

**Spring 2016**

We're here  
to help!

Monday – Friday  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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## Million Dollar Baby: STAR-NY

The news is huge: STAR-NY won a \$1 million grant to expand its online tutoring network. The consortium is still in its infancy yet already recognized as a key component of the SUNY-wide plan to increase student graduation rates.

With this grant, STAR-NY aims to add four schools to the network each year for the next five years, thereby bringing real-time, online tutoring services to over half of SUNY's 64 campuses by 2020. The goal is straightforward and its impact far-reaching thanks to the networks' unique membership requirements, starting with who those members are. STAR-NY thrives by understanding what academic support students need, and so the decision-making members are not administrators, but rather those who give or supervise direct student support.

Since each participating school must provide a tutor to cover one shift per week, adding new schools translates into expanded hours of operation and numbers of subjects covered for students at all participating campuses. This growth is assured to fit students' needs because STAR-NY members meet annually to determine consortium priorities based on the needs of their campuses. While the yearly planning session is still a few months away, possibilities for growth range from summer session coverage to daytime hours, and even graduate-level writing.

Another element of STAR-NY is that the network is meant to complement—not replace—brick-and-mortar services. Because participating schools must have

an academic support center, a side benefit of adding new campuses to the consortium is the potential to help campuses that don't currently have support centers think about how they could expand their services—a clear win for students.

Finally, campuses invest in STAR-NY not just financially, but through active involvement, too. For example, some members serve as advisors that offer feedback to network administrators throughout the year, while others act as mentors to fellow members in their same geographic area. This fosters professional growth for the academic support professionals involved, which in turn improves services for students. Right from the start, STAR-NY ensured that the power for making decisions stayed in the hands of those who know what students need: its members. Thanks to that vision, and equipped with a budget to grow, STAR-NY is positioned to continue to meet students' needs for academic support—straight through to graduation!



## Fast Facts

### You can use our website to:

- Learn more about our programs and services
- Schedule or cancel a Peer Tutoring 1<sup>st</sup> appointment
- Find SI and PLTL session days, times, locations, and important updates
- Access Night Owl online tutoring
- Read previous issues of our newsletter
- Discover more about Dogs in the Office and PAWS for Stress Relief event
- Learn more about becoming a peer tutor or SI leader

## Get to know: Christina Matthews

Whether working her gardens, crafting a poem, or capturing a Kodak moment, Christina Matthews knows the power of providing the right conditions for success. Her knack for bringing this power to student support makes Christina a terrific fit as our new Assistant Director. Christina, a Syracuse native, most recently worked with Onondaga Community College's CSTEP program as an academic coach, and also brings experience in teaching, tutoring and program administration from her years at Fort Valley State University in Georgia. Christina credits her experiences as having taught her to look holistically at students' needs for support so that she can be of greater service.

Christina was drawn to ASAP by the comradery of the staff—both professionals and students—working together to support academic success. What does ASAP's tagline, "Helping students succeed as independent learners" mean to Christina? She explained, "ASAP helps students navigate the thinking and learning process from a team approach rather than one of authority." Christina also likes ASAP's mission to support students of all ability as it's reflective of one of her favorite quotes: "Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to



unlocking our potential" (Liane Cordes, 1981). Christina translates this concept into helping students see that being successful in college isn't only about how smart they are, but about how well they plan and follow through on those plans. Speaking of plans, Christina looks forward to making connections with students here at Cortland, helping them "make strides toward understanding themselves and knowing what they can do to achieve their goals." With her strong mission to empower others, you may wonder what fuels Christina: coffee, she says, and lots of it!

### 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.