Supporting Student Success through Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

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- 30,516 students
- Ranked in the top 2% of universities in the world
- Globally ranked (33) as one of the world's best modern universities (THE 100 under 50)
- 5 star ratings
- Top 100 in the world for global graduates
PASS @ UOW

- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) commenced at UOW in 2002
- Most awarded peer learning program in the world!
- Mainstream and voluntary
- Over 100 PASS Leaders
- Flagship FYE program - running on multiple entry points
Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

• Academic peer learning / mentoring program for students - think “super group” learning!
• Aims to help students master subject content while integrating discipline specific learning skills
• Attached to difficult subjects or used in some disciplines to promote development of learning communities
• Not a remedial program – open to all enrolled students
What is PASS?

• Voluntary sessions facilitated by PASS Peer Leaders – high achieving senior students
• Not the Leaders’ role to give direct answers
• Peer Leaders are recruited based on academic competency and high level interpersonal skills
• Training, teambuilding and on-going observation, support and professional development. Multiple levels of mentoring / collaboration
• Extremely cost effective!
Strategic Goals of PASS

• Improving retention & reducing failure rates in targeted subjects
• Enhancing the student experience & satisfaction
• Assisting transition at multiple entry points
• Development of transferable study skills & independent learning
• Provides seamless integration of academic & social support for students
Potential Applications

• Large compulsory subjects, particularly ones which many students have no previous background in

• Subjects which have a high failure rate and/or are perceived by the students as difficult

• Transition points where students come in with advanced standing (including PG subjects)

• Where promoting the development of a discipline specific learning community
Benefits of PASS

• PASS Peer Leaders: enhances leadership, communication & teamwork skills. Looks great on resume!
• In 2013, 100% of PASS Leaders agreed that PASS had assisted in developing their personal and professional skills
• Provides a forum for students to consolidate lecture material and explore / unpack challenges
• Institution: enhanced student experience, fewer transition problems & improved retention
Participant Feedback

What I like most about PASS…

“Challenged to think rather than just being spoon fed”

“The hours of study that I don’t have to do at home”

“Opportunity for everyone to contribute”

“No pressure collaboration”

“It actually works – I come and I end up getting marks!”
Growth and Consolidation

• Commenced in 2002 in two subjects – now over 100 subjects per year!

• Currently supports students in all 5 Faculties and Graduate Schools – team of 100 PASS Leaders

• In 2013 delivered 35,000 contact hours to 6,000 participants

• In First Semester, 2014 delivered 25,000 contact hours (increase of 20% on same period last year)
Snapshot of Growth

PASS Contact Hours by Year

- 2003: 8000
- 2004: 10000
- 2005: 12000
- 2006: 14000
- 2007: 16000
- 2008: 18000
- 2009: 20000
- 2010: 22000
- 2011: 24000
- 2012: 26000
- 2013: 28000

Universities of Wollongong

National Centre for PASS
Peer Assisted Study Sessions
Everyone benefits

Average student mark by ATAR rank and PASS participation, 2003 to 2013
(no unique student = 31864)

Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank Group

- low (0 to 69)
- mid (70 to 84)
- high (85+)

Non-Participant (5< attend)
Participant (5+ attend)
National Centre for PASS

• Since 2005 UOW has been The National Centre for PASS for the Australasia region
• Trained PASS staff for 37 of the 39 Australian universities
• Over 500 trained staff from some 70 institutions across Australia, NZ, Fiji, Malaysia, HK, Singapore and PR of China making for a vibrant community of practice
National Centre for PASS

- Part of an international community of National Centres
- Annual National PASS Forum for 150 – 200 staff and student attendees & National Leader Awards
- 10th National PASS Forum, 30th Sept – 1st Oct 2014
- Publishes Journal of Peer Learning
- PASS Supervisor Training & resources
Questions or Comments?

Thank you for attending!

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