



# Columbia College

# Academic Wellness

# Educators

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## AWE Spotlight: First Semester Experience

By: *Alicia Kolstad*



The First Semester Experience is a cohort learning community designed to provide an enriching foundation for students that assess into pre-collegiate Math and English. This unique program begins with an orientation at our High Sierra Institute at Baker Station and culminates with a capstone fieldtrip to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. The group becomes a team that care about each other. They connect, support, learn and grow. Throughout the semester students meet with the teaching team to discuss their progress and develop customized strategies to enhance their learning. This program has a success rate significantly higher than our non-learning community pre-collegiate Math and English students. The First Semester Experience program is a model for student success and equity based education.



## Academic Achievement Center Growth and Expansion

By: *Lindsay Laney*

The Academic Achievement Center is growing! With additional funding thru AWE, this spring the AAC will be expanding its services and opening a Writing Center housed within the AAC. Last year, Kim Pippa-Tonnesen and Lindsay Laney researched the *essence* of a Writing Center: Kim visited neighboring centers and Lindsay attended the International Writing Center Association Conference. They both came away with the inspiration needed to see a Writing Center open at Columbia College. The Writing Center will provide a much needed quiet space dedicated to the writing process, tutoring, and workshops.

This semester, in addition to the traditional Biology and Chemistry courses, the AAC has expanded its Supplemental Instruction offerings to include Anthropology 1, Speech Communication 1, Sociology 1, Political Science 10, English 151, Math 104 and Chemistry 5. Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a weekly peer-assisted study group. The SI Leader, a student who has taken and succeeded in the course, attends the course as a peer leader and facilitates activities designed around the most difficult content. On average, SI participants earn a higher grade than non-participants.

Lastly, in addition to peer tutoring and Supplemental Instruction, the AAC offers Embedded Tutors who sit in a course as a peer leader and tutor. All courses with Embedded Tutors from Spring 2015 showed a higher retention rate than comparable courses without an Embedded Tutor\*.

Contact Lindsay Laney at [laneyl@yosemite.edu](mailto:laneyl@yosemite.edu) if you would like to *recommend a tutor* or if you have a student in mind as an *Embedded Tutor or SI Leader for your Spring 2016 course*. \*Research provided by Diana Sunday and Kristin Rascon. If you would like more information, please contact Lindsay Laney or Diana Sunday.

# Welcome Week Wows!

*By: Kirsten Miller*

**"Welcome to Columbia College!"  
"Can I help you find your class?"**

**"Did you get your free Student Handbook yet?"  
"Come get ice cream scooped by your professors!"**

You likely heard Welcome Week staff engaging students with these questions all around campus our first week--maybe you were even one of them! Our first "Welcome Week" was amazingly well received by students and staff alike--meeting our goal of creating a fun atmosphere where students were excited to be a part of the Columbia family.

Welcome Week was an idea that gained traction in the AWE Core Retreat last spring as a way to connect with and engage students, right from the beginning, by providing a bit of fanfare to a new school year. Welcome/Information tables, planned activities throughout the week, extended hours from Student Service departments, and willing helpers wearing 'Ask Me' buttons got students plugged into what they needed right away to feel supported as they continue the semester.

Welcome Week officially started with move-in day and orientation activities up at Student Housing. Throughout the weekend, Counselors provided general college information and helped students with their class schedules. The Bookstore and Student Center also provided special hours on Friday and Saturday so dorm students could get set for school with books, supplies and student ID cards. Students that live on campus can be our most invested students, now they have the warmest of welcomes to start them off.

Throughout the entire first week of classes, Welcome tables were stationed at the front of Manzanita and the top of the Alder stairs, staffed with friendly faces, stocked with campus maps and Welcome Week schedules, with fun music playing and a gift of a student handbook to EVERY student who walked by. Faculty came out in-force to scoop ice cream for students on Monday. Many of our Student Services, Library staff, AAC representatives and faculty came out on Tuesday to our 'Sidewalk Café' to provide resources to all who came for free donuts and coffee. Wednesday, the ASCC hosted a fun Welcome Back BBQ lunch (540 hot dogs served!) and club fair to show students how they could get involved on campus. Wednesday and Thursday, Student Ambassadors (with support from TRiO mentors and AAC tutors) put on Syllabus Shock and Prof 101 workshops. Friday, Jeff Tolhurst and Mark Ferreira claimed the trophy for our Students vs. Profs Ping Pong challenge--which will be housed in the Student Center until the next competition.

We envision Welcome Week as an annual event--can't wait to see it bigger and better as time goes on and ideas keep flowing from our wonderful constituents! If you want to be part of a future planning team, we'd love to have you!

