

# THINK TANK

## 2020-2021

### DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

THINK TANK is dedicated to empowering Arizona students by providing a positive environment where they can master the skills needed to become successful lifelong learners. Every University of Arizona student provides us with the opportunity to discover new ways of learning. By offering a wide range of programs and services, we encourage students to apply and refine transferable skills that will sustain them throughout their academic and professional lives. Strengthened by our partnerships, application of research, and use of technology, we create diverse learning environments that promote academic and personal exploration, collaboration, and critical thinking. The goals of THINK TANK are:

- As a result of using one or more services at the THINK TANK, students will self-report an increase in their academic self-efficacy.
- As a result of using one or more services at the THINK TANK, students will have a self-reported or observable increase in their metacognitive skills by identifying their learning strengths and applying them to their study habits to become more successful learners.
- As a result of using one or more services at the THINK TANK, students will self-report use of transferable cognitive strategies

Description of Services and Programs:

**Tutoring:** THINK TANK offers content area peer tutoring services for math, science, and business courses. Language tutoring is offered by Spanish and French instructors at THINK TANK. The majority of tutoring (92%) is free of charge and drop-in. THINK TANK also offers fee-based individual and group tutoring sessions. THINK TANK peer tutors are certified through the College Reading and Learning Association's training program.

**Supplemental Instruction:** Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a free service that provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class study sessions. SI sessions are led by students who have previously taken the course. During the sessions, students use collaborative learning techniques to review important course concepts, predict and practice test items, develop test prep strategies, and discuss readings.

**Writing Center:** THINK TANK's Writing Center offers students free drop-in tutoring sessions for writing support, as well as free 30-minute appointments. Writing tutors offer feedback on structure, formatting, style, and expression, and serve as a sounding board for students' ideas. Though many of the students come for support in foundational English courses, the Writing Center offers support for students in all subjects.

**Schedule for Success:** Schedule for Success (S4S) is a comprehensive program designed to help students build a strong foundation and support system at the University of Arizona. Students are placed into S4S based on their chosen major and the score they receive on their math placement exam. The program is designed to help students progress through their required math at the university level. Specific coursework, professional academic coaching, and individualized tutoring contribute to students' success this year and beyond.

**Academic Skills Tutoring:** Academic Skills Tutoring is part of the THINK TANK's academic coaching suite of services. Students work one-on-one with a peer who is trained as an Academic Skills Tutor (AST) to develop and refine academic skills, study strategies, and key behaviors to succeed in college. ASTs also conduct free regular workshops on academic skills.

**Test Prep:** THINK TANK offers preparatory courses for college entrance exams (ACT and SAT) as well as Graduate School entrance exams (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT). The courses are comprehensive and cost-effective. Professional staff members with training in the respective areas teach the Test Prep courses.

**Exam Prep:** THINK TANK offers two-hour, course-specific, math exam reviews in various courses during the fall and spring semesters. This is a fee-based service.

**Academic Coaching:** Academic Coaching includes a series of individual meetings with a professional Learning Specialist to help students develop and refine skills necessary for the rigors of the University of Arizona. Topics include balancing and prioritizing time, success in courses, and test preparation. This is a fee-based service.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The 2020-2021 Academic Year was the first all online year for THINK TANK and the academic support services we provide. This year the department has been managing the continued delivery of online services, successfully moving into our new home at BASC, and navigating/identifying the needs of students. The following is a summary of initiatives and efforts by all staff in the department:*

### New Programs and Initiatives

- Online Learning resources for students were developed and distributed by our teams. These include workshops by the Writing Center, Academic Skills Tutors, and Learning Specialist modules that exist in the SSRI Website. We will continue to expand this content.
- Supplemental Instruction continued to develop and explore effective online sessions.
- Content Tutoring initiated a strategic partnership to support statistic courses. This was accomplished with the support of faculty and advisors. Five courses were supported and to pilot resulted in 175 visits from 42 unique students in one semester.
- In efforts to increase engagement, Supplemental Instruction piloted Math Collaborative Review sessions for exams which grew in popularity with every exam.
- The Writing Center observed a significant shift in utilization with 3,535 uses of the Feedback Loop service versus 1,926 regular Zoom Sessions.

### Total Visits and Students Served

- THINK TANK had close to 41,000 visits across all services, serving 5,736 unique students. In addition, the teams had 2,919 effective outreach connections during orientation and prior to the semester starting. Visits do not include SAS100AX attendance, which includes additional connections with 1,900+ students in the cohort.

### Significant Partnerships and Collaborations

- Faculty in different disciplines and Academic Advising partnerships made statistics tutoring possible.
- The content tutoring program facilitated coordination and tutoring services to 3 TRiO grants such as ASEMS, Teacher Prep, and THRIVE, as well as continued targeted services with other college partners such as College of Engineering and Eller LEAD.
- In partnership with the Writing Across the Curriculum Director and the Writing Program, successfully proposed and was awarded a \$200,000 Hispanic Serving Institution grant to begin a two-year pilot.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### Services

- The Schedule for Success SAS 100AX Instructional team transformed the class from small in-person classes in fall 2019 to larger Live-Online classes in fall 2020. This included adapting content delivery, utilizing digital platforms, and providing effective flexibility for students.
- The Learning Specialist Team connected with students via text and offering summer appointments help build connection and sense of community for incoming students and can help students feel more comfortable transitioning in the fall. There were 2,045 points of contacts during orientation dates.
- Learning Specialists helped contribute content to the [SSRI website page](#) that was created specifically to support students remotely.
- ASTs led workshops on 4 new topics related to online learning. These were “Managing Time and Staying Organized in Online Classes,” “Getting the Most out of Online Lectures,” “Connecting with Faculty and Classmates as an Online Student,” and “Staying Focused and Motivated in Online Courses.”
- Tutoring and Writing Center began to transition and offer appointment-based tutoring at BASC in Spring 2021.

### Staff

- Hosted several staff engagement activities such as Wisdom Wednesdays, Staff Appreciation Days, Cookbook Sessions. These were efforts to maintain relationships and team synergy while being remote.
- Prepared building for staff to return following COVID protocols, provided orientations to each staff member, and created online training presentations with video tours of BASC.

### Plans

- All services will begin to offer in-person services in Fall 2021, following University and CDC guidelines.
- Tutoring will transition from appointment-based sessions to drop-in models in efforts to increase offerings.
- Knowing that students will still be managing online modalities, we intend to continue offering online learning academic support. We will continue to develop workshops and resources that can be utilized by students in online courses and by Arizona Online students.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

THINK TANK supported 5,736 unique students over the year, totaling 40,845 visits across all of our services.

FREE SERVICES	STUDENTS	VISITS
Math Drop-In Tutoring	935	11,225
Writing Center Visits	2004	5484
Language Drop-In Tutoring	114	252
Science Drop-In Tutoring	418	3587
Business Drop-In Tutoring	191	960
Statistics Drop-In Tutoring	52	235
Supplemental Instruction	2,307	15,225
Academic Skills Tutoring	383	463
Schedule for Success - Learning Specialists	499	1,298
Academic Recovery	50	180
College of Engineering Study Group	102	254
<b>Total Free Services</b>	<b>5,558</b>	<b>39,163</b>

FEE-BASED SERVICES	STUDENTS	VISITS
Academic Coaching	36	150
Exam Prep	245	466
Group Tutoring	10	27
Private Tutoring	187	1019
Writing Private Appointments	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>1,682</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5,736</b>	<b>40,845</b>
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## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic tables below include undergraduate students as of fall census.

Demographic/Academic Group	% of THINK TANK Undergrad Users Fall Census	Comparison to UA Main Campus Undergraduates (Fall 2020 Census)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	69.3%	55.0%
Male	30.7%	45.0%
Unknown/Other	-	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
African American	4.6%	3.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.5%	1.1%
Asian	6.2%	5.0%
Hispanic	30.2%	28.0%
International	5.5%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%
Two or more races	4.3%	4.9%
Unknown / Other	2.8%	5.1%
White	44.9%	47.3%
<b>Pell Recipient</b>		
	35.8%	23.7%
<b>First Generation</b>		
	31.8%	32.8%
<b>Residency</b>		
In-State	63.4%	61.1%
Out-of-State	31.0%	34.4%
International	5.6%	4.6%
<b>College</b>		
Agric and Life Sci	12.7%	8.9%
Applied Sci & Tech	2.0%	3.0%
Arch Plan & Landscape Arch	1.2%	1.7%
Education	1.5%	2.6%
Eller College of Management	12.6%	16.2%
Engineering	8.1%	8.5%
Fine Arts	1.4%	3.6%
Humanities	1.5%	3.7%
Medicine - Tucson	8.8%	4.5%
Nursing	4.5%	2.4%
Optical Science	0.4%	0.3%
Pharmacy	1.9%	1.0%
Public Health	3.3%	2.3%
Science	24.7%	20.0%
Social & Behav Sci	10.5%	16.9%
The A Center	4.9%	3.0%

Participant Demographics (continued)

<i>Class Standing (fall Census)</i>	
<i>Freshman</i>	39.8%
<i>Sophomore</i>	24.8%
<i>Junior</i>	16.9%
<i>Senior</i>	13.7%
<i>Graduate/Professional</i>	4.7%

## RETENTION OUTCOMES

Retention rates for AY19- THINK TANK participants are below. For the purpose of analysis, we define participation as three or more visits for a specific program (Writing Center, SI, or Tutoring), and five or more visits for THINK TANK overall. Approximately 20% of the new first-year students in fall 2019 participated in THINK TANK services 5 or more times. A comparison group for each analysis was created using propensity score matching analysis. Students who used THINK TANK services consistently persist at higher rates than their comparison group of non-participants.

### Full-time First-Time (FTFT)

Program	Participants (Fall 2019 FTFT Cohort)	One-Year FTFT Retention Rate	Retention Rate of Comparison Group
<i>Tutoring (3+ visits)</i>	N=575	90.4%	85.2%
<i>Writing Center (3+ visits)</i>	N=214	91.6%	85.1%
<i>Supplemental Instruction (3+ visits)</i>	N=792	92.3%	86.1%
<i>THINK TANK Participant (5+ visits)</i>	N=1,106	91.0%	84.5%

### Part-Time First-Time (FTPT)

Program	Participants (Fall 2018 FTPT Cohort)	One-Year FTPT Retention Rate	Retention Rate of Comparison Group
<i>Tutoring (3+ visits)</i>	N=212	82.1%	67.9%
<i>Writing Center (3+ visits)</i>	N=51	90.2%	78.4%
<i>Supplemental Instruction (3+ visits)</i>	N=169	86.4%	69.8%
<i>THINK TANK Participant (5+ visits)</i>	N=424	82.3%	63.4%

*Student comparison group is generated using propensity score matching to account for factors which influence retention and program participation*

## PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES

### Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction

- The SI Program, Private Tutoring, and Content Tutoring Programs, had more unique students, and visits in Spring 2021 compared to the S20 semester.
- Drop-In tutoring achieved a 9.67 return rate which is about 4 visits per student higher compared to previous non-pandemic spring semesters.
- Content Tutoring initiated a strategic partnership to support statistic courses. This was accomplished with the support of faculty and advisors. Five courses were supported and to pilot resulted in 175 visits from 42 unique students in one semester.
- The content tutoring program facilitated coordination and tutoring services to 3 TRiO grants such as ASEMS, Teacher Prep, and THRIVE, as well as continued targeted services with other college partners such as College of Engineering and Eller LEAD.
- Supplemental Instruction piloted Math Collaborative Review sessions for exams which grew in popularity with every exam.

### Schedule for Success Program

- **92%** of students placed into college-level math after their first semester; an additional 1% of students who retook MATH 100 in spring placed into college-level math after their second semester. This surpassed the goal of 86%.
- **63%** of students placed into and enrolled into college-level math in spring 2021.

### SAS 100AX

- Successfully transitioned a small-class, in-person format to a larger, live online format for fall 2020.
- Redesigned curriculum to focus on study strategies and academic confidence and provided students structured opportunities to connect with each other fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- Successful creation and roll out of the Undergraduate Teaching Assistant role

### Learning Specialists

- **Academic Resource Page Redesign.** The Learning Specialists worked together to update THINK TANK's academic resources page to make it more visually appealing and more user friendly. This includes newly created modules on Time Management, Learning Strategies, Communicating with Professors, Motivation and Mindset, Success in Online Courses, Stress and Anxiety, and Self-Care and Balance for students to engage with asynchronously.
- **Academic Coaching and Academic Advising Initiative – Spring 2021.** Learning Specialists reached out to each academic college to offer four free academic coaching sessions for up to 20 of their students. Advisors nominated students, Learning Specialists contacted the nominees, and the nominees could choose to engage with this opportunity. 24 students from 7 academic colleges utilized this service for a total of 51 visits.

### Academic Skills Tutoring

- ASTs created and led workshops on 4 new topics related to online learning. These were "Managing Time and Staying Organized in Online Classes," "Getting the Most out of Online Lectures," "Connecting with Faculty and Classmates as an Online Student," and "Staying Focused and Motivated in Online Courses." We will continue to offer these workshops in future semesters.
- 3 ASTs created video content to support students in five week, seven week, and 10 week courses.

- 1 AST co-led 11 workshops with various professional staff members for the Alpha Phi International Fraternity organization. Alpha Phi sought us out to provide support to their members across the U.S. and Canada as they all experienced online coursework. This partnership is continuing in the future.

### Writing Center

- In partnership with the Writing Across the Curriculum Director and the Writing Program, successfully proposed and was awarded a \$200,000 Hispanic Serving Institution grant to begin a two year pilot of embedded tutoring grounded in Anti-Racist Writing Vertically Integrated Writing Across the Curriculum principles.
- The WC hosted the largest number of tutoring sessions in Spring 2021 than it has in any Spring semester since 2017.
- The WC experiences approximately a 40% return from users for a second (or more) session/s.

### Admin Support

- The front desk staff answered 1,042 chats this year. This is the most chats answered over the past five years and a 35% increase from last year.
- 12 students applied for and were awarded scholarships for fee-based services this year, utilizing close to \$5,000 dedicated for these efforts.
- Redesigned Desk Assistant training curriculum and evaluations to focus on development of transferable skills.
- Used Microsoft Teams to set up a more organized and effective system of communicating with program staff about issues students encounter using our services. This improved response time and quality of answers for students.
- Hosted several staff engagement activities such as Wisdom Wednesdays, Staff Appreciation Days, Cookbook Sessions.

### Student Voices

Tutoring and SI: "I'm very grateful for this services and other services provided by Think Tank, all at exceptional quality. Without Think Tank, I would've withdrawn from MATH 112. SI, drop-in tutoring, and exam review sessions are a godsend. You can trust I will convey these same sentiments to the Math Department." – Spring semester student

Writing Center: "My first time utilizing the feedback loop service, and I am surprised by how helpful and encouraging it is. I learned a lot on essay writing from my feedbacks! Very convenient service. Love it." – May 9, 2021

I've had the best time working here for the past almost four years, and I hope you all will continue doing all the wonderful things we do for students for many years to come. -Haley Kenner, Tutor, thank you note

Working here I really developed good communication and taking charge. I used to be nervous to command the desk area, but I improved in that and developed those leadership skills. – Stephenie Tuntland, Desk Assistant, exit interview

## STAFF POINTS OF PRIDE

THINK TANK is proud to acknowledge the many accomplishments of our staff members.

- The SI Program completed their International Center of SI reaccreditation in the fall 20 semester
- Content Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction successfully onboarded a new Tutoring Services Coordinator and two Program Coordinators.
- The SI Services coordinator and one program coordinator were admitted to their Master's programs.
- Schedule for Success was Included in the proposal for the NASPA Virtual Innovation Award for the University of Arizona
- In Spring 2021 halfway through the semester, the SAS 100AX team adjusted the curriculum to include more study strategies which involved creating brand-new lessons and activities with quick turnaround times. Each staff member assisted in creating valuable content that was highly creative, but also relevant and helpful to our students.
- Alyssa O'Keeffe attended Bill Johnson's Student Success Navigator and Life Design Catalyst Coach Life Design Training at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Erika Deianni started nursing school in spring 2021.
- Rae LaBar Palmer completed her master's program and began her Ph.D.
- Caitlin Kerrigan continues to serve as the Arizona NASPA Co-Chair and Board Member for Region VI of NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education)
- Liz Kamerer co-facilitated Intergroup Dialogue for the Environmental Science department and served as a consultant for DEI Consulting hours with Initiatives for Organizational Inclusion.
- Assistant Director of Writing Support Nick Cenegy worked in concert with Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing Program colleagues to draft a successful \$200K grant proposal to fund a Faculty Writing Fellows and Embedded Tutoring Program.
- The collaborative Writing Across the Curriculum team led a coordinated online writing event called #UAWrites: National Day on Writing. The event engaged with faculty, staff, and students across the virtual campus to bring attention to sites of writing and writing support programs on campus via social media platforms.
- Nick was re-elected Rocky Mountain Writing Center state representative for AZ
- Nick co-presented at South Central Writing Centers Association with Leah Bowshier (WC GA) on their work with the WAC team.
- The Writing Center successfully re-certified their program via CRLA in late 2020.
- Two tutors presented at TutorCon, the Rocky Mountain Writing Center's biannual conference.
- Amanda Flexas, Hannah Eaton, Julie Barbier Bularzik, and Nicci Ainuu completed Mental Health First Aid training in October 2020 and are now Mental Health First Aid certified.
- Amanda Flexas was selected and served as a Wellness Ambassador with Life & Work Connections for 2020-2021.
- Precious Craig and Adora Harvey—Desk Assistants—were nominated by Admin Team members for Outstanding Senior Awards. Precious Craig was awarded a Robie Gold Medal.
- Nicci Ainuu graduated with a M.Ed. in Human Relations from Northern Arizona University in November 2020.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### *General*

- Create assessment plans covering departmental needs as well as program specific needs.
- Transition to new scheduling, chat, and visit tracking systems (Retain and Trellis).
- Establish the new BASC locations such as tutoring rooms, meeting rooms, and workspaces for in-person support.
- Create multi-dimensional staff development focusing on professional, supervision, and mentorship. This will support professional staff, graduate assistants, and student workers.

### **Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction**

- Strategically select service modalities, locations, and schedules that will meet students' needs this coming year.
- Continue to expand resources for online tutoring and content support.
- Support Arizona Faculty and students in the transition back to in persona while offering a robust online component of SI.

### **Schedule for Success Program:**

- SAS 100AX will be redesigned to support a cohort of 2000-2500 students. Curriculum will be transformed to hybrid and online formats for future fall semesters.
- Create and implement assessment plan tied to program objectives and learning outcomes to address programmatic changes.

### **Learning Specialists:**

- Implement a Peer Academic Coaching model to support the increasing number of students in Schedule for Success and Academic Recovery.
- Continuation of the Academic Coaching and Academic Advising Initiative in future Spring semesters. This initiative helps Learning Specialists reach students who may not have otherwise had the opportunity. It fosters cross-collaboration efforts between the academic advising community and academic support. Throughout the fall semester, the Learning Specialist team will continue to reach out to academic colleges and consider ways to collaborate with cultural centers.

### **Writing Center**

- Implement and refine Embedded Tutoring program
- Publish existing collection of student-facing multimedia writing resources on web.