

# *Developing an Undergraduate Learning Assistant Program*

*Session #2:  
Administrative Considerations*



## Housekeeping



- Session is being recorded.
- Please remain muted unless/until you would like to speak.
- Recordings and slides available on the CTT website after this week. Email me if you need any of the recordings sooner.
- Same Zoom link for every session



Welcome and housekeeping

Part I: Key Considerations in Developing an LA Program

Part II: Structuring the Benefits of an LA Program

Part III: Recruitment and Selection of Learning Assistants

Workshop: Preparing for Administrative Hurdles

Discussion and Q&A

*If you have any questions before the Q&A at the end, feel free to place them in the chat. We will address them or try to return to them at the end.*





Eric French, Ph.D.  
Instructional Designer  
Center for Transformative Teaching  
efrench6@unl.edu



Robert Vavala  
Instructional Designer  
Center for Transformative Teaching  
robert.vavala@unl.edu

## Session Facilitators





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# Part I: Key Considerations in Developing an LA Program



## Key Considerations

- What is the scope of the learning assistant program you need?
  - How many LAs do you need? What is desired number of students per member of the instructional team?
  - Which course(s) will they support? What type of support do students need in this course? What do *you* need?
  - Is this a permanent need or a temporary one?
- What will the administrative structure look like?
  - Who will do the recruitment, selection, and initial training?
  - Who will provide ongoing supervision and mentorship?
  - Will their service be recorded and recognized for future reference? If so, how?



## Key Considerations

- What kind of assessment will occur?
  - Will students evaluate their learning assistants?
  - Will the instructor evaluate the learning assistants?
  - Will the learning assistants evaluate the instructor or LA program?
- Will this be a one-time opportunity, or will it be iterative?
  - If the latter, how will the decision be made about whether an LA is invited to return?
  - If an LA has not performed at an adequate level, will any developmental opportunities be offered?



## Key Considerations

- How will the benefit structure be configured? Payment or otherwise?
  - Stay tuned for Part II.
- How will learning assistants be recruited and selected?
  - Stay tuned for Part III.
- How will learning assistants' roles be configured?
  - Stay tuned for Session 3 (Wednesday)
- How will learning assistants be trained?
  - Stay tuned for Session 4 (Thursday).



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# Part II: Structuring the Benefits of an LA Program

**RRIT**

## Structuring Benefits

- How will the benefit structure be configured? Three models:
  - Payment
  - Curricular underpinning (≠ “giving” course credit)
  - Hybrid approaches
- Important distinctions
  - Work vs. academic development
  - New opportunities vs. shifting from paid to unpaid labor
  - Concern for exploitation vs. concern for *equity*
  - In-load vs. overload



## Structuring Benefits

- Under what circumstances is it inequitable to *not* pay learning assistants? A few candidates:
  - If the work is significantly clerical or administrative
  - If you would *otherwise* pay someone to do the work
  - If the work is completed *on top of* a full load of courses (→ unequal access to the opportunity for those who need to work)
  - If one has limited ability to *not* serve as an LA
- In all other cases, look at student demand for LA positions as an indicator of whether the costs and benefits are in alignment.



## Reminder: Benefits for Learning Assistants

- Unique and exciting opportunity
- Closer connection with a faculty member
- Access to mentorship
- Greater likelihood of a highly-detailed letter of recommendation
- Leadership experience
- Greater expertise in the subject matter
- Teaching experience
- Professional and pedagogical development
- Keener sense of how college works and how to excel in classes



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# Part III: Recruitment and Selection of Learning Assistants

**RRIT**

## Recruitment and Selection

- Recruitment
  - The importance of an *open* call for candidates
  - Schedule recruitment carefully
- Vetting and selection
  - Implement application and/or interview process?
  - Considerations about GPA, course grade, subject matter expertise, etc.
  - Considerations about the nature of the candidate's interest in the position and their attentiveness to guidance
  - Considerations about availability and time commitments



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# Workshop: Preparing for Administrative Hurdles

**RRRT**

## Anticipating Administrative Hurdles



Take 2 minutes to consider (silently) the following prompt:

**What do you expect to be the major administrative hurdles in developing (or *further* developing) your learning assistant program? Who do you expect to put these hurdles in your path?**



## Preparing Your Request

Now take 2 minutes to consider (silently) the following prompt:

**What needs to happen for you to clear this hurdle? What do you need from others? What could you do to make a persuasive case to them that they should help provide what you need?**



## Role Playing

Now take 15 minutes to pair with someone else to practice “making the ask.”

- One of you plays the role of **Administrator**.
  - You are an administrator whose help your partner needs in overcoming an administrative hurdle.
  - Adopt the identity your partner gives you. They will summarize your priorities – protect those during the role play.
  - Listen to their case, and then provide feedback.
- The other plays the role of **Yourself**.
  - Do your best to make the case to your partner. Afterward, listen to their feedback.
- After the initial role play, switch positions and repeat.



What are the best arguments – or the best way of framing the issue  
– that emerged in your group?

Where did you run into trouble when it came to articulating your  
needs?



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**Questions or Comments?**

**RRIT**