Embrace GROWTH
Greetings from the University of Arizona!

At the SALT Center we believe that, given the opportunity, every individual has the potential to grow, to learn, and succeed, regardless of their challenges. This ‘growth mindset’ informs how we work with students and how we operate as an organization.

In this issue of the SALT Center Journal, I invite you to discover how students, staff, and parents all benefit from ‘growth mindset.’ We share a summary of the framework and examples of how this approach has helped us continue to improve services for students and, through our newly created Bartlett Labs, develop the cutting-edge solutions undergraduates with learning and attention challenges need to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

The SALT Center’s enhancement of student services and the launch of Bartlett Labs is possible through a transformative gift from longtime supporters, Bruce and Patricia Bartlett, who are the proud parents of a SALT Center alumnus. Time and time again, the Bartletts have stepped up to empower the SALT Center to continually improve our services and grow as a national and international leader in this work. We are profoundly grateful for their vision, friendship and support.

Bartlett Labs, which will focus on both internal evaluation and applied, multi-disciplinary research, is an essential next step for the SALT Center. Through it, we will contribute to the University of Arizona’s strategic plan, modeling inquiry, collaboration, and discovery for students, staff and all stakeholders.

With all that’s happening we cannot forget that in 2020 the SALT Center will celebrate its 40th anniversary. It’s an incredible milestone and we’d like to celebrate by (re)connecting to all those who have been a part of the SALT Center. I’d like to invite all alumni and friends of the program to share their SALT Center stories with us. We want to know how the SALT Center has impacted your life so that we can celebrate your accomplishments and continue to encourage others. Share your stories online at tinyurl.com/SALTCenterStory.

Bear Down!

Gabrielle E. Miller, Ed.D.
Executive Director

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Gabrielle Miller

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GROWING THROUGH FAILURE:
LESSONS LEARNED ON THE TRAIL
BY EMILY BUSHOUSE

L
ike many other runners, I have endured the ‘pain cave,’ where at mile 20 of
an ultramarathon, my legs feel like bags of sand, my stomach is doing back
flips, I’m breathing like Darth Vader, and my confidence is in a heap on the
side of the trail 15 miles back. I don’t know if I can do this. But here’s the thing: I
am not special. I am just like every other person in the running community who
is trying to work through fear, vulnerability, and doubt to reach the finish line.

If I dig deep into my bucket of courage, I can capitalize on these uneasy feelings in order to learn something about myself, hanging on until the possibility of failure doesn’t seem so scary anymore. This is where the magic happens.

The same is true for most growth opportunities in life. Facing challenges head-on is the best way to learn from our experiences, even those that result in failure. The more we practice working through something difficult, the better we get at navigating it.

Carol Dweck coined the term growth mindset to capture this idea, that we develop our abilities through effort and dedication to learning. When we are committed to growth, we understand that failure is a necessary part of the process by which real learning occurs. We fail time and time again, learning from our mistakes until we figure out how to solve a problem. When we adhere to a fixed mindset, on the other hand, we view our abilities as unchangeable and believe intelligence is something we’re born with. We are afraid to make mistakes and decide that not trying is better than trying and failing.

The key to success is finding the courage to try, even when it opens the door to failure. At the SALT Center, we help students adopt a growth mindset by challenging them to change their thinking patterns. We push students to:

…value the process over the outcome
- Fixed: “I can’t understand, I must be stupid.”
- Growth: “I will ask questions until I understand.”

…learn from failures
- Fixed: “If I failed, so I must not be smart enough to figure this out.”
- Growth: “I failed, but I’ve learned what to do differently next time.”

…reframe failures in terms of “yet”
- Fixed: “I’ve always been bad at it, so I’ll probably always be bad at it.”
- Growth: “If I practice every day, I’ll get it eventually.”

…change the strategy, not the goal
- Fixed: “I couldn’t finish the race, so I’m giving up.”
- Growth: “I will figure out another way to approach this goal.”

Growth mindset requires courage and challenges us to view learning as an opportunity to explore our own pain caves. We all have aspirations we’re scared to share because we’re afraid we won’t succeed. Failure is uncomfortable and can be embarrassing, but it is a critical part of growth and learning. Unless we change our mindset and choose to value all parts of the learning process, we remain stagnant. As Brene Brown puts it:

“You can choose courage or you can choose comfort. You cannot have both.”

BARTLETT LABS:
A COMMITMENT TO DISCOVERY
BY LAUREL GRIGG MASON

As we now prepare to enter our 40th year in operation, we are thrilled to announce the commencement of a new chapter in our history with the launch of Bartlett Labs, the SALT Center’s new research division, made possible through a transformational gift of $8 million by long-time friends of the program, Bruce and Patricia Bartlett.

The Bartlets’ relationship with the SALT Center began in 2004 when their son, Ben, was a student in the program who, with time, developed into a confident and accomplished student and professional. Since then, the Bartlets have been committed champions of the SALT Center, making significant donations toward scholarships, health and wellness programs, and the 2016 building renovation and expansion, as well as other impactful contributions to advance student success and research across campus.

As part of a top-tier, world-class research university, the SALT Center is uniquely positioned to successfully operate a scientifically rigorous research unit, and thanks to Bruce and Patricia Bartlett’s gift we can now make it a reality.

Bartlett Labs will prioritize applied research and assessment, and contribute to the collective knowledge about college students who learn differently all while providing us with valuable data to commit to our story and strengthen our services. The assessment function will focus on monitoring trends in enrollment and service usage and evaluating the learning outcomes associated with our program. Bartlett Labs will also facilitate the adoption of research-verified practices into the SALT Center core model as we pilot and evaluate new services.

In addition, Bartlett Labs will engage with instructors and researchers at the University of Arizona and institutions around the world to collaborate on projects that advance learning and college success for this population of students. Planned projects will explore the transition into college, degree completion in STEM fields, and career readiness and the challenges of college. We are fortunate to have established a relationship with the University of Macerata in Italy, and we are hosting a visiting scholar from that institution during the fall 2019 semester. We look forward to new partnerships and projects as Bartlett Labs grow over the years.

FORGING A RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP:
Bartlett Labs and the University of Macerata
BY ISAAC FLATER

This fall, Bartlett Labs is honored to host and collaborate with Italian Ph.D. candidate, Noemi Del Bianco from the University of Macerata, one of the oldest universities in the world. Noemi is cosponsored by ANFAS, a family advocacy group for individuals with intellectual and neurodevelopmental disorders in Italy.

While at the SALT Center, Noemi is studying our unique model of support with hopes of adapting some of our strategies for use in Italy. She says that one of the reasons she came here was because her research indicated that the SALT Center was one of the best programs in the U.S. for students with learning differences.

Noemi plans to continue collaborating with us into the future and we look forward to continuing our relationship with her and the University of Macerata.

As Bartlett Labs continues to grow, we expect to expand our collaborations with other researchers as we continue to innovate and be one of the leading centers for supporting students with learning and attention differences.
MEET JASON KEATSEANGSILP:

WORLD CLASS ATHLETE, FUTURE BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER AND SALT CENTER TUTOR

BY ISAAC FLATER

For many students, math classes can seem like insurmountable mountains. SALT Center tutor, Jason Keatseangsilp, believes that open-mindedness and determination are ultimately what determine whether or not a student will succeed in these tough classes.

As a tutor, Jason strives to show students that they really can do what they previously thought was impossible, as long as they show up, put in the work, and ask for help when they need it.

It's a valuable life lesson that Jason exemplifies every day of his life, a lesson that he has learned through his own struggles with adversity inside and outside of the classroom.

Throughout high school, Jason always got passing grades and enjoyed playing tennis, his favorite sport, but admits that he could have done much better if he'd only been mature enough to ask for the extra help he needed—a classic case of teenage pride. In November of his senior year, Jason was repelling when he had a catastrophic fall of nearly 40 feet which left him permanently paralyzed from the waist down. The 2011 accident truly tested Jason's resilience and helped him realize that there is no shame in asking for help when needed.

Immediately after his accident, Jason was hospitalized for 12 weeks and underwent demanding rehabilitation therapy, which was only effective because of his hard work and active participation. His dedication paid off and he was actually able to return home in time to finish out his senior year and graduate on time with his class that spring.

After high school, Jason became a Biomedical Engineering student at the University of Arizona with a minor in mathematics, where he dedicated himself completely to his studies and put other endeavors on hold. If a math assignment only required a true or false answer, Jason would still write out all the steps that lead to the solution and meet with tutors to work through complicated problems. This exhaustive approach often took two or three times as long, but helped ensure that he understood the concepts completely.

Early on in his undergraduate studies, Jason had to take a semester off for back surgery, but with the help of tutors, medical professionals, and the support of his family, returned to school taking extra classes and summer sessions to make up for lost time.

Jason's intensive studies and work ethic have paid off in major ways. For his senior design project in Biomedical Engineering, Jason helped design a custom “exoskeleton” for a fellow Arizona student with limited mobility, which allowed him to gradually retrain his body to stand and walk again. A patent and licensing arrangements are now being pursued to help bring the innovative invention to market.

Despite his tremendous success as an undergraduate student, Jason realizes that he's not done learning. In fact, the difficult process of building the “exoskeleton” helped Jason realize that there are still areas of engineering that he still wants to learn more about and he plans to eventually pursue a master’s degree in the field.

For the time being, however, Jason has returned to his lifelong passion of tennis where his work ethic has quickly catapulted him into the international rankings and earned him an impressive spot on team USA. This year he competed at the Wheelchair Tennis World Team Cup in Israel and aspires to represent Team USA in future Paralympic Games.

Fortunately for students enrolled in the SALT Center, when Jason's not engineering biomedical devices or travelling the world for tennis competitions, he can be found meeting one-on-one tutoring students. When meeting new people in his travels around the world, Jason says that he always introduces himself first as a tutor for the SALT Center, because he is so proud of the impact he gets to make here. He says the feeling he gets when he works with a student all semester long and they do well in their class, "That’s a rewarding feeling that you can only work towards and can't just buy. I love it!"
AN EXERCISE IN PERSISTENCE:
CHRIS PATZKE’S JOURNEY

BY REBEKAH SIEKER

Chris Patzke began attending the University of Arizona in 2007 and was interested in majoring in Psychology. Initially, the university setting proved rather challenging and Chris found himself on academic probation and unable to recover in time to avoid disqualification. Refusing to completely abandon his studies, Chris spent the next six months in a training program at a community college and became a Certified Nursing Assistant.

In 2011, Chris came back to the University of Arizona as a transfer student, determined to pursue a degree involving his passion for gardening. This was when he learned about the SALT Center for the first time. He thought it might be the support that he needed. He credits the SALT Center and specifically his Learning Specialist, Mary Beth, with giving him the much-needed support to advance his education and be successful. The weekly meetings helped him establish a routine, keep on track, refine class notes, and plan out assignments.

With support from Mary Beth, Chris was able to make an impact beyond the classroom in the rooftop greenhouse atop the Student Union Memorial Center, which grows food for the Campus Pantry, a resource for Arizona students experiencing food insecurity. He was responsible for maintaining the hydroponic irrigation and fertigation systems where he made key improvements.

During his last semester, Chris experienced a sudden and deep personal loss. It was a blow that made it hard for him to focus, but he was determined to keep pushing through to complete his degree. Mary Beth was a touch point to him and encouraged him to get a plan each week. This support, along with other SALT Center services, enabled him to navigate through and complete his degree at Arizona despite the challenging circumstances.

Now that Chris has graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Sciences, his impact will reach beyond the university. He intends to volunteer with local food systems to positively affect those with food insecurities. He also plans to put his skills to use investigating the medicinal properties of plants, specifically their impact in anti-cancer treatments.

Much like the late David Livingston White, Chris has had an impactful and circuitous journey in reaching his goals, all while demonstrating great dedication and tenacity, so it should come as no surprise that Chris was named as the David Livingston White Class Ring Award recipient for 2019. For Chris, the award is a symbol of the support he received at the SALT Center, and a tangible reminder of his sustained effort, and completion of an exercise in perseverance. Chris encourages others with learning differences to “Reach out, even before you think you need help. Keep the dialogue going…Show up, that’s the important thing, and it counts for a whole lot.”

TO BOLDLY GROW:
CULTIVATING YOUR STUDENT’S INDEPENDENCE

BY BLAKE CESARZ

Child rearing presents parents with one of the greatest challenges of their lives but also one of the greatest potentials for reward. Hand in hand with challenges and rewards, however, naturally comes a healthy fear that we might fail in our role as parents. From Barnacle Geese who nest high in the Arctic cliffs and trust their flightless fledglings to survive a 300-foot plunge to begin their lives, to African Elephants who nurse for up to 6 years and then invest a further 16 raising their offspring to maturity, nature abounds with a variety of parenting approaches for maximizing success. Unquestionably, human beings invest more in their children than any other species. And, when it comes to sending our children off to college, there’s a powerful sense that we need to be more vigilant, more involved, and more protective. Nevertheless, it seems that if we protect our children from every hardship, we might be depleting them of crucial opportunities for growth which prepare them for success in adulthood.

Jane Goldman and Joel Konigsberg, the parents of a sophomore student who truly came into her own this past year, know all too well the struggles of letting go. Still, they recognize its necessity and its benefits. On the subject, Jane recalled, “In high school I used to quiz her and her first psychology test here she called me and asked, ‘can you quiz me, you know, over the phone?’ I quizzed her. She did great on the test but afterwards, she was like, ‘I got this’.” From then on, Jane and Joel have endeavored to keep a more or less hands-off approach with their daughter. While it may be true that she would ask, “every time she took a test and shared her grade,” they know she only did so because they let her come to [them], and that made all the difference.”

Jane and Joel’s commitment to fostering their daughter’s independence has paid off. Over the course of the year, Jane and Joel were continuously surprised by their daughter’s sense of self-advocacy. Although, they did admit, “We thought she would lean on us a lot more. In fact, we felt a little lost, but…she needed to do it without us.” As it turns out, sending a child to college can be as difficult a transition for the parent as it is for the student.

For Jane and Joel, the biggest take-away from their daughter’s first year, is that “The best gift the parents of a new college student can give a young adult is to try to back away. They need to grow, develop their own identity, and their own confidence. They need to walk into a brick wall or two here and there. They’re not going to make life-changing mistakes by doing that and it’s good for everybody.”

All we need is a little faith, and the belief that if we let go we will be proud of who our children become.
 Dedication to the service of students is essential to being a successful Learning Specialist. Dr. Martin Luther King reminds us of this through the words, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” Fortunately, for the SALT Center, Rose Audretsch served the past 30 years answering this question through her dedicated work as a Learning Specialist. During her tenure, Rose saw the center grow from having a small staff of six to eight people sharing offices in the basement of Old Main to the current thirty-five-person professional team housed in the state-of-the-art Patricia A. Bartlett Building.

Rose Audretsch marked the end of her career with the SALT Center in June 2019, as she transitioned into retirement. Before her departure, I sat down with Rose to reflect on her career and the impact she has had on others and how others have impacted her.

QUESTION: You are the longest tenured staff member here at the SALT Center. How did you do it? What do you believe has kept you dedicated to this role for 30 years?

I was really looking for a way to connect with students but in a more meaningful or rich way and I think I found that in SALT. I started in admissions at the SALT Center, as a transfer from UA Undergraduate Admissions. I liked that Admissions, but I would form this little relationship with the students and then they were gone, moved on to somebody else. When I started as a Specialist at the SALT Center, I worked with juniors and seniors only. The model changed and we went from freshmen to senior and I really like the gamut of all the different growth and development that you can see from 18-22 years old.

There have been changes with SALT over the years but I think I did my best to stay focused on the students and hone in on that. That is the reason I am here.

QUESTION: How has your work here impacted you?

I think the biggest thing that this work has done for me is to [teach me to] look at my own children very individually. It is important to accept their strengths and limitations and believe in them. I think I am very good at letting them figure things out and I have worked hard to avoid becoming an overinvolved parent. Probably some of the best feedback I have gotten on that throughout the years has been from school administrators where my children have gone who have said things like, “You are the first parent that let your child have a consequence”; or “you are the first parent that didn’t make an excuse”. So that always made me feel like I was learning a lot about how to be a better Learning Specialist and how to be a better parent.
As a Learning Specialist at the SALT Center, I work with many new students who want to have a college experience which includes plenty of opportunities for socialization all while being successful in classes which can sometimes number in the hundreds. This can all be intimidating or overwhelming, particularly for those students coming to us from schools where classes can be as small as ten people. How then does such a student successfully balance their academics, a busy social schedule, and large class sizes?

For a student on my roster named Emma, the answer was clear from our first meeting. Instead of the usual icebreaker conversation, she asked that we immediately get to work on her calendar. I really admired her proactive attitude regarding her first week in college. Emma simply wanted to know it was OK to set our agenda according to her priorities. I was impressed with her initiative and self-direction and I worked to foster her independent spirit.

Next on her list of to-dos was to arrange her testing accommodations and we worked together diligently to ensure that they were scheduled and confirmed within the first month of the new semester. We also talked about other issues which often arise in college. For example, she let me know about her struggles with testing and her frustration with unmotivated members of group projects.

Emma also wanted to know she was getting enough help to pass her difficult college algebra class. She found that her math anxiety was lessened every time she sought help so, she invested 89 hours in math tutoring over 63 visits which lead to her eventual success in the class.

Emma never kept any of her challenges from me. She interviewed me for a class and she learned that college academic struggles are not unique but rather more universal than we think. She realized that, despite her troubles, she had a history of academic success in high school which she could build upon with the proper supports in a higher-education setting.

This liberating mindset afforded Emma a newfound sense of independence. She always got an early start on just about everything. She knew she needed to stay ahead because her commitments with Greek life required a great amount of her time. She also knew she would be making various journeys home throughout the term and this would require getting even further ahead on readings and assignments so that she wouldn’t miss any major assignments while she was away.

There were also some reality checks along the way where she didn’t do as well on tests as she had expected. Nevertheless, she followed up with her instructors, went to their office hours and strategized with them about how to make up ground on other graded work.

Emma never missed a meeting with me that first semester, nor did she neglect to follow up on visits scheduled with professors during office hours. She also knew that her academic advisor was the best source of information on which classes to take and in what order and she worked diligently with hers to understand how her first year fit into her path toward graduation.

Talking brought Emma reassurance. She thought she might be overdoing things but she soon found out that her attention to detail and great work ethic paid off. She did not get a 4.00 GPA her first semester, but she knew going in that it would be tough. She stayed positive and learned a new college level mindset that has brought her a great deal of success and instilled in her a strong sense of what it means to maintain a work-life balance and she did earn a 4.00 GPA second semester.

SUCCESS STARTS EARLY: STUDENT SPOTLIGHT ON EMMA LIPSHY

BY JUAN GODOY

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Moving to a new city for school can be exciting and terrifying all at the same time. To help you get to know Tucson and hit the ground running, we invite you to check out some of our favorite local sites. We think you’ll be surprised by Tucson’s diverse offering of restaurants, shopping, arts, and outdoor adventures, all punctuated by majestic mountains and sunny skies. There’s really something for everyone.

“Even though Tucson is a smaller city, there is still a surprisingly wide variety of restaurant options off campus! I like to go to Kababeque for Indian Food and Guadalajara Grill for fish tacos.”

RILEY LIEBERSON, Senior, Economics. Hometown: The Colony, Texas

“I live where I live because it’s near 4th Avenue which is full of eclectic shops and restaurants. There are cool murals on lots of the buildings, like the Hippy Gypsy. And it’s on the street car line which brings me to campus.”


“At the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, you can see and learn about animals, but it’s not a traditional zoo. I love that they are all about conservation.”

BONNIE CRAIG, Tutor

“At the Gaslight Theatre, you get to participate in the show and boo and hiss. They put on fun spoofs and parodies accompanied by an incredible band, especially the pianist.”

MICHAEL HOLM, Learning Specialist

“My friends and I like to drive up to Mount Lemmon where the weather is cooler. We go hiking or stargazing at windy Point. Afterward we get giant brownie cookies at the Cookie Cabin or fudge from the General Store.”

HANNAH HARPER, Sophomore, Social, Behavioral & Human Understanding. Hometown: Scottsdale, Arizona