

**SCHOOL FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES**

**PALS DIVISION**

**2001 — 2002**

© Copyright, 2000 by  
SCHOOL FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY  
Hempstead, New York 11549

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

This book or any parts thereof, may not  
be reproduced in any form without  
written permission from the author and  
the publisher.

# **PALS DIVISION**

**HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY**

Hempstead, N.Y. 11549

Hofstra University continues its  
commitment to extending equal  
opportunity to all qualified  
individuals.

## THE STAFF OF THE PALS DIVISION

2001 - 2002

- |                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Linda De Motta    | - | <b>Director, PALS Division</b><br>Professor of the Foundations of<br>Education, Teaching Fellow in the<br>Humanities |
| Pamela Mason-Egan | - | <b>Teaching Administrator and PALS Instructor</b>  |
| Cindy Scavelli    | - | <b>Adjunct Instructor and PALS Instructor</b>  |
| Jennifer Davis    | - | <b>Teaching Administrator and PALS Instructor</b>  |
| Nicole Pauzano    | - | <b>Teaching Administrator and PALS Instructor</b>  |

### SCHOOL FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES PALS DIVISION

### PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC LEARNING SKILLS (PALS)

#### *MISSION*

Hofstra University has traditionally sought to serve students with different academic needs. In a world increasingly aware of differences in culture, language and learning style, the School for University Studies extends this tradition to students with particular academic challenges and to those who need different arrangements to complete their undergraduate studies. Currently, the School for University Studies has four major divisions, the Freshman Division, the PALS Division, the Transfer Division, and the Degree Division.

Over the years, Hofstra University has been proud of its commitment to serve highly qualified students who have not been able to realize their potential. The professional staff of the Program for Academic Learning Skills (PALS) extends this work to a specific group of potential college students who have been traditionally identified as learning disabled. Course grades and test results have not always reflected the true potential of many learning disabled students.

The Program provides auxiliary aids and compensatory services to certified learning disabled students who have been accepted to the University through regular admissions. These services are provided free of charge.

In addition, among applicants *not* acceptable through regular admissions, the Program for Academic Learning Skills (PALS) seeks candidates with substantially higher than average intellectual ability, with emotional stability, who are willing to work very hard and who are socially mature, but who have experienced a variety of learning disabilities. These may be demonstrated by problems in oral and written language expression which reflect linguistic and semantic confusions, and problems with organizational skills which are demonstrated by disorientations in space and time. These problems contribute to deficiencies in listening, reading, writing and problem solving as they relate to academic achievement.

PALS believes that these difficulties do not always stand in the way of academic success, nor should they always stand in the way of entrance to a university community. The Program, therefore, concentrates on selecting the best applicants and on enhancing the skills that will help them achieve academic success at Hofstra University. There is an additional charge for this program.

## *IMPLEMENTATION*

Normally, candidates are accepted into the PALS Division for a period of one academic year. They are full-time, matriculated students of the University. Students normally enroll for a minimum of 12 credits per semester. Their academic work often allows the same options that students have in the various freshman curricula at the University.

In addition, students normally meet with a specialist at least once a week; they also participate in specialized small group workshops during the year. These workshops receive non-liberal arts academic credit. No more than eight PALS credits can be counted towards a Hofstra degree.

If needed and/or desirable, PALS students are permitted to take their course examinations without the pressure of time and under the supervision of the PALS staff. Books-on-tape and word processors are available. Upon a student's request, PALS will provide notification of testing accommodations to the student's professors.

As members of the Hofstra community, PALS students are able to participate in all activities open to qualified undergraduate students at the University. At the end of their year PALS students are able to continue at the University if their academic performance is judged to be satisfactory by the standards applicable to their specific freshman curricula. Please consult the Hofstra University General Bulletin and its addenda for these retention standards.

## *STAFF*

The PALS Division is part of the School for University Studies, which is responsible for its administration. PALS has its own professional staff of teachers qualified in the area of learning disabilities.

## *ADMISSION INTO THE PROGRAM*

PALS has always conducted a highly individualized admissions process. Candidates with documented learning disabilities not acceptable to the University through regular admission are offered the opportunity to apply to PALS. In addition to the materials submitted with the original application to the University, PALS candidates are required to submit any and all materials describing the specific learning disabilities. These must include the results of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) administered within one year of the application.

Once all these materials are on file, the applicant may be invited for an interview. Shortly after this interview, an admissions decision will be made. Acceptable candidates will be notified by the Admissions Office.

**SCHOOL FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
THE PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC LEARNING SKILLS (PALS)  
DIVISION AGREEMENT**

This statement represents an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_ and the PALS Division. The purpose of this agreement is to provide conditions to enhance the probability that the student named above will have a successful academic year within the PALS Division of the School for University Studies.

Under the terms of this statement, I \_\_\_\_\_, the student, agree that I will:

- 1) Attend and participate in all regularly scheduled PALS Division meetings;
- 2) Keep all scheduled appointments with my PALS Division instructor and keep my instructor informed of my progress or lack of progress;
- 3) Spend about two hours per week on homework and other assignments for every hour per week spent in class;
- 4) Submit a brief written report to my PALS Division instructor at the end of the freshman year informing my instructor of my current status, my reactions to the PALS Division and the successes and problems I have encountered.
- 5) Seriously consider, if I choose to join a fraternity, sorority, or other extra-curricular activity, how my academic success may be jeopardized.

Under the terms of this agreement, the PALS Division of the School for University Studies at Hofstra University agrees that *if the student fulfills each of the conditions outlined above* and does not otherwise break any of the established rules of the University, it will:

- 1) Provide the student with skills instruction. Skills instruction includes developing learning skills in time management, organization, decoding, comprehension, listening, studying, written expression, test-taking, and self-advocacy ;
- 2) Provide the student with compensatory services. Compensatory services include time extension on exams, quiet location for exams, reader for exams, books on tape, computer lab for papers and exams, computer technology (voice-activation, PCs, Kurzweil), notification of accommodations (upon request), and assistance with contacting classmates for note taking.
- 3) Provide the student with a written review of the student's progress towards mastering skills, assembled by the PALS Division's professional staff, at the end of their freshman year;
- 4) Post on the student's official record during the semesters in the PALS Division grades awarded in all PALS Division instructional classes (all PALS Division instructional classes receive a grade of Pass/Fail/NCR; Pass is equivalent to collegiate "C" or better). Grades in courses taken in other programs of the University, including those within the School for University Studies, will be recorded in the manner customary to that program.

Please note: Standards for continuance in a baccalaureate degree program at Hofstra can be found in the Hofstra University General Bulletin.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Ignacio Götz, Director  
PALS Division

I waive my right to keep information confidential *if my progress is not satisfactory* in PALS Division instructional classes, as determined by the PALS Division's professional staff.

Information about my academic status can be released to the following agents, offices or individuals if requested by these agents, offices or individuals:

\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship  
\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship  
\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## *ACADEMIC HISTORY AND RATIONALE*

In 1979, Hofstra University established the Program for Academic Learning Skills (PALS). This program was predicated on the belief that students with diagnosed learning disabilities and with above average intelligence are capable of succeeding at Hofstra University if they are supported by compensation and remediation to help them become academically independent. In the early years of the program, enrollment was as small as six students, and the program employed part-time learning specialists to provide compensatory services for those students and to help them develop learning skills. In more recent years, the Program has grown to include a Freshman enrollment of 40-45 students and to employ a staff of both full-time and part-time learning specialists. The staff has continued to carry out the original concept, emphasizing the development of learning skills and providing improved compensatory services enhanced by some recent advances in computer technology.

In 1998, PALS became a separate Division within the School for University studies to expand the availability of its services to all eligible students at the University. While some learning deficits will require compensation in the form of learning aids (e.g., taped texts, untimed testing, and computer facilities), PALS students have their own unique combinations of strengths which can become resources for them to use in compensating for their weaknesses. Hence, PALS now takes a dual approach to learning problems: compensatory and developmental. The compensatory element includes the aids and adjustments mandated by public statute. These compensatory services provide short term relief from learning problems. The developmental element is designed to provide PALS students with long term tools that they apply to their content area coursework. This is a slower process aimed at helping students become independent learners, not just for today, but for their entire lives.

### **PALS Workshops**

PALS 001& PALS 002

1 s.h./ P/F

Mandatory PALS workshops meet throughout the academic year and include all of the Freshman students in the PALS Division. The goal of the workshops is to disseminate information about the latest findings in the field of learning disabilities. This information includes such topics as theories about the causes of learning disabilities, diagnostic tools used for identifying and classifying students with learning disabilities, and the thinking processes affected by learning disabilities. When students know about their own metacognition and about the theoretical and research background of their learning deficits, they are able to effectively design strategies to compensate for their deficits. Moreover, this knowledge can be helpful as they learn to advocate for themselves in their University course work. The workshops operate as lecture classes, providing general information which the students can then apply to themselves through discussions in their individualized meetings with their PALS skills instructors.

## **Individualized Meetings**

Included in PALS 001 & PALS 002

Freshmen entering the University through PALS are assigned to a PALS skills instructor for the year. The student meets with the instructor regularly once a week with extra meetings scheduled as needed. The foundation of these meetings is skills development. The instructor and the student work methodically to identify learning strengths and weaknesses. They then discuss, develop and customize strategies which use the student's strengths to compensate for weaknesses. In some cases, the compensation may involve training with computers such as a Kurzweil Reading Machine, a voice activated computer for word processing or a four-track tape recorder for taped texts. In this one-to-one setting, the instructor aims to build a positive rapport with the student, acting as a mentor for the student's first year in college. These meetings will often become a conference for discussing some of the information presented in the workshop lectures and applying that general information to the student's specific needs. The student is then expected to use these customized strategies when approaching work from University classes. Although the PALS skills instructors are not content tutors, they will, at times, use some of the students' coursework to introduce, teach, model and practice a particular strategy.

## **PALS Individual Projects**

PALS 061

1 s.h./ P/F

PALS Projects are similar to the individualized meetings that PALS Freshmen attend in that they meet weekly and focus on the individual student's needs. However, these projects are designed for students who have developed a clear understanding of their own metacognitive processes. Students meet weekly or bi-weekly with an instructor and learn to enhance their reading, writing and study skills as well as their skills in time management, organization, test taking and research. Thus these weekly meetings "fine tune" skills that a student has already developed rather than introduce the student to the field of learning disabilities. When instructional resources permit, PALS Individual Projects are also available to those students at the University who did not enter as PALS Freshmen but who provide documentation of their learning disabilities through the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) taken within two years of applying for services. Students who entered the University as PALS Freshmen often find these projects helpful as transitional meetings during the first semester of their Sophomore year. Moreover, the PALS Projects are available to students throughout their undergraduate years at Hofstra.

Note: Earned credits in Workshops, Individualized Meetings, and Individual Projects count toward graduation credit but do not satisfy Liberal Arts requirements. No more than eight (8) credits of PALS may be applied to a Hofstra degree.

## *COMPENSATORY SERVICES*

As mandated by public statute, the PALS office will provide untimed testing, quiet testing locations, books on tape, and computer aids such as word processors, voice activated computers, and Kurzweil Reading machines. Additionally, upon a student's request, the PALS office will send letters notifying professors of the student's specific needs. The PALS staff will also teach students how to advocate for themselves in a mature and professional manner. Although PALS does not provide

notetakers in the classroom, PALS instructors will assist students in finding classmates who are efficient notetakers and who are willing to share their notes. Students with learning disabilities can have access to photocopy machines to reproduce notes from classmates who have agreed to help. These services will be provided to all students at the University who identify themselves as having been diagnosed with learning disabilities. The students must provide a copy of the total scores, subtest scores, psychologist's report and diagnosis from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R).

As a service provider, the PALS Division is committed to serving students without compromising the integrity of their education. Through its long history in higher education, PALS has developed an expertise and record of success of which all are proud.