

Abstract Submitted  
for the TSS13 Meeting of  
The American Physical Society

**Why You Should Have LAs: A Student Perspective** JESSICA CONN, ELEANOR CLOSE, Texas State University-San Marcos — In 2012 Texas State University's Physics Department created a Learning Assistant Program to further develop students' conceptual understanding of physics through the introductory physics sequence. Through this program, undergraduate students have the opportunity to work with fundamental physics concepts more deeply both during time spent with other LAs while preparing for the following week's lesson and while working directly with students in the classroom or the Physics Help Center. This program also provides an opportunity for physics majors who are interested in physics education research to learn about and participate in the field while still an undergraduate. I will discuss how being a Learning Assistant helped deepen my own conceptual understanding of Newtonian Mechanics and peaked my interest in physics education research, and what kinds of research I hope to engage in next school year.

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Date submitted: 05 Mar 2013

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