

SPRING 2024 Call for Instructor Proposal for Peer Learning Facilitators

Eligibility: Instructors of undergraduate courses at the Albuquerque campus

We are now accepting instructor proposals requesting to work with a Peer Learning Facilitator (PLF) in undergraduate Albuquerque campus classes.

Spring 2024 proposal priority deadline: October 23, 2023. Course selections made by November 1, 2023.

PROPOSAL LINK: https://forms.unm.edu/forms/plf_cfp_copy

WHAT IS A PEER LEARNING FACILITATOR (PLF)?

Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs) support instructors and students by enabling greater utilization of active, collaborative assignments and discussion during class time, as well as extending the options for support and mentorship of students. PLFs are skilled undergraduates who are academically qualified in particular courses and trained to help their peers succeed through collaboration and mentorship. PLFs assist you in developing and implementing active learning exercises/activities in your course.

At the same time as serving in this role in your class, PLFs are enrolled (or have completed) a 3-credit hour training course in the College of Education & Human Services. PLFs are paid per hour for their service (not including their 3-credit hour course).

In addition to the benefit to instructor and course, selection as a PLF can provide a student with meaningful sense of value to the University and within their academic field. This can be particularly important for students from historically marginalized groups and can strengthen self-esteem as well as motivate educational or career progress. PLFs, in turn, provide students in a class with a successful near-peer model who can share information about how to navigate the class and the university.

WHAT ARE THE INSTRUCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A PLF-SUPPORTED COURSE?

PLFs must be leveraged to promote active learning and collaboration during class time or using online tools. Most PLF-supported activities should be *required* for all students. Optional activities (for instance, optional study sessions or PLF office hours) are permitted, but should not form the bulk of your proposal. The proportion of required to optional activities will be considered in the selection process for PLF courses.

In your proposal to receive PLF support, you must describe the following instructional elements:

- How will you engage your PLF(s) to support active learning and collaboration during class time or using online tools? Specifically, what types of activities will you create, and what role with the PLFs play in developing and supporting those activities? Which PLF-supported activities are required for all students, and which are optional?
- How will you ensure effective collaborative communication with your PLF(s)? Will you meet regularly before/after class or at other times? Will you utilize regular email communications?
- For your own purposes, how will you measure and improve the effectiveness of your PLF support? How will you know if the program is working for you, and as needed, make changes to better leverage PLF support?
- How will you utilize your PLF(s) in grading? PLFs are not allowed to grade high-stakes assessments (for instance, mid-terms or finals), but can grade low-stakes assignments that are specifically designed to promote collaboration between students and active learning during class time.
- If you utilized PLF(s) in the past, how effective was the implementation? What changes do you want to make for this coming semester?

IS THE PLF PROGRAM OPEN TO ONLINE COURSES?

PLFs can be placed in online courses. However, it is crucial that that PLFs in online courses be specifically leveraged to promote active and/or collaborative learning. For instance, PLFs can be utilized to moderate discussion boards, or to facilitate group meetings focused on class projects. However, PLFs in online courses should not be utilized simply as grading assistants.

WHAT IS THE INSTRUCTOR ROLE IN RECRUITING AND SELECTING PLFs?

The relationship between PLFs and instructors is crucial to the success of this program. Consequently, we need your help RECRUITING and SELECTING your PLF(s). If your course is selected to receive a PLF(s), we will contact you asking for recommendations of past students in your course who you feel would be effective PLFs. We will then contact those students and ask if they are interested.

If you do not offer any recommendations, we will do our best to identify students who have taken your class in the past (earning at least a “B” grade), and contact them to see if they are interested. The final selection of PLFs is at the discretion of College Enrichment Programs staff, but you will be consulted prior to hiring if time permits.

It should be noted that if we are unable to recruit students for your section, then your section may not receive PLFs even if it is selected for support. ***Your help in recruiting PLFs is our best asset in recruiting and selecting effective students.***

WHEN DO PLF-INSTRUCTORS NEED TO APPLY FOR PLF SUPPORT?

PLF funding is allocated per semester, not per academic year. The proposal deadlines for the upcoming semesters are:

- Fall 2023 proposal priority deadline: April 14, 2023. *Call for Proposals* available March 15, 2023, with course selections made by April 21, 2023.
- Spring 2024 proposal priority deadline: October 23, 2023.

If you are applying for PLFs for both semesters, you will need to submit proposals for both semesters.

HOW MANY PLFs CAN I REQUEST?

You may request up to two PLFs per section. If you request two PLFs, the proposal form will also ask if you would accept just one if we are not able to fund two. The funding for PLFs is limited and variable.

Since students who are on work-study funding cost one-third the amount of students who are not, we are able to hire more PLFs when we maximize work-study. At the same time, the Center for Native American Health provides additional funding to hire American Indian PLFs who are working towards health careers, and the UNM HSC Centers of Excellence provides funding for their COE Scholars to serve as PLFs.

Consequently, each semester the number of PLFs we can hire is a range, not a fixed number. That range depends on how many PLFs are on work-study and how many are funded by CNAH, COE or other sources.

HOW ARE PLF COURSES SELECTED?

We have very limited funding for PLF support. Consequently, selection of PLF courses is competitive, and is based on how well your proposal meets the spirit of the program. To that end, the selection criteria include:

- How well do the proposed PLF engagements support active learning and collaboration during class time or through the use of online tools.
- How comprehensive are the instructor's plans to remain engaged and supportive of PLFs throughout the course of the semester?
- How appropriate is the instructor's plan to engage PLFs in low-stakes grading that support active learning and collaboration?

PLF applications will be reviewed on these criteria by the PLF Administrative Committee, which is composed of representatives from Academic Affairs, the Undergraduate Research, Arts & Design Network, the College of Education & Human Services, the Center for Native American Health, and the College Enrichment Programs. This committee will make the final selection decisions for the semester.

ARE THERE OTHER OBLIGATIONS FOR PLF INSTRUCTORS?

New PLF Instructors are required to participate in a zoom-based orientation session at the beginning of the semester. These sessions will be held at multiple times to ensure that one will meet your schedule.

All PLF instructors are required to meet one-on-one with the Director of the Undergraduate Research, Arts & Design Network once in the middle of semester for up to 30 minutes by zoom to discuss how well the program is working for you. The Director of URAD will schedule these meetings based on your availability.

As members of the College Enrichment Program Staff, PLFs participate in a mid-semester and end-of-semester open study sessions. These events help undergraduate students to better structure their academic preparation, to access support resources, and to strengthen academic connections with their peers. PLF instructors do not attend these events, but we ask that you encourage your students to attend, and that you promote the importance of these events to your PLF(s).

PLFs also meet monthly one-on-one with their supervisor in College Enrichment Programs. These conversations are essential in maintaining a healthy workplace for students. PLF instructors will not attend these meetings, but we ask that you promote the importance of them to your PLF(s).

WHO SPONSORS AND OVERSEES THE PLF PROGRAM?

The PLF Program is a collaboration between the UNM Provost's Office, the College Enrichment Program, the College of Education and Human Sciences, the Undergraduate Research, Arts and Design Network, and the Center for Native American Health. The PLF program receives funding from student fees.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

Questions regarding the PLF program should be directed to Tim Schroeder, Director of the Undergraduate Research, Arts & Design Network at timschroeder@unm.edu.