



PLUS | Program Leading  
to University Success  
Eastern Washington University

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start something **big**

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## PLUS Program Executive Summary

### Academic Year 2017-2018

Prepared by the PLUS Staff

*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, one-on-one tutoring, online tutoring, academic coaching, and student success programming.*

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

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## Professional Staff 2017-2018

### Director

Michelle Galey



### Retention Specialists

Jocelyn Brown, Special Projects and Online Tutoring

Caroline Dias, One-On-One Tutoring

Alyson Rode, Study Groups



### Graduate Student

Robert Dula – Graduate Student Assistant (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.

## 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
Effective Communication	Goal Setting
Campus Resources	Test Anxiety
Active Learning	Learning Styles
Probing Questions	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 training hours and meet a minimum of 25 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.” Beginning Fall 2018, Master Tutors will have the opportunity to serve as peer academic coaches for a new PLUS academic coaching program launching in September.

## 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 took a photo with their supervisor to be posted on the PLUS Facebook site.



### Service Presentations and Tabling

Throughout the academic year, PLUS staff presented on academic success strategies to freshman and sophomore student athletes attending the Life Skills I and II courses, led by Jim Fitzgerald.

Professional staff and our graduate student also tabled and/or presented at many events on campus, including firstSTEP, Running Start orientation, Neighborfest, and Admitted Student Days.

## **Retention Initiatives**

During spring quarter, PLUS worked closely with the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) to provide academic coaching services to CSTEM probation students as part of a pilot program. The purpose of the pilot was to assist students who are on academic probation in recovering their good academic standing and graduating from EWU. As part of the pilot, CSTEM students completed the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) to determine specific academic skills that needed further development, such as test-taking and note-taking skills. CSTEM students attended specific workshops based on areas of needed improvement identified in the LASSI. Based on the results of the pilot, PLUS will be offering peer academic coaching sessions on a limited basis beginning Fall 2018 to all EWU students with plans to increase services each quarter.

## 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.

“[The study group] has helped me better understand the material and helped me retain the information to actually learn, versus being confused while doing the homework and quizzes.” – End of Quarter Survey Response, Winter 2018

## One-On-One 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 to three 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 contract.

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



“I am glad this service is available to all students and I am always happy to recommend the PLUS tutoring to someone. Thank you.” –  
End of Quarter Survey Response, Winter 2018

## Program Assessment Academic Year 2017-2018

### Objectives – Study Groups

- Serve 2,200 students during the academic year
- Employ 35 facilitators per quarter (105 per academic year)
- Provide 35 study groups per quarter (105 per academic year)
- Partner with 40 faculty members (120 per academic year)
- Students that attend five or more sessions in a quarter will average a 0.5 or higher course grade than their peers in the course who do not attend
- The rate of DWF grades for students attending study groups will be lower than that of students who do not attend

### Objectives – One-On-One Tutoring

- Serve 220 students during the academic year
- Employ 35 tutors per quarter (105 per academic year)
- Maintain 110 contracts per quarter (330 per academic year)
- Most students who meet the tutoring contract (15+ hours) will pass their course with a 2.0 or higher
- Most students who are retaking a course and meet the contract will pass their course with a 2.0 or higher

## Outcomes for Both Services

- Students will find the peer assistance provided by PLUS to be effective and meet their needs
- Facilitators and tutors will implement best practices for student success in their sessions through:
  - Encouraging active and independent learning
  - Fostering collaboration among student peers
  - Helping develop critical thinking and reasoning skills
- On a scale of 1 to 5, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, student responses to the following survey questions will average a score of 4 or higher:
  - I leave PLUS study groups/tutoring sessions feeling better about the material and my own abilities
  - Participating in PLUS study groups/tutoring is really helping me improve my grade
- In the summer session, limited academic support services will be provided to students in chemistry and mathematics, the highest need disciplines at EWU.

## Results – Study Groups

- Served 2,305 students, employed 129 facilitators, provided 162 study groups, and partnered with 184 faculty members
- Students who attended 5+ sessions per quarter achieved a course grade difference of **0.57** 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 **3.12**, with the non-PLUS average equaling 2.55 and the overall course average equaling 2.64
- The overall PLUS DWF rate was **14%** and the non-PLUS DWF rate\* was 23%
  - \*Number of students in course who obtained D, W, and F grades relative to total number

## 2017-2018 PLUS Study Groups Academic Year Summary

Category	Fall 2017	Winter 2018	Spring 2018	Total
# Total Individual Students Served †	938	744	623	2,305
# Individual Students Served*	777	553	393	1,723
# Total Unique Students Served †	816	692	593	2,101
# Faculty Assisted	62	65	57	184
# Group Facilitators	43	44	42	129
# Total Study Groups Offered †	53	56	53	162
# Study Groups Offered	42	38	28	108
# Study Group Sessions	1026	970	916	2,912
Student Contact Hours	4,150	2,797	3,099	10,046
% Students Attending Study Groups*	24%	20%	22%	22%
PLUS (All Attending) Course Grade Average	2.95	2.86	2.84	2.89
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.54	2.54	2.53	2.55
Course Average	2.66	2.65	2.61	2.64
PLUS (All Attending) Grade Difference	0.42	0.31	0.31	0.34
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Course Grade Average	3.20	3.10	3.04	3.12
Non-PLUS Course Grade Average	2.54	2.54	2.53	2.55
Course Average	2.66	2.65	2.61	2.64
PLUS (5+ Sessions) Grade Difference	0.66	0.55	0.51	0.57
% PLUS DWF Rate	14%	15%	14%	14%
% Non-PLUS DWF Rate	23%	23%	27%	23%

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

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

◆ Unduplicated

## **Results – One-On-One Tutoring**

- Served 537 total students, employed 188 tutors, and maintained 550 active contracts out of 657 total.
- **78%** of students who met contract received a passing grade of 2.0 or higher
- **73%** of students who met contract and were retaking a course passed with a 2.0 or higher

## 2017-2018 One-On-One Tutoring Academic Year Summary

Category	Fall 2017	Winter 2018	Spring 2018	Total
<b>Total Individual Students Served †</b>	162	177	198	537
<b># Active Students Served*</b>	130	158	172	460
<b>Total Number of Contracts †</b>	207	222	228	657
<b># Active Contracts*</b>	160	192	198	550
<b>Number of Tutors</b>	59	66	63	188
<b>Total Hours of Tutoring</b>	2,893	3,281	3,308	9,482
<b>Mean Hours Per Student</b>	16	16	16	16
<b>Total Requests Received</b>	363	309	328	1,000
<b>Students Who Met Contract (15+ Hrs)</b>	111	128	125	364
<b>Students Who Did Not Meet Contract</b>	49	64	73	186
<b>Met Contract with Passing Grade</b>	89	103	93	285
<b>% Met Contract with Passing Grade</b>	80%	80%	74%	78%
<b>Met Contract, Course Retake ‡</b>	28	21	15	64
<b>Met Contract, Course Retake, Passing Grade (2.0 or higher)</b>	22	16	9	47
<b>% Met Contract, Course Retake, Passing Grade (2.0 or higher)</b>	79%	76%	60%	73%
<b>Withdraws/Drops/Other Cases</b>	57	31	34	122

‡For each course a student receives assistance in

\*Active contracts run the whole length of the quarter

†A course retake is self-reported by students when filling out the online tutor request form

## Results for Both Services

- In total, PLUS served the needs of **2,842** students at Eastern Washington University
- **275** students responded to our end-of-quarter surveys\*. Our response rate was 11%<sup>^</sup>.
  - 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 **4.1/5**

\* Student service users were previously asked to complete both mid-quarter and end-of-quarter surveys. This academic year, we only provided end-of-quarter surveys at the conclusion of each term.

<sup>^</sup> The Survey function within Canvas Quizzes was used to poll student service users in fall and winter. SurveyMonkey was used in spring 2018. We will continue to use SurveyMonkey for this purpose in the next academic year.

## Conclusions

Every year the PLUS team seeks to improve the delivery of academic support services to our students at EWU. We continue to see steady interest and often 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. Based on the results of the CAAR/PLUS/CSTEM pilot in spring, PLUS will be offering peer academic coaching sessions on a limited basis beginning Fall 2018 to all EWU students with plans to increase services each quarter.

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 2018-2019 academic year, being mindful of the student success and completion initiatives to be implemented as part of the EWU Strategic Plan.

## Appendix

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



International Tutor Training  
Program Certification

Program ID #: US-WA-0937

# Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington Campus

## Program Leading to University Success (PLUS)

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 Certified Tutor**

Valid: 01/13/2016 – 01/13/2019

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dorothy Bugg', positioned above a horizontal line.

CRLA President 2015-2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Robata Schotka', positioned above a horizontal line.

ITTPC Coordinator



**Program ID:** US-WA-2482  
US-WA-0319

# Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

## PLUS Program

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

**Level III Master Certified Tutor**

Valid: 10/23/17 – 11/20/20

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Appatova".

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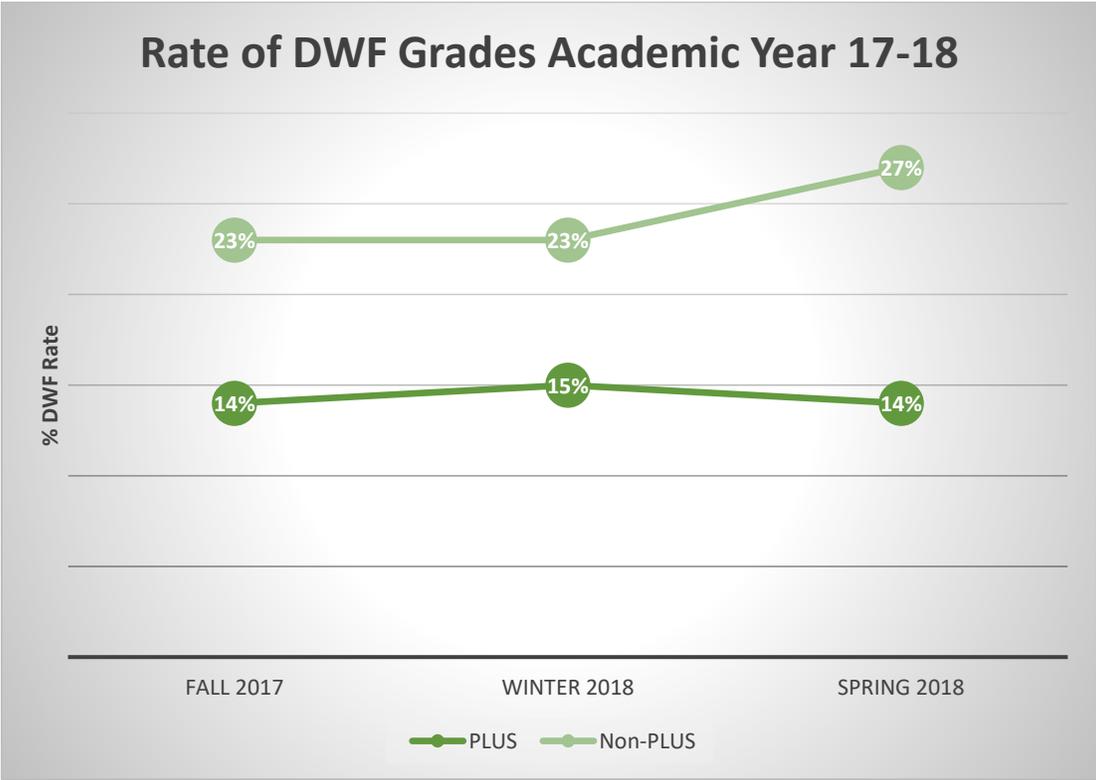
Victoria Appatova, CRLA President 2017-2018

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 2017-2018

To Note: Canvas Quizzes (ungraded survey) and SurveyMonkey were used to create and distribute the surveys.

1. Which PLUS services are you utilizing this term? Check all that apply.
  - a. 1-1 Contract Tutoring
  - b. Drop-In PLUS Tutoring (CHEM or MTHD only)
  - c. Study Groups
  - d. 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.