The Learning Skills Lab staff provide support and assistance to nearly 300 students per semester. In addition to applied study skills instruction, they generate ideas for continual improvement of our services, make contact with each student in a peer mentor capacity, and act as a team to address the unique challenges that arise throughout the semester. Allow us to introduce these notable individuals:

**Adam:** Versatile, patient and friendly, Adam kindly approaches our students with a "can-do" attitude and has been a steady, solid force in the Lab for several semesters.

**Amina:** She plans to become an Architect one day, but her innate teaching and people skills make us hope we might eventually recapture her as a COS instructor. She’s been with us 4 semesters, and is most comfortable assisting students in the areas of math, English and history.

**Anthony:** Students have yet to encounter a subject beyond the experience and expertise of Anthony, who is working towards becoming a Pharmacy Technician. With 10 semesters of LSL experience, we were glad for his return after a year-long absence.

**Christina:** Three semesters of LSL work have revealed a knowledgeable, engaging and patient aide, who takes a genuine interest in each student she serves. She typically assists our students in the areas of biology, chemistry, math and history.

**CJ:** Fluent in ASL, this easygoing, caring and approachable aide has been providing assistance in math and history for the past two semesters. His upbeat nature and vibrant personality add zip to the workplace. He will be transferring next semester to CSU Fresno or Northridge.

**Johnny:** Our resident thespian with a kind demeanor and ready smile, he returned this semester after a furlough; he has been assisting our students with math, English, history and geography learning skills for four semesters now. Next semester, Johnny will be attending John Paul Catholic University in San Diego.

**Monica:** is one of our future doctors. With us for 2 semesters, her subject competence and natural teaching ability have been assets in the areas of math, chemistry, biology, physics, and history.

**Anthony:** Students have yet to encounter a subject beyond the experience and expertise of Anthony, who is working towards becoming a Pharmacy Technician. With 10 semesters of LSL experience, we were glad for his return after a year-long absence.

**Omar:** with us two semesters, and fluent in both English and Spanish, this genial, competent and caring aide has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Lab. In addition to assisting our students with math, computers and languages, he has helped to create materials for our Spanish-speaking students as well.

**Rachel:** our other future M.D., has been with us 7 semesters. Having alternated between student worker and classified Instructional Aide, this witty, kindhearted, treasured employee offers math, chemistry and computers as her main areas of expertise.

**Samantha:** Samantha will no doubt be a gifted teacher when she completes her education. With us four semesters now, this gentle, amiable aide often helps students in the areas of math, English, history and Spanish 1. She will be attending Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo in the fall.

**Tony:** has been with us 4 semesters. Calm, patient and knowledgeable, he ably guides our students in the areas of math, physics and chemistry, while helping us maintain an atmosphere of teamwork and cooperation. Tony will also be attending Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo in the fall.
The Learning Skills Lab (in the southwest corner of the Library/Lodgepole’s first floor) is proving to be a valuable resource in our campus effort to assist students learning basic skills. The composition of our student population this year is revealed in the chart below:

Additionally, students who utilize the lab recognize the benefits they’ve realized. Fully 66% of those students who participated an average of 3 hours per week or more last year had taken the LS 308: Instructional Support class before.

With fewer employees and resources than ever, your Learning Skills Lab (LSL) staff have been working harder - and smarter - as we evolve. Melony Henson, Senior Instructional Assistant (and previous Giant Award Recipient) recently conceived and implemented two new databases, which allowed us to cull the data reported in this article. Her ability to do so was due in part to our unique situation this year: we were able to re-hire former student employees who returned to COS for additional coursework. As such, our 11 Instructional Aides have a combined total of 26 years of LSL experience! As our daily front-line staff, these seasoned student service providers continue to generate invaluable ideas and synergy to our operation.

**Student Testimonial: Rolando Corral**

Hello, my name is Rolando and I have been utilizing the DRC services for most of my semesters here at COS. Not only my grades, but my life of learning has improved since using the DRC. The DRC did not just have an impact on me as a student but as a whole person. By next year I will have enough units to transfer with a high GPA. When I was in high school the word college wasn't heard or said much, so I had doubts about attending any kind of higher education after high school. But as William Shakespeare said, “Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt”.

Without the services and accommodations given to me through DRC I would have dropped out a long time ago. So my dreams of ever transferring to any university would have disappeared. I mean not to exaggerate, but it’s a fact. My first semester was one of the most terrifying times in my life, even for a combat veteran like myself. In the Army you always fall back on your training. When I first stepped foot onto campus I had no clue about “learning disabilities.” There was no training that I could depend on for what was in store for me to attend college.

During, my first semester I was a part of Puente. The program helped me get through my English courses, but I still had problems with the rest of my academics. For example, while sitting inside a class room with a number of students I began to feel like I did not belong there. You tell yourself “why even ask a question the instructor is going to get annoyed with you.” It seemed like each lecture just went in one ear and out the other. Most, or sometimes all, of the important information would not stick. I never knew why it took me so long to understand the material.

I managed, barely, to pass the semester. Just before that semester ended, I spoke with my counselor and she recommended the DRC to me. If you have read thus far then you know the rest of my student testimonial. One of the many important DRC services that has helped me is the testing center. Before, I used to feel much anxiety just before taking a quiz or test and it would always hurt my grades. The testing center provides an environment that aids me to not feel like it’s a life or death situation. It helps me to be able to take a test with some ease. So I am very thankful for the testing center and its staff. Although I still have some doubts, I am more prepared to overcome them.

Thank you,
Rolando Corral
Hello students, I hope that your spring semester is a successful one! We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Each year the DRC is confronted by new challenges that create obstacles to our ability to provide services to students as quickly as we’d like. Reductions in state funding to the program continue to impede our progress and future funding for community colleges looks grim. Several suggestions and recommendations on how community colleges will need to adjust to less funding will have a direct impact on your ability to participate at community colleges in the future. Here are some of the recommendations that are being considered in order to address the reduction in funding for community colleges next year:

- Increased enrollment fees; new fees could range from $36 per unit up to $66 per unit.
- Impose a 90-unit cap on each student's taxpayer-subsidized credits; students who have more than 90 units may have to make-up for lost state revenue if they want to continue their participation.
- Restructure priority registration and limit it to targeted students who have less than 100 units and who don’t already posses a BA/BS or advanced degree.

Now, more than ever, students need to refocus their energy and seek the help that they’ll need in order to achieve academic success and complete their community college goal(s). If you haven’t visited with a Counselor to review your student educational plan, I would suggest you do so at your earliest convenience. You can’t get where you want to get unless you know where you’re going.

The DRC customizes services and accommodations based upon the unique needs of each student. These services and accommodations are outlined in each student’s Authorized Accommodations (AA) form as well as on the Student Educational Contract (SEC). If you are unfamiliar with the services that you are eligible to receive, or if you aren’t taking advantage of the services, drop by our office so that we can discuss your needs. We can’t help you if we don’t know how things are going for you. Don’t wait until it’s too late, we want to make sure you have a successful college experience. The sooner we discuss problems and issues that need to be remedied, the better off you will be. Good luck!

The WorkAbility III (WAIII) program has gotten off to a great start this semester! We have been working closely with our partner CA Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to assist WA III students to find gainful employment. There are currently 10 students who have been referred by DOR and are active in the WA III program. We have 7 student receiving job preparation services, 2 students in work experience and 5 in job placement.

We continue to open new WA III files as we receive referrals from DOR. Our Job Developer, Sharmeen Lakhani, has been meeting with students once a week to assist students with resume, cover letter and job preparation services. The WA III program also continues to collaborate with our community partners, The Employment Connection, Employment Development (EDD) and Proteus Inc. We are excited about seeing WA III thrive and helping students find employment. If you have any questions about the WA III program please give me a call at (559) 730-3805, Maria Matta, Program Coordinator/Counselor.

Student Support Services (SSS) by TRiO
The SSS program provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements and motivates them toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The program may also provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

The SSS program provides academic tutoring/advising and assistance in postsecondary course selection. The Program provides students with information on student financial aid programs, benefits and resources for locating public and private scholarships and assistance in completing the needed applications. Other services include workshops on improving financial/economic literacy and assisting students in applying for admission to graduate and professional programs; assist students enrolled in two--year institutions and applying for admission to four--year programs.

For more information, please contact the TRiO Office by calling (559) 737-5400 or visiting the office located in the Mariposa Building on the Visalia Campus.
Walk-Ins
If you need help planning your classes, you are encouraged to visit or call the general counseling office in Sequoia Rm 103 (730-3715). DRC counselors are also available to assist you with this on a walk-in basis. First-come, first-served basis. We do our best to see as many students as possible during our limited walk-in hours. Walk-In schedules for the next week are available every Friday.

Authorized Accommodation Forms
Request your Authorized Accommodation (AA) forms EVERY SEMESTER! These forms are not automatically produced. They take 2 days to be processed. You may pick up these forms from the DRC and distribute them to your instructors.

Testing Center
If you will be using the Testing Center sign up EVERY SEMESTER! Exams must also be scheduled 2 days in advance.

Priority Registration
Usually occurs about 6 months before the start of the next term. Keep that in mind when preparing for registration each semester. An email will be sent to your COS email address to inform you of the dates of Priority Registration.

Alternate Media
If you believe you may qualify for this accommodation, but do not have it yet, make an appointment with a DRC counselor. If you qualify for this accommodation (Braille, books on CD/USB, e-text, large print, etc.) as soon as you have planned your classes, please check http://bookstore.cos.edu for information on required textbooks. Then, go to http://www.cos.edu/alternatemedia, click on Request Educational Material in Alternate Media Format (textbooks), and complete an online form for each textbook needed.

Miscellaneous
Keep track of your accommodations and check in with the DRC office at least twice a semester so you are aware of upcoming events, requirements, and deadlines. The DRC office will now be closed for lunch every day between 12:00 – 1:00 pm. If you are more than 10 minutes late for an appointment you will be rescheduled! Additionally, we require at least 24 hours notice for all appointment cancellations and reschedules.

DRC Testing Center
The DRC Testing Center is open Monday through Thursday 8 am to 4 pm and Friday 8 am to 12 pm. Please remember to schedule exams at least two days in advance of your exam.

Upcoming Workshops
March 15th 10 - 11 am “Mental Health” Room 712B, Jill Maze
March 29th 1- 2 pm “Diversity & Student Success” Room 207, Sonia Jeffery
April 6th 1-2 pm “Nutrition/Cultural Foods” Room 507, Debb Campbell
April 11th 2 - 3 pm “Self-Esteem” Room JM 107, Debbie Douglass

Dates to Remember
March 18th Last day to file for Associate’s
March 25th Final Drop Date with a “W”
April 18th—April 22nd Spring Break
May 20th— May 26th Final Exams
May 30th Holiday

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS
This publication can be made available in an alternative format. To request a copy in alternative format please contact the Disability Resource Center (559)730-3805.