges and universities.

Morrell-Wilson was one of the 15 students at the workshop which involved individually training the computer to recognize each of their voices. When the program was first developed, it typically required weeks to train the computer, Patel said, but the newer version takes only a matter of hours.

Merrill D. Parra, Director of Special Student Services, noted that an advantage of the new edition of the software is its portability. “Students may now carry their voice files with them as they move from home to the classroom,” she said. “They can work with their files anywhere there’s a computer. Thus, tutoring sessions and group work can become more meaningful.”

The Assistive Technology Lab has five stations with Dragon Naturally Speaking. The latest upgrade, 8.0, has been purchased for the lab and will be installed soon.

Greater usage is expected as the number of students with hand dysfunction and visual impairments is on the rise.

Students Plan Visit to Holocaust Museum with Queens Hillel

The Office of Campus Life announced that five Lehman students will travel to Washington, D.C. on March 11–12 to visit the Holocaust Museum. Their trip was underwritten by the David and Linda Taub Foundation. The students will be part of a 90-member group, half of whom will be Jewish students. The trip is being organized by the Queens College Hillel Society and a member of the Hillel professional staff will accompany the group.

The purpose of the trip is share the experience of Jewish people in the Holocaust with students of color in an effort to forge a better understanding of this historical event and to work together on campuses to prevent any form of prejudice, hatred, and bigotry—and also to prevent modern-day genocidal behavior around the world.

Laptop Rental a Hit

Students are voting with their feet at the Campus Information Services counter in the Student Life Building. Counter staff report nearly 100% utilization of 10 laptop computers with wireless access to the Web, which are available for free, short-term rental. There’ve been virtually no incidents of damage or software problems to the rental laptops. Even better, the computers were recently switched to a more robust broadband, so now they are much faster and have enhanced storage capacity.

‘Men’s Health Month’ Features March 14 Discussion

The Student Health Center will hold a “Men’s Health Campaign” during the month of March. This follows “Love Yourself Month” in February, which promoted physical health and well-being.

A highlight of the new campaign will be a facilitated discussion, “Talking in the Men’s Room,” at 4 pm, Tuesday, March 14, in the Old Gym Building, Room 114. The discussion (for men only) will be led by Alan Fuentes of Career Services and two male peer educators from the Health Center. The focus will be on good communication and healthy relationships.

Among the “Love Yourself” events last month were a college-wide blood drive, free cholesterol, blood sugar screenings, HIV testing and free mammograms for women students over the age of 40. Health Center staff also ran workshops as part of the Health, Wellness and Personal Development Series sponsored by Lehman’s Counseling Center. Health educator Jessica Butts presented “Safer Sex” and “Healthy Eating” workshops. Family nurse practitioner Rosemary Weingarten led a workshop on the importance of gynecological exam called LOVE for Learn anAbout Vaginal Exams.

Peer Educators Conference

Lehman’s peer health educators will have an opportunity to improve their skills and network with students from other colleges at a conference at Temple University on March 24–25 sponsored by the Bacchus/Gamma, the national student organization for peer health educators.

‘Spring Into Wellness’

Looking ahead, the Health Center is planning its annual health fair, “Spring Into Wellness,” which will be held on Tuesday, May 2, from 11 am to 2 pm in the Music Building.
Busy Internet Lab in Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid’s Internet Lab allows students to perform online a growing number of tasks related to their financial aid packages. The lab averages more than 8,300 student visits a year.

During peak periods—from June to September and the month of January—as many as 300 students visit each week. The lab also processes hardship tuition deferment requests during registration. Students use the Internet Lab to:

✔ Complete, file, and correct the FAFSA.
✔ Print SARs (Student Aid Reports).
✔ Obtain e-mail addresses and DOE pins.
✔ Fill out Master Promissory Note for the Federal Direct Loan.
✔ Receive exit counseling for Stafford loans.

Many students rely on the lab because their home computers are not powerful enough to perform these interactive tasks with government computer systems. The lab is staffed to assist students who may have difficulty understanding what is required when they are completing the forms and applications. “We help prevent errors that might adversely effect a student’s financial applications. “We help prevent errors that when they are completing the forms and difficulty understanding what is required is staffed to assist students who may have

Campus Life Goes Digital

Forms are the lifeblood of the planning process for student organizations. But there has to be a better way than filling them out with paper and pens, said Campus Life Director Michael E. Sullivan. He charged Rhena Montero, Assistant Director, and Lydia Queros, Office Manager, with simplifying the process, and they enlisted IT support from Venu Gopal, John Dono and Alberto Fuentes.

Together, the team created and tweaked the various forms, which were uploaded and are now accessible online to all student organizations. Club leaders need worry no longer about a misplaced form. Once it’s submitted, the information is stored in a secure database accessible to the Campus Life staff.

Students Celebrate Dominican Independence

The Dominican Students Association and CASA co-sponsored a “Dominican Independence Celebration Dance” on February 23. More than 250 attended the event in the Student Cafeteria. Dominicans are the largest group of Hispanic students at Lehman. They’re active in student government on campus and in CUNY—such as Carlos Sierra, currently Chair of the University Student Senate and a member of the CUNY Board of Trustees.

African Students Celebrate Their Cultural Heritage

The African Students Association and CASA co-sponsored an African Culture Show at Lovinger Theatre on February 17. Among the performers were dancers from Ghana and Senagal. Special guests included Ambassadors from the Ivory Coast and Nigeria. United Nations Under Secretary Ibrihim Gambari was the guest speaker. More than 150 students attended the 3 to 9 pm event with their friends and families, many of whom wore their traditional dress.

Meridian Editor Wins Major Fellowship

Alice Michelle Augustine, Editor in Chief of Meridian, has learned that she will receive the prestigious Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans. The Fellowship recognizes students’ commitment to the values expressed in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. It is a cash award of $20,000 a year for two years and a commitment to fund half of the student’s graduate tuition.

Augustine, who is also a Lehman Scholar, McNair Fellow, and Jeanette K. Watson Fellow, hopes to attend Yale University Law School. Her long-range goal is a career in international humanitarian work.

Book Vouchers Win Points for Convenience, Timeliness

English major Shanee Bruno, a junior from the Bronx, likes to have all of her books on the first day of class. “It feels good to be prepared,” she says. That’s why Bruno appreciates Financial Aid’s computerized book voucher. “It’s right there when I need it—at the beginning of the semester. My ID acts as a credit card at the bookstore.”

Financial Aid Director David Martinez reports that book voucher amounts range from $75 to $300 per term, based on a student’s balance (after payment of tuition and fees) of Pell or Federal grants or SEEK book grants. More than 3,000 Lehman students qualified for book vouchers this term.
**Lehman Athletes Win 2006 CUNY Championships**

**Record-setting Times in a Big Victory for Women’s Indoor Track & Field Team**

Lehman College women captured the prestigious CUNY Track & Field Championship at the 168th Street Armory on February 25. Lehman edged CCNY by a score of 127-117.

Junior Amy Ruston, the two-time CUNY cross-country “Most Valuable Runner,” led the Lehman Lightning team to three first-place, record-setting finishes in the 800-, 1500- and 3000-meter races.

Martinia Heath was first in the 55-meter hurdles and high jump and second in the long jump. Also making significant contributions were team members Ana Ortiz, Olga Torres, Lianee Torres, and Alyyah Vizcarrando.

“This was a fantastic win for the program,” said Lehman head coach Lesleigh Hogg. “We came into the event as an underdog, and our team really stepped up to the challenge of winning CUNY.”

The Lehman women also won the CUNY Cross-Country Championship in October.

**Lightning Swimmers and Divers Set New CUNY Conference Point Record**

The Lehman Lightning men’s swimming team won the 2006 CUNY Athletic Conference Swimming and Diving Championships, which were held on Lehman’s campus, at The APEX pool, on February 3–4. It was a huge victory, with Lehman setting a conference point record and ending the College of Staten Island swimming team’s four-year victory run.

“We put together a great team effort,” said head coach Peter Kiernan. “Everybody did their part—swimmers, divers, the coaching staff and even the women’s team provided great moral support.”

Lehman team members received three individual gold-medals en route to the victory. Sophomore Darnell James set a new meet record in the 100-meter butterfly. Sophomore Kostya Slavashevich won the 200-meter freestyle, and freshman Bud Rivera added a first-place finish in the 50-meter freestyle.

James scored a team-high 54 points in the meet and was named CUNY swimming “Performer of the Year” for the second year in a row. “We had a meeting a few weeks ago that helped us turn the corner in terms of giving maximum effort,” he said. “Our captain, Walter Lugo, inspired us to come together and finally get over that hump and defeat Staten Island.”

The winning team and their coaches celebrate after the victory at the Armory.

“I can’t begin to say enough great things about our women’s track team and Coach Hogg,” said Director of Athletics Dr. Martin Zwiren. “We are all very proud of their hard work and tremendous success.”

The team and their coaches savor a sweet victory at The APEX, their home pool.