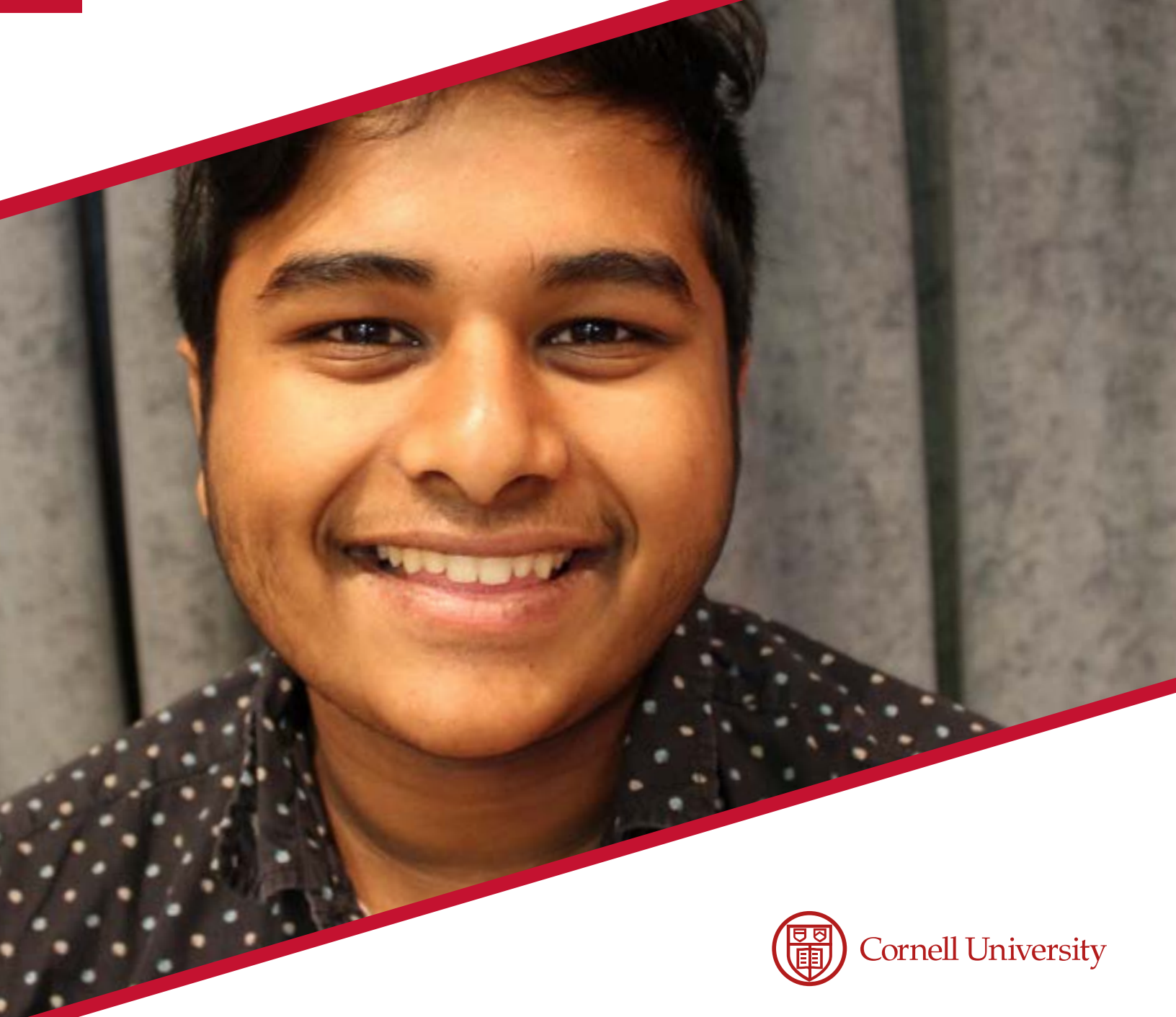


The Learning Strategies Center

2017

ANNUAL REPORT



Cornell University

From the Director

At the Learning Strategies Center (LSC), we work to ensure every student, no matter what high school they attended... no matter their socioeconomic background or their personal life experience... is equipped to fully take advantage of the outstanding educational opportunities available to them here at Cornell.



Cornell has extremely high academic standards, and transitioning to the college learning environment presents challenges to many students. Through peer support, study skills sessions, tutoring, supplemental courses, and scholarships, the LSC provides countless opportunities for students to find whatever additional support they need to do their best here at Cornell. Every step of the way we strive to not just help students develop the skills they need in order to do well in a particular class, but also to grow as independent learners so they can be successful in all of their classes. We know that learning doesn't happen in a vacuum; we address the needs of students holistically, helping them connect with their peers and learn effective habits to help them be engaged, healthy, and motivated learners. In my first year at the Learning Strategies Center, I cannot emphasize enough how impressed I am with the dedication of our staff and the amount of support they are able to provide to thousands of students each semester. The LSC serves a vital and transformative role, most essentially for the students who learn here, but also for the university as a whole. I'm excited to help guide our collaborative efforts to support the academic success of Cornell's increasingly diverse student body. Ezra Cornell had a vision that established Cornell as a place where any student could succeed, and the Learning Strategies Center is critical to upholding that vision in the everyday life of the University.



Amy M. Godert

Amy Godert Ph.D.,
Director

Prefreshman Summer Program: Learning to Belong

In 2017, 189 students completed the Prefreshman Summer Program (PSP) prior to their first semester at Cornell. PSP provides incoming students the opportunity to become familiar with academic expectations, support at Cornell, and the requirements and culture of their college. This is accomplished by students taking an array of classes and participating in numerous college and program activities. Prefreshmen start their first year already knowing how to navigate the campus and with a social network in place.

In 2017 Prefreshmen reported that the program helped them by:

98% | Familiarizing me with resources and services that are available to support students.

93% | Giving me a good introduction to the undergraduate experience at Cornell.

94% | Helping me develop close friendships with other students.



“It's difficult as a first-generation student to say ***I belong here*** just as much as the next person, or say like someone whose parents also went to Cornell. PSP really did bring a sense of community and let us know that we all do belong here and that Cornell is home for us.

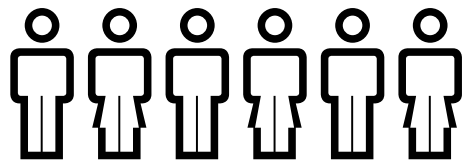
Natalia Hernandez, A&S 2021

Participation in PSP improves students' study skills and time management habits, and helps students make the transition from being successful high school students to being successful college students:

During (high school or PSP), did you usually:	During High School (asked in June)		During PSP (asked in August)	
	% Yes	% No	% Yes	% No
1. Review course material frequently?	23	74	77	23
2. Study with other students?	47	52	81	19
3. Attend tutoring or help sessions if needed?	53	46	84	16
4. Study only right before a test?	72	26	30	70
5. Complete assignments right before they were due?	77	22	48	52
6. Make a schedule to manage time?	34	66	75	25

Study Skills: Learning How to Learn

Helping students learn how to learn is a central element of the Learning Strategies Center's work. Our Study Skills supports include everything from coordinated peer-facilitated workshops and tutoring sessions to our essential course HE1115: Critical Reading and Thinking, offered every fall and spring semester. Students may learn about the Cornell Note-Taking System and other ways to organize information, the basics of stress management, or effective exam strategies, among many other study skills. Our team works to reach out to students with a variety of opportunities to help them be more organized, productive, and efficient learners. Study skills and academic success skills are built in to all our programs.



76 students took study skills class

More than **2,250** students attended workshops

About **350** private consultations

Jen,
Over the past semester you have helped me make drastic improvements in school and also in my life through self-reflection and goal setting. One goal of mine was to get a 3.7 GPA this semester and I just wanted to let you know that I got a 3.9. I sincerely thank you for all your help!

Alyson

“As a student athlete, I think every student should take a class like this. Even if you don't think you need to take this class because you've been successful in school, it's about learning other strategies. Not all of your strategies are going to be the same for each class, so learning how to adapt and have a variety of tools is helpful. The class has helped me stay resilient and learn from my mistakes.

Ethan Agritelley, HumEc 2020
HE 1115 Student



More than any other technique, the key to performing well on exams is starting early and using short, frequent study sessions. That's why one of the essential study skills we teach students is "The Five Day Study Plan."

Study Skills Highlight: The Five Day Study Plan

Space out learning over a period of five days.

Prepare a new chapter or chunk of information, and review previous material.

Divide material and work on it in chunks.

Use active learning strategies (writing and reciting) to study the material.

Use self-testing techniques to monitor learning.

Instructor Mike Chen has been helping Cornell University students improve their study skills for almost twenty years. He coordinates LSC study skills services, teaches the LSC Critical Reading and Thinking course, and consults one-on-one to support students in developing better time management, note-taking, test preparation, and other study skills.



“Professor Chen helped me see that that the way I approached learning was at least as important as how much time I spent learning.

Tutoring: Learning From Teaching

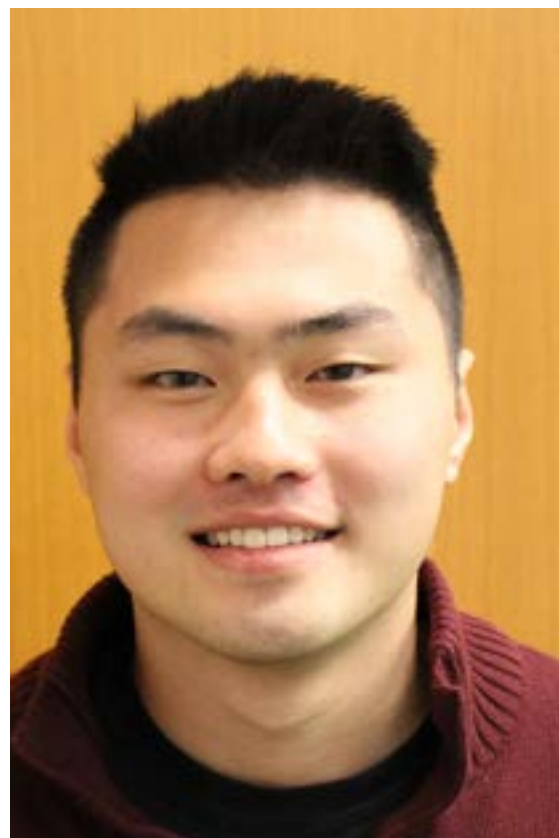
Peer to peer learning is an essential component of the LSC's work. Peer tutors offer students a low-stress, easy-entry source of academic support. Students who attend LSC's walk-in group tutoring often find that other students ask questions they didn't know they had yet. It's important that students see, first-hand in the tutoring room, that they are not the only one with questions.

“

Students find LSC tutors approachable and helpful: “I went to tutoring...on (almost) a weekly basis this past semester. The tutoring was extremely helpful and... helped me significantly improve my grasp of the material. I would like to express my appreciation for the tutoring service... I will be sure to recommend tutoring in Stimson to my friends and underclassmen taking intro science courses. Thank you!

-Max Rothman, CALS 2019

Tutoring allows LSC tutors to grow in their knowledge of content material, pedagogy, and interpersonal skills.



“ I've learned so much from the students and tutors I've worked with. Ethan Pan, A&S 2018
LSC tutor in Chemistry, Biology, and Study Skills

In 2017, LSC piloted an enhanced tutoring training class to facilitate development of a self-reflective tutoring practice. 22 tutors participated in the class.

Tutors shared that the class helped them:

100% | Develop a student-centered tutoring practice.

100% | Practice and master tutoring skills in a safe environment.

95% | Provide productive feedback to peers.

95% | Create and maintain a comfortable working environment for diverse learners.

100% | Reflect on and evaluate their experiences as tutors.

More than
80

LSC tutors provide walk-in group tutoring for more than 30 classes each semester.

More than
6,250

Visits were made to LSC tutoring and office hours in 2017.

“ Tutoring requires many soft skills that are easily transferrable to other aspects of life: communicating with others, finding different ways to get the point across, teamwork, building relationships with others, patience, speaking and listening. The list goes on and on! I think the biggest thing that I learned in tutoring is how to get to know people. I learned how to talk to others and make them feel comfortable telling me about their problems.

Scott Ho, CALS 2019
LSC Organic Chemistry Tutor



Tutors discuss best practices in a training session

“ When I took physics I found the course content to be incredibly challenging and often looked to my teaching assistants and peers for support. For me, tutoring physics has been a personal accomplishment that I can look back on and reflect on how I have evolved from the struggling student to the peer mentor. I understand where students need the most guidance, and I refresh my sense of accomplishment when my students reach their goals in the course.

Jacquelyn Knapp, HumEc 2018
LSC Physics Tutor



Tutors work on a hands-on project in the enhanced tutor training program

Comments from students about LSC tutoring



Supplemental Courses: Learning to Understand

The LSC offers specific supplemental courses for some of the most challenging introductory courses at Cornell. Through our supplemental courses, students step out of the sea of people in large classes to receive personal in-depth course clarification, assistance with problem analysis, and prelim preparation. Students can enroll in supplemental courses but a distinguishing feature is students' ability to "drop-in" when needed. LSC supplemental course instructors also hold regular office hours, and this is often the greatest benefit to students as they develop their understanding of course content.

20 Supplemental courses offered in 2017 in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Math, and Physics

1,300 + Students participated regularly

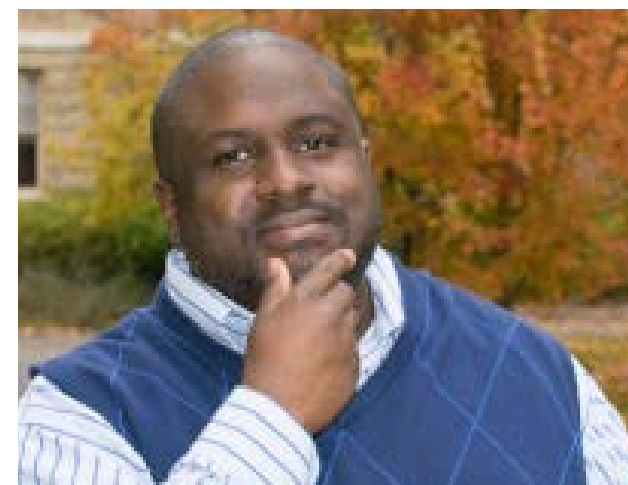
an additional 1,200 + Students attended casually, when they needed extra help

“ In Jane Walcott's review lectures she really went over everything, it definitely put things together. Her problems and notes on-line helped me study effectively.

Anuush Vejalla, A&S 2020
Organic Chemistry Supplemental Course



Quincy Loney, LSC Math Lecturer, was the 2017 recipient of the Math Department's Junior Faculty Teaching Award, in recognition of the care he displays towards his students and for his initiative in mathematics support course development. Quincy teaches LSC supplemental courses for calculus and linear algebra.



“ I took the gen chem supplement my first semester freshman year. I was really overwhelmed, and Steve Johnson's class presented the material in a more understandable way. He's so patient! His problems started out easy and then he worked up to the harder ones, it allowed me to understand the underlying principles. The supplemental class definitely boosted my confidence in the material.

Hannah Stein, HumEc 2019
General Chemistry Supplemental Course

LSC Scholarships: Supporting Additional Learning Opportunities

Learning Strategies Center Scholarships allow students with financial and academic need to meet timely graduation goals by providing tuition funding for Winter and Summer Session courses. LSC Scholarships also support students' participation in a broad range of academic enrichment opportunities provided by Cornell. **271** students from across undergraduate colleges at Cornell received funding from the Learning Strategies Center to take Winter or Summer courses in 2017.



“ I would not have been able to go abroad or graduate on time without the LSC Scholarship.

Nathaniel Pineda, A&S 2018



“ The LSC Scholarship was a blessing for me, because I felt so unburdened knowing my financial obligations for my winter course were taken care of. Thanks to the LSC for giving me this awesome opportunity, I do not have to overload on credits during my last semester at Cornell. In my opinion, the shining quality about the LSC Scholarship is that it provides students with financial support and hope to continue to with their Cornell career.

Brandon Adams, CALS 2018



“ The LSC Summer Session Scholarship was an amazing and helpful step toward my graduating on time. The courses moved rapidly but I felt I learned more that way. This was an invaluable opportunity you afforded me.

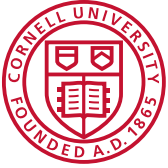
Anna Warfield, AAP and CALS 2018

Cornell Faculty appreciate the diversity the LSC Scholarship brings to their Winter and Summer Session courses:

“ I wanted to tell you about the positive impact of your Learning Strategies Center scholarships. We have a full roster, and many of the students would not be able to take advantage of this educational experience without LSC tuition scholarships. This is such a good use of scholarship money; to enable students who need credits to graduate to participate in a rich, multi-cultural, international experience that will also greatly improve their writing skills. This is the most diverse group of students we have ever taught. Please let us know if we can do anything to support this program and help make sure it continues into the future.

Faculty in CALS

The Future of Learning with LSC



The Learning Strategies Center at Cornell is a success by any measure, generating greater academic and social confidence, creating stronger study skills, and stimulating a love of learning in the students we reach-- but we know there is still more we can do.

The Learning Strategies Center

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LSC is committed to building on our work throughout the coming years by:

Generating and sharing evidence of success

We are continuing the process of identifying outcomes and selecting strategies and tools to measure the success of our programs. As we develop these tools, we will be applying our new knowledge to ensure that as many students as possible succeed academically. We will share these results and use them to inform practice in our own programs and throughout the university.

Evaluating effectiveness and fine-tuning programs

We must look closely at critical questions about how effectively we are accomplishing our mission of helping students master Cornell's rigorous academic expectations. Is the level of support sufficient? Is our support targeted appropriately? Are we reaching students in the most timely manner? These and other questions must be consistently revisited and our work recalibrated as we move forward.

Increasing awareness

We are compelled to ensure students, faculty, staff, and TAs throughout the university are aware of all that LSC offers. We will employ a multi-faceted approach to get the word out about LSC. We will also build on our existing collaborations, create new partnerships, and further the synergy between the LSC and other units that support student learning to foster an inclusive academic experience and promote student success campus-wide.

The LSC continues to be an advocate for the success of all students, and together we can expand our work and better support our diverse student body.