

Geo Learning Community Student Community and Belonging

Shannon Williams and Kristina Head

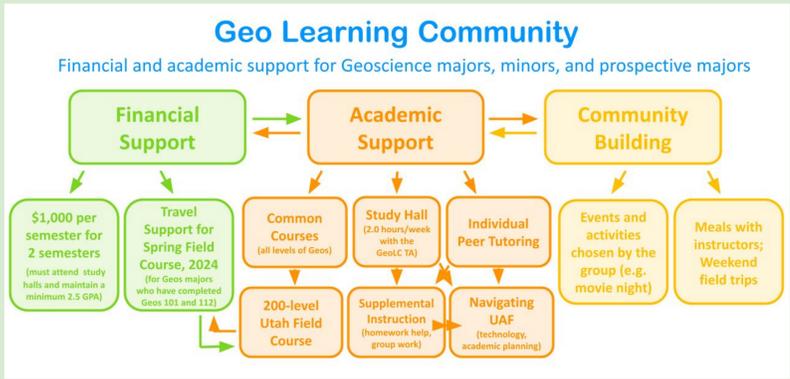


Background:

The Geo Learning Community (GeoLC) is designed to enhance the participation and academic success of geoscience students from underrepresented groups when they attend college at UAF. Our goal is to engage students from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in the geosciences including, but not limited to students who; are from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (Hispanic, Latino, African-American, Alaska Native, Native American, Pacific Islander), are first generation college students, graduated from rural or inner-city high schools, identify as LGBTQ+, identify as female.



“[Geo LC entails] supplemental instruction and tutoring coupled with exposure to other students with shared interests and opportunities for Geoscience majors. And there’s candy.”



Group Demographic Data:

- 21% self-identify as all or part Alaska Native, compared to less than 1% in the geoscience workforce in the US as a whole
- 18% self-identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, compared to 4% in the geoscience workforce in the US as a whole
- 44% self-identify as female, which is on par with the nationwide geoscience undergraduate percentage (also 44%), but is higher than the 24% of women in the geoscience workforce in the US as a whole

What we were able to do with the URSA Funding:

Social events

- Evening events: pizza and movie nights, pumpkin carving, cookie decorating, ice skating
- Weekend events: hikes, Castner Glacier visit

Tutoring

- Extra tutoring provided by Shannon Williams for GEOS 101 and GEOS 112 students
- Math tutoring for any Geo LC students provided by Kristina Head



“Geo LC helps me feel more connected to the other geoscience students and I have learned a lot about the different career and educational opportunities in geoscience from the guest speakers.”



“I find that Geo LC helps keep me accountable in my academics and most of the opportunities that I’ve been exposed to have been through Geo LC ”



“[Geo LC is] a “club” of sorts filled with like-minded scholars. The leaders of which are determined to ensure everyone is having a smooth, happy, and productive time in their path through geoscience. I really love having the gateway to network and connect with future geoscience opportunities, as well as being present in the community of geoscience students here.”

Focusing on retention of Geoscience Majors:

- The two semester introductory Geology sequence (GEOS 101 and 112) are required for all Geoscience majors - making sure our Geo LC students pass those with confidence helps ensure that they remain in the major
- Supplemental Instruction weekly
- Tutoring offered by Shannon Williams
- Math courses, especially for students from rural Alaska and first generation college students, are often a sticking point for students being able to earn the Bachelor’s of Science (which requires at least Calculus 1).
- Tutoring offer by Kristina Head for Calculus 1 and lower Math courses