

# Academic Enhancement Programs



## ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

### Academic Advising

At Sacred Heart University, academic advising is an integral part of a student's education, and meetings with an academic advisor should be an important and regular feature of a student's life. The Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences coordinates academic advising for all first-year students while the Director of Academic Advising oversees the advisement for incoming transfer students and for upperclass students. First-year students are assigned a faculty advisor from one of the Freshman Advising Programs for their first semester. Freshmen who are ready to decide are encouraged to declare their major soon after the start of their second semester. Once a student officially declares a major by filling out the Declaration of Major form, he or she will receive a new faculty advisor in the chosen discipline. An academic advisor works not only to assist students with course, program, and schedule selection, but also to provide the guidance and support needed to assist students in exploring personal and professional goals. It is very important that students meet with their academic advisors regularly.

### Academic Incentive Program (AIP)

Sacred Heart University's Academic Incentive Program offers academic and personal support to a segment of each year's entering freshman class. The Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Director of Freshman Communication codirect this program designed to enhance the success of highly motivated, academically unprepared freshmen. Selected academic advisors assist these freshmen with their transition

to the challenging academic environment of college. Freshmen are selected for the Academic Incentive Program based on a profile consisting of their high school performance records (grade point averages, rank in class), SAT scores, and performance on the Sacred Heart University English Placement Exam.

Freshmen in the Academic Incentive Program have regular and frequent access to their freshman academic advisor, who also serves as a professor in each student's fall semester EN 109 course. Freshman in the program are encouraged to meet frequently with their freshman academic advisor, who monitors their academic progress and intervenes with appropriate support. The Academic Incentive Program offers:

- Our 3-credit EN 109 (Introduction to Academic Writing) course in a student's first semester. The course is limited to 15 students per section.
- A freshman academic advisor, who serves as the student's EN 109 professor.
- Specially designated sections of selected core courses in the first and second semesters.

Freshman academic advisors assist their advisees as they select courses, choose academic programs, and decide on an academic major. Many Academic Incentive Program freshmen declare their major during their second semester and move to a faculty advisor in their field. Students who choose to remain undeclared stay with their AIP academic advisor until they do declare.

### English as a Second Language (ESL)

The ESL program is designed for students whose native language is not English and who wish to study English either full or part-time. Its purpose is to help students improve their oral and written communication skills in English, preparing them

for successful study in an American academic institution.

The program offers six levels of English language courses, from beginning to advanced. The first four levels are pre-academic, intensive courses. The full-time ESL student enrolls in eight-week sessions, taking a cluster of oral communication, written communication and an elective, totaling 20 hours per week. In addition, students work in the multimedia language lab and on computers with audio, video, software and online learning programs.

Levels 5 and 6 are academic levels and are credit-bearing, semester-long courses that focus on college reading and writing. Students in one of these levels may take University classes while they complete their language training. Thus, the full-time, upper-level ESL student takes a combination of ESL and University courses, carefully planned by his or her academic advisor. Whereas the completion of level five satisfies the English language requirement for graduate study at this University, students may be advised to take level six as well. For further support, tutoring is also available at the University Learning Center.

Placement in the ESL program depends on TOEFL, MELAB, or SAT scores, University placement tests, an oral interview and the student's language profile. For more information regarding the program, contact the director at 203-371-7837.

## **Thomas More School of Honors Studies**

The Honors Program is home to some of the University's brightest and most committed students. The Honors version of the Common Core, The Human Journey, is rigorous, but also highly student-directed, in that students are given greater latitude in selecting readings and designing assignments and, in general, are invited to take active responsibility for what they are learning.

Honors students also organize and participate in their own seminars and discussions on topics inspired by the core or other areas of common interest. The relative size of the University's program and the number of course offerings means that honors students receive highly individualized instruction. Since the best learning can sometimes take place out of the classroom, the program coordinates and funds opportunities every semester to travel as a group to off-campus cultural events, and provides a stipend for students who study abroad.

The mission of the students in the Honors Program is to serve as leaders in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual life of the University. In this way, Honors students can themselves become leaders and active learners.

For more information, visit the Honors website, or contact the director of the program, at 203-371-7730.

## **Independent Study and Individual Instruction**

Independent study is available for the qualified student who wants more advanced or specialized work in a given academic area. Faculty members guide the student in the research needed for the study. Only the student who has officially declared a major and who has successfully completed at least 15 credits will be able to enroll. A maximum of 6 credits of independent study or individualized instruction is permitted toward the baccalaureate degree.

Independent study courses are designated as course number 399 in the appropriate subject area (e.g., EN 399 Independent Study in English). Usually, an independent study course is awarded three credits.

Individual instruction is available for the student who needs a specific course to fulfill degree

requirements but is unable to schedule the course for a valid reason (involvement in student teaching, field experience or unavailability of the course). The syllabus for individual instruction conforms to the usual requirements, including required assignments, for that course. Ordinarily, no student will be permitted to take more than one individual course per semester, and no more than two individual courses to fulfill degree requirements.

## **Instructional Technology and Student Mobile Computing Program**

Recognizing the increasingly important role of technology in our society and in education, Sacred Heart University has made a commitment to, and a serious investment in computers, networking and its supporting technologies. The University's network infrastructure provides connectivity to every facility on campus via a fiber-optic Gigabit Ethernet backbone. The network architecture is capable of supporting well over 5,000 simultaneous users at any given time.

Network services are provided to the student community via 100-megabit data jacks and 54 Mbps wireless access points. These provide access to the University library, Internet and student e-mail 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Wireless access is also provided in the academic buildings, library and most other indoor and outdoor locations where students gather on campus.

VPN, Citrix and terminal services are available to provide connectivity solutions for even the most sophisticated applications, from anywhere on the Internet. Outlook Web Access (OWA) is available through the web, for sending and receiving e-mail from any computer connected anywhere on the Internet.

To promote its "Anytime, Anywhere Learning" initiative, Sacred Heart University deployed wireless networking in the summer of 2000 to create one of the first wireless network campuses in New England. This infrastructure allows students to use their laptops in nearly all outdoor areas on campus, and in most public areas indoors.

The current wireless standard is 54Mbps 802.11g.

The students' computing laboratories are currently comprised of 300 desktop computers dispersed throughout several academic facilities. Six laboratories are used for computer-related instruction, and an additional lab provides 24/7/365 access for Sacred Heart University students, faculty and staff. The University continues to upgrade regular classrooms to "smart" classrooms with fixed multimedia capabilities that allow instructors to fully integrate technology in their classroom presentations. All general-purpose classrooms are now equipped with a full complement of multimedia and audiovisual equipment. These rooms are equipped with LCD projectors, DVD, VCR, audio capabilities, and PC/laptop connections. All classrooms on campus are equipped with an active data jack for instructors or students to access the network. Additionally, there are data/CATV connections in every room for use by the instructor. The network infrastructure is designed with future technologies in mind and with excess capacity to allow for significant growth. The University is making a serious financial commitment to maintaining the network at peak performance capability and reliability. Upgrading the software and hardware that support the network is a continuous process and not one the University will ever say is complete. Sacred Heart's commitment is to keeping a state-of-the-art system in place for all our campus customers.

In 1995, Sacred Heart University became the first university in Connecticut and the fourth in New England to require incoming freshmen to own a

notebook computer that meets a specified standard (networking connectivity to access the Internet, e-mail, University library and other libraries across the country and other networked resources). By fall 1998, all of the University's full-time undergraduate students had notebook computers. In the fall of 2000 the laptop program was changed in order to replace every student-used laptop after two years of use, thereby ensuring that students have the latest hardware and most current software available. The Mobile Computing Program, and the universal nature of the program on this campus, makes integrating technology across the curriculum and into the daily lives of our students, a much easier process. In addition, Sacred Heart University provides all of its full-time faculty members with a notebook computer. Faculty members are able to incorporate more online information into the curriculum and use computers as a key component of classroom instruction; faculty and students are able to communicate using Sacred Heart's Online Web-based Course Management System, "BLACKBOARD," for class content, assignments, questions and classroom discussion groups; as well as virtual office hours.

## **Computer Facilities**

Sacred Heart University offers a state-of-the-art campus network. The library, classrooms, on-campus residence facilities, health and recreation center, and faculty and administrative offices are all networked. With its fiber-optic infrastructure, the University is positioned to support a wide range of emerging technologies.

The University has established itself as a pioneer in the implementation of technology across the curriculum.

A host of multiprocessor campus servers supports the labs and educational programs. The University's 90 Mbps Internet, 10 Mbps Internet2

and Gigabit backbone support 100 Mbps wired and 54 Mbps wireless links throughout the campus. The network also supports video, voice and data across the campus. State-of-the-art routers and fire walls provide high-speed connectivity and security to Wide Area Network segments and is completely managed in-house. This has allowed the administrators to implement traffic-shaping, intrusion detection and wireless security measures for access as secure as it is convenient.

In support of the laptop program, the University has an on-site Notebook Service Center and Call Center staffed by certified technicians open 12 hours a day, Monday through Friday. The University's Call Center is staffed 12 hours a day, 5 days a week, so that members of the University community can call trained technicians for assistance with anything on campus that pertains to technology. The Call Center can be accessed on campus through the internal telephone system and off campus via a toll-free telephone number. This facility is specifically designed to service and troubleshoot problems with laptops. In addition, Sacred Heart University has a full-time trainer who provides basic, intermediate and advanced instructional courses on all supported applications included on the laptop. Through Sacred Heart's telephone support hotline, students, faculty and staff can dial a toll-free number to obtain technical assistance.

## **Jandrisevits Learning Center**

### **Office of Academic Support**

The Jandrisevits Learning Center (JLC) is located in the lower level of the Ryan-Matura Library. Staffed by highly experienced faculty tutors and well-trained peer assistants, the JLC provides a warm, friendly learning environment where the successful academic accomplishments of students are our primary concern. The JLC offers the fol-

lowing support services to all undergraduate and graduate SHU students:

- individualized one-hour tutoring in all disciplines provided by a staff of 10 faculty tutors;
- monthly workshops on college-level learning skills such as note-taking, time management and test-taking;
- classroom learning assistants (70 peer tutors who provide academic support in disciplines across the curriculum);
- learning disability specialists in compliance with S 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act;
- adaptive technology instruction for learning and physically challenged students;
- an online writing service (!JLC.OWL); and
- drop-in tutoring for selected courses and referrals for individualized tutoring.

The JLC is open 7 days a week: Monday–Thursday, 10 am–9 pm; Friday, 10 am–3 pm; and Saturday–Sunday, 2 pm–6pm.

## Office of Special Services

Though there is not a separate application process to be admitted to the Office of Special Services, all students with disabilities must submit appropriate documentation *prior* to the start of the academic year or *prior* to the student's request for services. The University's documentation policy can be obtained by contacting the Office of Special Services.

## Federally Mandated Services

**Disclosure Letters.** At the written request of students, the Director of Special Services writes letters to some or all of the students' professors that clearly states the nature of the disability and the appropriate classroom accommodations.

**Extended-Time and Separate Environment Testing.** Extended-time testing (usually time and a half or double time) takes place either in classrooms designated by professors or in a separate, secluded environment within the JLC.

**In-Class Notetaker.** In-class notetakers are fellow students who are also taking the class. By agreement, these students make copies of their notes or allow students in need to duplicate notes on a copy machine paid for by the JLC Disabilities Office.

## Interpreting and/or Technical Services.

Deaf or hard-of-hearing students can request either an oral interpreter or an American Sign Language interpreter. If they do not use interpreters, but have a significant hearing loss, technology can be requested to assist in understanding classroom lectures and obtaining notes.

**Alternative Forms of Testing.** Depending on the students' documentation and disabilities, the Special Services Office negotiates appropriate alternative testing methods on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Substitutions when Appropriate.

A course substitution policy enables physically and learning challenged students on a case-by-case basis to request previously approved alternatives in place of specific required courses, but only when it is clear that the required courses would severely disadvantage students' ability to successfully compete in those courses.

## Classroom Learning Assistants Program.

Tutoring in disciplines across the curriculum is provided for all Sacred Heart University students free of charge by graduates and undergraduates in the Classroom Learning Assistants Program (CLA). The CLAs are responsible for providing students with a full set of notes for the class, assisting them with tests, study or paper preparations.

**Books on Tape.** Students can be provided with recorded books either through Sacred Heart University's institutional membership with Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D).

## Additional Billable Services

**L.D. Trained Specialists.** The Director of Special Services along with L.D. specialists, who

collectively provide services day and evening for a total of 35 hours a week, assist students with special needs on a one-to-one basis. These tutors have expertise in specialized pedagogy for the learning disabled and, thus, provide services over and beyond those offered by the University's regular tutorial program.

**Technical Services.** A closed-caption note-taking system provides notes for students who choose to avail themselves of an additional academic accommodation beyond those required by law.

**Content Tutors.** Tutoring in disciplines across the curriculum is provided for all Sacred Heart students free of charge by graduates and undergraduates in the Classroom Learning Program. While students with disabilities may attend group CLA tutoring sessions, some also need the special expertise of faculty tutors—over and beyond what is provided by tutors in the Classroom Learning Assistants Program—to provide them with individual assistance on a regular basis.

**Hired Scribes.** An upperclass student not registered for the class who attends the class for the sole purpose of taking notes for the student requesting the service is available. Scribes are paid not only for taking class notes but also for assisting with homework assignments.

**Academic Coaching.** A personal service is available that assists learning and physically challenged students to develop organizational life-skills that will foster independence and increase their opportunities for academic success.

Appointments: Call 203-371-7820, or come to the JLC, located in the lower level of the Ryan-Matura Library.

## Internship and Co-op Programs

Sacred Heart University embraces the concept of experiential learning as a way of supplementing the

classroom experience, exploring different career paths and enhancing the student's marketability when seeking post-graduate employment. Opportunities include both internships and co-ops.

Internships may be paid or unpaid and can be completed by the student for academic credit. The length of the internship and the number of credits awarded vary. A typical placement lasts for one semester and involves 10 to 20 hours of work per week.

In co-op placements, the student works full-time for one or two semesters for a set hourly wage and 6–12 academic credits per semester. This allows the student to maintain full-time student status while earning a salary and gaining valuable experience.

The student works with his or her faculty advisor to gain approval for the content of an internship or co-op, and to determine the number of credits that will be awarded. The student must also complete the required documentation from the Office of the Registrar. The Office of Career Development assists the student in locating an appropriate position.

Experiential learning opportunities are available in all fields including the sciences, business, health care, media and government. Students interested in these programs should consult their faculty advisor as well as the Office of Career Development.

## The Newcomer (NC) Program

The Newcomer Program, the largest of SHU's Freshman Advisory Programs, provides academic advising for all freshmen not enrolled in one of the University's specialized programs. Faculty advisors in the Newcomer Program provide academic advice and support, assist with course and program selection, and make referrals, when appropriate, to other University support services. For the first semester, a student's Newcomer advisor is a

full-time faculty member who also serves as the professor in one of the student's freshman courses. This allows for regular and continuous interaction throughout the semester. Students and advisors will also meet regularly outside of class for additional support and guidance.

## **Professional Programs**

Sacred Heart University offers pre-professional advising in Pre-Law, Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental, Pre-Optometry, Pre-Occupational Therapy, Pre-Physical Therapy and Pre-Veterinary.

### **Pre-Law Program**

There is no prescribed pre-law course required for admission to law school. The student interested in law as a career is advised to secure a strong education in the liberal arts. The Pre-Law advisor will help design a Pre-Law program and will aid in the law school admission process.

### **Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental, Pre-Optometry and Pre-Veterinary Programs**

The Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental, Pre-Optometry and Pre-Veterinary programs give the student the required educational background to pursue a career in medicine, dentistry or related health professions at a professional college or university. The balanced curriculum for the program consists of studies in biology, chemistry, English, humanities, mathematics and the social sciences, and provides the student with the humanistic values and scientific background needed to pursue a career in the health care field.

### **Pre-Occupational Therapy and Pre-Physical Therapy Programs**

For more information, please refer to the corresponding section under the College of Education and Health Professions.

## **Study Abroad**

Sacred Heart University sponsors undergraduate study abroad programs in Rome, Italy, in partnership with the American University of Rome; in Fremantle, Australia, in partnership with University of Notre Dame Australia; and in Dingle, Ireland, at the Disceart Institute of Education and Celtic Culture. With the help of the Coordinator of Study Abroad, students participating in the Rome and Australia programs select courses from a wide variety of offerings which will further the completion of their degree requirements. Students participating in these programs pay the regular Sacred Heart tuition rate plus a study abroad fee. Federal and state financial assistance as well as Sacred Heart University grants may be applied to the Rome, Australia, and Ireland programs. Students interested in the Ireland program are assisted by the director of the Center for Irish Cultural Studies.

Students may also participate during the fall and/or spring semester in a variety of study-abroad opportunities preapproved by the Office of Study Abroad. These preapproved programs are sponsored by a number of U.S. accredited institutions through the CCIS Consortium (College Consortium for International Studies). The coordinator of Study Abroad assists students in selecting and applying to these programs and facilitates the transfer of credits from these programs by clarifying prior to participation how these courses will be used in their Sacred Heart University degree programs. Students who participate in these programs are assessed a study-abroad fee. While federal and state financial assistance may be applied to these programs, Sacred Heart University grants will not.

Short-term programs of two to four weeks, led by Sacred Heart faculty, are also available. Recent short-term summer experiences include programs in Ireland, Amsterdam, Granada, and various cities in Europe.

For more information, contact the coordinator of Study Abroad at 203-396-8022.

## **Women's Studies Program**

Women's Studies is an academic, interdisciplinary program oriented to the study of women and gender roles. The program draws on the new scholarship about women from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to examine and critique traditional models of thinking and to develop creative ways of exploring women and their experiences. Theoretical and critical debates that have influenced modern feminist thought are also an integral part of the curriculum. Students select courses cross-listed in Women's Studies and a variety of other disciplines including: Criminal Justice, Literature, Media Studies, Nursing, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies and Sociology.

The Women's Studies program provides students with the opportunity to broaden their education by enriching their understanding of women through multiple fields of inquiry. The program supports critical thinking about women's and men's social, economic, cultural and political roles in the past, present and future. It challenges students to develop their intellectual understanding of the impact of gender as an organizing force in society. Students are encouraged to explore the meaning and application of this knowledge to their own lives.