The ALEKS-TAC course was first introduced as a pilot in the Spring of 2014 by the Math Department in conjunction with the Academic Support Center. The goal of the ALEKS-TAC course is to provide math students who place in a PreAlgebra (Math 92) course with a faster, more meaningful path to college-level math. ALEKS, an artificially intelligent learning software system, allows students in the ALEKS-TAC course to move through remediation at a quicker pace by using adaptive questioning to determine a student’s knowledge base and help students improve their math skills in the topics that they are weak in. Additionally, as a student works through the ALEKS course, the software will periodically reassess the student to ensure that topics learned are being retained. The TAC portion of the course (TAC=Tutor Assisted Course) provides students in the ALEKS-TAC course with assistance from an in-class tutor. Having TAC tutors in the classroom allows for individualized help to occur, but also encourages students to foster a connection with the classroom tutor and the Academic Support Center. In addition to the four in-class hours per week, students are required, as part of their grade, to spend two additional hours at the Academic Support Center to meet with their TAC tutor for help or to work on the ALEKS modules.

ALEKS-TAC students begin the course by taking an assessment on ALEKS to determine what each student’s math level. ALEKS will only include topics in each module that the student needs to learn. Although students work at their own pace to complete each module, they are provided with target dates that must be met in order to complete the course. Once a student has achieved 90% mastery in a module, they take an online practice test. If they pass the practice test, a student can then take the paper exam. Once a student passes the exam, he/she can move to the next module. Students are not permitted to sit for the final exam until they have taken and passed all the paper exams for their course. Any student who does not finish the course within the first semester may register for the course again the next semester and begin from where he/she left off on ALEKS. After one calendar year, if a student has not completed the course, students will receive an RC grade and start the course again from the very beginning. If a student does not finish the course by the third semester (within one calendar year), they are given a grade of F. PreAlgebra students who finish the course before the semester ends can start the Beginning Algebra course. If they finish Beginning Algebra within the same semester, they are given the credits as if they originally enrolled in a Beginning Algebra course.

Initial results of the pilot were very promising; when compared to traditional Math 93 sections, 69% of the students enrolled in the ALEKS-TAC course passed the course with a C or better compared to 37% of students enrolled in a traditional PreAlgebra course. Here is a small sample of what the ALEKS-TAC students had to say about their experience in the course:

- The ALEKS-TAC Program is a really great program for students like myself who aren’t strong in math. This program really helps me with math problems I don’t understand. Also, the tutors are very helpful when I can’t do certain problems on the computer.

- ALEKS is customized based on what I know and need to know so I am not wasting time going over the material I have already learned.

- With ALEKS you go at your own pace so that you fully understand the concepts instead of just rushing through them to keep up with the teacher.

In the fall of 2014, the pilot was expanded to four ALEKS-TAC sections: two Math 92 (PreAlgebra) and two Math 93 (Beginning Algebra) sections. In Spring 2015, a total of 7 sections are running: four sections of PreAlgebra and three sections of Beginning Algebra. At the end of the Spring 2015 semester, the pilot will be evaluated and a determination for the full implementation of the ALEKS-TAC course for the future will be made by the Math Department and the Academic Support Center.
The Common Read; Uncommonly GOOD!

By: Joanna Peters

The Common Read program, now in its third year, proved to be highly successful this past fall semester. Co-Chaired by Prof. Meralee Silverman, Chair of the Reading and Study Skills Department, and Joanna Peters, Reading and ESL Coordinator of the Academic Support Center, an Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from all constituencies of the college community. Over 1,300 students were given a copy of Running for My Life by Lopez Lomong. Mr. Lomong writes about his life: kidnapped from church when he was six years old, taken to a revolutionary Sudanese camp to become a child soldier, and then, several years later, escaping to a Kenyan refugee camp. The story of Lopez Lomong goes on to describe his adoption by a New York family and his incredible journey to be the flag-bearer at the 2008 Olympic Games as a runner for the United States team.

The kick-off events included almost 600 students who sat spellbound as they listened and watched videos of Mr. Lomong’s life. Over 43 faculty members participated in using the book in class, or as an ‘extra.’ Students were stimulated to read a whole book, something that some students admitted was not within their usual habit.

Additionally, for the first time ever, the Common Read promoted a Run/ Walk/ Roll for all interested students. They were asked to sign up with a minimum donation to the Westchester Community College Foundation’s Scholarship Fund for a Veteran Student. The college raised over $600.00, which included a 2-for-1 Match by one of the Foundation Board Members.

When the students heard that Mr. Lomong was coming to speak, with the support of the Humanities Institute, they filled the Hankin auditorium. Following his speech and a question and answer session, a fine luncheon was prepared by the Culinary Arts senior students for 50 invited guests. Students, staff, and faculty came together to share their thoughts about the book. Right afterward, Lopez Lomong not only answered additional questions, but signed every book and took selfies with all the students who patiently waited online to see him once more.

We look forward to the Common Read becoming the initial phase of a First Year Experience program.

Improve Your Study Skills & Reduce Test Taking Anxiety Workshops:
- 2/18: Improve Your Memory Techniques
- 2/25: Increase Your Multi-Sensory Learning
- 3/4: Reduce Your Test Anxiety
- 3/11: Decrease Your Math Anxiety
- 3/25: Predict Test Questions
- 4/1: How to Take the Test
- 4/8: Review of Study Skills & Test Taking Skills

Review Your Grammar Workshops:
- 2/17: Prepositions
- 2/24: Punctuation
- 3/3: Articles

Writing - Let’s Get Started:
- 2/18: Writing the Introduction & Thesis
- 2/25: Revising the Paper

For more workshop information call:
Math, Reading & ESL @ 914-606-6470
Writing Tutorial @ 914-606-7853
Science Tutorial @ 914-606-6906
Many students entering the college are at risk of being inaccurately placed into lower remedial classes. Being placed into incorrect classes is a problem that is overwhelming to both students and to the college. The goal of offering brush-up workshops is to help under-prepared students gain not only the skills they need for testing but also to gain confidence. Being well-prepared for the placement exam will show students’ true level of academic skills in these areas and thus they will be placed into the correct course. Placing students into the right courses when they enter college will increase motivation and help to promote retention and completion. In addition, students will benefit from more college-level courses rather than simply repeating courses they took in high school. As a result, they will save time, money, and achieve their educational goals faster to promote completion, with a higher level of satisfaction than they would experience without the brush-up workshops.

Historically, the Academic Support Center has tried to provide tutorial assistance to students who seek help prior to taking the placement exam. The center provided students with materials as a means of reviewing; however, it was still not enough of a review for students. In 2014, Bishara Al-Akeel and JoAnn Gala submitted a proposal for, and were awarded, a grant for Placement Exam brush-up workshops to be held in the summer 2014 semester. In this project, the Academic Support Center offered brush-up workshops in math, reading, writing, and study skills for students who either took the placement exam for the first time or had already taken it and wanted to attain higher scores. The brush-up pilot was conducted from June 16 to July 31, for three days per week, Monday-Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Each day included workshops in math, reading, writing and study skills. These sessions were open to students who had applied to the college and wanted to prepare for or retake the placement exam. No appointment was needed. Students dropped in to attend the session(s) that they needed help with at their own convenience. This model has been more successful because the “drop in” nature of these workshops put less stress on the students.

Forty-one students applied to the college and signed up for the brush-up workshops. Thirty students out of the forty-one applied to the college, signed up for the workshops and took the Placement Test. Twenty-one students out of the thirty students who took the placement exam bypassed at least one lower developmental course in the area(s) that they took the test for. These results prove that students who take these brush-up workshops may be able to accelerate and pass some remedial courses to become more confident and successful learners. To measure the program’s success a survey was issued in person and emailed to students who attended these workshops via SurveyMonkey. High average rates were received from these surveys which indicated that the brush-up workshops were successful. Below are some comments:

♦ This program was more than great, the first day I felt welcome. The tutors are very knowledgeable. I was able to grasp some topics I was having trouble with in just 1-2 hrs. AWESOME PROGRAM!
♦ I appreciate the time taken out of the tutors’ day to help me become more prepared for the placement test in which I am now ready fully for.
♦ Not only has this program projected me with enough enthusiasm to pursue this placement exam, but it also has built great confidence on the educational field in my opinion.
♦ Thank you for having this program ASC summer brush up.

We feel this program has the potential to grow and reach more students with additional funding, publicizing, and marketing. Therefore, this year, we applied for another grant to fund this program again. Stay tuned for details regarding Summer Brush-Up 2015.
The Academic Support Center offers FREE tutorial services in the following subjects:

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<th>Math, ESL &amp; Reading</th>
<th>Computer Science</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<td>Library - Ground FL G-31 Pre-Algebra Beginning Algebra College Algebra with Trigonometry College Algebra Functions &amp; Models Mathematical Literacy for College Students Foundations of College Reading Analytical Reading Introduction to Academic Writing I, II AND Upper levels of ESL</td>
<td>Library - Ground FL G-31 Introduction to Computer Concepts Computer Programming I &amp; II Java Programming Linux Operating System Computer Architecture AND GUI Development</td>
<td>Science Building Rm # 219 Biological Science I &amp; II General Biology I &amp; II Anatomy &amp; Physiology I &amp; II Microbiology Chemistry (All) Non-major Physical Sciences, Respiratory Care and Foods/Nutrition, AND Emergency Medical Services</td>
<td>Library - Ground FL G-13 Writing and Research, Writing and Literature, Writing for College I &amp; II AND Papers in All Disciplines</td>
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Monday - Thursday: 7:30AM - 5:00PM Friday: 8:00AM - 4:00PM

Monday: 11:00AM - 1:00PM & 3:00PM - 4:00PM Tuesday - Thursday: 11:00AM - 4:00PM Friday: 12:00PM - 4:00PM For evening & weekend hours call (914) 606-6470

Monday - Thursday: 9:00AM - 5:00PM Friday: 9:00AM - 4:00PM For evening & weekend hours call (914) 606-6906

Monday - Thursday: 9:00AM - 5:00PM Friday: 9:00AM - 4:00PM For evening & weekend hours call (914) 606-7853

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If the Library or the Academic Support Center contributed to your academic success, then apply for THE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AWARD

AWARDS ARE GREAT FOR: COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, RESUMES AND TRANSFER STUDENTS
Pick up the award application packet from either the Library Reference Desk or the Academic Support Center Front Desk.