

AU Parents

A quarterly publication for families of AU students. Spring 2008



Nearly 5,000 Reasons to Visit the Center for Teaching & Learning



Tatianna Mistic, a junior business major (right), is one of more than 700 students who utilize the services of the Center for Teaching & Learning each semester. With Tatianna is Katie Driscoll, Writing Specialist with the Center for Teaching & Learning.

One of the most popular locations on the AU campus doesn't have a television, has nothing to do with food, and isn't centered around sports and games. It's an area dedicated to improving study skills and achieving academic success.

Each year, students make about 4,800 appointments with tutors in the Center for Teaching & Learning. The center, located in the Charles B. Phillips Library, is open 64 hours a week and offers free academic services to all AU students. There are 10 professional tutors who work in the center, all of whom have done graduate work. Several staff members also teach at Aurora University in their discipline.

"What we try to stress to students is that we are not a remedial center," said Eric Schwarze, Director of the Center for Teaching & Learning. "As evidenced by the number of visits we have each year, we work with a variety of students. They may be struggling with a particular subject or trying to improve in an area of study. Regardless of why they come to the center, the degree to which we can help students depends on their efforts, preparation and self-advocacy."

Many students visit the center to receive assistance with writing. "The tutors help me organize my thoughts onto paper," said Elizabeth Van Fleet, a nursing student. "It can be overwhelming when a big paper is assigned; however, the tutors are great at providing direction. I always feel more confident about my writing after they help me establish an outline and arrange my ideas."

Van Fleet also sees a tutor once a week for chemistry. Tutors encourage students who need extra help with math and science to make ongoing appointments at the center. "As a beginning nursing student, it's important that I devote ample time to studying the sciences. The center is creating a foundation for my current and future success in this area," she said.

Tutoring at the center can be on an individual basis or in a group setting. There are professors who encourage and coordinate group tutoring with the center's peer tutors. These sessions provide a review of what is taught in the classroom. Peer tutors (students) are recommended by instructors to work with other students who are seeking additional


help in an area of study. Whatever the method, the center empowers students in a supportive and collaborative environment.

"I like to think of the center as a great starting point," said special education student Teilsen Hennenfent. "I try and take what the tutors say and apply it to my next paper. When a tutor reviews my papers and suggests changes, I take notes about what to do and what not to do for my next paper. The center is helpful in many ways. I recently had a paper pre-graded by a professor and received a 'C-'. The tutors at the center helped me improve the paper, and I ultimately received a 'B'."

The center's staff members strive to help students develop their abilities, meet academic requirements, access campus resources, and develop new approaches to their academic success. Students who are seeking additional academic support are encouraged to contact the Center for Teaching & Learning at 630-844-5520.

Other support services offered by the center include the following:

- Skill development in note taking, time management, test taking and reading
- Help in citing research and avoiding plagiarism
- Writing seminars and presentations on APA style, MLA style and research skills
- Review sessions for the Illinois State Board of Education Basic Skills Test for teachers and social workers
- Coordination of reasonable accommodations for students with documented physical, learning or psychological disabilities

For more information on the center's services, visit www.aurora.edu/learningcenter/index.htm. 

Lifelong Learner Offers Lessons on Education

Jim Varney teaches How Schools Work and Theories of Learning, both introductory courses in AU's undergraduate Initial Certification teacher preparation program. He recently submitted an article for publication in the "Kappa Delta Pi Record" titled "Humanistic Mentoring: A Unique Kind of Helping Relationship." Varney chairs the Initial Certification Advising/Mentoring Committee and is a member of the Adjunct and New Faculty Committee. He is also a member of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Illinois Association of Teacher Educators and is AU's Counselor for Kappa Delta Pi, an education honorary society.



What schools did you attend?

I received my bachelor's degree in elementary education from Illinois State University, my master's degree in early childhood education from Northern Illinois University, a certificate of advanced study in educational administration from National-Louis University, and a doctoral degree in education from Aurora University. I've gone to school my entire life, and I'm still "in school!"

Why did you decide to become a professor?

Prior to becoming a professor at AU, I was a teacher and administrator for the West Aurora public schools, the last 20 years as an elementary school principal. I had been an adjunct instructor for AU for 10 years, teaching in the master's degree cohort program. Thus having been an educator for the past 35 years, I wanted to pursue something "post-retirement" where I could give back to my profession. Helping to initiate and guide students and training them to become teachers is the perfect way to positively influence a whole new generation of educators. I love working with undergraduates and being infected by their enthusiasm and open-mindedness.

What do you enjoy most about teaching at AU?

AU is a very special place to teach and learn because of its small size and the belief of faculty regarding the importance of mentoring. We are committed to caring about students as people as well as for their academic success. Teaching at AU allows me the opportunity to really get to know my students as learners and evolving young adults with aspirations, challenges, defeats and triumphs. I want my students to not only have highly effective teaching skills, I want them to be able to create classrooms of caring — collaborative communities of learners in which every student is known, valued and validated. At AU, I can run my classrooms this way and model this kind of mentoring for my students.

How is the university's mission — "an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning" — incorporated into your classrooms?


I'm mindful of the both university's mission and the College of Education's mission which is "achieving excellence

through collaborative learning communities." Examples of how I incorporate both into my courses include having high excellence performance standards for student work, modeling how to build communities of learning in which both teacher and student learn together as part of lifelong learning, promoting understanding and tolerance of many different kinds of diversity, and partnering with neighborhood school districts so AU students can observe and participate in "real world" classroom contexts.

What advice do you give to students to help them be successful?

Take advantage of the many resources AU has to support you and your collegiate experience. Seek out faculty mentors, meet with the advisors at the Crouse Center for Student Success, get to know the librarians and the resources at the Center for Teaching & Learning. Join at least one of the many student organizations on campus and participate in and attend campus athletics, performances and extra-curricular activities. Oh yes, and don't skip classes, study hard and put the required amount of time in for your assignments!

What advice would you give parents to help support and guide their sons and daughters while they are attending the university?

Realize that you still are their best and most effective teachers. Continue to mentor them, ask them how they are doing — both with their classes and as a member of the AU community. Continue to support them, as all too soon both you and I will beam as they walk across the AU graduation stage with diploma in hand and are launched toward long and highly successful careers. 


The Choices That Count Task Force Continues to Make a Difference

The Choices That Count Task Force continues to create a positive campus atmosphere for all AU students. The task force identifies and sponsors programs, and develops processes and procedures that encourage students to make informed choices that positively impact their college experience. Topics discussed by the task force include alcohol and drug use; nutrition; sleep habits; relationships; study routines; personal safety; financial management; tobacco use; and other issues that can impact a student's ability to fulfill his or her potential.

Included in this semester's activities:

- Displayed an informational booth at the Alcohol Awareness Fair




- Distributed "mid-term survival kits" to students
- Promoted "Kick Butts Day" with stress reliever giveaways and information about tobacco cessation programs
- Planned a "financial fitness" seminar
- Created a Choices That Count Web page
- Participated in select "Greek Week" activities 

New Campus Emergency Notification Alert System

As part of the university's overall commitment to safety and emergency preparedness, students, faculty and staff can now sign up to receive a text message in the event of an emergency situation.

This new notification system has been implemented in addition to the current notification system which includes all campus e-mails and posting of emergency information on the Web site.

Encourage your son or daughter to sign up for this service as it is a fast and easy way to receive notification of a campus closing when a computer is not available (e.g., when your student is driving to campus).

Students can sign up their cell phone number by logging in to WebAdvisor through the AU Web site. Within the WebAdvisor functions for "Students," click on the "Address Change" option. Complete the two entries for "Alert Notifications" at the bottom of the Web page. Be certain to click "Submit" to update your record. 



Click! Students Can Start a Career Here

Aurora University partners with the College Central Network which allows AU students to search for jobs and upload their resumés to be viewed by potential employers. Students can register for the service by visiting www.aurora.edu/career/index.htm. Students may also register to receive e-mails about programs, services and job-related topics through the network.



Sports, Studies and Self-Discovery



Having been born and raised in London, England, playing soccer at Aurora University might have seemed like the obvious choice for me. However, being part of the "American football" team at AU was the only certainty I had as an incoming freshman. I knew what Head Coach Rich Duncan expected from me — yet, I didn't know what to expect from my overall college experience.

My first year at AU was probably very typical for a student-athlete. I practiced a lot and studied a lot. I was relatively shy, so I didn't have a problem with that routine. Yet, AU faculty and staff had other ideas for me. I'm glad they did as my reserved nature was holding me back from my full potential.

Today I am active with the Honors Program and peer advising. The Honors Program provides me with extra academic challenges. Additionally, I've become close with other students in the program. As a peer advisor, I'm helping new students make the transition to college.

I'm also the vice president of the Pre-Law Club. This allows me to network with legal professionals, learn about law schools and discover different types of law. My internship with a law firm this summer will also be a great introduction to the legal world.

As my education continues, I know there will be many challenges and opportunities ahead. The faculty and staff at Aurora University are empowering me to not only be involved, but to excel and pursue my interests. I'm happy to report that with all this self-discovery, I'm having fun too. I'm playing the sports I love (football and tennis) and learning in a close-knit, friendly environment. It suits this Englishman just fine.

— Andrew Price

Aurora University Calendar

April 3–September 8, 2008

Eighth Annual Aurora University Student Art Show
Downstairs Dunham Gallery • Dunham Hall

Friday, April 25, 2008; 7:30 p.m.

University Chorale Concert: An American Sampler II
A program of post-Civil War era choral music.
Free event; reservations required (call 630-844-5486
or e-mail artsandideas@aurora.edu)
Crimi Auditorium • Institute for Collaboration

Sunday, May 4, 2008; 10:00 a.m.

Graduate Commencement Ceremony
University Quadrangle

Sunday, May 4, 2008; 2:30 p.m.

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony
University Quadrangle

June 2–July 5

Summer Term I
(no classes on the Fourth of July)

July 7–August 9

Summer Term II (5 weeks)

June 2–August 9

Summer Term III

For a complete listing of all
events available on campus, visit
www.aurora.edu/geninfo/events.htm.

www.aurora.edu

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