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Engaging physics majors as partners in teaching: Learning Assistants in introductory physics ELEANOR CLOSE, DAVID DONNELLY, HUNTER CLOSE, Texas State University - San Marcos — This semester we are running a pilot Learning Assistant (LA) program in one section of our introductory calculus-based mechanics course. The LA model of course transformation was developed at the University of Colorado (<http://laprogram.colorado.edu/>). In our current implementation, five undergraduate physics majors are assisting with tutorial instruction in the lecture section once a week (using primarily Tutorials in Introductory Physics); in addition, most weekly laboratory sections begin with a tutorial. Both LAs and laboratory TAs attend tutorial preparation sessions prior to instruction each week. In this talk we briefly describe the current program, including implementation issues; give preliminary notes on the experiences of the new LAs; and discuss future plans for an expanded LA program. Overall our plan is to improve the experience of being an undergraduate physics student in our department by improving student understanding of physics concepts and by including students as legitimate participants in the mission of the department.

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