

# Academic Support Services

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## Special Interest:

Measure your students' level of test anxiety using the enclosed test anxiety inventory.

*We want you! The Academic Support Services Division is forming an advisory board and are seeking interested persons to serve. Interested faculty should contact Sheryl Blahnik at Ext. 282.*

## New Division Created

Academic Support Services is a division that was formed in the fall of 2007 in order to re-focus attention on retention of our students. Services within the Division include:

**Career Services**  
**ISTEP (displaced homemaker program)**  
**Learning Accommodation Services**  
**Learning Resources Center and Audio Visual Services**

**Student Learning Services (Student Learning Center and Testing Center)**

**Student Support**



### Contact Information:

Academic Support Services Division Office - S145, Ext 224  
 Career Services - C129, Ext. 307  
 ISTEP - C129, Ext. 232  
 Learning Accommodation Services - C136, Ext. 379  
 Learning Resources Center - C155, Ext. 296  
 Student Learning Center - S117, Ext. 419  
 Testing Center - W124, Ext. 238  
 Student Support - C129, Ext. 232

## Career Services Staff in the Classroom

Would you like us to facilitate your class when you are unable to be at the college? Instead of canceling, call us and we will bring our expertise to your classroom and share it with the students. It's a wonderful opportunity for them to learn about resume writing and interview-

ing. You can choose from a number of Career Development topics.

If you are interested, we would love to come and speak to your classes about what we can offer them.

### Contact

Michael Diggs, Ext. 205  
 Janean Garrett, Ext. 304  
 Becky Lawson, Ext. 307

*"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."  
 B.F. Skinner (1904 - 1990)*

## Learning Accommodation Services - C136 — Ext. 379

**Learning Accommodations Services** serves both students and instructors. In addition to ensuring that students with disabilities receive the appropriate accommodations, the LAS staff is available to assist instructors with any student who is having academic or behavioral problems. Instructors are encouraged to consult with Mary or Josh concerning individual students who may be struggling.

Tutoring by both peers and faculty

is available in the Resource Room. Students who need tutoring should see Josh to arrange their schedule.

Mary can administer the Woodcock Johnson Assessment as a screening for learning disabilities. The vast majority of RCC students who have taken this assessment are very low in both short-term and long-term memory. We have software in our Resource Room that students can use to improve their memory. Any

student can use this software; two or three times a week for 20 minutes each time will make a big difference.

If you would like to see a demonstration of the Woodcock-Johnson Assessment, contact Mary Atkins at Ext. 362 or Sheryl Blahnik at Ext. 282. We would be excited to show you this useful learning assessment tool.

## Learning Resources Center Enhances Book Collection

The Learning Resources Center [LRC] continues to enhance and update its general and reference book collections. Since July 2007, the LRC has purchased nearly 230 books – most of them published in 2007. Whether you're conducting academic research or simply seeking literary solace, check out the new books in the LRC. Recent titles range from Carl Bernstein's portrait of Hillary Rodham Clinton [A

*Woman in Charge*], to Michael Blitz and Louise Krasniewicz's *Johnny Depp: A Biography*.

Faculty, staff and students can access the LRC databases at home through the use of their NetID. (Faculty and staff should use the log-in they normally use when turning on their pc's in their offices.) Go to [my.richland.edu](http://my.richland.edu) to log in.

**Check out the  
new books in  
the LRC!**

## Plan to Partner with the LRC Staff this Spring!

The Learning Resources Center looks forward to partnering with faculty to help all students excel. If you'd like to schedule a research workshop for your students, please contact Carolyn Sanford at Ext. 294 or visit her in the LRC.

During the Fall 2007 semester,

more than 225 students participated in the LRC's Information Literacy classes. The LRC also is presenting research workshops as part of Academic Support Services' ongoing series of workshops to help new students transition to college life.

**In the middle of  
every difficulty  
lies opportunity.  
Albert Einstein**

## Student Support Offers Students Structured Support System

### Persistence

The key to student success is consistency and persistence. This requires the concept the faculty and staff wrapping their collective arms around the students. We must remove every barrier to their success by providing a sense of "surrounding" services. The research tells us that in order to retain students we need to surround them with the services that are essential for their success.

Over the next semester, Kathryn

Mast, Director of Student Support will pilot programs designed to provide complimentary "wrap-around" services to students. Kathryn's will focused exploring different ways of helping students succeed and to retain them at the College. Her role will work in the following way:

Piloting new approaches for supportive, wrap-around services  
Working with faculty to identify strategies to help students be successful  
Working with at-risk students; tracking and connecting them to services that are essential for their success.

Piloting new and innovative services

Kathryn has been monitoring at-risk student progress with faculty and support services.

Working inside of the classrooms is a strategy has been employed in previous years. It is our intent to bring faculty, staff, and students together as a team to approach retention. Faculty and staff will help the student obtain the skills base to be success and manage their academic endeavors.

### Consistency

## Audio-Visual Department Update

Services available in Audio Visual

Multi-media systems technical support and service for faculty and students in the classroom

Schedule and loan media, video tapes, and DVDs

Equipment setup, DVD/VCR & monitor, computer-projector, speakerphones, etc.

Technical support for video conferencing and satellite teleconferences

Media duplication (DVD/CD/videotapes/ audio tapes)

Training and maintenance of ScanTron

grading machine

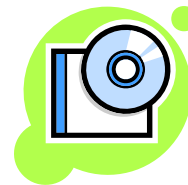
Tightrope digital signage system (internal television system)

Maintenance of the College's low power AM radio station

Audio Visual will answer any audio visual equipment related problems in the classrooms, however, due to the wide variety of potential hardware and or software related problems, we may need to direct any computer related problems to Technical Services.

Audio Visual serves faculty and staff on a daily basis and is always willing to assist a student if they need instruction on a classroom multi-media system or if they have a special need that is within our scope to assist them with.

Please report any problems with classroom multi-media systems to the Audio Visual department at ext. 299. Most problems can be resolved quickly but in the event of equipment failure, we will do our best to troubleshoot the problem in a timely manner and provide a feasible option that will minimize



## Internships and Part-time and Full-time Employment Opportunities

Did you know that the RCC Career Center can provide information about Internships and Part-time/ Full-time Employment?

Students may want to inquire about internship opportunities in your program of study. Internship opportunities will provide you with hands-on

experience that will give you a chance to enhance the skills that you have been building on in your educational experience. Internships can be paid or non-paid and may even lead to future employment. Internships can be your opportunity to not only test your knowledge, skills and abilities, but also try em-

ployer settings that you may be interested in.

Also, the RCC Career Center hosts a website, [Collegecentral.com/richlandcc](http://Collegecentral.com/richlandcc), which posts part-time and full-time employment not only locally, but may have information about internships. Please stop in Students Services, visit the Career Center and let us assist you with your needs!

The following test anxiety diagnostic is best used as an “ice breaker” to get students thinking about the impact of test anxiety on performance. This is an excellent device for beginning a dialog between the learning skills professional or a college counselor and the student. It is a logical progression then to open a dialog about strategies, techniques, practices, and the skills for college level learning that will help get test anxiety under control.

### **MEASURE YOUR TEST ANXIETY**

Some test anxiety can actually sharpen the senses and speed recall. However, when test anxiety rises above a certain level, it can have the opposite effect. The following diagnostic test can give you an idea of how much text anxiety you experience and what to do about it if it has become an impediment.

How much test anxiety do you have? Circle “True” or “False” according to your response to each statement.

1. **True False** While taking an important exam, I find myself thinking of how much brighter the other students are than I am.
2. **True False** If I were to take an intelligence test, I would worry a great deal before taking it.
3. **True False** If I knew I was going to take an intelligence test, I would feel less confident and anxious.
4. **True False** While taking an important exam, I perspire a great deal.
5. **True False** During class examinations, I find myself thinking of things unrelated to the actual course material.
6. **True False** I get to feeling very panicky when I have to take a surprise exam.
7. **True False** During a test, I find myself thinking of the consequences of failing.
8. **True False** After important tests, I am frequently so tense my stomach gets upset.
9. **True False** I freeze up on things like intelligence tests and final exams.
10. **True False** Getting good grades on one test doesn't seem to increase my confidence on the second.
11. **True False** I sometimes feel my heart beating very fast during important exams.
12. **True False** After taking a test, I always feel I could have done better than I actually did.
13. **True False** I usually get depressed after taking a test.
14. **True False** I have an uneasy, upset feeling before taking a final examination.
15. **True False** When taking a test, my emotional feelings interfere with my performance.
16. **True False** During a course examination, I frequently get so nervous that I forget facts I really know.
17. **True False** I seem to defeat myself while working on important tests.
18. **True False** The harder I work at taking a test or studying for one, the more confused I get.
19. **True False** As soon as an exam is over, I try to stop worrying about it, but I just can't.
20. **True False** During exams, I sometimes wonder if I'll ever get through school.
21. **True False** I would rather write a paper than take an examination for my grade in a course.
22. **True False** I wish examinations did not bother me so much.
23. **True False** I think I could do much better on tests if I could take them alone and not feel pressured by time limits.
24. **True False** Thinking about the grade I may get in a course interferes with my studying and performance on tests.
25. **True False** If examinations could be done away with, I think I would actually learn more.
26. **True False** On exams I am fearful I will forget something if I don't write fast and answer quickly.
27. **True False** I really can see why some people get so anxiety ridden about tests.
28. **True False** Thoughts of doing poorly interfere with my performance on tests.
29. **True False** I don't study any harder for final exams than for the rest of my coursework.
30. **True False** Even when I'm well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious about it.

- 31. **True False** I don't enjoy eating before an important test.
- 32. **True False** Before an important examination, I find my hands or arms trembling.
- 33. **True False** I feel the need for "cramming" before an exam.
- 34. **True False** The college should recognize that some students are more nervous than others about tests and that this affects their performance.
- 35. **True False** I feel very uneasy just before getting a test paper back.
- 36. **True False** I dread courses where the instructor has the habit of giving "pop" quizzes.

### Scoring

The total number of "True "responses is your test anxiety score. Count and place that number in the box.

A score of 11 or below suggests low test anxiety.

A score of 12 to 20 suggests medium test anxiety.

A score above 20 indicates high test anxiety.

In general, a score of 15 or higher suggests that you have enough discomfort when taking tests that it could impede your performance. A high test anxiety score is not necessarily a cause for alarm. Scoring in the medium to high range simply means that you could benefit from meetings with a learning skills specialist or campus counselor. Excess test anxiety interferes with learning and recall and can be overcome.

Some of the anxiety reducing techniques can produce dramatic results in a fairly short period of time. Permanent changes in how you handle test anxiety very rarely happen immediately. They can happen in a reasonable amount of time with help from a professional in the field. One *major cause* of test anxiety is going into a test not knowing whether you've learned the material or not. It is normal for humans to experience anxiety when facing situations involving the unknown. Using a study technique such as the Note-card Question and Answer Technique or the Cornell System can go a long way to help identify what you have and have not learned BEFORE you take a test - when something can still be done about it.

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*From a Test Anxiety Scale reproduced from Sarason, I.G. (1980), Test Anxiety: Theory, Research, and Applications.*

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## Stress and Anxiety—Sheryl Blahnik

Shortly after I arrived at Richland (in 1994), a student I was working with came in to see me for counseling. She was feeling very stressed about her classes. She appeared to have a difficult time expressing her concerns verbally. I knew this student loved to draw so I asked her to draw a picture of how she was feeling. Here is my version of what she drew:



When she brought this drawing to me, we sat down and explored her negative self-talk. Even though she wasn't actually hearing these kinds of statements being said to her, she imagined that her professors were saying these kinds of things. We looked at ways she could embrace more positive and encouraging behaviors. We examined when she started feeling insecure and how she could overcome this to be successful. She came to see me several times to work on her anxiety issues, self-concept concerns and study skills. She eventually graduated from a four-year institution, is successful in her work and reports that seeking counseling was the single most important step she took that kept her from giving up.

If you know of a student who appears to need additional support, don't hesitate to make a referral for him or her to the counselors in the Student Services Center. They can assist the student with finding the most appropriate services and resources to address their needs. It takes all of us to notice when a student is struggling and needs support!

It is challenging to start a conversation with a student who is showing signs of "not caring" about her course. Let's face it. This course and the other courses you teach are your passion! It can be difficult to understand why someone isn't as excited about the material you are teaching as you are with teaching it. That is why it is important to know HOW to engage in a caring confrontation with your students. Many people consider confrontations to be negative. However, the definition of a confrontation suggests that it is not negative at all:

The act of confronting or the state of being confronted, especially a meeting face to face—American Heritage Dictionary)

You will find some guidelines on the next page for engaging in a caring confrontation with someone else. Hopefully this information will be useful to you in class and on a daily basis with those around you.

# How to Confront a Student with Care

*Gum snapping! Foot tapping! Napping!*

All of these can be someone's behavior and another person's pet peeve.

Faculty at RCC have identified several issues that are pet peeves to them. These pet peeves are also negative behaviors that often go unaddressed in the classroom, or are addressed in ways that are indirect, leaving room for students to misinterpret what is being said to them.

Top pet peeves identified by faculty include:

- Coming to class consistently late
- Coming to class and having a cell phone ring or vibrate loudly
- Chatter during lectures
- Disorganized papers and assignments
- Not doing homework

Students need to know we care about them. They need to understand that their behaviors can cause them to have difficulties in classes. If professors do not identify these behaviors for the student, the student will never correct the behaviors. Ignoring the behavior can create more challenges in the classroom because it sends a message to other students that they, too, can "get away with" the same behaviors.

We are training the future workforce and must help the student understand how their behaviors will impact their workplace behaviors. In essence, you are the employer, and as the employer, you have certain expectations of your employee (the student). A consequence of not performing your duties as an employee is to be terminated and the equivalent of that for a student is to be dropped or earn an "F" for the course.

Confronting behavior can be difficult for some people. It is uncomfortable for both the confronter and the confrontee.

## Preparation

Identify the issues you wish to present to the individual.

Gather the facts of the situation.

Practice the confrontation with a counselor, supervisor, colleague, or friend.

Be aware of the resources available to the student.

## Delivery

Show that you care about the person.

Remain calm.

Communicate your concerns.

Identify the behaviors you observed.

Identify statements the student has made.

Identify attitudes the student has expressed.

Identify what has happened to prompt the conversation.

## Response

Stay problem centered.

Avoid defensiveness.

Let the student respond.

Listen carefully and empathically.

Communicate care, concern, and a desire to talk about problems with a non-judgmental attitude.

Be knowledgeable about the resources available to the student.

Arrange to follow-up with the student after your initial discussion.

## Follow-up

Identify your own feeling(s), which may include:

- Anger
- Helplessness
- Frustration
- Fear

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Support Services is a division at Richland Community College that is dedicated to helping students remain in classes and helping them attain success.

### Services available from the Academic Support Services Division:

#### Career Services

Resume development  
Interview skills workshops  
On and off-campus employment  
Career assessments  
Career resources  
Labor market information

#### ISTEP (for displaced homemakers)

ISTEP is a State of Illinois grant-funded program for women and men who are divorced, widowed, separated or have a disabled spouse.

##### Services Include:

Tuition and textbooks  
Referrals to community and college resources  
Job search skills training  
Job development and training

#### Learning Accommodation

##### Services

Assistance for students with documented disabilities  
Arrangement of accommodations—assistive technologies, specialized tutoring, learning assessments  
Transition from high school to college classes

#### Learning Resources Center

Individualized assistance and bibliographic instruction  
Free library card available to students and RCC District community  
Interlibrary loan services  
Free public access to computers to search the Internet or databases, word processing, etc.  
Walk-up reference assistance including instruction in using electronic resources  
Color and black/white copy machine  
Research assistance

#### Student Learning Center and Testing Center

Free tutoring in reading, writing, biology, mathematics and other subjects.  
Study groups  
Biology modules and manipulatives  
Applied Learning Skills Modules  
Computers to type term papers, conduct research and work on tutorials  
Math videos to supplement math courses  
Placement testing  
Make-up testing, virtual class testing

CLEP and DANTES test

Testing from other universities  
GED practice test and Constitution tests  
EMT and CNA testing

#### Student Support

Provides support programs for students who are in need of additional support to maintain academic excellence  
Provides specialized academic skills workshops  
One-on-one personalized support  
Referrals to other specialized on- and off-campus services

#### Locations:

Career Services—C129, Ext. 307  
ISTEP—C129, Ext. 232  
Learning Accommodation Services—C136, Ext. 379  
Learning Resources Center—C155, Ext. 296  
Student Learning Center—S117, Ext. 419  
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