



SUMMER SCHOOL

A new program helps struggling students and SU's retention rate.

Dan Weinheimer readily admits it: his freshman year was like one long vacation. About the only thing he made time for was fun. He opened few books, attended fewer classes, and worried little about either, until he realized he was headed for academic Armageddon.

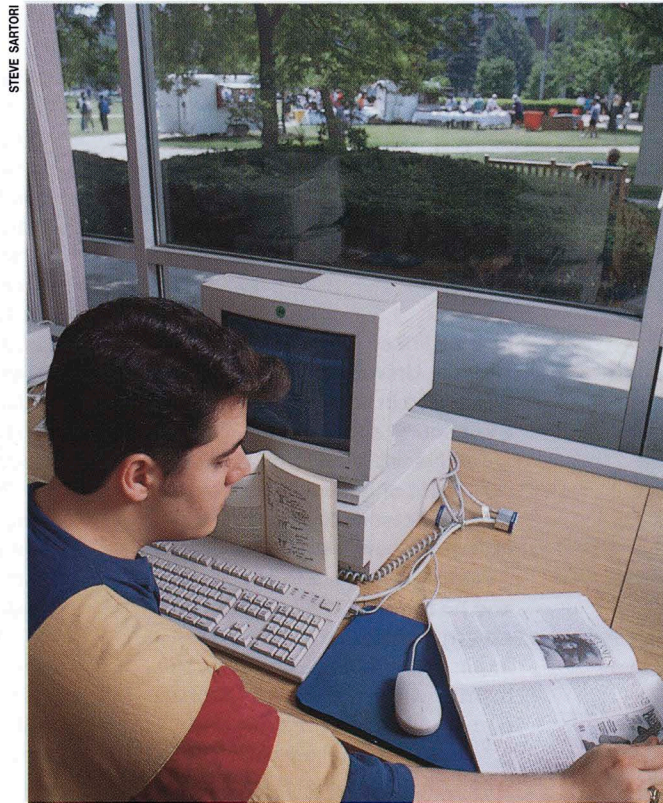
In years past, Syracuse University students like Weinheimer would have been told to improve their grades or pack their bags. Nowadays, they're told to stick around for the summer.

"I knew I was struggling, so I went and talked to my adviser," says Weinheimer, who was directed to the Syracuse University Academic Improvement Program, or SAIP.

Launched in 1992, SAIP is designed to teach students how to help themselves. The program addresses academic deficiencies, and attempts to examine the underlying causes, during two six-week summer sessions. Students attend classes, workshops, and seminars, and reside together in the same residence hall, where mentors make sure they do little more than eat, sleep, and study.

"It's like a Marine boot camp," says Ernest Hemphill, associate professor of biology. "There's plenty of people to keep track of them and make sure they study. Most of the students in this are having difficulties because they don't have enough self-discipline. This is a very disciplined environment."

Weinheimer appreciates the struc-



While summer rolled on without them, 80 SU students attended an academic "boot camp" designed to help improve their study skills and self-discipline.

ture—and the opportunity to keep from flunking out.

"I looked at this as a way to stay at Syracuse," says Weinheimer. "I had pathetically poor grades and this gave me a chance to start over. Not only did it give me a chance to do better, but it showed me a way to do it."

SAIP is the brainchild of Horace Smith, associate dean of Summer Sessions, and a creation of fiscal necessity. To help offset enrollment dips, Syracuse University is trying to improve retention rates—SU typically graduates about two-thirds of the students who enter the University as freshmen, despite the fact that students

come to SU academically qualified to attend.

"There isn't much attention paid to retention when students are plentiful, but things change when there's a scarcity," admits Ronald R. Cavanaugh, vice president for undergraduate studies and a wholehearted advocate of SAIP. "I think SAIP is one of the more innovative programs that we've seen at this University. It's a very practical program that makes a lot of sense. It's the kind of program that hardly anybody around can believe wasn't put in place long ago."

"It's a common-sense program," says Smith, "but to my knowledge, this is the first time it has been done at any university in the nation."

The program began as a pilot in the summer of 1992, when a two-session total of 36 students participated. Enrollment more than doubled this summer. The students, generally freshmen

and sophomores and typically floundering, are directed to SAIP by their individual colleges. Participation is neither mandatory nor free, although tuition is discounted.

Participants who have not already taken the College Learning Strategies course (CLS 105) must do so. In addition to this course—which covers skills such as note taking, exam preparation, and time management—students take one other three-credit course. Students who have already taken CLS 105 register for two three-credit courses. They're allowed to repeat previous courses in which they did poorly, and if the new grade is better, the old grade is replaced.

SAIP received two national awards for academic excellence following the program's 1992 trial run, during which all but one of the participants improved their grade point average. Time revealed a need for certain changes, however.

"We found that the students did extremely well during the sessions last summer, but many fell apart in the fall," says Smith. "We decided we needed to extend the program beyond the summer and provide more long-term structure." In essence, it takes many students longer than six weeks to learn the self-discipline skills necessary to be academically successful on their own.

Enter Linda Karell, who was hired in May, named program director, and charged with the responsibility of making SAIP a year-round entity. Under Karell, participants now have continued exposure to tutoring sessions and clinics, SAIP mentors, special seminars, even SU counselors.

Academic difficulties aren't always caused by a lack of discipline, says Karell, and to be successful, SAIP must address divergent student needs.

"When students are having difficulty, we've found that emotional distress is often involved, or emotional distress may come about in response to poor grades," says Karell. "The reasons for academic problems can be many—learning disabilities, family problems, not being academically prepared. We need to be able to respond to various student needs. We've got to do whatever we can to get students to engage in critical thinking and problem solving on their own, and help them find new ways to achieve academic success."

Resources and intentions notwithstanding, SAIP can't guarantee academic improvement. "It's a helpful program, but you have to want to take advantage of it," says Weinheimer, who, over the summer, retook two 100-level courses he failed last year and earned high marks in both.

"It's obvious now that I can do the work, but I wasn't sure of that before," he says. "I felt I needed structure, and I needed to block out time better. I just needed another chance to prove to myself that I could handle college."

—BOB HILL

HEAD LINES

- *Jensen Takes Arts and Sciences Helm.* As the search continues to fill the position of dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Vice Chancellor Gershon Vincow named Robert G. Jensen interim dean for one year, effective July 1.

A professor of geography, Jensen served as chair of the geography department for 17 years, and for the last 4 years has been dean of the Graduate School. Leo Lambert, associate dean of the Graduate School, will serve as acting dean of the Graduate School for the 1993-94 academic year.

Jensen succeeds Samuel Gorovitz, dean since 1986, who will return to the College of Arts and Sciences faculty following a research leave.

- *SU Investigates Lacrosse Program.* The University launched an investigation of its lacrosse program in May, prompted by statements made to University officials regarding possible rules violations.

Fred Amaya, a starter in the midfield, was declared ineligible to play by the University on May 7, based on preliminary conclusions reached in the investigation. At the University's request, Amaya's eligibility was restored by the NCAA 12 days later, and Amaya was allowed to complete his senior season.

The investigation, conducted by John P. Hardt, SU director of compliance, and Thomas S. Evans, senior partner of Bond, Schoeneck & King, SU's general legal counsel, comes 15 months after Syracuse University completed a two-year investigation of its athletic program, prompted by allegations made against the men's basketball team in November 1991. That investigation uncovered violations by the lacrosse team, including excessive financial aid distribution for three seasons. The NCAA penalized the program by docking three scholarships for three academic years, beginning this fall.

Failure to uncover other possible violations was due not to lack of scrutiny but to the investigative process, says Robert Hill, SU vice president for public relations.

"Witnesses make statements informally, and then are unwilling to make an official statement. Witnesses make official statements, then come forward later with different statements," he says. "This can result in inconclusive evidence about whether a violation occurred. The University wishes to obtain a full account of any possible NCAA violations, and will take appropriate action."

- *Maxwell Institute Funded.* The family of Alan K. "Scotty" Campbell has pledged \$500,000 to SU to support a public affairs institute named in his honor. Campbell, dean of the Maxwell School from 1969 to 1977, is a member of the Maxwell Advisory Board and a visiting executive professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Announcement of the gift was made June 18 at a campus symposium in his honor organized by former students. Campbell also received the Maxwell School's Spirit of Public Service Award.