Interdependence

By Michael Dickinson, Director

Greetings! This is the first newsletter of what is planned to be a regular series from the Ballotti Learning Center. We hope at the very least the contents will provide you with some useful information about the many programs and services offered in the BLC and may even stimulate a dialogue that will support our collective efforts to foster learning at Suffolk. With these goals in mind, interdependence, the concept of having a shared responsibility and mutual dependency, seemed like the perfect theme for this inaugural newsletter.

Interdependence is one of the underlying principles in all of the programs and services that are offered in the BLC. It is an extremely important concept for students to understand and recognize, as successful persons do not and cannot function alone.

Unfortunately, the importance of interdependence is often overshadowed by an emphasis on establishing independence in college.

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Study Group Success

By Brian Moore, Associate Director, Peer Services

As the New England Patriots enjoyed a perfect regular season last Fall, the Engineering Department and Ballotti Learning Center collaborated to achieve their own level of perfection during the Fall 2007 semester. With the support of Lisa Shatz, Chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, and Study Group coordination by Randall Livingstone, Assistant Director of Peer

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BLC Announcements

- The Ballotti Learning Center is excited to present its first faculty-focused newsletter. The Ballotti Bulletin will include news about the Center, faculty, students, and programmatic updates so that you can easily keep up-to-date with everything happening in the BLC. We are interested to hear what content you would like to see in future editions. Please consider this question and contact us at learningcenter@suffolk.edu with comments and suggestions.
- Do you have a course which you think might benefit from a study group or tutor next year? Please contact Brian Moore at bmoore@suffolk.edu to discuss options for supporting students.
Services, 100% of students enrolled in Dr. Shatz’s ECE 205 Circuit Theory II course attended Study Group sessions led by senior engineering major Chris Cheng. These students consistently attended Chris’ weekly Study Group sessions, had the opportunity to discuss course content, shared problem solving techniques, and connected as Engineering majors.

This study group marks the first engineering course the Ballotti Learning Center has served, and the results were exciting: the Fall 2007 Circuit Theory II students earned a .45 higher average course GPA than the Fall 2006 Circuit Theory II class. Based on this highly successful study group, Chris is continuing his Study Group leader role this semester, offering sessions for the ECE 225 Linear Systems course. The Ballotti Learning Center and Electrical and Computer Engineering Department plan continued collaboration to offer quality academic support to Engineering majors for future semesters.

**Featured Faces of the BLC**

**Linda Mui, Accounting Tutor**

*Class year:* December 2008  
*Favorite book:* The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*Favorite professors:* Professors Michael Kraten, Tom Whalen, and Alex Yen  
*Describe Suffolk University in one word:* Opportunities

As a Nathan Miller scholar and Griffin fellow, Linda is most often seen attending Beta Alpha Psi meetings and tutoring peers at the Ballotti Learning Center. Linda believes that the students which she tutors are truly motivated and want to succeed. Linda was drawn to Suffolk because of the small class sizes and the Sawyer Business School’s accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). She enjoys volunteering and traveling in her spare time and was able to study Chinese business law at Hong Kong Baptist University on a semester-long study abroad program. After graduating from Suffolk, Linda plans to pursue her MSA and become a Certified Public Accountant.

**Denyce Wicht, Professor of Chemistry**

*Year started at Suffolk:* 2005  
*Favorite book:* Crossing to Safety by Wallace Stegner  
*Academic hero/heroine:* Dr. David Glueck (PhD advisor, Dartmouth College)  
*Describe Suffolk University in one word:* Diverse

A Milwaukee, Wisconsin native, Professor Wicht was most recently awarded the Faculty Development Summer Stipend Award in 2007. Professor Wicht is usually seen on the sixth floor of the Archer Building. She is very interested in green chemistry, especially environmentally friendly bond-making (particularly to carbon). Professor Wicht utilizes the BLC by recommending tutors and study group leaders for Organic Chemistry, scheduling extended time tests for students with learning disabilities, and referring students who need peer tutoring. Professor Wicht enjoys gardening, surfing, and is a member of two book clubs in her spare time. In the future, she would like to continue working on research projects with undergraduate students.
Nathan Miller Scholars Serve

By Faith Litchock-Morellato, Assistant Director, Academic Success Programs

The Nathan Miller Scholars Program promotes access to Suffolk University for deserving students from the Boston Public Schools. The program awards tuition scholarships to approximately 8-14 graduates of the Boston Public Schools each year and the grants continue for eight consecutive semesters, provided that Scholars maintain a GPA of 2.7 or above. Scholars are required to attend weekly seminars during their first year and perform 15 hours of service during the spring semester.

This year’s cohort of eight is doing an exceptional job serving the community. They are currently volunteering at The Boys and Girls Club, Harborside Community Center, Boston Latin School, Josiah Quincy School, and Trinity Albanian Orthodox Church. One group even chose to spend every other Wednesday at the Paulist Center on Park Street serving food to those in need.

Robert Keough, a freshman business major and volunteer at the Paulist Center, said, “It made me feel good to help out, and it was nice to see a lot of volunteers from other schools or organizations there as well. All of us coming together in order to help is a great act and I feel fortunate to be a part of that effort.” Robert’s group efforts don’t stop there. In addition to the Paulist Center, Robert and his fellow scholars will participate in the 11th Annual Service Day through the S.O.U.L.S Office. These students have truly taken part in their community in the spirit of interdependence.

UAP Students Fight Rare Disease

By Greg Freed, Assistant Director, Developmental Education Support Programs

The University Achievement Program’s cohort is going above and beyond this semester as its students complete service projects with community partners they selected in the fall. Randall Livingstone’s section is raising money for Sanfilippo syndrome, a rare childhood genetic disease that impedes normal development and shortens life expectancy to the mid-teens.

The group has partnered with Phunk Phenomenon, an Everett-based dance group whose owner’s son, Jared, was recently diagnosed with Sanfilippo syndrome. Phunk Phenomenon uses urban dance to reach today's youth as it builds self-esteem and cultural awareness. The company is known for “its cross-cultural fusion of traditional, contemporary ‘street’ dance formats with highlights of modern dance, ballet, tap and various music forms.”

Together, the UAP students and Phunk Phenomenon will host a show on April 25, 2008 at the C. Walsh Theatre. Profits will be donated to Jared's family as they cope with the effects of Sanfilippo disease. Tickets are available now in the BLC.

Tutor Recruitment Comes Full Circle

By Brian Moore, Associate Director, Peer Services

This spring, five Suffolk alumni and former BLC tutors and study group leaders came back to the BLC to speak to current employees about the skills they developed while working in the BLC and how their experiences have helped them in their current jobs. The alumni’s words affirmed the message the Peer Services Team tries to communicate as it prepares to recruit another cohort of tutors and study group leaders.

The recruitment of 60 exceptional student leaders each semester is a crucial and sometimes challenging aspect of the Peer Services Program. Peer Services considers students’ academic performance, faculty recommendations, maturity, interpersonal skills, and dedication to the Suffolk community. Hired students benefit from a paid opportunity to assist peers and realize their own growth potential.

Andrew Cioffi (B.S. Biology; M.Ed. Foundations of Education) a Peer Services student employee for five years, said, “The Ballotti Learning Center provided me with some of my most valuable experiences. I honed my communication, supervisory, and advising skills, and most importantly, I learned the leadership that I would be lost without in my career. The Ballotti Learning Center truly prepares its student employees for lifelong careers as educators and leaders in whatever they pursue.”
When students first come to college, they are warned that teachers and parents are no longer going to remind them when and what to study. Students are repeatedly told that they have to learn to live and learn on their own. As a result of this emphasis on developing independence, students sometimes confuse the difference of being able to function independently and having to function independently. Perhaps it shouldn’t be a surprise that students do not take advantage of office hours or are reluctant to use support resources.

In the BLC, we work to develop students’ interdependence and clarify that being responsible for one’s actions does not mean always acting alone. Rather, we teach that the successful person uses resources, builds networks, and recognizes the interconnectedness people, places, and events. We foster study groups, encourage students to meet with their professors, and include service learning experience in our programs. We emphasize that successful students recognize their strengths and their weaknesses; they share their talents as well as accept the talents of others; they accept their self-responsibility as well as a global responsibility. In addition, we aim to practice the interdependence that we preach.

May this newsletter be an example of our effort. We hope it helps in keeping the community informed about resources and programs that are available to students and in developing the connections among us that are important in fostering student success. In this spirit, I invite your comments, suggestions, and questions about the newsletter and the center overall. You can email me at mdickins@suffolk.edu.

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**Ballotti by the Numbers**

The Ballotti Learning Center encourages students to become independent learners as well as take advantage of the many available campus resources. Results from a survey of students who used the BLC services last semester show that 73% of the students who participated in tutoring felt that they learned to study on their own through their tutoring experience. Seventy-three percent of students who met with an educational consultant identified that the EC meetings resulted in their having a clearer idea of how to take advantage of the resources across campus. These results suggest that students did find the BLC to be effective in helping them develop independence and interdependence.

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**Through my tutoring experience, I feel I have learned to study on my own.**

- Strongly Agree: 23%
- Agree: 23%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 50%
- Disagree: 2%
- Strongly Disagree: 2%

**n = 52**

**Based on my experience working with an Educational Consultant, I now have a clearer idea of how to find other helpful offices and people on campus.**

- Strongly Agree: 36%
- Agree: 38%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 22%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly Disagree: 0%

**n = 65**