

PLUS

SUCCEEDING
TOGETHER

PLUS PROGRAM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview and History	1
Professional Staff 2020-2021	2
CRLA Certification and Training	2
Student Employment Guidelines	2
Yearly Program Highlights	3
Study Groups Summary	6
Tutoring Summary	7
Academic Coaching Summary	8
Outcomes for PLUS Services 2020-21	8
Conclusions	9



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 (WeTC), 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. In July 2020, PLUS joined the Academic Success and Academic Planning Team, which reports to the Office of the Provost.



PROFESSIONAL STAFF 2020-2021

DIRECTOR



Michelle Galey, M.S.

RETENTION SPECIALISTS



Rachel Carroll, M.A.
Academic Coaching
(Hired April 2021)

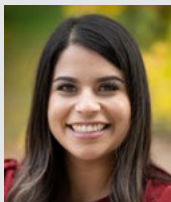


Caroline Dias, M.A.
Tutoring



Alyson Rode, M.A.
Study Groups

GRADUATE STUDENT



Cecilia Oronia:
GSA

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. New academic coaches are considered coaches-in-training for their first quarter of employment. During that term, they complete CRLA levels I, II, and III, as well as shadow another coach's sessions to get hands-on experience before independently coaching their peers.

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 3.0 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 overall GPA and have at least sophomore standing.

Supervision

Student employees are directly supervised by one to three 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 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

PLUS STUDENT EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

The PLUS staff helped determine which student employee (facilitator, tutor, academic coach, office aide) would be recognized as a model employee each month. Recipients received a copy of their PLUS Employee of the Month certificate, had their photo and announcement posted in the Learning Commons, and also had a social media posting on the PLUS Facebook and Instagram sites.

PLUS OUTREACH

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, opportunities to present to students were limited. However, through Zoom, PLUS staff presented on academic success strategies to freshmen student athletes attending Life Skills courses, and in other courses at the faculty member's request. Additionally, they presented on test-taking

strategies in all sections of First Year Experience (FYE) first-year seminars in Fall 2020. Professional staff and graduate students also presented at many events via Zoom, including New Student Orientation.

COVID-19

When the COVID pandemic emerged in 2020, PLUS transitioned all of its services to online within two weeks, offering academic coaching appointments and drop-in tutoring via Zoom for Spring quarter.

In assessing student use of PLUS services during Fall 2020, one of the patterns noted was increased usage on the WeTC eTutoring platform and that students were mostly attending eTutoring sessions during evenings and weekends.

The Weekend Warriors Study Group service was implemented in Winter 2021 and continued into Spring 2021 to accommodate this change in student schedules, providing evening and weekend sessions for students in select classes serviced.

Services were mostly implemented through Zoom during Fall 2020 and Winter 2021.

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.

TUTORING SUMMARY

Students interested in receiving small group 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 tutees 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 small group 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.

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, transferable 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. These skills include the following:

- Anxiety
- Attitude
- Concentration
- Self-Testing
- Motivation
- Selecting Main Ideas
- Information Processing
- Test Strategies
- Time Management
- Using Academic Resources

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.

OUTCOMES FOR PLUS SERVICES 2020-21

Outcomes—Study Groups and Weekend Warriors

- Served a total of 832 students through study groups and Weekend Warriors
- 596 unique (unduplicated) students attending study groups and 79 unique students attending Weekend Warriors
- Accrued **2,729** student contact hours (study groups and Weekend Warriors)
- Employed 69 facilitators, provided 69 study groups, and partnered with 82 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 3.4, with the non-PLUS average equaling 2.8 and the overall course average equaling 2.8
- The overall PLUS DFW rate was 11% and the non-PLUS DFW rate* was 24%

**Number of students in course who obtained D, F, and W grades relative to total number*

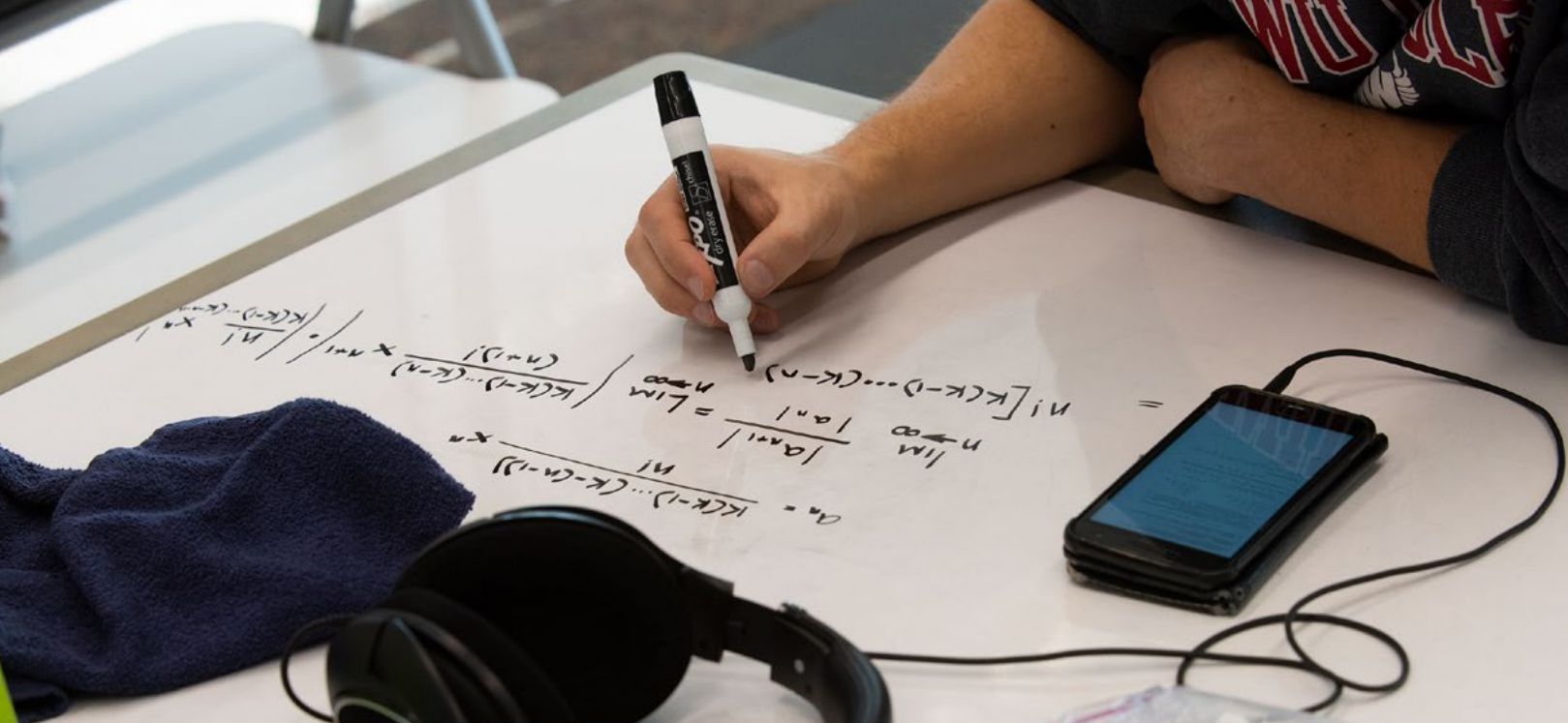
- The Weekend Warriors* service was implemented in Winter 2021 and continued into Spring 2021. 94% of the 142 participating students passed (C or higher) the course they were receiving assistance with. These students attended 5 or more sessions in winter or spring quarter.

**Weekend Warriors combined the collaborative group nature of study groups with the commitment of tutoring (to sign up for the service and attend all scheduled sessions), rather than the drop-in format of traditional study groups*

“I have felt very isolated in the past due to the online format. It is so lovely to be able to connect with other students and collaborate on study materials.”

— End of Quarter Survey Response, Fall 2020





2020-2021 PLUS STUDY GROUPS ACADEMIC YEAR SUMMARY

Category	Fall 2020	Winter 2021♦	Spring 2021♦	Total
# Total Individual Students Served ■	451	139	100	690
# Individual Students Served*	341	122	84	547
# Total Unique Students Served ♦	419	134	97	596
# Faculty Assisted	49	16	17	82
# Group Facilitators	46	12	11	69
# Total Study Groups Offered ■	45	13	11	69
# Study Groups Offered	28	11	8	47
# Study Group Sessions	716	212	185	1,113
Student Contact Hours	1,277	415	417	2,109
% Students Attending Study Groups*	12%	10%	12%	12%
PLUS (All Attending) Course Grade Average	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.1
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.8
Course Average	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.8
PLUS (All Attending) Grade Difference	0.1	0.3	0.9	0.4
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Course Grade Average	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.4
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.8
Course Average	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.8
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Grade Difference	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.6
% PLUS DWF Rate	10%	16%	10%	11%
% Non-PLUS DWF Rate	21%	29%	26%	24%

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

* Of the students enrolled in courses included in the analysis

♦ Unduplicated

♦ Lower due to start of Weekend Warriors Pilot - Spring Semester 2021 data in Spring 2021 column

OUTCOMES – TUTORING

- Served 942 individual students across commitment-based, drop-in, and WeTC tutoring
- 497 unique (unduplicated) students attending
- Maintained 461 active contracts out of 722 total (64%)
- Employed 90 total tutors
- Accrued **6,515** student contact hours across all tutoring services
- **92%** of students who met commitment received a passing grade of 2.0 or higher

OUTCOMES – ACADEMIC COACHING

- Served 158 individual students across commitment-based and short-term academic coaching, with 177 students requesting coaching services for the academic year
- **87%** of students who met commitment maintained/earned a 2.0 or higher cumulative GPA
- **85%** of students who received academic coaching during the 2020-21 academic year and completed both the pre- and post-LASSI showed improvement in at least 7 out of 10 areas assessed

“ My academic coach was the best part of my winter quarter. She pushed me and believed in me and it made me do better in my classes. ”

– End of Quarter Survey Response, 2020-21

2020-2021 TUTORING ACADEMIC YEAR SUMMARY

Category	Fall 2020	Winter 2021	Spring 2021	Total
♦ Total Individual Students Served	399	275	268	942
Total Tutor Matches	184	141	136	461
Total Number of Commitments*	293	221	208	722
Total Number of Requests Received	412	307	277	996
Total Drop-In Students Served	12	N/A	N/A	12
Total WeTC Tutoring Students Served	58	54	58	170
♦ Total Unique Students Served	325	226	174	497
Total Number of Tutors	36	28	26	90
♦ Total Contact Hours	2,110	2,236	2,169	6,515
Total Small Group Tutoring Hours	1,826	2,036	1,812	5,674
Total Drop-In Tutoring Hours	19	N/A	N/A	19
Total eTutoring (WeTC) Tutoring Hours	265	173	180	618
Number of Students Received Passing Grade	156	129	120	405
Met Commitment with Passing Grade**	29	47	21	97
% Met Contract with Passing Grade	97%	96%	81%	92%

♦ Includes small-group commitment, drop-in, and online tutoring through WeTC

* Includes duplicates & drops

** Met commitment is equal or greater than 15 hours



OUTCOMES-ALL SERVICES

In total, PLUS served the needs of **1,932** students at Eastern Washington University

- 1,111 unique unduplicated students
- 633 duplicate students used more than one PLUS service

In total, PLUS accrued **9,933** contact hours

109 students completed our end-of-quarter surveys (fall and winter). Our response rate was **10%**.

- The average response to the question, "I leave PLUS learning sessions feeling better about the material and my own abilities" was a **4.2/5**
- The average response to the question, "PLUS learning sessions are helping me to improve my grade" was a **4.0/5**
- The average response to the question, "I am satisfied with PLUS program services and my experience with them" was a **4.2/5**



“I’m very thankful that the PLUS program is available. I wouldn’t have survived online classes without it.”

- End of Quarter Survey Response, Fall 2020

2020-21 ACADEMIC COACHING ACADEMIC YEAR SUMMARY

Category	Fall 2020	Winter 2021	Spring 2021	Total
Total Number of Requests	58	69	50	177
# of Coaches	20	15	10	45
# of Commitments	50	60	35	145
# of Commitments Met*	37	46	20	103
Met Commitment with 2.0 or higher cum GPA	31	39	19	89
% Met Commitment with 2.0 or higher cum GPA	84%	81%	95%	87%
# of Short-Term Coaching Students	4	4	5	13
% of Commitments Met*	74%	77%	57%	71%
# of Commitments Not Met*	13	19	15	47
% of Commitments Not Met*	26%	32%	43%	32%
# of Drops	17	17	21	55
Student Contact Hours	284	352	185	821
# of Students on Academic Warning/Probation**	3	5	4	12

*Met commitment is equal or greater than 6 hours. It's important to note that many of the students who did not meet the 6 hour commitment might have only requested assistance for a particular issue, such as Zoom help, time management, or tech--nology assistance.

**Warning students have received a GPA of <2.0 for the term in their first year at EWU; probation students have a cumulative GPA of <2.0.

“PLUS keeps me on my feet and on top of my school work. It provides me with an extra push and the motivation to not procrastinate.”

- End of Quarter Survey Response, Spring 2021

CONCLUSIONS

Every year the PLUS team seeks to improve the delivery of academic support services to students at EWU. Although we did see a decrease in service usage during the 2020-21 academic year, we attribute the decrease to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the 2021-22 academic year, we continue to see steady interest and growing demand for the use of PLUS services once again, and we hope to experience service usage numbers that we witnessed in 2018-19 (pre-pandemic).

As part of EWU’s Academic Success and Academic Planning leadership team, PLUS works in collaboration with the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR), Institutional Research, Academic Planning, Student Success Collaborative and Degree Completion, Title III Project grant, and CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program). Our team envisions an excellent student experience in advising, success programming, and student support from day one through graduation for all current and future EWU students.

We continue to shape and reshape our program into the 2021-22 academic year, being mindful of the student success and completion initiatives to be implemented as part of the EWU Strategic Plan. PLUS will continue its mission to serve students through a variety of services, including offering virtual sessions for all offerings so that students can receive the support they need even during the pandemic.