A. Program History

Florida Atlantic University began offering Supplemental Instruction (SI) in the fall semester of 2007. **Supplemental Instruction (SI)** is an academic support model developed by Dr. Deanna Martin at the [University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC)](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=University_of_Missouri-Kansas_City&oldid=402927328) in 1973 that uses peer assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success within targeted historically difficult courses. The SI program provides peer support by having students who succeeded in traditionally difficult academic courses... help other students complete these courses. SI is a non-remedial approach that provides regular review sessions outside of class, in which students work collaboratively by discussing readings, comparing notes, working together to predict test items, and sharing ideas for improving class material. Courses selected for SI tend to be “gatekeeper” courses for first and second year students—generally those classes that have a 30% or higher proportion of students who receive a “D”, fail, or withdraw (the DFW rate) from the course. Out-of-class review sessions are led by “SI leaders,” students who took the class already and did well. SI leaders attend all class lectures, take notes, and act as models to those currently taking the course.


The Director for Student Retention, Dr. Jennifer Bebergal, was asked to begin supporting 'Math for Liberal Arts I (MGF 1106)’ in order to lower the 60% average DFW rate for that course each semester. Following attendance at the UMKC SI Supervisor training in fall 2007, Dr. Bebergal conducted on-going training for the first 8 SI Leaders at FAU. Specific guidelines from UMKC’s Supervisor training was used to guide the initial training of SI leaders. Over the next two years, the DFW rate in MGF 1106 continued to fall and currently is less than 30% each semester.

In 2009, a Coordinator of Academic Support position was created to direct the SI program, as the program had grown so extensively. Since the founding of this program in 2007, SI has grown to support 26 courses and employs between 40-45 SI Leaders each semester. Currently, all SI leaders are exposed to far-reaching trainings before and during employment as SI leaders. As the program grew, the nature of training has grown. Both the director and the coordinator have gone through UMKC’s Supervisor Training. Through this process and the experience as administrator, tutor and graduate student of Higher Education, the trainings given to SI leaders have continued to expand to be more encompassing and holistic in nature.

B. Program Objectives

The SI program objective is to increase student success rates in courses that have proven to be traditionally difficult courses at FAU. Lowering the rate of attrition and ultimately increasing graduation time-to-degree are also objectives of the program. For student leaders, we hope to instill a sense of pride in the University, pride in the roles they play in assisting students to success, and the leadership experiences they gain as part of the SI team. SI respects student differences and embraces the program as a vehicle to success for any interested student, regardless of ability.
6. “BRIEF PROGRAM OVERVIEW” FOR LEVELS 1, 2 AND 3

C. Reporting Lines

Coordinator, Academic Support Services > Director, Center for Learning and Student Success > Dean, Undergraduate Studies > Provost > FAU PRESIDENT

D. Sources of Funding

SI is funded by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies off the top of the Academic Affairs budget for the University. One course, Quantitative Methods in Business (QMB 3600), has been funded by the University’s College of Business to directly impact success within business majors. Short-term funding was provided by the University’s Lifelong Learning Society and Student Government to help start up the program during the first two years.

E. Services and Students served

SI is currently offered in 26 courses, which encompasses 97 lecture sections. Fall 2010 enrollment in these courses was 10,091 students after the University’s add/drop period, which occurs after week one. SI is, by nature of the program, free, voluntary and offered to all enrolled students in the courses supported. Each SI leader holds 3-4 50-minute SI sessions and 1-3 hours of student-focused office hours each week. Many high enrollment courses are supported by numerous leaders, which can greatly increase the availability to participate in sessions and/or office hours. The courses traditionally offered are of the freshman/sophomore level courses, but we have branched out into 3 junior level courses as well. Essentially, the current credit level is not a prerequisite of enrolling in SI supported courses, so students of any year designation are able to enroll in these courses, thus affording them the opportunity to participate in SI.

Student participants in SI sessions mirror non-participants in terms of demographics. Although students attending SI often have lower overall SAT/ACT test scores, they outperform non-attendees. Each term we have strong statistical significance in our increases in course grades for students who regularly attend SI sessions (at least 6 times per semester) versus students who do not attend.

F. Program Location and Facility

The current location of the SI program is in the Student Support Services building, which also houses Financial Aid, Registrar, Controller, Cashier, and Freshman Academic Advising Services, among other offices of support. Our first floor location is visible and easy to access. The program is housed in the Center for Learning And Student Success (CLASS), which also supports Learning Communities, Student Success Series, tutoring, drop-in advising, etc. There is a small workroom provided for SI leader office hours, preparation and study. There are currently plans to move the CLASS office to a more interior building on campus and join the resources provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Math Learning Center and the University Center for Excellence in Writing in a comprehensive Center for Teaching and Learning. Future recertification will highlight any and all changes made to the location of our program’s main location.
SI sessions, on the other hand, take place throughout campus in a variety of locations. Our program currently has three permanent rooms dedicated only to the use of SI sessions. We hold review sessions in larger lecture halls to accommodate the number of students who typically participate in pre-exam study groups. Whenever possible, rooms closest to the lecture are used for convenience of use by students.

As the program expands, we are beginning to offer academic support through alternative (virtual) means – including through skype (online, real-time video chat) and through SI Leader developed websites and social networking media to better reach the large numbers of students enrolled in SI-supported courses.

**G. Training Guidelines (administration; selection, hours, tracking, evaluation, etc.)**

Our training process is very structured. Initial pre-term training takes place before classes begin each semester. Training is administered by the Director of Student Retention and the Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction. Our initial training is two full-days, 8 hours each day. All leaders must take place in all trainings, regardless of previous length of service. Our ‘veteran’ leaders take on a larger role in the facilitation of training for certain points. A precise agenda (located in ‘Information Pages’ p.1-2) is formulated early. Leaders are given the UMKC SI Leader Training materials along with additional materials designed to assist in training leaders to facilitate study sessions in multiple disciplines. We encourage leaders to evaluate the nature and effectiveness of the training they received in an open forum during our first in-service training, traditionally held after the third week of training. We find that reflection is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of the initial training as it pertains to the nature of the position.

**H. General Conduct of Trainings**

In addition to the training delineated by the UMKC model, we cover University based information, such as additional support programs and offices on campus, Human Resources information, etc. We invite representatives from numerous offices to do short presentations on services. We traditionally have representatives from Disability services and Athletics. We currently hire between 40-45 leaders each term. All leaders take place in all trainings. We find that it is important to incorporate team building activities into training, as co-leaders are often used as mentors for leaders and the bonds formed during trainings help to foster the level of communication we find most effective in maintaining a fresh, ever evolving program.

Pre-term training occurs once each semester for 2 days. In-service trainings are held monthly and last 1.5-2 hours. Additional on-line trainings and discussions are posted on Blackboard. There is a new discussion module every two weeks. Topics of theory, pedagogy and requisite skills are discussed. These discussions are further supported by academic journal articles that assist student-leader discussions. The coordinator of SI moderates these discussions and provides feedback. Leaders typically spend 2-3 hours on each Blackboard module.
Peer observations are also conducted every semester. Leader must observe at least two leaders’ sessions. Leaders are asked to complete a small form that highlights congratulatory and constructive feedback for the leader observed. Leaders are also asked to reflect on the experience as it pertains to their own sessions and function as a student leader. All observation forms and feedback from both leader and supervisor are shared with the observed leaders. This is an integral portion of our training of leaders.

All trainings, peer observations and modules are mandatory for all leaders.