



## How Learning Assistants Can Help Foster Active Learning

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Learning Centers

<https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-info/group-and-individual-academic-support/learning-assistant-program>

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



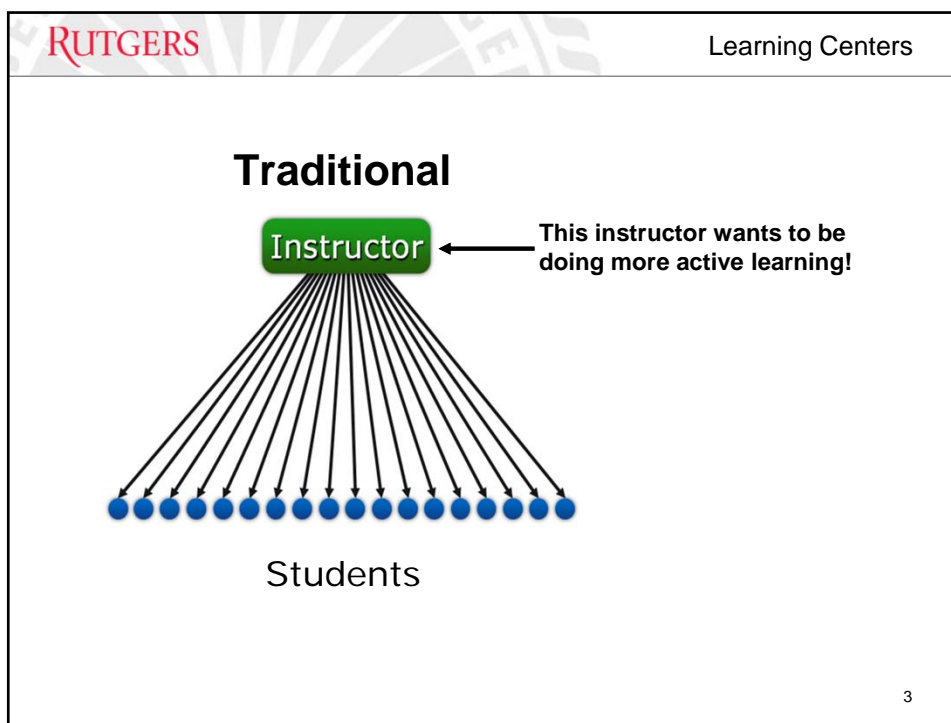
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### Learning Assistant Program

- The Learning Assistant Program is a national program developed at University of Colorado, Boulder.
- Learning Assistants (LAs) are students who work with faculty to create collaborative learning environments.

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### Active Learning

When you are one instructor in a room with students, it is a challenge to:

- Approach all of the groups
- Address every question that comes up
- Facilitate learning and ensure everyone is on track

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## Learning Assistant Program

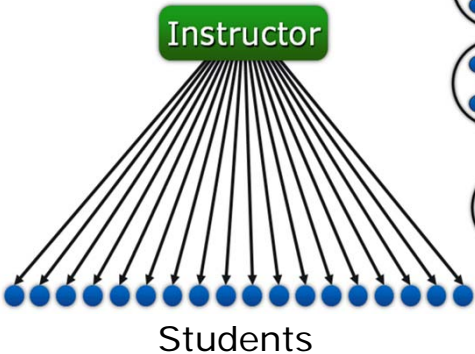
- Learning Assistants
  - Undergraduate students
  - Earned a B+ or an A in the course
  - Hired in a future semester to be a Learning Assistant for that course
  - Will work with the instructor or TA in lecture, lab, recitation, or leading a study group

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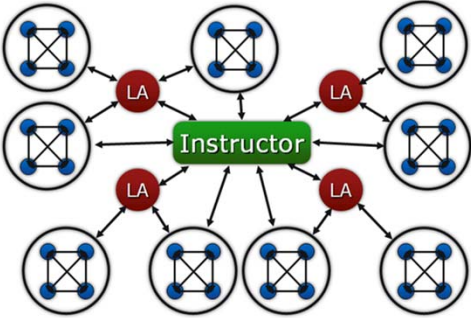
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## How are courses “transformed”?

### Traditional



### Transformed



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## Faculty Quote

*"I knew the LA program would be a great learning experience for the LA's themselves and also allow me to incorporate more active learning tools in my classroom with 200 students. What I did not expect was how much I learned from the feedback from my LAs. Throughout the course, they have provided me with thoughtful constructive suggestions and how to better communicate with students. I have used many of their suggestions in my lectures and the course is improved because of them."*

Dr. Asa Rennermalm  
Associate Professor  
Department of Geography Undergraduate Program Director

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## LA Quotes

"Being a learning assistant has been one of my favorite experiences at Rutgers over the last 4 years. It's something I always look forward to every week." - Zac

"This position has definitely opened doors for me and I have learned how to be a better learner and better facilitator this past year." - Sarah

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### Student Quote

“A. was the best LA ever. She was genuinely passionate about making sure we understood concepts. She has inspired me to also pursue a double major in math and computer science and to be a LA next year.”

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### What makes a Learning Assistant?

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### Three Essential Elements

**CONTENT:**  
LAs have weekly staff meetings with faculty of the course they are supporting

**PRACTICE:**  
LAs have contact time with students in lecture, lab, recitation, or study group

**PEDAGOGY:**  
LAs co-enroll in Peer Instructor Education course

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## Content Prep Meetings

- Meet weekly with faculty of the course
- Review material that will be coming up
- Discuss the material recently covered in the course
  - LAs may have insight into student questions or issues
- Dialogue between LAs and faculty for benefit of students

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### **Pedagogy:**

- At Rutgers, LAs take a 300-level, 3 credit Peer Instructor Education course
  - Topics include
    - Effective Questioning
    - Metacognition
    - Cooperative Learning
    - Diversity
  - Assignments include
    - Teaching Philosophy statement
    - Interview Project
    - Weekly reading quizzes

### **What LAs do not do:**

- At Rutgers, LAs do not:
  - Hold 1-on-1 tutoring or office hours
  - Grade
  - Proctor



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## Benefits of LA Program

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>LAs</b>	<b>Students</b>
Support for their students	Leadership skills	Collaborative learning environment
Dialog with Learning Assistants	Stipend of \$1500 a semester	Near-peer in educator role

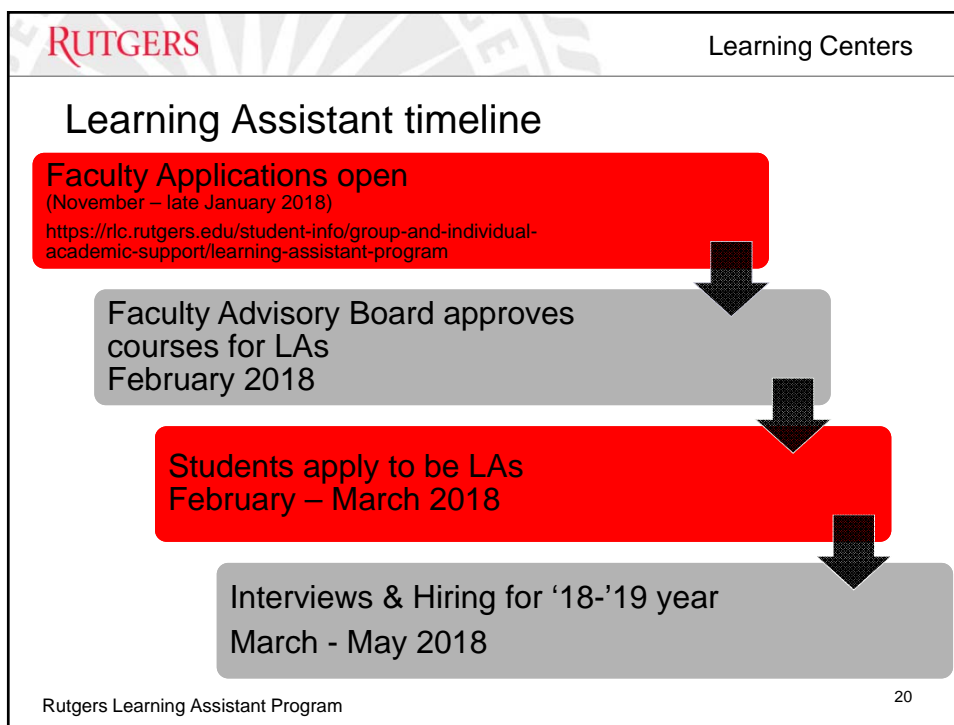
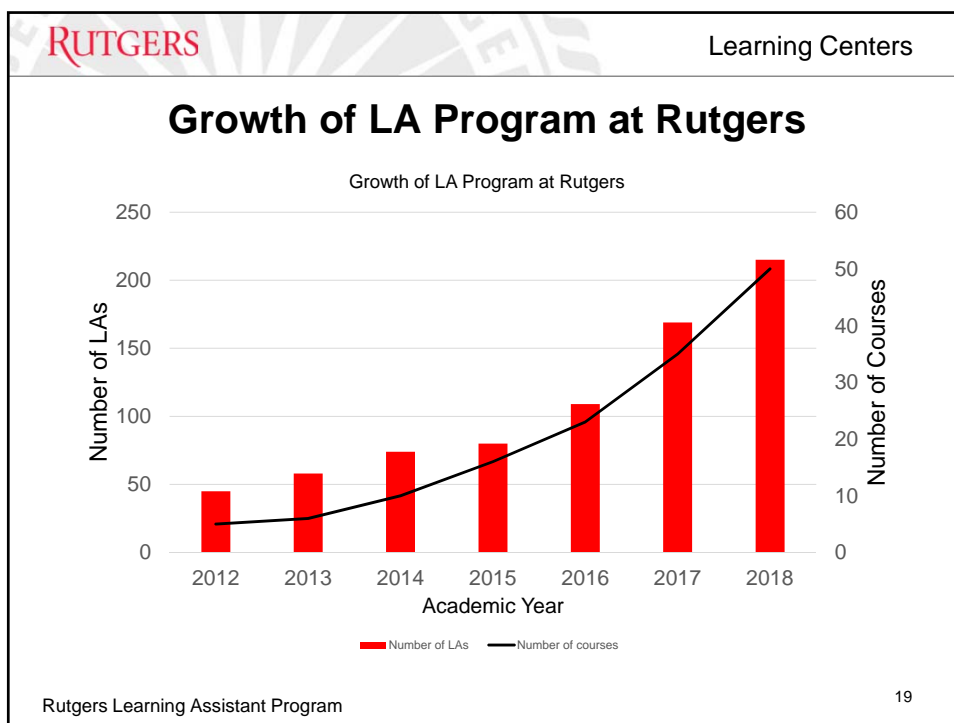
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### LA Program is centralized in the Learning Centers

- The LCs provides the following support to departments:
  - Teach pedagogy course and provide professional development training
  - Coordinate LA applications, interviewing, hiring
  - Employment on-boarding and weekly payroll
  - Coordinate assignments and LA schedules

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## Interested in having LAs in your course?

- If you teach at Rutgers-New Brunswick:
  - Please fill out this interest form:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yaxkpzga>
- If you teach at another school:
  - Reach out to me and I can let you know if there is an LA Program at that school!  
(alice.seneres@rutgers.edu)
  - Consult the LA Alliance website  
<https://www.learningassistantalliance.org/>

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## Questions?

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Learning Assistant Alliance website:  
<https://www.learningassistantalliance.org/>

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