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Carnegie Mellon's Undergraduate Collaborative Learning Programs

Supplemental Instruction

EXCEL Collaborative Learning Groups

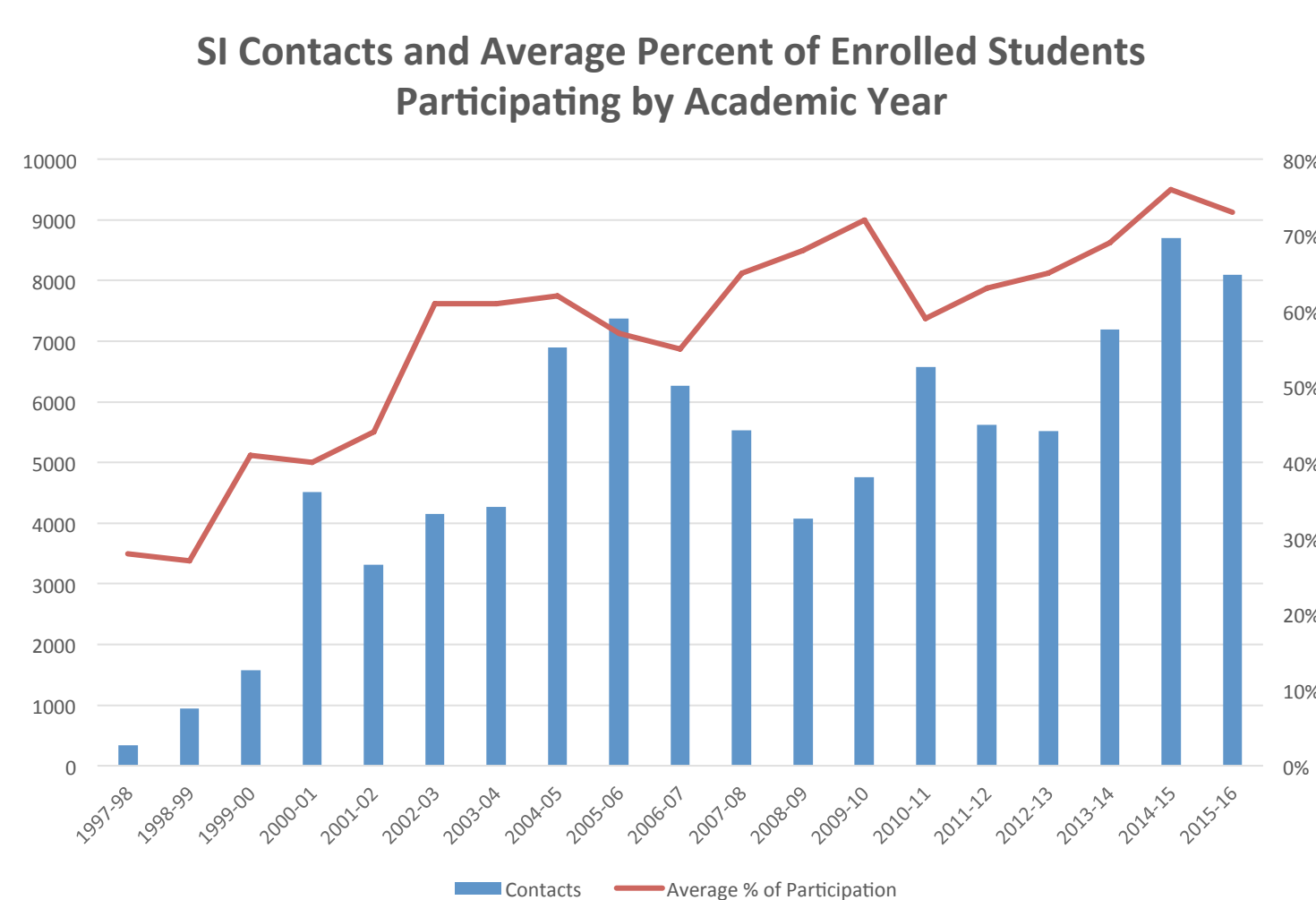
Overview

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic enrichment program that targets traditionally difficult courses. It offers weekly review sessions designed to supplement--not replace--class lectures and recitations. SI sessions are interactive and collaborative, and attendance is voluntary. Trained undergraduate SI Leaders work closely with the course professors to plan and facilitate the sessions.

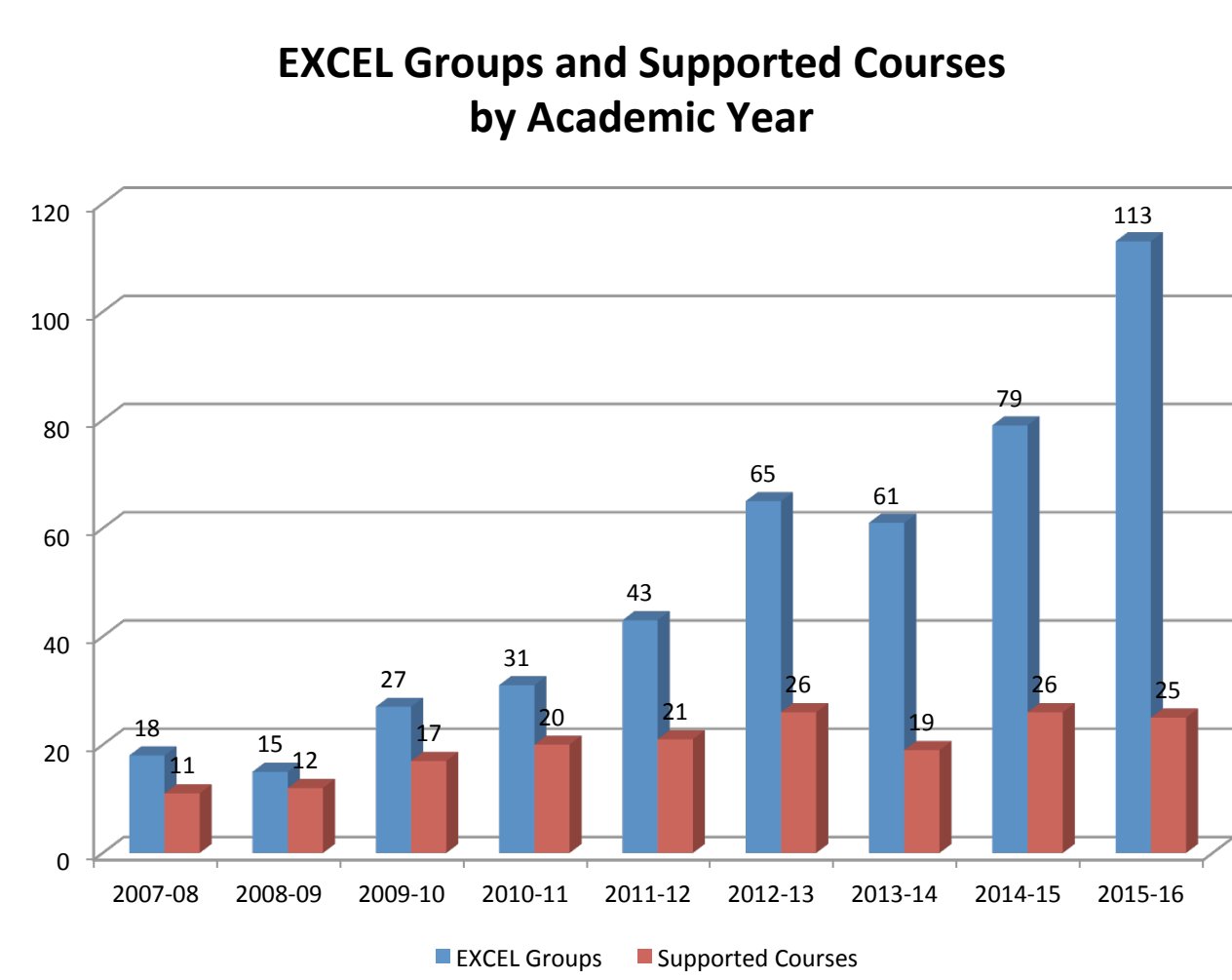
- SI was developed in 1973 by Dr. Deanna Martin at the University of Missouri Kansas City and is now offered at more than 3,500 institutions around the world.
- In 1981, SI was certified by U.S. Department of Education as a best practice for enhancing learning at the college level.
- SI was first introduced at CMU in 1997
- In 2007 the EXCEL Collaborative Learning Group Program was developed to offer the same level of collaborative review in formalized, small study groups for prob



Outcomes



SI PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. As illustrated in the chart above, the SI Program has experienced tremendous growth in student participation as demonstrated through the student contacts and average percent of enrolled students participating.



EXCEL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. As illustrated in the chart above, the EXCEL Program has grown to support more than twice as many courses while the number of EXCEL Groups has increased by more than a sixfold in the past nine years.

Program Standards

- Collaborative Learning - Research shows that students who study together learn 2.5 more in the same amount of time than students who study alone. SI/EXCEL Leaders are trained to implement collaborative learning techniques and emphasize student-to-student interaction.
- Independent Learners - SI/EXCEL Leaders are trained to model ideal student behavior and emphasize effective learning strategies to help students break the dependency cycle on their way to becoming independent learners.
- Trained Peer Leaders - Leaders must maintain a QPA of 3.5 and complete 45 hours of pre-employment training as well as 10-17 hours of ongoing training each semester. They are regularly observed and evaluated.
- Regular Evaluation - Professors, students and leaders are invited to evaluate the programs twice each semester, and students are asked to identify their level of active involvement as demonstrated below. Aggregated grade comparison reports are conducted for each course at the end of every term.

Student Self-Reported Active Involvement in Sessions					
	I Asked Questions	I Requested Topics	I Explained Concepts to a Peer	I Worked on Problems with Peers	I Shared Study Techniques
EXCEL Members (n=274)	98.2%	83.2%	95.9%	99.6%	79.8%
SI Participants (n=782)	77.5%	57.6%	84.9%	89.8%	66.4%

Referring Students

Students attending SI or EXCEL should expect to participate in active practice and review of the course content.

- SI sessions are offered twice per week for each course and are open to any student enrolled in the course. SI schedules are located on the Academic Development website: www.cmu.edu/acadev/
- EXCEL groups are formed on an as-needed basis, according to students' availability, with multiple groups per course. Each group is limited to nine members and therefore regular membership is required. EXCEL is an ongoing weekly commitment with each group meeting once per week at a set time. Students can sign up at: www.cmubalance.org

