

SPRING 2026 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. Proposals accepted for review until funding is exhausted.

Spring 2026 proposal priority deadline: October 31, 2026. Preliminary course selections made by November 14, 2026. Proposals will be accepted for review until funding is exhausted.

Starting with the Spring 2026 semester, UNM will utilize a common faculty proposal form for the following programs:

- Peer Learning Facilitators (administered by the College Enrichment Program)
- Online Learning Assistants (administered by the Center for Teaching and Learning)
- Supplemental Instruction Leaders (administered by the Center for Teaching and Learning)

This common form will allow UNM to better support our faculty members by connecting their individual proposals to the academic support options most aligned with their curricular plans. As part of the selection process, program coordinators from each of the programs will review all applications together to determine which one(s) to offer to the instructor.

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

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE THREE PROGRAMS:

Online Learning Assistants (OLAs) are students who previously excelled in a course or subject area and are employed as embedded peer tutors in fully online max classes. They participate in training through CTL on embedded peer educator pedagogy and best practices for student support. Under faculty guidance, they support student learning, foster engagement, and help build community within the Canvas environment, especially in courses with challenging content where students may not otherwise seek help.

The Supplemental Instruction Leaders are tutors embedded in face-to-face, historically difficult courses. SI Leaders have previously taken their assigned course, earning a B+ or better, proving mastery over the subject. SI Leaders are trained to facilitate a supportive learning environment using research-based metacognitive learning strategies and instructional design principles. SI Leaders attend every class to observe, take notes, and build connections with students. They also work closely with faculty to create meaningful out-of-class, small-group study sessions three times a week, with each session uniquely tailored to correspond with the topics covered in each lecture for that week.

Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs) are students embedded in large-enrollment courses. PLFs have previously taken their assigned course, earning a B+ or better, proving mastery over the material. PLFs are trained in evidence-based, student-centered teaching strategies that promote equity, engagement, and active learning. They attend class regularly to assist with in-class activities, facilitate group discussions, and support student participation in problem-solving and collaborative learning. As near-peer mentors, PLFs help students navigate course challenges by modeling effective study strategies, encouraging the use of campus resources, and fostering a sense of belonging. They also collaborate with faculty by providing feedback from a student perspective, assisting with low-stakes grading, and refining course activities to improve student learning. By bridging the gap between instructors and students, PLFs strengthen classroom community and increase student access to meaningful academic support.

	Presence in the classroom	Facilitates in-class activities and group discussions	Facilitates out-of-class reviews and test prep sessions	Works in historically difficult lecture courses	Works in fully online courses	Works in large enrollment courses designed for active and collaborative learning	Previously earned a B or higher in the course	Recommended by faculty to provide peer support	Works closely with faculty or instructor	Grades low-stakes assignments
Online Learning Assistants	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer Learning Facilitators	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supplemental Instruction	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	

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.***

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 Chris Lynch, College Enrichment Program at chlynch@unm.edu, or Tim Schroeder, Director of the Undergraduate Research, Arts & Design Network at timschroeder@unm.edu.