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Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): Students + Staff + Faculty = Support for Success

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History of PASS and Supplemental Instruction

PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) is the University of Calgary's implementation of Supplemental Instruction, which was created in 1972 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Rather than focusing on a particular set of students, it focuses on courses. PASS was piloted in Winter 2012 (7 courses/16 sections), with a full program launch Fall 2013 (6 courses/17 sections). In Winter 2013, Pass supported 9 courses/ 26 sections.

What is PASS?

PASS focuses on historically challenging courses (those with a high percentage of D, F and W grades). It features peer-facilitated studying, with a focus on interactive activities and student discussion and the goal of improving students' study strategies, both in the context of the course and in general. PASS is not re-lecturing or tutoring and is not remedial in nature. Sessions are free to all students in supported courses. PASS Leaders are students who have completed the course with a high degree of success. PASS Leaders attend their course's lectures and collaborate with faculty members about session content and strategies.

Key Stakeholders

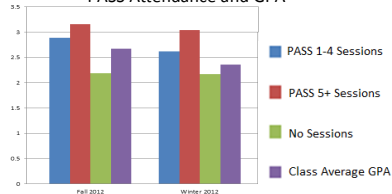
PASS Student Leaders: They plan, promote and lead sessions. They also observe other leaders' sessions and attend weekly meetings to discuss innovative approaches to interactive sessions.

Students: They attend as many sessions as they choose and are encouraged to promote sessions through their social networks.

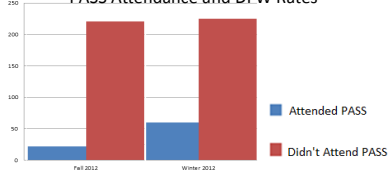
Program Coordinator: This role liaises with faculty to determine courses. They hire, train and observe leaders. They also prepare statistical analyses of session attendance and its relationship to final course grades.

Faculty: They meet with PASS leaders to discuss session content and strategies. They promote the sessions in class and recommend potential student leaders. They receive and review data related to PASS attendance and student success.

PASS Attendance and GPA



PASS Attendance and DFW Rates



Data Analysis

Data is checked to determine if any relationship exists between incoming High School grades and PASS session attendance. If such a relationship exists, a variance process is run to correct for this before the GPA data is presented.

Winter 2012 courses: BSEN 291, CPSC 217, CHEM 351, ECON 395, LING 201, ZOOL 377, PHIL 379

Fall 2012 courses: BSEN 291, CPSC 217, ECON 395, LING 201, PHYS 211, PHIL 379

Winter 2013 courses: BSEN 291, CPSC 217, ECON 395, LING 201, PHYS 223, ZOO 377, ENGG 202, PHIL 307, PHIL 379.

Student Feedback about PASS

Students and student PASS Leaders have offered several comments on what they feel makes PASS sessions useful:

"[Our leader] validated our attempts to solve problems and helped us grow"

"[PASS] presented new learning techniques!"

"Small sessions made it easier to ask questions and made it fun."

"[Our leader] was approachable and respectful. She was always willing to answer questions."

From PASS Leader: "[I gained] increased confidence to speak in front of people and [the program] showed me the benefits of group study"

Faculty Feedback about PASS

Faculty have offered several comments on how they view the program:

"It sounds like this program has been very successful"

"The students who participated found it very helpful"

"It has been a very helpful resource in my sections over the past year."

Future Goals:

This Fall, we plan to support the following courses: : MGST 217, PHYS 211, LING 201, ECON 395, PHIL 279 & 379, ENGG 201

The following are proposed courses for Winter 2014: MGST 217, ACCT 217, PHYS 223, ZOOL 377, LING 201, ECON 395, PHIL 279 & 379, ENGG 201, 202 and 225.

Future key issues include increasing attendance (particularly in science courses), increasing the effectiveness of the program thereby decreasing DFW grades among students who attend PASS, and increasing program awareness among students, potential student leaders, faculty members and the campus community in general.

■ Attended PASS

■ Didn't Attend PASS

ASS 1-4 Sessions

■ PASS 5+ Sessions

■ No Sessions

■ Class Average GPA_i

