

PLUS

SUCCESSING TOGETHER

PLUS Program Executive Summary

Academic Year 2023-2024



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Program Overview & 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 DFW rates and student/faculty feedback.

In Fall 2010, contract-based, one-on-one peer tutoring was introduced. In Winter 2011, PLUS joined the Western eTutoring Consortium (WeTC), providing our students online access to tutors at college and universities across the Western United States.

In 2012, PLUS moved to the main floor of the JFK Library to serve as a partner in the Learning Commons. A dynamic and free-form students earning 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. In July 2020, PLUS joined the Academic Success and Academic Planning Team, which reports to the Office of the Provost.

In Fall 2022, PLUS partnered with CurioXR's pilot program to provide free virtual reality to EWU students.

Professional Staff 2023-2024

Director



Caroline Dias, M.A.

Retention Specialists



Samer Alrayes, M.A. , M.F.A.
Academic Coaching



Brent Olinger, M.A.
Tutoring



Anna Tadlock, M.A.
Study Groups/SI

Graduate Students



Jasmine Krapf
GSA



Aimee Brooks
GSA

CRLA Certification & Training

PLUS is internationally certified through the College Reaching and Learning Association (CRLA) for tutor training through levels 1,2, and 3. 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:

Learning Theories

SMART Goal Setting

Grit & Growth Mindset

Working with Special Populations

Implicit Bias

Active Learning Strategies



PLUS student employees are required to complete levels 1 and 2 . To become a certified tutor for either level, they must complete 10 training hours and meet a minimum of 30 contact hours per quarter. Upon completion, the students receive a certificate that can be added to a professional portfolio. Students can then choose to pursue their level 3 certificate to become a Master Tutor.

New academic coaches are considered coaches-in-training during their first quarter of employment. During their first term, they complete levels 1, 2, and 3, and shadow veteran coach's sessions giving them hands-on experience before independently coaching their peers.

Student Employment Guidelines

Requirements

Student employees who apply, interview, and are hired as PALs and/or tutors through the PLUS program received at least a 3.3 in the course, maintain a 3.0 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.

Student employees who apply, interview, and are hired as academic coaches must have and maintain an overall 3.3 or higher GPA and at least have sophomore standing.

Supervision

Student employees are directly supervised by the retention specialists who coordinate PLUS services. GSAs will also 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 GSAs conduct observations of student employees. A performance rubric is utilized and an observation follow-up meeting is scheduled for 15 minutes in which the observer reviews the rubric with the student employee and identifies what went well in the session and what can be improved. We call it a "praise and polish" approach.

Additionally, students attending PLUS session are asked to complete an end-of-quarter survey 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. These surveys are completely anonymous.

Yearly Program Highlights

Becoming Full Staffed

At the start of the Fall 23 quarter, PLUS hired on two new Retention Specialists - Brent Olinger and Anna Tadlock. Before joining PLUS, Brent and Anna were EWU Advisors with Center of Academic Advising & Retention (CAAR). Brent oversees PLUS Tutoring, and Anna oversees PLUS Study Groups/SI.

We are so excited to have both of them join PLUS. They have done a wonderful job contributing to the PLUS vision and mission.

Curio XR Expansion

In the Spring 24 quarter, Caroline and Samer joined Curio XR for the nations virtual ACTLA conference. They presented on how the Curio XR app can be used during Chemistry tutoring sessions.

PLUS has also expanded their partnership with Curio XR to help add more subjects to the app. Samer is currently working with them to develop more English content to help students when writing their essays. Additionally, the math department along with PLUS student employees have shared with Curio XR math ideas to help them develop more content for those subjects.

At the end of the Spring 24 quarter, PLUS was awarded funding to buy more headsets and expand the usage of virtual reality headsets. With these new headsets, PLUS will be able to serve EWU students at both the Cheney and Spokane campuses. PLUS has already partnered with faculty partners to utilize headsets inside of the classroom. With the new headsets, PLUS will also be able to have more virtual reality tutoring sessions for EWU students starting the Fall 24 term.

Tutoring

Students interested in receiving tutoring assistance complete a request form on the PLUS website and agree to the terms of the tutoring commitment. In short, they are expected to come to all scheduled sessions on time and prepared with questions and any course materials that are necessary for the tutor to best assist them.

The tutor and tutees meet two hours a week, which is a 20-30 hour commitment for the quarter. A minimum of 15 hours are required to meet this commitment. Tutors expect to have three to six students in their tutoring sessions.

All tutoring sessions occur in the Learning Commons and Catalyst building in Spokane. Students are assigned to an available tutor and must communicate via text or email prior to sessions. Many request the same tutor to assist them in a course sequence the following quarter.

Study Groups/SI

Study Groups and Supplemental Instruction (SI) are peer led collaborative learning sessions for a given course. They occur twice per week (50 minutes each) on a drop-in basis in both the Cheney and Spokane campuses.

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 and supplemental instruction sessions target courses rather than specific student populations. Students can attend any sessions they choose during the term as attendance is not mandatory.

Academic Coaching

Academic Coaching can be defined as the one-to-one or small group process of helping a student to assess their current study habits and assisting them in building general, transferable skills for use throughout their academic career and beyond. Coaches provide students with academic support in order to help them develop their college level skills.

Coaching targets several populations of students on campus and specializes in helping students such as first-year college students, first-generation students, and students on academic warning/probation/returning from dismissal.

Coaches usually meet once per week with students individually with their coachees. Students complete the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) to determine specific academic skills that need further development and to increase self-efficacy. These skills include but are not limited to the following:

Motivation

Emotional Wellness

Time Management

Test Strategies

Study Skills

Stress and Anxiety

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. The coach is a guide and resource for the student. This helps to ensure that self-efficacy and confidence are increased, and the student feels more confident about their academic time at EWU.



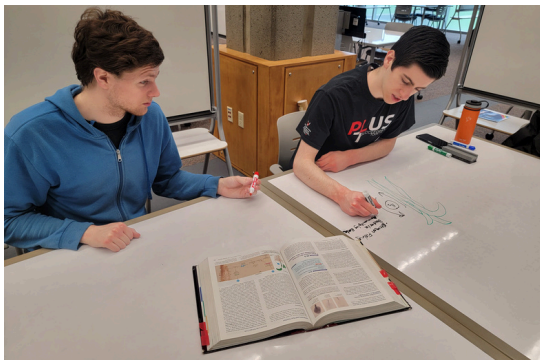
“

“Caitlin is awesome, 10/10, it’s my 5th quarter with her for Japanese, and I couldn’t ask for a better tutor!”

”

End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24





“After tutoring I didn’t feel need to nervously rush through the material, after sessions everything was completely clear and I left with no confusion about the topic”
 End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24

2022-2023 PLUS Tutoring Academic Summary

Category	Fall 2023	Winter2024	Spring2024	Total
Overall				
Total # of Tutors	20	21	21	62
Total # of Requests Received	435	375	279	1089
Total # of Students Served	218	213	164	595
Total Unique Students Served	189	191	143	416
Total Contact Hours	1302	1205	1287	3794
e-Tutoring				
Total e-Tutoring Students Served	43	36	20	99
Total e-tutoring Hours	67.5	37	26	130.5
Drop-In Tutoring				
Total Drop-In Students Served	40	62	33	135
Total Drop-In Tutoring Hours	72	124	119	315
Small Group Tutoring				
Total Tutor Commitment Matches	135	114	111	360
Total # of Commitments	93	84	89	266
Total Small Group Tutoring Hours	1162	1044	1142	3348
**Students Who Met Commitment >15 hours or Late Adds with 8 or more hours	32*	26*	28*	86*
***Students Who did Not Meet Commitment	61	60	62	183
#of Students with passing grade	80	68	76	224
% of students with passing grade	86%	81%	85%	84%
Met Commitment with Passing Grade	29	22	24	75
% Met Commitment with Passing Grade	91%	85%	86%	87%
Dropped Tutoring After Week 2	43	30	22	95

“The study group leader really did make me feel like I understood the material and was a big help in presenting the material in a more clear way if it was confusing. Overall my experience with this group was great and I would recommend it to anyone asking about it.”

End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24



2023-2024 PLUS Study Groups (SG) Academic Summary

Note: Fall 2023 & Spring 2024 include both Quarter and Semester Statistics

Category	Fall 2023	Winter 2024	Spring 2024	Total
Overall				
Total # Students Served	280	109	295	684
Total # Unique Students Served	180	107	221	508
# Faculty Assisted	18	14	19	51
# Study Group Leaders	16	9	15	40
Total # Study Group Sessions Offered	184	139	250	573
Total # Study Group Sessions	160	121	227	508
Study Group Attendance				
# Student Contact Hours	1449	433	1463	3345
% Students Attending SG	55%	19%	33%	29%
GPA				
SG (all attending) Course GPA Average	3.48	2.91	2.98	3.14
SG (non attending) Course GPA Average	3.19	2.66	2.84	2.93
Course Average (all)	3.26	2.71	2.86	2.97
SG (all attending) GPA Difference	0.22	0.2	0.1	0.21
SG (attended 5+ sessions) GPA Average	3.53	3.11	3.06	3.38
SG (attended 5+ sessions) GPA Difference	0.27	0.4	0.3	0.4
DFW Rates				
Attending SG DFW Rate	3.6%	7%	5.4%	4.5%
Non Attending SG DFW Rate	16%	12%	15%	14.3%
Attending 1-4 SG Sessions DFW Rate	3%	7%	5%	5%
Attending 5-9 SG Sessions DFW Rate	0.01%	0%	1%	0.7%
Attending 10+ SG Sessions DFW Rate	0%	0%	0%	0%



"Jasmine has been an enormous help to me this quarter. Our sessions have made a huge difference to my overall academic performance."
 End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24

2023-2024 PLUS Academic Coaching Academic Summary

Category	Fall 2023	Winter 2024	Spring 2024	Total
Overall				
Total # of Requests	209	64	68	341
# of Coaches	13	7	8	28
# of Long-Term Commitments	77	30	34	141
# of Short-Term Coaching Students	5	1	7	13
# of Long-Term Commitments Met*	18	10	13	41
% of Commitments Met	23.4%	33%	38%	27%
# of Commitments Not Met	68	20	21	109
% of Commitments Not Met	76.6%	65.5%	62%	73%
# of Short-Term Commitments Met*	1	1	7	9
% of Short-Term Commitments Met	20%	100%	100%	69%
# of Short-Term Commitments Not Met	4	0	0	4
# of drops	127	31	27	185
# of Coach Contact Hrs.	410.65	176	187	773.65
Traditional Requests				
Average Prev. Term GPA - Used AC	2.47	1.98	1.6	1.48
Average Term GPA - Used AC	3.09	2.41	2.06	2.41
Average Term GPA - Dropped AC	1.87	2.02	2.4	2.08
Retention % of Students that Used AC	94%	90%	64%	82%
Academic Coaching Presentations				
# of Presentations	-	17	4	21
# of Students With Duplicates	-	246	57	303
# of Students Without Duplicates	-	219	55	274

Academic Warning/Probation/Dismissal				
# of Students	3	9	9	21
# of Students GPA increase	2	9	9	20
Prev. Term GPA	1.92	0.99	1.14	1.17
Current Term GPA	2.36	1.79	1.56	1.77
Pathway Students				
Total # Given	142	-	-	142
Total # Served	42	4	4	50
Used PLUS Services Avg GPA	2.27	2.27	2.39	2.30
Did Not Use PLUS Services Avg GPA	1.88	1.92	1.77	1.85
% of Next QTR Retention Used AC	95%	91%	64%	88%
% of Next QTR Retention Didn't Use AC	82 %	71%	25%	69%

Outcomes - Tutoring

We've maintained 84% of students that used tutoring passed their class and served 416 unique students this past academic year. Additionally, tutoring accrued 3,794 total contact hours and average over 1,264 hours per quarter. Tutoring has proven to be consistently in high demand with PLUS having 1,089 requests.

Outcomes - Study Groups/SI

When students attended 5+ Study Group sessions, their course grade average was 3.38 while those who did not attend Study Groups had an average GPA of 2.93. Additionally, those that attended Study Groups had an average DFW rate of 4.5%, while those that did not attend groups had an average DFW rate of 14.3%.

Outcomes - Academic Coaching

Academic Coaching helped serve students in the Pathways program where 88% of Pathway students that used Academic Coaching stayed at EWU for the entire academic year. An average of 82% of traditional sign-ups retained for the entire academic year, as well. We have also seen a consistent increase in term GPA for students that utilized our services. Academic Coaching had a total of 773.65 contact hours with students.



Alaina provided us with a lot of encouragement, positivity, and support each week. She made everyone feel comfortable and never made a student feel like their question shouldn't have been asked or was inadequate. I really appreciated her efforts. Especially considering that this PLUS session was held during lunch, she did a good job navigating around helping us while also allowing us to feel unpressured with rushing.

End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24



Outcomes - All Services

In total, PLUS served the needs of 1078 students at Eastern Washington University.

- 1078 unduplicated students
 - 677 duplicate students used more than one PLUS service
- PLUS had just over 8100 contact hours, and had 181 end-of-quarter survey completions (Fall, Winter, and Spring terms).
- "I feel like my sessions at PLUS were effective." 4.6/5
 - "I believe that using PLUS resources improved my overall grade and understanding of the material." 96.4%
 - "Would you recommend the PLUS to other students?" 97.1% said "Yes"



Conclusion

During the AY 23-24 academic year, PLUS became fully staffed and worked with a variety of departments to provide services to EWU students. The relationships that PLUS has made across the Cheney and Spokane campuses in the 23-24 year will become even more important as we look to provide services to all EWU students. We were also able to develop a closer connection with the virtual reality company, Curio XR. This has helped us create and develop virtual reality services for the coming academic year.

In AY 24-25 academic year, PLUS will be expanding exponentially with the usage of virtual reality tutoring. With the new headsets that PLUS was able to attain during Summer 24 intersession, we will be providing VR services to the Cheney and Spokane programs. This will make it to where EWU students will be able to gain hands on learning experience in a 3D environment.

PLUS services are consciously expanding to support our EWU student population. PLUS will continue its mission to serve students through a variety of services in new and cutting edge ways, so students can receive the support they are looking for in their courses.



Brady, was very patient and very professional he was a good listener and always gave positive helpful feedback. My experience with my PLUS tutor was a 10/10 Brady most definitely deserves a raise! He is worth the hype. I'm going to recommend him to all my friends if they are looking for a PLUS tutor.

End of Quarter Survey Response, 2023-24