



PLUS | Program Leading  
to University Success  
Eastern Washington University

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## PLUS Program Executive Summary

### Academic Year 2018-2019



*PLUS Mission: To enhance the quality of university student scholarship and support the achievement of students' academic and career goals through peer-based collaborative study groups, tutoring, academic coaching, and student success programming.*

*EWU expands opportunities for personal transformation through excellence in learning.*

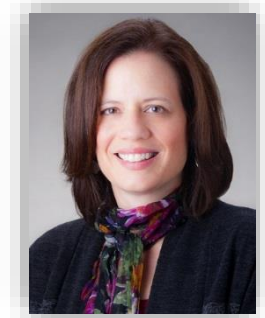
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## Professional Staff 2018-2019

### Director

Michelle Galey, M.S.

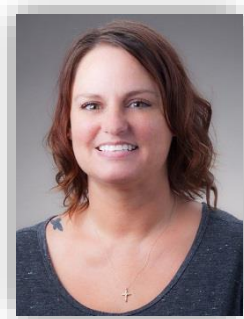


### Retention Specialists

Jocelyn Brown, M.A: Special Projects, Academic Coaching, and Online Tutoring

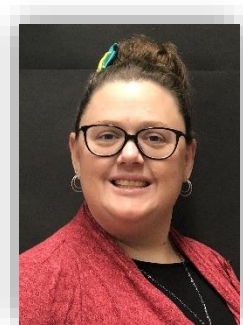
Caroline Dias, M.A: Tutoring

Alyson Rode, M.A: Study Groups



### Graduate Student

Kelli Knerr: GSA



## Program Overview and History

The *Program Leading to University Success* (PLUS) is an academic support program that first began offering peer-led study groups to students at Eastern Washington University in the fall of 1992.

Study groups are typically offered for 100 and 200 level courses that have been identified as being historically difficult for students based on the rate of D, W, and F course grades received, as well as student and faculty feedback.

In the fall of 2010, contract-based, one-on-one peer tutoring was introduced, and in the winter of 2011, the PLUS program joined the Western eTutoring Consortium, providing our students online access to tutors at colleges and universities across the Western United States.

In 2012 PLUS moved to the main floor of JFK Library to serve as a partner in the Learning Commons, a dynamic and free-form student learning space containing moveable whiteboard tables, chairs and rolling whiteboards.



Extended evening hours were added in 2015. In October of 2016, library management was restructured to include the Learning Commons and specifically the PLUS program.

In September 2018, peer academic coaching was introduced as a service students could self-request.

## CRLA Certification and Training

PLUS is internationally certified through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) for tutor training through levels I, II, and III. Each training session covers a student success strategy and best practice that can be implemented and/or shared with peers in PLUS sessions, including but not limited to the following topics:

Time Management	Critical Thinking
Communication Skills	Goal Setting
Campus Resources	Test Anxiety
Active Learning	Learning Styles
Problem-Solving	Study Skills

PLUS student employees are required to complete Levels I and II. To become a certified tutor for either level, they must complete 10-11 training hours and meet a minimum of 30 student contact hours per quarter. Upon completion of the requirements, the students receive a certificate that can be added to a professional portfolio.

Some student employees choose to pursue their Level III certificate to become a Master Tutor, completing course or discipline-specific resource guides for future peer leaders so they can “pay it forward.”

## Student Employment Guidelines

### Requirements

Student employees who apply, interview, and are hired as facilitators and/or tutors through the PLUS program received at least a 3.3 in the course, maintain a 3.3 or higher overall GPA, have sophomore standing or higher, and have received a faculty recommendation. They demonstrate leadership qualities, excellent communication skills, and a willingness to help others.

### Supervision

Student employees are directly supervised by one or two retention specialists who coordinate PLUS services. Graduate students may assist as needed.

### Assessment

PLUS student employees must attend certified CRLA training sessions in their first quarter of employment to gain proficiency in their peer support role by learning best practices.

To assess whether these best practices are being implemented in learning sessions, retention specialists and graduate students conduct quarterly observations of student employees when they are in a session. A performance rubric is utilized (see Appendix) and an observation follow-up meeting is scheduled for 15 minutes in which the direct supervisor reviews the rubric with the

student employee and identifies what went well in the session and what can improve.

Additionally, students attending PLUS sessions are asked to complete an end-of-quarter survey (see Appendix) providing both quantitative and qualitative data on the efficacy and quality of service provided by PLUS. The complete results of each survey are provided to PLUS student employees respectively via email. Any names provided within the comments are removed prior to dissemination.

## Yearly Program Highlights

### **Facilitator and Tutor of the Month**

The PLUS staff helped determine which student employees would be recognized as model employees each month. Recipients received a copy of their PLUS Employee of the Month certificate, and also had a social media posting on the PLUS Facebook and Instagram sites.

### **Service Presentations and Tabling**

Throughout the academic year, PLUS staff presented on academic success strategies to freshman and sophomore student athletes attending Life Skills courses led by Jim Fitzgerald. Additionally, they presented on test-taking strategies in 28 sections of First Year Experience (FYE) freshman seminars in Fall 2018.

Professional staff and our graduate student also tabled and/or presented at many events on campus, including New Student Orientation (previously firstSTEP, College Migrant Assistance Program (CAMP) tutor orientation, Running Start orientation, Neighborfest, and Admitted Student Days.



## **Retention Initiatives**

During the 2018-19 academic year, PLUS worked closely with the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) to support student success and retention on a daily basis through the implementation and usage of EAB Navigate for reporting, campaigns, and the CCN (Coordinated Care Network). As more EWU faculty and staff become adopters of Navigate, the need for PLUS and CAAR to work even more closely will increase.

PLUS continues to evaluate how it can provide more services to meet increasing demand and help support retention at EWU. As a result, PLUS began offering peer academic coaching sessions on a limited basis beginning Fall 2018 after a pilot was conducted in Fall of 2017.

In addition, drop-in tutoring hours were offered in both the Learning Commons and the residence halls, which allowed PLUS to serve more students. Plans are also underway to pilot supplemental instruction (SI) sessions in courses with high D, F, W rates in the near future. The sessions will look much like PLUS' current study group model; however, peer facilitators will be attending class alongside students, allowing for stronger faculty and student relationships – a key factor in the success of supplemental instruction, as noted by UMKC (University of Missouri-Kansas City).

## Study Groups Summary

Study groups are peer-led collaborative learning sessions for a given course. They occur twice per week (50 minutes each) on a drop-in basis in the Learning Commons of JFK Library or in classrooms across campus.



Content and learning strategies are built into sessions, including a review of lecture notes, textbook readings, problem-solving exercises, and pair- or team-based activities that promote active learning and collaboration. During sessions, students have the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback.

Student attendees gain confidence in mastering content, develop critical thinking skills, learn how to ask questions of their peers and instructors, and apply new learning strategies. PLUS study groups target courses rather than specific student populations and attract students from differing ability and culture groups.

Students can attend any sessions they choose during the quarter as attendance is not mandatory.

“\_\_\_\_\_ has been an outstanding facilitator of learning for us through the entire biology 170 series. I would not have done as well as I did without her help and guidance.” – End of Quarter Survey Response, Spring 2019

## Tutoring Summary

Students interested in receiving one-on-one tutoring assistance complete a [request form on the PLUS website](#) and agree to the terms of the tutoring agreement. In short, they must come to all scheduled sessions on time and prepared with questions and any course materials (textbook, class notes, etc.) that are necessary for the tutor to best assist them.

The tutor and tutee meet two hours a week, which is equal to a 20- to 30-hour commitment for the quarter. A minimum of 15 tutoring hours are required to meet this commitment.

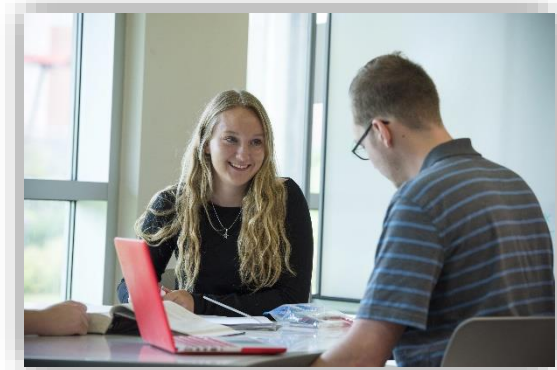
All one-on-one tutoring sessions occur in the Learning Commons. Students are assigned to an available tutor and most communicate via text, email, or phone prior to sessions. Many request the same tutor to assist them in a course sequence the following quarter.



“\_\_\_ was/is an excellent tutor. His assistance in helping me grasp this class was instrumental in my grade improving dramatically from my last attempt.” – End of Quarter Survey Response, Winter 2019

## Academic Coaching Summary

Academic Coaching can be defined as the one-to-one process of helping a student to assess their current study habits and assisting them in building general, transferrable skills for use throughout their academic career and beyond. Coaches provide students with academic support in areas ranging from time management and goal setting to attitude and motivation, as well as a variety of study skills.



PLUS targets several populations of students on campus and specializes in transitioning to college for first-year students, first-generation students, graduate students, students on academic warning or probation, and students who are looking to strengthen the skills they already possess.

Coaches generally meet once per week with students individually. Students are paired with their coach through a [self-request form](#) on the PLUS website. Students complete the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) to determine specific academic skills that need further development. Although the LASSI is a starting point for students to identify areas of focus, coaching is very student-driven, so students dictate what they want to work on, and in what order, guided by the coach.

“It really helped me, especially at the beginning of the quarter, to have a coach to help me get organized, set goals, and keep me accountable.” –  
End of Quarter Survey Response, Spring 2019

## Outcomes for PLUS Services 2018-2019

### Outcomes - Study Groups

- Served a total of **1,731** students through study groups with 200 students using the service more than one quarter
  - 1,118 unique (unduplicated) students attending
- Accrued **7,561** student contact hours
- Employed 101 facilitators, provided 114 study groups, and partnered with 148 faculty members
- Students who attended 5+ sessions per quarter achieved a course grade difference of **0.4** compared to their peers in class who did not attend\*
  - \*While a direct causal link cannot be drawn between session attendance and course grades, the results are still suggestive. It is also recognized that motivation may serve as a mediating factor.
- The PLUS course grade average (5+ sessions) was a **3.0**, with the non-PLUS average equaling 2.6 and the overall course average equaling 2.7
- The overall PLUS DFW rate was **15%** and the non-PLUS DFW rate\* was 21%
  - \*Number of students in course who obtained D, F, and W grades relative to total number

## 2018-2019 PLUS Study Groups Academic Year Summary

Category	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Total
# Total Individual Students Served †	770	532	429	1,731
# Individual Students Served*	742	506	374	1,622
# Total Unique Students Served ♦	684	505	417	1,118
# Faculty Assisted	59	48	41	148
# Group Facilitators	39	33	29	101
# Total Study Groups Offered †	45	36	33	114
# Study Groups Offered	37	33	28	98
# Study Group Sessions	825	595	587	2,007
Student Contact Hours	3,514	2,188	1,859	7,561
% Students Attending Study Groups*	21%	16%	19%	18%
PLUS (All Attending) Course Grade Average	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.9
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.6
Course Average	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.7
PLUS (All Attending) Grade Difference	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Course Grade Average	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.6
Course Average	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.7
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Grade Difference	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
% PLUS DWF Rate	17%	13%	14%	15%
% Non-PLUS DWF Rate	24%	21%	18%	21%

\*Of the students enrolled in courses included in the analysis

†Includes low attendance study groups and incompletes (ended early in quarter)

♦Unduplicated

## Outcomes – Tutoring

- Served 857 individual students across contract-based, drop-in, and online tutoring, with 178 students using the service more than one quarter
  - 501 unique (unduplicated) students attending
- Maintained 601 active contracts out of 670 total (90%)
- Employed 191 total tutors
- Accrued **9,152** student contact hours across contract, drop-in, and online tutoring services
- **81%** of students who met contract received a passing grade of 2.0 or higher

## 2018-2019 Tutoring Academic Year Summary

Category	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Total
♦Total Individual Students Served	345	253	259	857
❖Total Tutor Contract Matches	272	195	216	683
*Total Number of Contracts	236	177	188	601
Total Number of Requests Received	398	411	394	1,203
Total Drop-In Students Served	26	42	23	91
Total Online Tutoring Students Served	47	16	20	83
♦Total Unique Students Served	261	206	212	501
Total Number of Tutors	66	61	64	191
♦Total Contact Hours	3,488	2,838	2,826	9,152
Total Drop-In Tutoring Hours	42	10	17	69
**Students Who Met Contract (>15 hours)	126	105	107	338
***Students Who did Not Meet Contract	68	59	61	188
Met Contract with Passing Grade	93	87	95	275
% Met Contract with Passing Grade	74%	84%	89%	81%
Dropped Tutoring After Week 2	42	10	17	69

❖Formerly labeled “Total Individual Students Served”

♦Includes contract, drop-in, and online tutoring

\*Includes duplicates & drops

\*\*Does not include duplicates or drops

\*\*\*Met contract is equal or greater than 15 hours



## Outcomes – Academic Coaching

- Served 66 total students across the 2018-19 academic year
- Matched 86% of students who requested academic coaching with a peer coach\*
- Accrued 330 student contact hours
- Nearly half of all students who self-requested academic coaching for Winter quarter 2019 were not in good academic standing, and either on academic warning or probation
  - These students showed a significant increase in their grades, with an **average term increase** of more than a full grade point (**1.08**)
  - **100%** of students who were on warning/probation achieved a term GPA of 2.0 or higher, with an **average term GPA of 2.71**

\* Students not matched were unable to participate in the program for various reasons (scheduling, wrong service request, no contact, not enrolled).

## 2018-19 Academic Coaching Academic Year Summary

Category	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Total
✦ Total Students Served	9	25	32	66
Total Number of Requests	11	32	42	85
# of Matches Made	11	29	33	73
% of Matches Made	100%	91%	76%	86%
Student Contact Hours	49	111	170	330
# of Coaches	5	8	7	20
# of Contracts	9	24	31	63
*# of Contracts Met	7	11	24	43
% of Contracts Met	78%	46%	83%	68%
# of Contracts Not Met	2	13	5	20
% of Contracts Not Met	22%	54%	17%	32%
# of Drops Due to No Shows	0	3	4	7
**# of Students on Academic Warning/Probation	2	10	10	22

✦ Includes students who met with a coach at least once

\*Met contract is equal or greater than 15 hours

\*\*Warning students have received a GPA <2.0 in their first term and year at EWU;  
 Probation students have earned a cumulative GPA of <2.0

## Outcomes - All Services

- In total, PLUS served the needs of **2,654** students at Eastern Washington University
  - 1,638 unique unduplicated students
    - 491 duplicate students used more than one PLUS service
- In total, PLUS accrued **17,043** contact hours
- **227** students completed our end-of-quarter surveys. Our response rate was **14%**.
  - The average response to the question, “I leave PLUS learning sessions feeling better about the material and my own abilities” was a **4.3/5**
  - The average response to the question, “PLUS learning sessions are helping me to improve my grade” was a **4.4/5**

## Conclusions

Every year the PLUS team seeks to improve the delivery of academic support services to students at EWU. We continue to see steady interest and growing demand for the use of PLUS services. Increased marketing at freshman and transfer student events, as well as referrals from campus partners and fellow students, helps to maintain student awareness and exposure of services.

PLUS continues to maintain a strong partnership with the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) in developing retention initiatives.

The continued support of executive level administrators at EWU is an integral part of maintaining the quality and quantity of support we provide to students. This includes professional development opportunities on and off campus at conferences, committees, and so on.

We continue to shape and reshape our program into the 2019-20 academic year, being mindful of the student success and completion initiatives to be implemented as part of the EWU Strategic Plan.

In a time where enrollment is a critical issue at public universities across the US, retention is going to be a key factor in keeping our enrolled students at EWU.

During the 2019-20 academic year, PLUS will support the Pathways to Success students through peer academic coaching

and other retention initiatives. In addition, PLUS will present in all of the FYE courses this fall and lead workshops on academic success to student athletes, Running Start students, sororities on campus, and various classes at the faculty member's request.

## Appendix

1. CRLA Certification
2. DWF Grade Comparison Graph
3. Direct Observation Rubric
4. End-of-Quarter Student Survey Questions



Program ID: US-WA-0967

The College Reading & Learning Association awards ITTPC program certification to

# Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

## PLUS: Program Leading to University Success at Cheney & Spokane

and authorizes the above program to issue certificates to tutors meeting its CRLA-approved requirements for the following program certification level(s):

**Level I Certified Tutor, Level II Advanced, Level III Master Tutor**

Valid: 11/05/2018 – 05/23/2023

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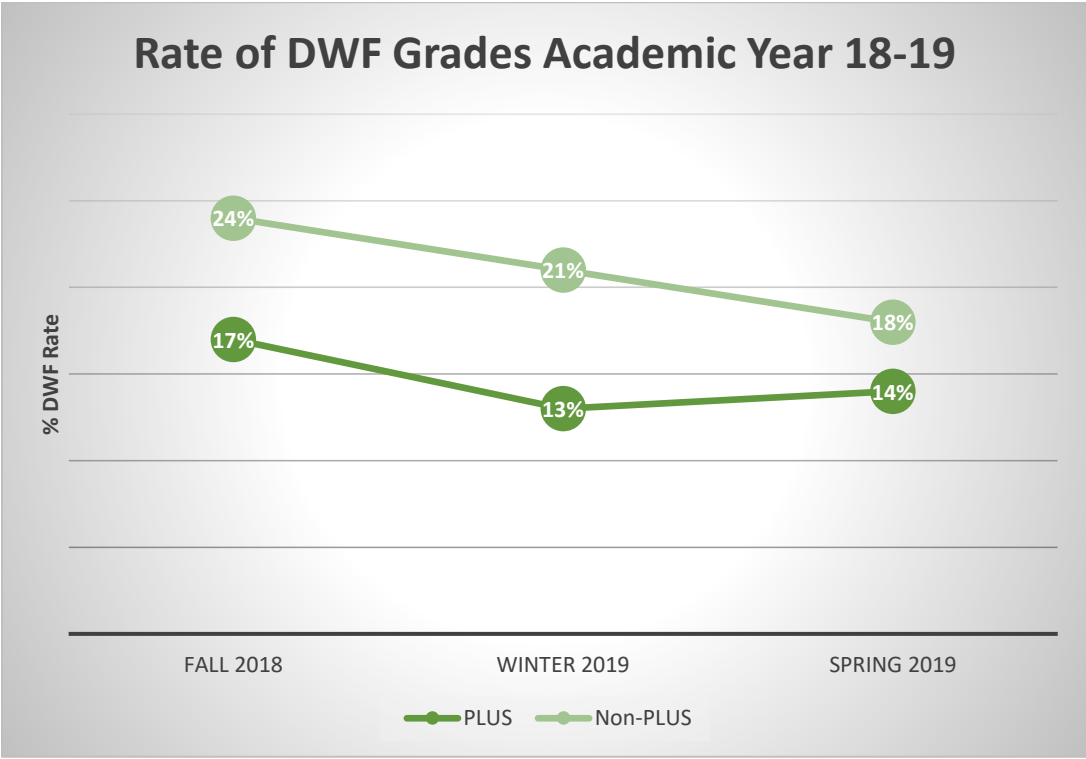
Page Keller, CRLA President 2018-2019

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roberta Schotka".

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Roberta Schotka, Certifications Director

# Rate of DWF Grades among Study Group Participants and Non-Participants



*Rate of DWF Grades among PLUS Groups and non-PLUS Groups participants.*



# Direct Observation Rubric

Session Criteria	Seen: Yes/ No/ N/A	Comments
<b>A. Beginning the Session:</b>		
1) Arrives on or ahead of time and appears prepared		
2) Attempts to establish or maintain rapport with student through warmth and positivity		
3) Refers to agenda and discusses a Study Skill or Resource		
<b>B. Working Through the Session:</b>		
4) As appropriate, ensures that the student has attempted the homework independently		
5) Uses active and collaborative learning (including board work & practice problems, and team work)		
6) Uses open ended questioning		
7) Psychologically attends to student & provides positive feedback		
8) Uses active listening		
9) Refers student to notes, text, and professors and other resources		
10) Concludes session with productive interaction: summary, goal setting, appointment confirmation, etc.		

# PLUS End-of-Quarter Student Survey

## Questions 2018-2019

To Note: SurveyMonkey was used to create and distribute the survey. A separate survey was conducted for the Academic Coaching pilot.

1. Which PLUS services are you utilizing this term? Check all that apply.
  - a. 1-1 Contract Tutoring
  - b. Drop-In Tutoring Nights at the Residence Halls
  - c. Drop-In Stats CSBS 320 Tutoring – Learning Commons
  - d. Drop-In Chem Tutoring – Learning Commons
  - e. Study Groups
  - f. Online Tutoring
  
2. What course(s) are you using PLUS services for?
  
3. How did you hear about PLUS services?
  - a. In class from the study group facilitator
  - b. In class from my professor
  - c. Through prior experience
  - d. Through the PLUS website
  - e. Other students in the class
  - f. Another office on campus
  - g. PLUS tabling events on campus (firstSTEP, Neighbor Fest, etc.)
  
4. The PLUS program is a member of the Western eTutoring Consortium, which provides free online tutoring assistance through a web portal. Have you ever used the eTutoring service before?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
5. Do you currently live in the residence halls on campus?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
6. (If answered yes to previous question) Would you be more inclined to go to study groups or tutoring if they were offered in common areas within your residence halls, due to convenience?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

**Peer Learning Sessions: Please indicate how much you agree with the statements below for each of the following questions pertaining to your experience in peer-learning sessions.**

**Strong Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree**

7. I am consistently engaged in the peer learning sessions.
8. The facilitator/tutor makes me feel welcomed/comfortable in our sessions.
9. The facilitator/tutor explains ideas, concepts, and study strategies clearly.
10. As needed, the facilitator/tutor uses alternative methods to explain course materials.
11. The facilitator/tutor breaks the content down for me, helping me to better understand it.
12. The facilitator/tutor asks me to explain, summarize, and give examples in order to check my understanding.
13. The facilitator/tutor listens to me and tries to understand my questions.
14. The facilitator/tutor is patient and courteous with me.
15. I can easily approach my facilitator/tutor and ask questions in learning sessions.
16. The facilitator/tutor is on time and prepared for the session.
17. The facilitator/tutor encourages my personal responsibility to study.
18. The facilitator/tutor knows and understands the subject matter of the course.
19. I leave PLUS learning sessions feeling better about the material and my own abilities.
20. PLUS learning sessions are helping me to improve my grade.
21. I am satisfied with PLUS program services and my experience with them.

### **Short Answer**

1. What other courses would you like to have PLUS learning assistance for in future quarters?
2. What could the PLUS Program improve on to better serve your needs? Please describe:
3. If you have any specific comments or questions you would like to provide us with, please do so below.