

2016 Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award Winner: Jennifer Dorian, Faculty Coordinator, PASS; Instructor, Fresno City College

May 2016

ASCCC,



Jennifer Dorian, the faculty coordinator for Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), serves with a focus on the diverse elements of teaching, research, and coordinating in support of students preparing for and currently enrolled in humanities courses focused on reading and writing. PASS is a program designed to increase student success, retention, and GPAs through embedded tutoring and supplemental instruction adaptation practices in English, EMLS, linguistics, and literature courses and learning communities. PASS tutors attend class throughout the week with students and have access to instructors and class material. PASS sessions take place in the PASS Center. Jennifer has an undergraduate degree in psychology, a master's degree in English, and a second master's degree in human behavior; she is currently finishing her dissertation for a PhD in education. Jennifer has been preparing students of higher education at Fresno City College for five years and is currently a full-time faculty member at Fresno City College where she teaches and coordinates. During her time as a faculty member, Jennifer has served English, ESL, literature, and linguistics students as the coordinator of a large tutorial program and center. She has also taught English and tutor training courses throughout the district in traditional and online settings. Her current work with the PASS program is centered on the holistic support of students. Jennifer believes that all individuals have the power to make a comeback and design the life of their dreams. She supports students through something she calls the Pedagogy of Encouragement, which is a strategy that focuses on inspiring students to be their best selves through the encouragement of educators and the community. Jennifer has devoted herself to uplifting the lives of students who have been impacted by myriad experiences while supporting them to find their voices through the written word.

In the last year and a half, Jennifer redesigned and grew the PASS Center/program. Beginning in the fall of 2014, Jennifer developed a holistic implementation designed to meet the need of contextualized academic support for writing students reported by English and ESL students and faculty. As a result, Jennifer redesigned PASS to embed tutors in all levels of English and ESL classes (developmental through transfer) and provide scheduled-group tutoring sessions and walk-in tutoring services for writing students in the PASS Center six days a week and 24/7 online. Students from Jennifer's own classes have also benefitted from her program. Jennifer grew the PASS program over 400%, from serving 12 classes to 54 classes, between fall of 2014 and fall of 2015; as a result, thousands of students preparing for or enrolled in first year writing have been supported academically and holistically. This was possible because of the dedicated team of peer tutors who believe in the Pedagogy of Encouragement and the uplifting of student lives.

In that same year, Jennifer increased the peer tutor count from 6 to 45 tutors; most importantly, in the past year, Jennifer was able to increase PASS tutoring attendance and success by creating a theoretically based implementation plan she calls the "Brain Food Project," which provides food (meals and snacks) as a supportive measure for students during PASS tutoring sessions. Jennifer consistently quantifies and qualifies the significance of the program and Brain Food Project. In one year, PASS attendance (usage) increased from 26% to over 85% as a result of her implementation; this is nearly 70% higher than the national average for embedded tutoring attendance in community colleges. The students enrolled in her program also reported feeling authentically supported, which has been reported through surveys and focus groups. The Brain Food project has propelled a movement to holistically support students throughout the entire campus. Initially, Jennifer saw a need in her classrooms as she realized students were experiencing difficulty focusing and learning during class. Jennifer often provided food to her students during class, but she was able to reach more students by developing the Brain Food Project

for PASS. In the last year, Jennifer has funded the Brain Food Project through personal and community donations as well as other various resources. Jennifer has established a sense of belonging and worth to writing and reading students of all levels through her efforts.

Jennifer also expanded the PASS Center and program to currently serve students from all course levels of English and ESL, which includes developmental through transfer students. In addition, she extended PASS to serve all learning communities and cohorts for the first time. Even more importantly, under Jennifer's leadership, PASS students of *all levels* who attend tutoring in the PASS Center perform significantly better than students who do not attend the PASS Center; for example, PASS students enrolled in courses two levels below transfer had a success rate of 91% while non-PASS students in the same course level had a success rate of 56%. Retention for PASS students is significantly higher as well. PASS serves underprepared students through transfer level students because Jennifer teaches that everyone can benefit from learning assistance. During the fall 2015 semester alone, Jennifer marketed PASS to reach well over 11,000 contact hours and 8300 visits from over 900 unduplicated writing students. These high numbers are the direct result of Jennifer's unparalleled devotion to the success of students in and out of the classroom. Jennifer has also extensively connected with the community by appearing on local new stations to explain to the community that writing at the college level is possible with the help of the PASS program; she has also traveled nationally to share her holistic Brain Food Project implementation with universities and colleges, such as Texas A&M University and Georgia Southern.

Her background in English, psychology (behavioral), higher education, and leadership supports the multi-faceted nature of leadership excellence that is necessary for the development and mentorship of students/writers. Jennifer holds a board position as Technology Coordinator for the Association of Colleges for Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA) and is the 2016 Golden Award recipient from Georgia Southern University. Currently, she is preparing to conduct a true experiment for her dissertation research to extend learning theory and inform practice for tutoring engagement through the holistic support of Brain Food. As an English instructor and faculty coordinator for PASS, Jennifer understands the hardships, experiences, and successes of writing and reading students who are developing their voices. As the coordinator of a robust English and ESL SI/embedded tutoring center, Jennifer works with tutors and PASS students daily as they develop academic prowess and writing confidence while developing their own community in the PASS Center. She teaches that every experience in life is a necessary recipe ingredient in the celebration of diversity.

When Jennifer began teaching at Fresno City College, she saw that students needed a way to express themselves through the written word; she also saw that students were struggling in and out of the classroom because their basic needs, such as regular nourishment, were not being met. Jennifer developed a sustainable program that feeds writing students while they attend writing tutoring sessions with their embedded tutors. But most importantly, the results of the Brain Food Project can be seen in the increased PASS attendance/engagement and statistically significant success rates. The Brain Food Project is all about serving students. More information about Jennifer's success with PASS writing students and the Brain Food Project can be found here: <http://fccwise.fresnocitycollege.edu/www/#/pass> (<http://fccwise.fresnocitycollege.edu/www/#/pass>).

<http://www.asccc.org/content/2016-stanback-stroud-diversity-award-winner-jennifer-dorian-faculty-coordinator-pass>

The articles published in the Rostrum do not necessarily represent the adopted positions of the academic senate. For adopted positions and recommendations, please browse this website.