



THE STEM LAB

WHAT IS THE LEARNING ASSISTANT (LA) PROGRAM?

The LA program is an embedded peer support program that focuses on supporting faculty & students both in and out of the classroom.

WHO ARE THE LAS?

Learning Assistants are undergraduate students who were previously successful in the course and are now embedded in a section of that course as support.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN LA?


LAs are a resource for faculty implementing active-learning and a source of feedback from the student perspective. LAs engage in four main activities:

- (1) Attend class every day and interact with students in class.
- (2) Provide drop-in support for students in the STEM LAB.
- (3) Engage with faculty & graduate TAs in biweekly Course Conversations.
- (4) Participate in pre-semester orientation and biweekly LA staff meetings centered around pedagogy & professional development.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN INSTRUCTOR / GRAD TA?

Faculty members/graduate TAs with an LA should engage in four main tasks:

- (1) Build a safe environment for continued collaboration & feedback (it is "our" class).
- (2) Use materials that facilitate active learning that utilize the LA during class time.
- (3) Engage with LAs in biweekly STEM LAB Course Conversations.
- (4) Regularly check-in with the LA for feedback from the previous day/week & prep them for the upcoming day/week.



POSSIBLE WAYS TO UTILIZE YOUR LEARNING ASSISTANT

General Class Support:

- Track attendance
- Facilitate planned activities
- Build community through ice breakers
- Encourage interaction between students, group discussion, and questions
- Ask relevant questions during lecture to enhance student understanding
- Stay engaged and take quality notes
- Have resources and links readily available for students
- **Allow LAs to speak to the class every day (even just to say hello & remind students of STEM LAB hours)

Out-of-class Support:

- Assist students & answer questions during their drop-in hours in the STEM LAB
- Post announcements on Blackboard about resources, reminders, etc.
- Manage a community thread on Blackboard to get to know students
- Provide feedback to faculty from the student perspective
- Serve as a sounding board for new activities and ideas
- Create activities for in-class use
- Host exam study sessions
- Act as a role model and share strategies for college success
- **LAs should NOT grade student work and do NOT work during finals week

Asynchronous Classes:

- Conduct polls (through Zoom, Google Forms, Kahoot, etc.)
- Build a community on Blackboard through discussion boards (ex: "getting to know you" introductory discussion thread)
- Create a Discord channel for the class to help students connect over homework or studying for exams
- Host a weekly zoom call for students to come in and talk about course or non-course related topics
- Host a problem solving session each week
- Help students set up study groups
- Share an "LA Tip of the Week"

Online Synchronous Classes:

- Move between breakout rooms to assist students with group work and discussions
- Temporarily set as host so LA can create & manage breakout rooms (stage manager)
- Monitor the Nonverbal Feedback options (Chat or Raise Hand feature)-- respond to questions and alert instructor when something in chat needs their attention
- Conduct polls (through Zoom, Google Forms, Kahoots, etc.)
- Type instructor's directions and questions in the chat for clarification
- **LAs should always be set as a co-host on Zoom

In-Person Classes:

- Help professor collect work and pass papers back
- Help facilitate group discussions and actively engage with students
- Reach out to students who may seem disengaged, lost, or after an absence
- Lead workshops on topics such as quality note-taking, staying engaged online, studying for exams, and attending office hours
- Catch up students who arrive late
- Be a time keeper for activities