Sustaining STEM: Peer Learning Facilitators and the Undergraduate STEM Network

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The Plan for today

- Who are the Peer Learning Facilitators?
- How do they make my (recruiting) job easy?
- How does this help you?
Who are the PLFs?

- Qualified, experienced undergraduates
- Teammates with faculty
- Support active learning in collaborative classrooms
- Tutors - TAs - Mentors
What are their qualifications?

- A or B in the class they want to work in
- Or, have tested out of that level
- Recommendation from an instructor in the field
- Professional interview with me
The key is “PEER.”
How do they make recruiting easy?

- They model success.
- They hang out in like groups.
- They talk to each other.
- They help each other.
This is Elizabeth (hi Elizabeth!)

Program Assistant, 2011-2013
Elizabeth is friends with Tony

Math PLF, 2012-2014
Tony is roommates with Mauricio
Tony is also friends with Seth

Chemistry PLF, 2013-2014
But enough about Tony.

Carolina was Alyssa’s PLF, 2012-2014

Veronica recommended her roommate, Maddie, Chemistry PLF, 2013-2014

Math PLF, 2012-2014
My Spring 2014 lineup includes:

- Aron
  - friends with Hallie, PLF
- Lyndon
  - cousins with Weston, PLF
- Elias
  - mentored by Jennifer Gomez-Chavez, UNM Staff
- Siobhan
  - tutored by Mariel
- Andrew
  - Same study group as Siobhan
All of my PLFs are sent to me by

- Faculty members
- Friends
- Roommates
- Fraternity and Sorority members
- Family
Ok, so what’s the point?

- Student success is collaborative and that means so many different things.

- Because active learning happens in the classroom, students are ALLOWED to talk to each other and become friends.

- They’re given the time they need to form relationships.

- This phenomenon is not unique to me. I’m not doing anything special or exceptional.
“They kind of come over without asking after asking multiple times, which is good.”

“Being able to get help when needed is a great comfort.”

“The PLFs were very helpful. They can relate to us and help us when we need it.”

“I am SO thankful I ended up in a classroom setting like this because I was terrified to take chemistry before-hand.”
(This technique works on faculty, too.)
How does this help you?

- Invest in social events
- Don’t worry about having an overly detailed agenda
- They are the experts at being STEM undergraduates, not us.
Training activities:

- Lunch with their faculty members
- Semi-guided discussion with returners
- Ask-It-Basket
- Recognizing achievements/news (not only academic)
- First Friday Fractals!
- End-of-Semester Wrap-up
Thank you!

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