



Peer-led Engagement, Excellence, and Resilience through Supplemental Instruction (PEERS)

The University of Alabama's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on improving student success by embedding enhanced peer-led Supplemental Instruction (SI) within bottleneck courses, i.e., historically difficult courses required for degree completion. The project was developed in response to institutional data revealing high drop, failure, and withdrawal (DFW) rates, particularly among academically vulnerable student groups in these courses. This initiative, **Peer-led Engagement, Excellence, and Resilience through Supplemental instruction (PEERS)**, combines traditional peer SI Leaders with additional student supports in required, high-enrollment courses with significant failure rates to achieve the following goal and outcomes:

Goal: Improve Student Success

Outcomes:

- Reduced DFW rates in bottleneck courses.
- Increased credit hour earnings.
- Increased annual retention rates.
- Increased graduation rates.

Program Design

PEERS situates SI Leaders (students who have excelled in the course previously) within the classroom to model effective academic behaviors and lead supplementary study sessions to improve student success. These sessions emphasize both content mastery and metacognitive skills, providing students with strategies for self-directed learning to improve both academic success and the student learning experience. To further improve the student learning experience, especially participation in SI, UA's PEERS model adds components that seek to build community around SI and to actively involve faculty in the delivery of academic support. The PEERS model aligns with UA's strategic goals by enhancing support for academic success and by promoting equity, particularly for students facing academic barriers.

Assessment Plan

The success of PEERS will be evaluated through a combination of direct and indirect metrics that include:

- **Student Success Measures:** DFW rates, credit hour earnings, retention rates, and graduation rates.
- **Project Evaluation:** SI participation rates; feedback (surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations) from faculty, SI leaders, SI student participants, and SI staff to monitor ongoing effectiveness of additional supports.

Institutional Support and Partnerships

The QEP will be implemented in collaboration with faculty across disciplines and the Learning Commons unit within UA's Capstone Center for Student Success. This program is backed by a \$3.6 million investment, ensuring a sustainable impact on student success. Early pilot results from Academic Year (AY) 2023-24 demonstrate promising reductions in failure rates and stronger academic engagement among participants while providing opportunities to improve upon proposed plans for implementation.

Contact: Dr. Teranda Donatto (tdonatto@ua.edu), QEP Director