

# Learning Assistant Program

Dr. Alice Seneres

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Learning Centers

Rutgers University

# Learning Assistant Program

- Learning Assistants are undergraduate students who work with faculty to create collaborative learning environments
- Modeled after a successful program developed at University of Colorado, Boulder
- The Learning Assistant Program began at Rutgers in 2011 in 5 courses, and now is partnering with 50 courses

# Practice: How can faculty use LAs?

Learning Assistants placed in:

- Lectures: assist instructor by facilitating discussions
- Labs: team-teach with TA
- Recitations
- Study Groups
  - LA leads supplemental study group that students have the option to join



in-class  
support

# LA Program Model

- LAs have weekly contact time with students
- LAs take a 300-level, 3-credit pedagogy course
- Weekly staff meeting with course instructor(s) and TAs
- Ongoing training and professional development
- Earn a stipend

# Pedagogy Course Overview

- Designed to develop LAs' understanding of the role of a peer educator
- Through this course, students learn how to:
  - facilitate small-group learning among students
  - ask effective questions and engage students in dialogic discourse
  - design student-centered activities

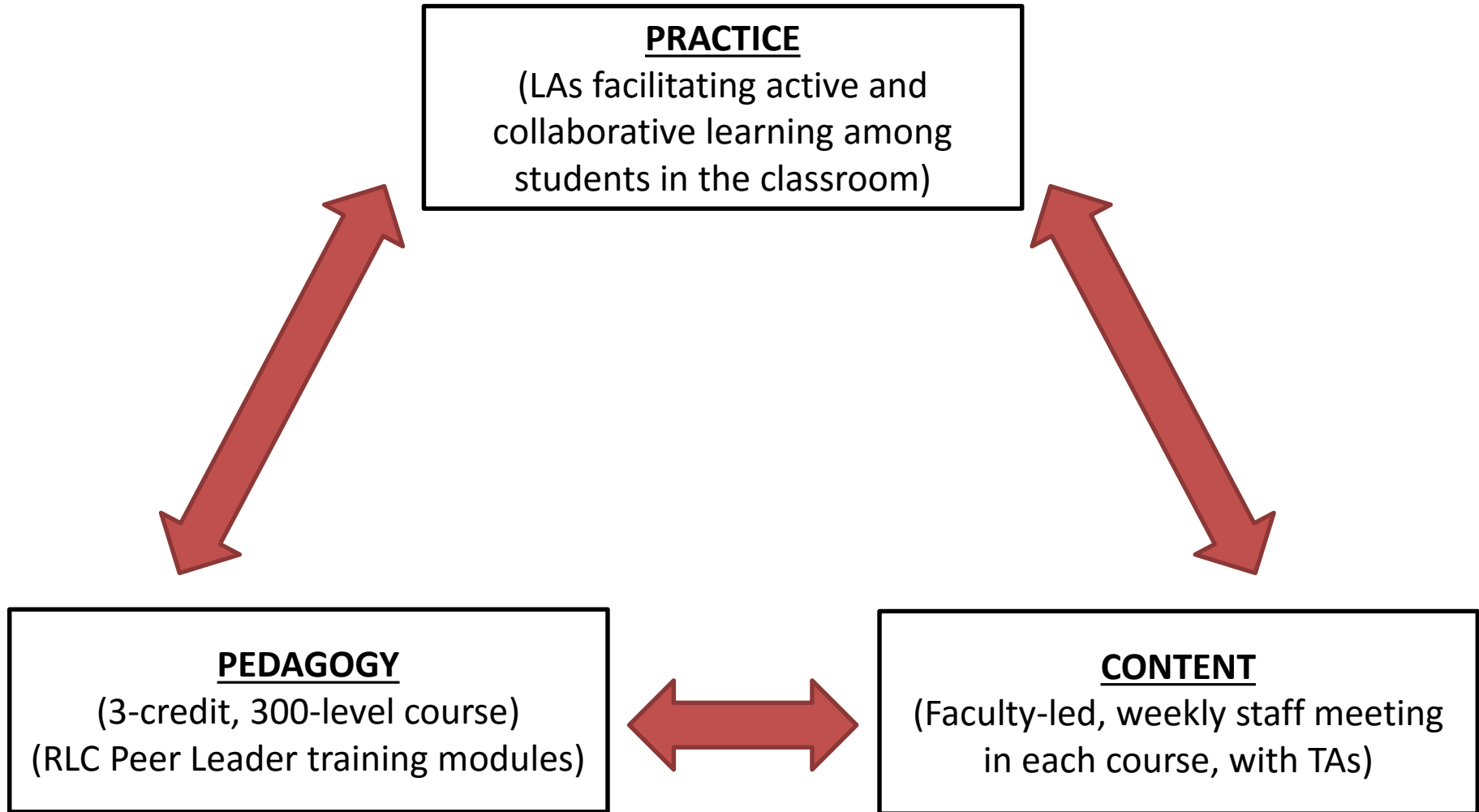
# Pedagogy Course Topics

- Questioning techniques
- Qualities of effective teachers
- Conceptual change and misconceptions
- Mental models
- Cognition and metacognition
- Cooperative Learning
- Content Literacy
- Constructivism

# Instructor-Led Staff Meetings

- Faculty have weekly meeting with their LAs
- Discuss course content & classroom structure
- Give and receive feedback about student learning

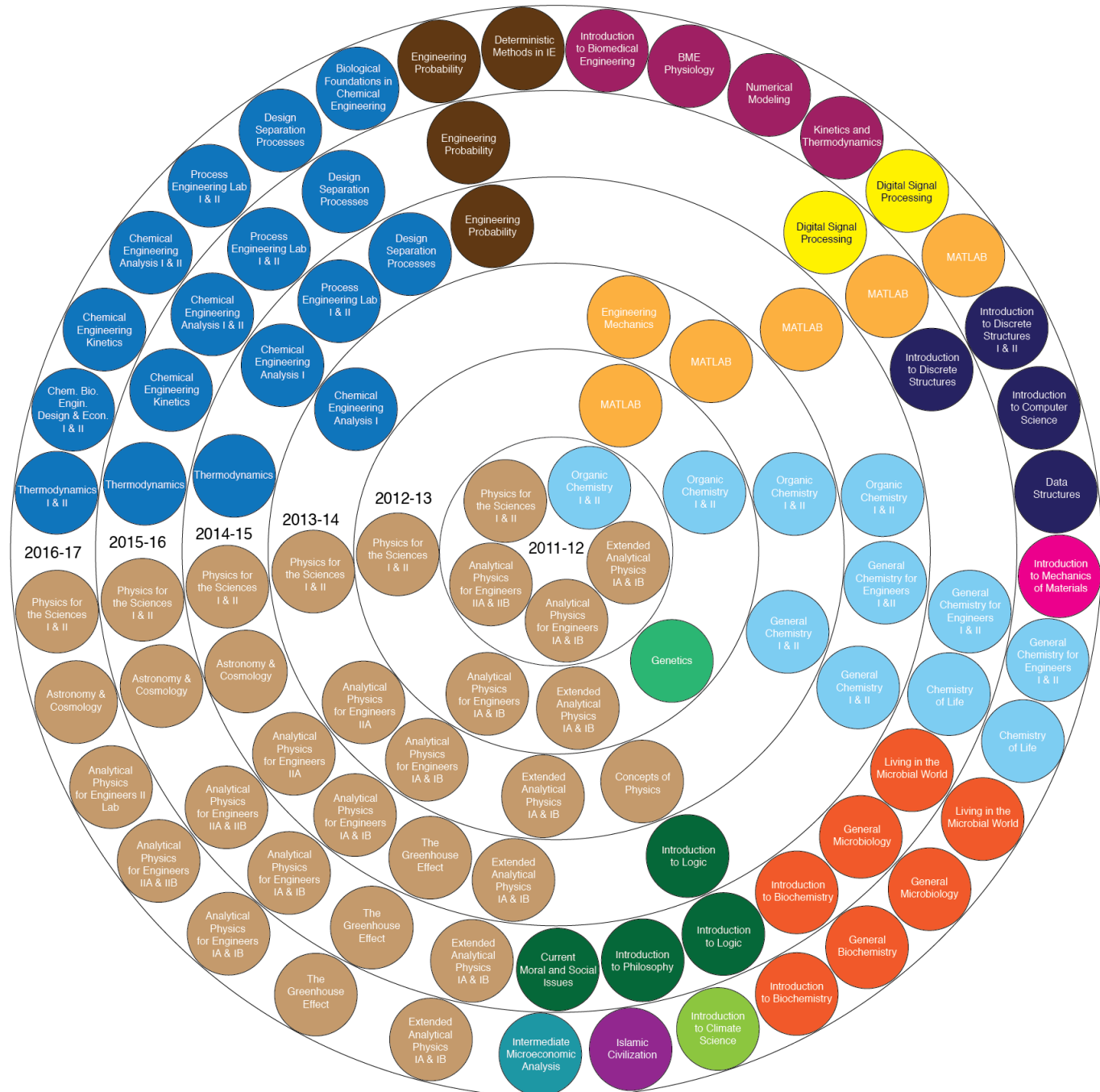
# Essential Elements of LA Model





# Some courses using LAs

- Chemistry of Life
- Intro to Computer Science
- Separation Design Processes
- Islamic Civilization
- Microeconomics
- Discrete Structures 1 and 2
- Introduction to Biomedical Engineering
- Concepts of Physics
- Astronomy and Cosmology
- Extended Analytical Physics
- Analytical Physics
- Physics for the Sciences
- Organic Chemistry





# Staff & Services

- Director of Integrated Academic Support Programs
  - Program Coordinator
- Services to departments & faculty
  - Coordinate LA applications, interviewing, hiring
  - Employment on-boarding and weekly payroll
  - Coordinate assignments, schedules
  - Maintain employment records
  - Teach pedagogy course and provide training

# My Background

Ph.D. in Mathematics Education; Teachers College,  
Columbia University

M.S. Biomedical Engineering; Rutgers University

M.S. Mechanical Engineering; Tufts University

Teaching Instructor of Mathematics (2011-2015)

Engineer for Hewlett Packard (5 years)

# LA Program Opportunities

Faculty Applications  
November to January

LA Course Assignments  
February

Undergraduate LA Applications  
February to March

LA Interviews & Hiring  
March to May

# Questions?

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SERC 103

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