Get to Know: Mark Bischoff and Chris Scagnelli

SUNY Cortland cultivates exceptional grads, and ASAP is lucky to have recently added two to our professional tutoring staff.

While their shared alum status alone is exciting—who better to relate to Cortland students?—Mark Bischoff and Chris Scagnelli have more in common than just their alma mater. Both hail from downstate New York, chose M.A.T. programs to further their education, and were already valued members of our campus community. Yet, each comes to ASAP with his own expertise.

Mark, a seasoned math instructor who also holds a Ph.D. in counseling, tutors math and study skills in addition to working with our Peer Tutoring Program.

By contrast, Chris, a recent NYS-certified teacher who’s been part of ASAP’s writing and study skills tutoring scene throughout undergrad and grad school, adds PLTL to his responsibilities now that he is ours for keeps. Differences aside, it’s clear both enjoy sharing their insights and observations while displaying keen senses of humor!

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Supplemental Instruction Goes Cellular

We couldn’t resist a play with words to introduce two exciting SI Program upgrades!

First, we’re putting the power of choice in students’ hands. Using QR code technology, students in SI-supported classes can now vote for study session schedule preferences by using their cell phones to access the online survey. This move not only saves precious class time, but approximately 1800 sheets of paper per semester as well!

Second, BIO 210 Cellular Biology is now an SI-supported course, becoming the first new pairing in more than 10 years. Wondering what took us so long? As part of an internationally-recognized academic assistance community, ASAP’s SI Program must carefully consider whether courses meet specific criteria.

BIO 210 is a terrific fit for the SI model, not just because students have historically found the course to be challenging, but also because of its large class size and the number of different majors that are required to take it. Equally important is the course itself: Cell Bio topics naturally lend themselves to the collaborative, interactive sessions for which SI is so well known.

Biological Sciences Department Chair Steven B. Broyles and Professor John M. Sternfeld have been instrumental in successfully bringing Cell Bio on board, from approaching us with the request and supplying data that established need to recommending students for leader recruitment.

The addition of BIO 210 to the SI roster highlights how collaboration with academic departments can lead to enriched student support. While the SI model may not fit every course, it’s just one of the many ways ASAP can work with professors and departments to promote student success. Need to know more? Contact us!
For Students, By Students: Summer Peer Tutoring

ASA P is always finding new ways to foster student success, but this past spring a novel idea found us thanks to some enterprising students! As part of their CRLA Level 2 training, peer tutors learn how to conduct real-time, online tutoring sessions just like the ones offered through our Night OWL/STAR-NY programs. After learning the skill, tutors Kassandra Gacek, Megan Whitbeck, and Ashley Vogler proposed harnessing the technology to support SUNY Cortland summer session students.

These peer tutors took full responsibility for marketing the program to summer professors, advertising the service to classes, and scheduling appointments with students. Tutors were available for Anatomy & Physiology, Child Psychology, and Statistics. Megan loved the experience: “Online is so different than in-person tutoring. You never know what to expect and it definitely keeps you on your toes!” During Summer Session I alone, tutors logged approximately 15 hours with students who would not have had support otherwise. The program was a win for tutors, too: summer tutoring kept them engaged with the campus community and, because sessions were held online, they didn’t have to sacrifice hometown employment opportunities.

The Summer Peer Tutoring Program is transformative education at its best: students using what they learn to support other students, all while creating meaningful employment experiences.

Professional Tutors: Meet Mark & Chris

(Continued from front page)

Why tutoring? While helping students learn is key to many jobs, both Mark and Chris are drawn to the individualized experience that is tutoring. “It’s the excitement of how students think and learn,” Mark explained. For Chris, who’s been tutoring in ASAP for six years, “It’s the fun with students that’s so rewarding.”

What services were you (pleasantly) surprised to learn that ASAP offers? Both Mark and Chris are excited about peer-led programs. Chris specifically cites Peer Tutoring: “It’s what got me to walk through the ASAP door.” For Mark, it’s Supplemental Instruction: “a great opportunity for classmates to learn with and from each other.”

What’s your tutoring superpower? Mark’s is “compassionate patience” while Chris’ strength is forecasting: “predicting where the student’s thinking is going.”

Why work at ASAP? Mark enjoys the “captive collaboration” of the physical office space: “you learn a lot that way and hone the skill of tuning into yourself.” Chris is amazed that we all love what we do: “The staff actually wants to be here!”

What song title best reflects your work ethic? Both Mark and Chris turn to classic 70s rock for inspiration: Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin” and Queen’s “Don’t Stop Me Now,” respectively. Highlighting their similarities once more, it’s clear these great minds do think alike!

About ASAP

We provide academic support to undergraduate and graduate students of all ability and achievement levels through tutoring in writing, reading, math, time management, and study skills, as well as through our Supplemental Instruction, Peer Tutoring, PLTL and online tutoring programs. Students who have regularly used ASAP’s services tend to demonstrate increased academic confidence, stronger learning skills, and improvement in their coursework.