

INTRODUCTION

This monograph was conceived as a series of conversations between CRLA members who have had extensive experience as directors of Learning Assistance Centers and younger, less experienced CRLA members. The conversationalists do not have all the answers. Answers will reflect an individual's views based on their experiences with learning assistance centers. Some of the answers are shorter than others as you would expect in an informal setting. In addition, conversations are sometimes interrupted with listener questions when clarification is needed.

CRLA authors/conversationalists include among its most experienced contributors, Martha Maxwell, founder of the first annual institute for learning center directors and staff and author of many important books and articles relevant to learning assistance; Frank L. Christ, one of the founders of CRLA when it was known as WCRA, director of the Summer Institutes for Learning Assistance Professionals at CSU Long Beach and founder and co-director of the annual Winter Institutes for Learning Assistance Center Directors and Staff; Gene Kerstiens, another founder of CRLA and the founder and former director of the Learning Assistance Center at El Camino College in southern California; Gwyn Enright, who has the distinction perhaps of being the only professional who has been a director at both a large state university and a urban community college; Karen Smith, probably the only person who has designed, developed, and directed comprehensive learning centers at a state university (New Mexico State University), a private university

(Tulane), and a multi-campus research university (Rutgers) with six learning centers; and Rick Sheets, former founder and director of the Learning Assistance Center at Paradise Valley College and co-director of the Winter Institutes. Contributors include five past presidents of CRLA: Frank Christ, 1968-69; Gene Kerstiens, 1971-72; Karen Smith, 1983-84; Gwyn Enright, 1987-88; and Michael O'Hear, 1998-99. Contributors have over 250 years experience as directors of learning support centers in higher education.

Each conversation ends with a brief biographical sketch of its author. Titles of suggested readings for additional information can be found at the end of most conversations with a full bibliography located as an appendix at the end of the conversations.

NOTE: Because web site URL's change frequently, Internet references are not cited in this monograph. However, the major web site for Learning Support Centers in Higher Education can be found on the Internet at this URL:

<http://www.pvc.maricopa.edu/winterinstitute>

Starting with the publication release date of this monograph, this web site will have a special section devoted to any additions and changes including an email address to send your comments and suggested readings. Look under RESOURCES/Learning Support Center Resources/Books/Learning Support Centers or use the search bar and type in the phrase "Starting a Learning Assistance Center."

Frank L. Christ, Rick A. Sheets, Karen G. Smith