Expertise without the Expert: Building Academic Success through Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

Kimberly Fama, Cassie Gilpin and Christina Sylka
University of British Columbia

KEY STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Top 5 Qualities of PASS

- Help me improve my exam grade
- Help me stay on top of course material
- Positive impact on overall course grade
- Leaders effectively facilitate group and work
- Leaders demonstrate knowledge on content

Motivation

- Reasons they attended their first PASS session

- Source of information that will impact their decision to attend PASS (in order of preference):
  - Senior student, COMM 290/291 Professor, friend who attended PASS previously
  - An hour or less Commute increases their chances of attending a PASS program

Satisfaction

- Strengths of PASS
  - Format: Includes small group size, comfortable and open environment to ask questions
    - Characteristics of PASS leaders

- Weakness of PASS
  - Low variation of PASS levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced)
  - Potential to conflict with their other schedules at school and life

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- Enhance the student experience
- Improve the training of PASS leaders
- Strengthen promotion of PASS

RESEARCH DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Intended</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>8-16 students</td>
<td>2 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>~100 responses</td>
<td>88 responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PASS Team Interview 4 PASS Leaders 4 PASS Leaders

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Challenges

- Students: Advance registration and cancelation is too tedious a process as compared to a drop in when needed.
- Leaders: Uncertainty to the number of students coming makes planning for a session difficult.

Recommendations

- Students: Students expect that a session operates similarly to that of a lecture.
- Leaders: Greater outreach to students (eg. sharing the PASS experience with other faculties).

MOVING FORWARD

- Expand to other courses (Financial and Managerial Accounting) and programs (B+MM)
- Customize the training of PASS leaders
- Build stronger partnerships with internal units who can promote PASS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Trinh Nguyen and Sunah Cho for their guidance, collecting and consolidating the data and report. Professor Jonathan Berkowitz and Tim Huh for their support in collecting the data from their students. UBC Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISoTL) and the Centre for Teaching, Learning, & Technology (CTLTL) for providing funds and graduate research assistance hours.