

Abstract Submitted
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Designing Learning Assistant Program Structures to Create Resilient Community¹ ELEANOR CLOSE, JESSICA CONN, HUNTER CLOSE, DAVID DONNELLY, Texas State University — The Physics LA program at TXST was designed to support development of collaborative relationships among participants. LAs support all sections of the calculus-based introductory physics sequence. Weekly LA preparation sessions are held jointly with all LAs and LA-supported faculty, incorporating whole-group discussions. Because of existing course structures, LA facilitation is implemented in the "lecture" portion, with 3 to 5 LAs assigned to each section; thus, an LA uncertain about how to assist students can ask a peer or the course instructor, and can observe as well as practice facilitation skills. In addition, the seminar-style LA Pedagogy course includes equity-related readings and discussions that make space for vulnerable conversations. The majority of our majors now serve as LAs. In addition to the large body of shared experiences this provides, the strong program emphasis on communication, collaboration, and mutual support has significantly shaped the broader culture of the physics department.

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