

Notes from Peer Learning Assistant Learning Community Meeting

April 11, 2017, 4 – 5 PM – 570 Chemistry Building

- 4:00 **General Welcome and Introductions** Tim Burg
In attendance: Peter Carnell, Tim Foutz (Engineering); Maggie Blanton (Division of Academic Enhancement); Tim Burg, Cole Causey (Office of STEM Education); Bill Dennis, Craig Wiegert, Andrei Galiautdinov (Physics and Astronomy); Malcolm Adams, Bobby Benim, Gary Iliev (Mathematics); Chuck Kotal, Norb Pienta (Chemistry); Naomi Norman (OVPI); Jason Lang (Education); Brad Barnes (Computer Science); Kris Miller (Biological Sciences)
- Tim noted that funding for next year should be confirmed soon. We are expecting the same level of funding for year two, but certainly no more. OSE will prepare a revised budget and proposal revision to submit to USG.
- 4:10 **Agenda and Meeting Objectives** Cole Causey
What we want to achieve during this meeting:
- Recap of Spring efforts, experiences, lessons learned
 - Evaluation survey overviews
 - Inventory of Needs for fall semester
 - Discussion on potential for growth and institutional partnerships
- 4:15 **Recap of Spring Efforts**
MATH2250 – Malcolm, Bobby, and Gary have coordinated efforts over the course of the semester and are implementing similar approaches, with PLAs running Thursday class meetings. PLAs contribute to the design of these activities, including developing an ‘anti-derivative’ learning game. Bobby mentioned he felt he had tried to do too much early on in the semester. Gary felt he attended too many of the early-semester, PLA-run class meetings. Attendance was addressed. Malcolm mentioned that he might need to enforce a stricter attendance policy. Malcolm also mentioned that he did not feel that individual sections needed to be micromanaged. PHYS1211 – Andrei offered that the semester has been an overall wonderful experience, despite some troubling dips on test performance compared to fall semester. There was a general discussion regarding the differences between fall and spring semester trends that affect performance and DFW rates. However, withdrawals are lower in this course during the current semester, with 86/94 remaining on the roster. Andrei Galiautdinov
- PHYS1112 – Bill noted that in addition to using PLAs for the first time, the testing schedule has also been chunked further, with 5 tests compared to 4 from previous semesters. He mentioned that 8 PLAs was an ok number for coverage in a class size of ~170. He noted that he is planning to tweak instruction a bit to create a more flipped delivery to provide more opportunity for active learning and PLA support. Bill Dennis

Physics and Astronomy plans to expand the PLA program in their department for fall semester. There will be three sections of 1111 and one section of 1112.

Craig Wiegert

CSCI1301 – Brad runs an almost completely flipped instructional delivery in the SCALE-Up classroom. About 90% of material is delivered prior to class meetings so that time is dedicated to learning activities. Brad mentioned interest in seeing how students would respond to PLAs if he were not present for some class meetings. He currently has a control, traditional lecture section, but would like to make his two courses more similar, with PLA-support. There are plans to offer a summer section with PLA-support. Pedagogy training options will be explored.

Brad Barnes

BIOL1107 – Norris was not in attendance; Kris provided an overview. Approximately half of the 1107 PLAs are repeat PLAs, and they generally have asked for more leadership experience.

Biology is considering the idea of a PLA leadership structure in which senior PLAs would help manage junior PLAs.

Biology will continue to offer its discipline-specific pedagogy course. Biochemistry has also been using PLAs.

4:30

Evaluation Overview

Based on comments from fall 2016 students, the following categories were identified in terms of perceived value of PLA-supported instruction: Engaged; Approachable; Prepared; Knowledgeable; Helpful; Effective – we will distribute this brief evaluation survey to students in PLA-supported classrooms. This is an online survey constructed in Qualtrics. Cole will coordinate with faculty to get this sent out. A similar evaluation will be distributed to the PLAs themselves. We are also interested in perspectives from faculty on how using PLAs has impacted your instruction. If possible, please send Cole a brief reflection on any impacts or influence on instruction you have experienced in working with PLAs.

Cole Causey

4:40

Inventory of Plans and Needs for Fall

MATH2250 will use PLAs in 4 sections (compared to 6 currently), but is exploring possibilities for expanding to 1113. Advertising and recruiting is underway for fall. 11 have applied as of 4/13.

BIOL1107 has been advertising and recruiting for several weeks, with close to 30 applicants so far.

CHEM – Chuck does not offer his PLA-supported 1312H course during fall, but there are plans to start using PLAs in CHEM 1210. Cole will coordinate with Chuck and Norb to plan for this initial implementation.

ENGR2120 – Peter and Tim Foutz expressed plans to use PLAs again in the fall, with up to 11 sections of 2120. Pedagogy options will need to be explored, as there is concern that potential ENGR PLAs will not find the 1-hour course appealing. OSE will continue discussions to coordinate efforts and develop an approach.

CSCI1301 – Brad will continue offering PLAs in his SCALE-Up

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section, but would also like to bring them into his lecture section. There are also plans to try out a PLA-supported section over the summer.

PHYS will expand to three sections of 1111 and one section of 1112.

Projected PLA Needs:

MATH2250 – 8 (+ potentially 12 for 1113)

CSCI - ~5

PHYS – Up to 27

CHEM – 10 – 15

ENGR – 11-17

BIOL – 15-20

Pedagogy course section needs will be assessed during the selection process.

4:50

General Discussion

OSE will continue conversations with DAE and OVPI. Maggie would like to revisit options for leveraging PLAs with DAE's tutoring program. Naomi is aware of similar efforts across campus, but a clearer picture needs to be developed in order to consider options for a larger consolidation of efforts and resources.

Group

5:00

Adjourn