

# Supplemental Instruction (SI) Advisor Partners Guide



**Contact Supplemental Instruction  
Supplemental Instruction Coordinator**

Rachel S. Hawley, Ph.D.

Email: rhawley3@msudenver.edu

\*Feel free to message me on Teams

Click image for SI Website



## Supplemental Instruction (SI) Overview and History

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was first developed in 1973 by Dr. Deanna Martin at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. SI is an academic assistance program that provides weekly, peer-led group study sessions for students taking historically difficult, gateway, and bottleneck courses. SI sessions bring students together in a collaborative learning environment where they improve their understanding of course material, review and discuss important concepts, develop study strategies, and prepare for exams. In SI, students connect *what to learn* with *how to learn*. SI is provided for all students who want to improve their understanding of course material and improve their grades; SI is *not* a remedial program for struggling or failing students. Students who attend SI sessions on a consistent basis traditionally earn a half to full letter grade higher than those students who do not participate in SI.

### Purpose and Goals of SI

- Create strong learning communities for our MSU Denver students.
- Help students become more independent learners.
- Reduce DFW (D, F, and Withdraw) rates in targeted historically difficult courses.
- Improve student grades in targeted historically difficult courses.
- Increase re-enrollment and persistence of participating students.
- Ultimately, improve the graduation rates of students at MSU Denver.

*By encouraging regular attendance, SI aims to accomplish these goals through helping students:*

- Understand *what to learn* and *how to learn*
- Develop transferable study skills
- Gain problem-solving experience through trial and error
- Develop analytical and critical thinking skills
- Become more actively involved in the course
- Engage in discussion and collaborative activities with peers
- Build connection to the MSU Denver campus community

### Key Elements of SI

- The SI Program supports historically difficult courses at MSU Denver. SI course assignments are based on challenging content and high rates of D's, F's and withdrawals – not because of the way it is being taught or by whom it is being taught.
- SI Leaders are assigned to a specific faculty/section(s) and plan and lead at least two 50–60-minute SI study sessions per week that integrate *what to learn* with *how to learn*.
- SI Sessions are voluntary, outside of class, and beneficial for ALL students (not just for students who are struggling). SI Sessions are open to all students in the course section and is *not* viewed as remedial.
- SI Leaders attend all class sessions for their designated section(s) as a model student, getting to know the students and staying up-to-date with all course material, expectations, and challenging content to students.

- SI Leaders are encouraged to collaborate with faculty to discuss the course and how to best support the students.
- SI Leaders attend training before the semester begins and ongoing weekly professional development to continue sharpening their professional and leadership skills, including topics such as strengthening student academic performance, session facilitation tips, using inclusive language, and strategies for marketing sessions to students.
- Students who regularly attend SI Sessions earn higher grades and have lower DFW rates (D's, F's and Withdrawals). Data has also demonstrated higher graduation rates for students who regularly participate in SI.

## Differences Between Supplemental Instruction & Other Academic Supports

MSU Denver offers multiple academic support programs that focus on student success through peer learning. The purpose and role of each leads to a different approach to serving students. There are clear benefits for each program, and students are encouraged to utilize as many programs as will best meet their needs! *(Note: Teaching Assistants' roles and responsibilities typically vary by department, and from Undergraduate to Graduate TAs.)*

SI leaders Academic Support <a href="mailto:SI@msudenver.edu">SI@msudenver.edu</a>	Tutors Academic Support <a href="mailto:Tutoring@msudenver.edu">Tutoring@msudenver.edu</a>	Learning Assistants Academic Support <a href="mailto:LA@msudenver.edu">LA@msudenver.edu</a>	Peer Mentors Connect to Academic Support <a href="mailto:RoadwaysPeerMentoring@msudenver.edu">RoadwaysPeerMentoring@msudenver.edu</a>	Writing Consultants Writing Center <a href="mailto:writingcenter@msudenver.edu">writingcenter@msudenver.edu</a>
SI Leaders are assigned to a specific course/faculty. They attend a designated class as a model student and provide support for other students during regularly scheduled SI sessions outside of class.	Tutors are assigned to specific courses, but not a specific section/faculty. They provide walk-in and scheduled one-on-one tutoring sessions during regularly scheduled hours at designated tutoring locations.	Learning Assistants are assigned to a specific course/faculty. They provide support for students primarily during class, as well as office hours outside of class, based on class needs.	Peer Mentors help students find a community on campus to build their academic, social, and emotional support networks. All students are assigned a Peer Mentor as a resource and connection.	Writing Center Peer Consultants help students with writing assignments for any class or personal writing projects. Students can make appointments at any of 3 locations on campus or online, and walk-in support is subject to availability.
SI Leaders plan SI sessions based on challenging course content, faculty collaboration, and students' needs.	Tutors prepare general content for one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions and adapt to student needs.	Learning Assistants meet regularly with faculty to discuss upcoming activities and how they will be involved in the classroom.	Peer Mentors provide personalized support for individual students and plan group activities and events.	WC Peer Consultants provide 50-minute one-on-one or group sessions that help students with writing assignments, as well as resumes, cover letters, grad school applications and more.
SI Leaders emphasize collaboration, discussion, student engagement, and ownership of learning – as well as how these skills can transfer to other courses.	Tutors emphasize individual study skills, organizational skills, and student ownership of learning.	Learning Assistants emphasize class participation, discussion, collaboration, student engagement, questioning techniques and ownership of learning.	Peer Mentors help connect students to resources for various skills/needs and help promote ownership of learning.	WC Peer Consultants help students with understanding writing assignments/prompts, planning and drafting, organization, citation support and proofreading, and more.
<b>BONUS: All these support services are FREE and can be used simultaneously by students.</b>				

## Advisor Role

*Advisors strive to keep up to date on campus and community resources that are available to students. Advisors typically refer students to a wide variety of campus resources, including financial aid, counseling, tutoring, career advising, etc. It is your guidance that aids in the success of our students at MSU Denver and advisor support is critical to the SI Program's success. Supplemental Instruction has become increasingly popular on college campuses, and academic advisors should encourage students to take advantage of this service if it is available. SI is an effective way for students to be successful not only in difficult courses, but to take the in their introductory courses. Advisers are ideally positioned to suggest to students that they participate in SI sessions.*

## How Do Students Benefit From SI

Stone and Jacobs (2008) found a number of benefits to students participating in SI. For example, SI students are less likely to earn grades of D or F or withdraw and are more likely to earn higher final grades than students who do not participate in SI, and their institutions are more likely to retain them. Promote the benefits of SI to skeptical students. Students who participate in SI tend to earn higher grades on exams and higher final grades than students who do not attend. Students who participate are also less likely to earn Ds or Fs or withdraw from the course (Stone & Jacobs, 2008).

Although there are not many research studies focusing on benefits to the students who serve as SI leaders, some studies have shown that SI increases communication skills, faculty interaction, and knowledge of the material (Stone & Jacobs, 2008). At MSU Denver, Supplemental Instruction has had a large impact on retention rates as well as increased course grades. The SI program began collecting retention and DFW rates data in 2016. Between 2016-2018, the retention rate rose 12% for those who participated in SI versus those who did not. Our most recent data, Fall 2019, demonstrates that continued trend with almost a 15% lower DFW rate for those utilizing SI than those who did not. It is our goal at SI to continue to improve retention numbers as well as decrease DFW rates across multiple departments and courses across the university.

## Encourage Students to Attend SI

The most important piece for Advisors is our SI Website. When you are advising your students, please feel free to log onto our site for the most up to date courses, sections, and SI session days/times.

### **A Few Additional Tips:**

- Let your students know that at MSU Denver, students do not need to sign up in advance and can just come to any of our SI sessions.
- Explain to students how they can make the most of SI. These sessions are most beneficial when students have prepared for them by completing the homework and attending class.
- It is important that students realize SI is not a makeup course for students who miss class nor is it a "homework" session. SI Leaders guide students through course materials, provide additional problems and worksheets, and encourage collaborative learning. Advisers should encourage students to become actively involved by asking questions during SI sessions.

- Let SI Coordinator know if there is any way we can help support you! We can also provide marketing materials to share with your students (PDFs or print once back on campus).

## **Come visit an SI session!**

As an advisor, we welcome you to attend an SI session. This is a great way to see our leaders in action with our students. Please feel free to contact SI about attending a session or use our website to drop into a session that fits your schedule.

## **SI Supported Courses**

You can find this semester's SI Supported courses here: <https://www.msudenver.edu/supplemental-instruction/si-session-schedule/>

## **Identifying Future SI Leaders**

Advisors can also encourage students to apply to become SI leaders after they successfully complete courses that offered supplemental instruction. Our SI program requires the follow for potential SI Leaders:

- GPA of 3.3
- Must be registered for at least 6 credit hours for the semester
- Taken the course prior and earned a minimum of a final grade of B- (unless department requires a higher grade) OR be a major in the discipline
- Hold sophomore status or higher
- Required to attend pre-semester training sessions and Friday afternoon (3-4) trainings per month

We will contact you when our application for the upcoming semester is posted! Also, feel free to have potential students contact SI directly at [rhawley3@msudenver.edu](mailto:rhawley3@msudenver.edu).

## SI at MSU Denver – Feedback & Data

### The SI Team at MSU Denver

*The key participants in the SI model at MSU Denver are: the SI Coordinator, SAS Specialist, SI Program Assistant, faculty partners (whose classes are supported by SI), Senior SI Leaders, SI Leaders, and the student participants.*

#### **SI Coordinator: Rachel S. Hawley, Ph.D.**

**Email:** [rhawley3@msudenver.edu](mailto:rhawley3@msudenver.edu)

The SI Coordinator possesses a strong understanding of the UMKC SI model, and provides leadership in developing, implementing, and promoting an exemplary and comprehensive SI Program at MSU Denver. Collaborating with both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, the SI Coordinator works closely with administrators, faculty liaisons, and other campus programs across the campus to meet the needs of the greater campus community.

#### **Student Academic Services Specialist: Vacant**

The SAS Specialist also possesses a strong understanding of the UMKC SI model and provides valuable support to the SI Program by assisting with the recruitment, interviewing, training, development, oversight, and evaluation of SI Mentors and SI Leaders.

#### **SI Faculty Partners**

Faculty partners are the professors who teach courses that are historically difficult for students at MSU Denver and typically have been identified as gateway or bottleneck courses; those courses that have a high percentage of Ds, Fs, and Withdrawals. These faculty support the SI Program by having their course section(s) linked to an SI Leader and help encourage students to attend SI Sessions.

#### **Senior SI Leaders**

SI Mentors are outstanding SI Leaders that have been selected to help contribute to the inner workings of the SI Program through mentoring, training, and developing SI Leaders.

#### **SI Leaders**

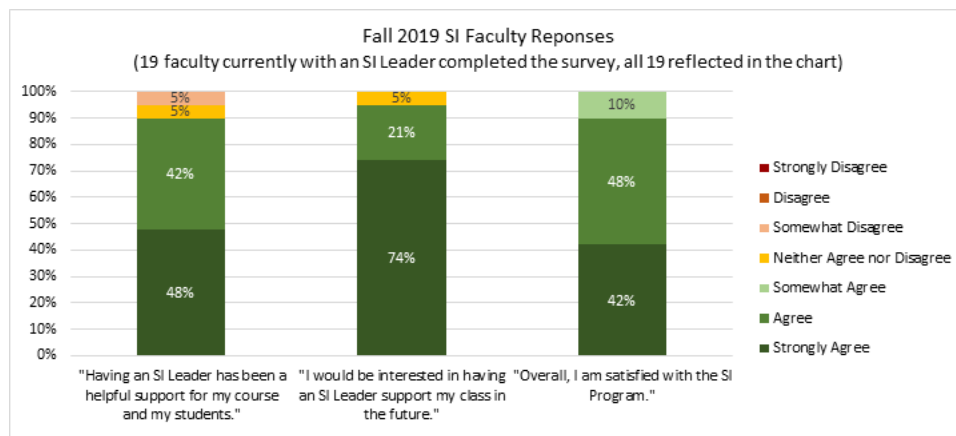
SI Leaders are exceptional students who have already mastered the course material. They are trained to plan and facilitate group study sessions for students to improve their understanding of course material, review and discuss important concepts, develop study strategies, and prepare for exams. They provide two or three 50-60 minute sessions each week, bringing together course readings and content together in a collaborative learning environment. Through the process of planning and leading SI Sessions, SI Leaders gain content knowledge as well as develop many transferable professional skills (i.e. communication, leadership, collaboration, time management, organization, problem solving).

### What MSU Denver Faculty Members are saying about SI

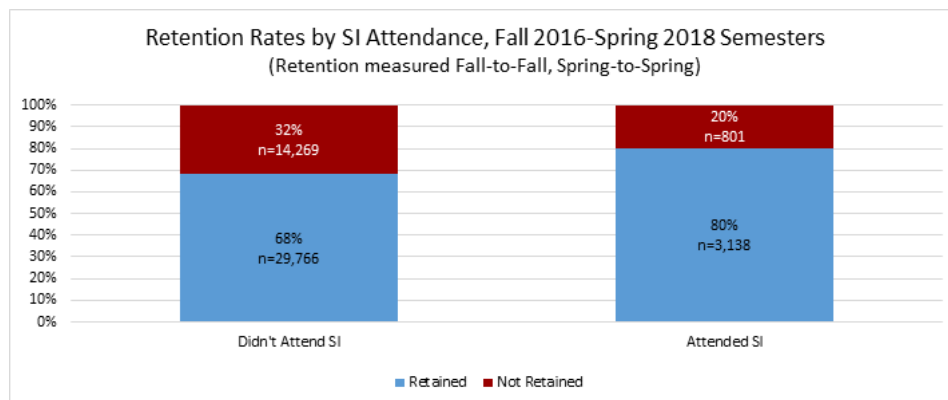
Faculty have noticed a variety of benefits from having an SI Leader in their course. Common benefits include (all quotations are from the Fall 2019 SI Faculty Survey responses):

- “Students who attend SI sessions tend to be more motivated and more engaged in the course.”

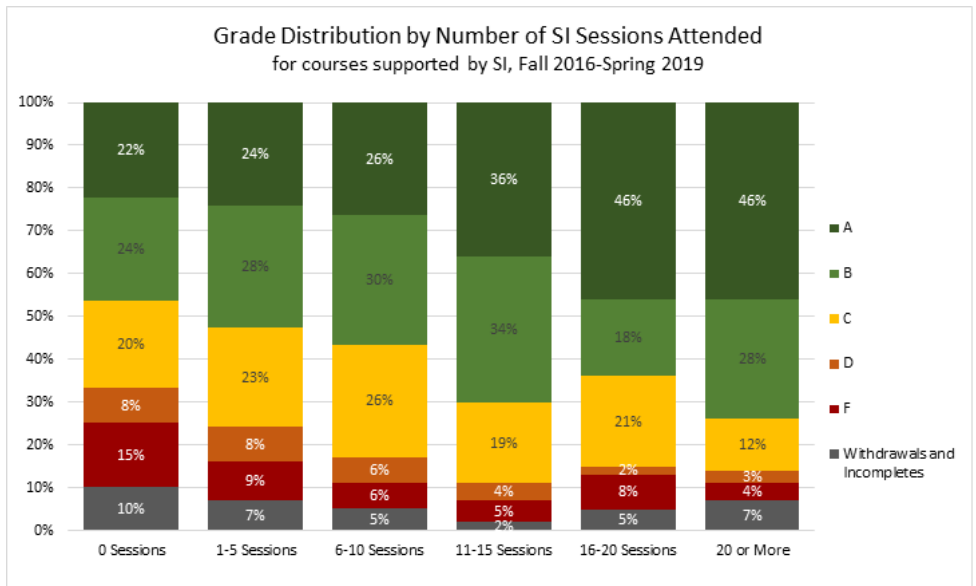
- “I just gave what historically has been the most pivotal exam of the semester and for the first time I had 1 perfect score and more A’s and B’s than previously.”
- “Unprompted... students would speak very positively about the SI Sessions, even trying to recruit other students to attend. They shared that it helped highlight the most important course information, as well as guiding them to take better notes and better study.”
- “Students have a peer contact they can go to in addition to seeing the instructor... students have more opportunities for help.”
- “It provides another avenue for students to engage in the material... in a very meaningful and challenging way.”
- “The students in the class are comfortable talking to the SI Leader. It’s nice having extra support for students who are struggling with the course.”



## Supplemental Instruction Data



From “The HIPs Don’t Lie: Tracking High Impact Practices at MSU Denver” (Petranovich, 2019)



From "Analysis of Courses with Supplemental Instruction: Fall 2016-Spring 2019" (Business Intelligence, 2019)

