



Five Years in Review



UMBC

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

2019 - 2024

Message from the Associate Vice Provost and Assistant Dean



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Photos throughout were provided by Marlayna Demond '11, Melissa Penley Cormier '17, and Mike Mower '12.

As a first-generation college student from rural West Virginia, I have devoted over twenty-five years to a career in higher education as a way to give back to a system that has given so much to me. My passion is advocating for students from all backgrounds to help them achieve academic success, and avoid many of the barriers I once faced as a first in family college student. It is a privilege to work alongside an exceptional team in the [Academic Success Center \(ASC\)](#) and countless partners from across the campus. As part of the [Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs](#), the ASC proudly supports UMBC's strategic plan by delivering a robust array of academic support services to all undergraduate students, to promote and reinforce student persistence, academic progression, and timely degree completion. Our services, which include [Academic Advocacy](#), [Academic Learning Resources](#) and [Academic Policy](#), empower students to identify and engage with resources and to develop skills and strategies for success in their academic journey and beyond. We collaborate with faculty, staff, and campus partners to ensure consistent support to all undergraduates to help them achieve their individual goals and earn a UMBC degree.

It's remarkable what has been achieved since establishing our one-stop shop learning center model in 2019. We have earned the International College Learning Center Association's Designation of Excellence, one of only four centers in the world who currently hold such distinction! Our SI PASS Program has earned certification by the International Center for Supplemental Instruction, and our Tutoring Program is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. We collaborated with the College of Engineering and Information Technology to create the new [Computing Success Center \(CSC\)](#), opening a new dedicated space in the Fine Arts building for the CSC and SI PASS.

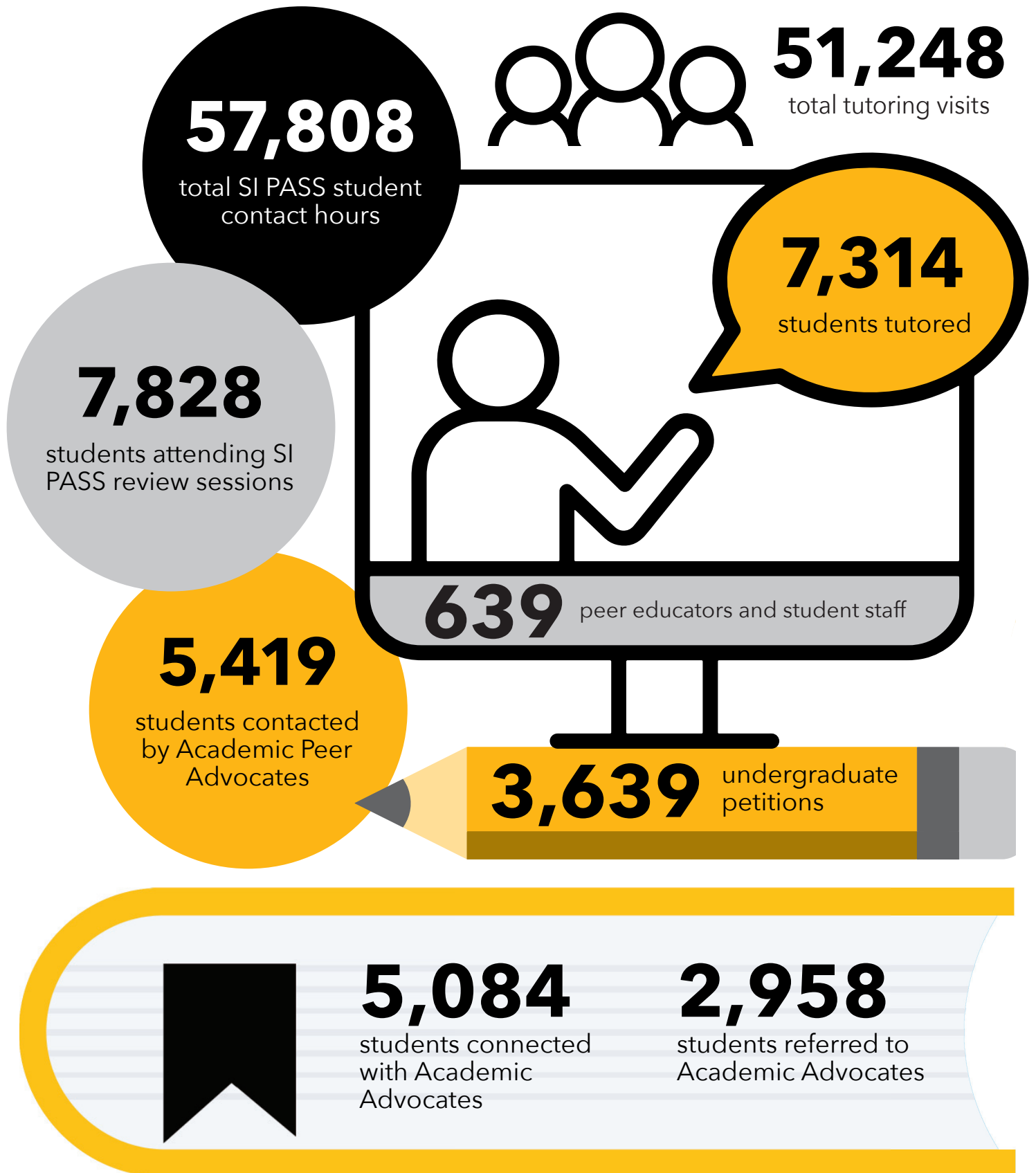
The expansion of the ASC allowed for us to centralize some of our student-facing programs in a highly visible and accessible location in the Library. Our ASC Welcome Desk is now one of the first stops for new and prospective students and their families, with a guest experience team ready to help answer questions and connect students to the appropriate campus resources, in collaboration and in partnership with our [Academic Care Team](#). Many faculty schedule class visits, and campus guests from other institutions and organizations seek to learn more about our efforts, particularly our Academic Advocacy program. Representatives from around the world reach out to learn about Academic Advocacy and our Academic Success Center model.

To stay connected to students and to each other we have a robust social media presence on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). As we celebrate our fifth anniversary, we are excited to welcome students, faculty, staff and visitors to our newly expanded space in the Albin O. Kuhn Library and in the Fine Arts Building. Guided by our [core values](#) and in partnership with an exceptional campus community committed to student success, we continue to provide academic support to help students claim their future with their UMBC degree.

Amanda M. Knapp, Ph.D.

Photo by Melissa Penley Cormier '17

5 YEARS AT A GLANCE



RECOGNITION AND REACH



In September 2023, the UMBC Academic Success Center (ASC) gained the Learning Center of Excellence designation from the [International College Learning Center Association \(ICLCA\)](#). There are only four other institutions in the world with an active designation of excellence from ICLCA.

The Academic Success Center has gained [international visibility and recognition](#) as a Learning Center that adheres to the professional standards established by the [International College Learning Center Association](#). The ASC has also been recognized as an early and innovative adopter of the emerging [Academic Advocacy Model](#) positioned uniquely within a College Learning Center. Other campuses routinely reach out to the ASC to request conversations with leadership to learn how to replicate and build upon the models at their institutions.

The ASC's [Tutoring Program](#) meets the College Reading and Learning Association's International Tutor Training Program Certification and the [SI PASS Program](#) – ASC's peer-assisted study sessions – is accredited through the International Center for Supplemental Instruction. In the past year, both organizations hosted site visits at UMBC's Academic Success Center, when representatives from college learning centers around the world toured our spaces and learned about our model to support student success.



Photo by Kelsey Nguyen

ASC PEER EDUCATORS

Peer Educators are crucial to the success of the Academic Success Center—Tutors, SI PASS Leaders, Academic Peer Advocates, and a Guest Experience Team make our work possible. Over the past five years, the ASC has employed over 600 peer educators, a vital part of our programs. Tutors and SI PASS Leaders are faculty-recommended model students who have succeeded in the courses they support. Academic Peer Advocates (APAs) are successful model students who empower their peers to take advantage of appropriate campus resources at UMBC. Our peer educators attend ongoing training to improve their knowledge and skills, on topics including: active learning theories, study skills, questioning techniques, online learning theories, communication strategies, metacognition, and conscious and unconscious bias. They participate in mock sessions for their peers and are observed, evaluated and given feedback through one-on-one meetings with their supervisors. We encourage our experienced peers to complete higher levels of training and mentor new peers. Training for all ASC tutors is certified by the International Tutor Training Program through the College Reading and Learning Association, and our SI PASS Program is accredited by the International Center for Supplemental Instruction.

In end-of-semester reflection surveys, tutors described their strengths as:

- Active listening and questioning techniques
- Modeling study strategies
- Communication strategies
- Adapting to students' learning preferences
- Supporting students from a variety of backgrounds



Peer Educator Spotlight

Hallel Dereb '26 is a Junior, majoring in Computer Science, who works as an SI PASS Leader.

"Being an SI PASS leader has honed my leadership skills, enabling me to support my peers academically while fostering a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. This experience has also empowered me to make a meaningful impact in my community by helping others achieve their academic goals, and it has been instrumental in my personal and professional growth."

"Seeing students come back each week and hearing how they've taken what we've done and were able to better understand an assignment...I find it most fulfilling to see the students grow each session."

-Academic Peer Educator

52

Student Staff

398

Peer Tutors

51

Academic Peer Advocates

158

SI PASS Leaders

ACADEMIC POLICY



The Academic Success Center empowers students to take charge of their academic careers through understanding and navigating academic policies. We provide policy support in many different forms:

- Academic ombuds services
- Admissions interviews involving prior academic misconduct
- Course repeat petitions
- General undergraduate academic policy questions
- Grading method petitions
- Late-add petitions
- Non-applicable semester petitions
- Petitions regarding the General Education Program and/or University Requirements
- Petitions regarding undergraduate commencement participation

The largest number of petitions are from students who seek to repeat a course for the third and final attempt. This academic intervention requires students to create a plan for success in the course, which includes time management and tutoring support. With the recommendation of their academic advisors and approval from the Academic Success Center, students completing the course for the final attempt are more likely to successfully pass.

Petition Type	Total	Approved	% Approved
Course Repeat	3642	2822	78%
Late Add	1028	761	74%
Change Grading Method	341	69	20%
Admission Prior Misconduct	159	71	45%
Graduation Requirements	120	101	84%
Non-Applicable Semester	25	5	20%
Overall Summary	5266	3829	73%

3,593

course repeat
petitions
reviewed

78%

course repeat
petitions
approved

75%

of students registered
for approved course
repeats succeeded in
their courses

Photo by Mike Mower '12

ACADEMIC ADVOCACY

Academic Advocates are dedicated to assisting undergraduate students in resolving academic and institutional challenges which adversely affect persistence, progression, and timely completion of degree. Undergraduate students who may be experiencing barriers to persistence/graduation receive direct outreach from an Academic Advocate to address issues in a timely manner. No matter how complex the concerns (i.e., personal, academic, or financial), Academic Advocates will work together with students to review their progress, present options toward graduation, map out a plan for success, and facilitate coordinated care with the appropriate resources. Every undergraduate student at UMBC has an Academic Advocate who serves as their champion to provide proactive, personalized, and coordinated care.

5,084

students connected
with Academic
Advocates

91%

of all transfer students
connected with an
Academic Advocate
persisted into
Spring 2023



2,958

total referrals to
Academic
Advocates

"My Academic Advocate has been amazing throughout my years at UMBC. They have offered me so much support, patience, and encouragement, and I cannot thank them enough. They have been one of my biggest advocates at UMBC, I always leave their office and meetings feeling better and more sure of myself and my academic capabilities."

-UMBC Student

86%

of the Fall 2023 first-time
students connected with an
Academic Advocate persisted
into Spring 2024

Academic Advocacy Five Years in Review:

- 2019: Academic Advocacy began at UMBC, with three advocates who worked primarily with first-time, full-time students in each academic college.
- 2021: UMBC added an Academic Advocate to support transfer students.
- 2022: UMBC expanded the program to six Academic Advocates (First and Second-Year Academic Advocacy and Academic Peer Advocacy, College Academic Advocates, and a Transfer Academic Advocate).
- 2024: UMBC now has a Director of Academic Advocacy, and four Senior Academic Advocates who work with all first-time in college and transfer students; two focus on all UMBC students in their first year and second year, and two focus on all students in their third through fifth year. An additional Senior Academic Advocate is dedicated to leading the Academic Peer Advocacy Program.

Photo by Marlayna Demond '11

ACADEMIC PEER ADVOCACY

Fall 2022 First-Time, Full-Time New Freshmen	#	% Students Retained to Second Semester (Spring 2023)
All Fall 2022 FTFT Freshmen	2130	95.12%
Students Reached out to by APA (2-3 Risks)	1010	91.49%
Students Who Met with an APA (in response to APA Outreach 2-3 Risks)	141	97.87%
Students not Targeted for APA Outreach (1-0 Risks)	1120	96.83%

The Academic Peer Advocate (APA) Program pairs first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students in their first and second year with trained and compassionate peers dedicated to providing individualized support during their transition to college. APAs empower their peers to take advantage of the appropriate campus resources and to confidently seek help when needed. APAs connect students to the First and Second Year Academic Advocates for coordinated care when there are complicated barriers to navigate.

"My APA was very nice and helpful! She made a comfortable space for me to talk about my concerns. Her advice was helpful and thoughtful, and she spoke from her own experience which helped a lot!"

-UMBC Student

638

APA meetings with

504

individual students

15,447

APA emails sent to

5,419

individual students



Academic Peer Advocate Spotlight

Elizabeth Liedahl '24, earned her B.S. in
Biological Sciences.

"While I was a UMBC student, I worked as an ASC Academic Peer Advocate (APA), and I am excited to return to the program as a Graduate Assistant. I will work alongside the amazing APAs and Advocates while studying toward my Master's in Biotechnology from UMBC. Working for the ASC has reinforced the skills necessary to sustain professional connections and maintain mindful and healthy student habits. I am excited to be back and confident that I am in the right place to cultivate student success."

Photo by Melissa Penley Cormier '17

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is a tutoring space dedicated to helping UMBC students with writing for any undergraduate class at any stage of the writing process. Writing Center tutoring is one-to-one assistance provided by trained peers who help students learn to critique and improve their own writing. Writing Center tutors help students work through their ideas, focusing on organization and clarity over editing.

Top Courses Tutored

Course	# of Visits
ENGL 100	1815
Other (resumes, personal statements, etc.)	1154
AGNG 200	447
CMSC 304	424
ENTR 201	300
ART 216	236
PSYC 437	176
PSYC 309	174
ENGL 393	159
FYS 101	155
ART 321	126
MUSC 322	125
ENGL 101	115
SOWK 360	102

"Working with [the Writing Center Tutor] motivated me and assured me that my writing skills were not as poor as I thought. They helped me to become more confident in my writing skills and also helped me to develop my paper to the best form that it could be."

-UMBC Student

10,680

Total number of Writing Center tutoring visits

4,084

Number of individual students tutored by Writing Center tutors

90%

of students felt more confident about their ability to write after their tutoring session



Tutor Spotlight

Aaron Belmonte '25, is a senior, pursuing a B.A. in psychology.

"Working at the ASC helps me grow side-by-side with the students I am assisting. As individuals, we all deal with a variety of challenges, and we can help overcome them together. I love being a writing tutor because I can help students find their "lightbulb" moment and this allows me to grow my communication and leadership skills through daily tutoring sessions with my fellow students."



"I appreciate my Academic Advocate's understanding, her concern, and her willingness to do whatever is possible to help me succeed as a student."

- UMBC Student



"I found a friend, a guide through my tutors. They were supportive and made me feel 'smart'."

- UMBC Student

APPOINTMENT TUTORING

Appointment Tutoring is an opportunity to study and practice with peers at least once a week in a small group. The Academic Success Center provides appointment tutoring to support the content of most 100 and 200 level courses and some 300 and 400 level courses. Students can choose if they would prefer in-person or online appointment tutoring. Academic Success Center tutors are UMBC students who are recommended by faculty, have received formal tutor training, and have succeeded in the courses they tutor.

16,465

total number of
appointment
tutoring visits

2,341

individual students
tutored by
appointment

94%

of students stated that they felt
more confident in their ability
to understand and learn the
material covered during
tutoring

"I liked the safe
atmosphere of being
able to ask questions and
the tutors helped me think of
concepts in a different light."

-UMBC Student

Top Courses Tutored

Course	# of Visits
MATH 151	892
MATH 152	792
CHEM 351	788
PHYS 121	746
STAT 121	700
CHEM 101	636
BIOL 302	625
CHEM 102	598
BIOL 141	525
MATH 106	515
SPAN 201	505
MATH 155	454
CHEM 352	414
PHYS 122	386
MATH 150	348



"The Academic Success
Center has taught me to think
and process information given to
me in problems for my class. I am
able to understand what questions
ask me to find."

-UMBC Student

"I came back
because I learned so
many things I didn't know
how to do myself like creating
study habits, time management,
and also problem solving skills."

-UMBC Student

DROP-IN TUTORING

The ASC provides drop-in tutoring assistance for students who have quick questions about course concepts, to support the content of many 100 and 200 level courses, and some 300 and 400 level courses, in math and science, Spanish and economics.

12,832

total number of drop-in visits



2,511

individual students tutored by drop-in



Top Courses Tutored

Course	# of Tutoring Visits
MATH 151	2000
MATH 152	1177
MATH 106	1074
CHEM 101	900
MATH 150	854
MATH 155	792
CHEM 102	604
PHYS 121	598
CHEM 351	471
Studying and Practice	471
PHYS 122	286
MATH 221	277
STAT 355	241
BIOL 302	237
BIOL 141	230
STAT 121	187
MATH 251	186

Tutor Spotlight

Avi M. Newman, '24, is a Statistics B.S. major with previous degrees in Biochemistry, Biology, and Philosophy.

"I've been tutoring for over a decade, with over seven years at the ASC! After graduation, I plan to go to grad school and eventually become a professor. My friends often joke that I don't know how to stop learning, but I see that as a good thing! Being able to help other students overcome difficulties and succeed on their academic journeys, while challenging myself to think about and deeply internalize various course material, gives me such an unmatched feeling of fulfillment and exuberance. Seeing and hearing the positive impact I am able to make on the lives of my peers and broader UMBC community is the ultimate reward, one that motivates me to learn all that I can so that I may continue to teach and inspire others. I've struggled in many courses and often times sought help, so being able to assist others in reducing their academic anxiety and better grasping their course material is an honor and privilege that I relish."

COMPUTING SUCCESS CENTER

The Computing Success Center (CSC) was created in 2020 as an online academic support collaboration between the Academic Success Center (ASC) and the College of Engineering and Information Technology (COEIT).

In spring 2023, the Academic Success Center opened new academic support spaces in the Fine Arts Building for the Computing Success Center and Supplemental Instruction Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (SI PASS). This investment by the campus creates a dedicated drop-in space for Computer Science, Computer Engineering and Information Systems students, and students with any programming questions, plus a space for 60 hours per week of SI PASS study sessions for the traditionally most difficult courses at UMBC.

Since its inception as an online support model during remote instruction in 2020, the CSC has seen more than a ten-fold increase in student participation.

1,134

individual students
tutored by the
Computing Success
Center



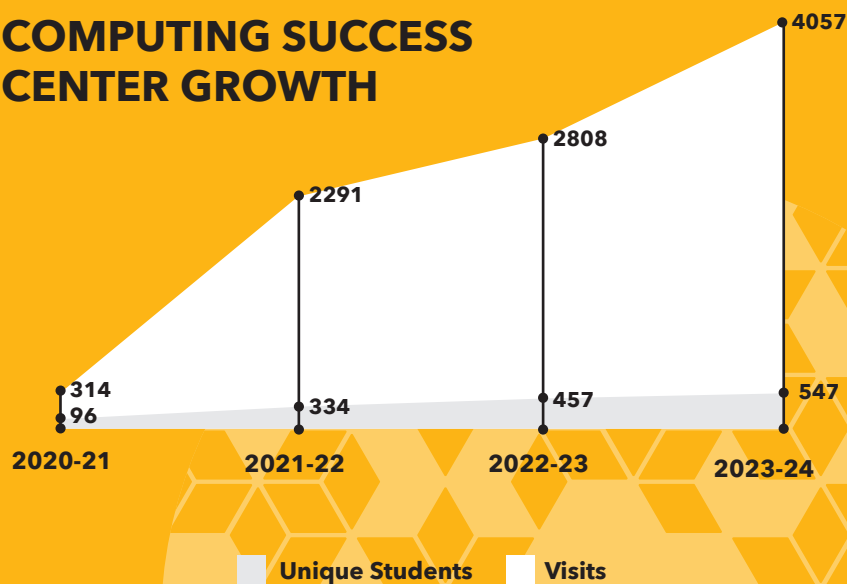
Top Courses Tutored

Course	# of Tutoring Visits
CMSC 201	2853
CMSC 202	2315
CMSC 341	970
CMSC 203	416
CMSC 421	382
CMSC 313	373
CMSC 331	351
IS 247	234
IS 147	195
CMSC 441	189
CMPE 306	144
Other Programming Questions	97
CMSC 411	81
IS 410	69
IS 310	55

9,470

total number of
Computing Success
Center visits

COMPUTING SUCCESS CENTER GROWTH



SI PASS

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support model that utilizes Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). The SI PASS program targets traditionally difficult academic courses, providing regularly scheduled, out-of-class review sessions. The sessions are informal seminars in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools and predict test items. SI PASS support is available for 22 courses including Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Information Systems, Math, Physics, Spanish and Statistics.

8,781

SI PASS sessions

57,808

total number of SI PASS student contact hours

7,828

individual students attending SI PASS

Peer Educator Spotlight

Lydia Mayenge '24, earned her B.S. in Business Technology Administration.

"I was an SI PASS leader and mentor for MATH 151 with the Academic Success Center. I joined SI PASS during fall 2022 because I wanted to provide support and resources to math students, having started my time at UMBC during COVID, when academic resources were limited. Working in the ASC helped me develop as a UMBC student as well as a community member, connecting me to my peers. After graduation, the leadership skills as well as public speaking skills I gained through SI PASS have helped me further in my graduate school program in Business Data Analytics at the University of Maryland, College Park."

Retention Rates and GPA for Registered First-Time and Transfer Students by SI PASS Participation During Fall 2023

Attended/ Not Attended SI PASS	Term	First-Time Admitted Students	Cumulative GPA End of Term First-Time Students	1 Semester Retention First-Time Students	Transfer Admitted Students	Cumulative GPA End of Term Transfer Students	1 Semester Retention Transfer Students
SI PASS	Fall 2023	1011	3.21	97.13%	216	2.88	86.67%
No SI PASS	Fall 2023	2628	3.00	92.85%	528	2.82	84.85%

Retention rates for first-time admitted students (those who came directly to UMBC from high school) and transfer-admitted students who attended SI PASS were higher than those who did not.

ACADEMIC SKILLS MEETINGS

Academic Skills Meetings are one-to-one meetings available to all undergraduate students who want individualized strategies and advice for being successful academically. Academic Skills Meetings can help students learn new study skills, develop better time management strategies, and find appropriate UMBC resources.



402

Individual Students

542

Academic Skills Meetings

76%

of students finished the semester with a GPA of 2.0 or higher

86%

were retained into the next semester at UMBC

ACADEMIC SUPPORT COURSES

EDUC 113 and EDUC 114, now called UNIV 102, are success courses delivered through the Academic Success Center, in partnership with the Office of Financial Aid, Student Business Services, and the Office for Academic and Pre-Professional Advising. EDUC 113 is designed for students who are on academic probation or suspension. EDUC 114 uses a similar curriculum to support students beginning their academic journey at UMBC. Both EDUC 113 and EDUC 114 provide students with the skills to succeed at UMBC and beyond.



James Dharmaraj '21, Information Systems, working in IT as a Department of Defense Contractor.

When he was a student at UMBC, he faced academic challenges. After being placed on academic probation, James enrolled in EDUC 113.

"The class was what I needed to make sure I stayed on track to graduate from UMBC... I learned time management, how to set SMART goals, [and] how to prioritize my tasks to get everything done I needed to do."

EARLY ACADEMIC ALERTS



64%

of alerts sent
resulted in a grade of
A, B, C, P, or W

"I received an
academic alert so I reached
out to the Academic Success
Center. I met with a staff member
and learned about my options. I
didn't know how to study for the
class so I made a tutoring
appointment."

-UMBC Student

34%

of first-year students
received at least one
academic alert

19%

of non first-year
students received at
least one academic
alert

The ASC helps support student success through Early Academic Alerts. This program allows instructors to notify students who might not be successful in the course. Instructors identify these students at risk of receiving a D or F and send them alerts. Once alerted, these students are pointed toward resources that can help them become successful in the course.

Photo by Marlayna Demond '11

LOOKING FORWARD

The first five years of our Academic Success Center have been a resounding success! With our newly renovated library space in the heart of campus, the Academic Success Center is positioned as a key academic support, visible and accessible to all undergraduate students. Our over 200 peer educators are trained on referring students to the many Academic Success Center and campus resources. By co-locating our Tutoring and Academic Peer Advocacy Programs together in the Library, students will be able to access our services seamlessly, with the right help being available at the right time.

Our Academic Advocacy team has adapted their model to serve all undergraduate first-time in college and transfer students, supporting first and second year students focusing on retention, and then helping students progress to graduation. The Academic Peer Advocates will also help all new students navigate institutional resources and ensure that students with more complex needs are directed to the Academic Advocates for personalized outreach. Our staff is poised to present at several national and international conferences on our unique academic support model, helping partner campuses build their own Academic Advocacy programs to support students.

UMBC has been selected to participate in the four-year U.S. Department of Education Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program, as part of the University System of Maryland's ABCs for Student Success project, to provide Advising, Belonging and Coaching peer mentoring to support underserved students in higher education. The Academic Success Center staff will deploy the College Access: Research and Action (CARA) based training for our Academic Peer Advocates, in collaboration with campus advisors and partners, to assess how this holistic support can increase rates of persistence, retention, and graduation for underserved students, as well as build capacity at UMBC while fostering inter-institutional collaborations across the System and State. This is an exciting opportunity for the Academic Success Center, to deepen partnerships on campus and across Maryland, while working to decrease equity gaps for students of color and low-income students.

Our Academic Advocacy and Academic Policy staff will continue to be available in Sherman Hall 3rd floor for student and faculty meetings. We will continue to offer SI PASS review sessions and the Computing Success Center in our new Fine Arts spaces. While we are expanding the reach of our Academic Success Center spaces, we will remain committed to [our mission and core values](#):

The mission of the Academic Success Center is to provide centralized academic support services for undergraduate students to help them achieve their individual goals and earn a UMBC degree. Guided by caring peers, staff and faculty, and in collaboration with the campus community, the ASC's programs empower students to identify and engage with resources and to develop skills and strategies for success in their academic journey and beyond.

By positioning our Academic Success Center services as an easy-to-access, centralized support resource, we are removing barriers to student success and normalizing help seeking among students.

Visit us on the first floor of the UMBC Library and online at academicsuccess.umbc.edu.



Photo by Marlayna Demond '11

MEET OUR TEAM



Amanda M. Knapp, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Provost and
Assistant Dean



Delana Gregg, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Provost



Amanda Sharp, Ed.D.
Director,
Academic Advocacy



Deborah Webb
Assistant Director,
Supplemental Instruction



Tanay Adams
Operations and Guest
Experience Coordinator



Tenley Stewart
Business Services Specialist



Shelly Johnson
General Associate



Beck Hertl
Coordinator,
Tutoring Services



Elaine MacDougall
Assistant Director,
Writing Center



Ira Fabri
Associate Director,
Tutoring Services



Micah Havens
Coordinator, Computing
Success Center



Alison Larsen
Senior Academic Advocate



Cari Coleman Godin
Senior Academic Advocate



Clifton Saul
Senior Academic Advocate



Hope Weisman
Senior Academic Advocate