

# Enhancing Economics Education Through Peer-Facilitated Study Sessions (PASS)

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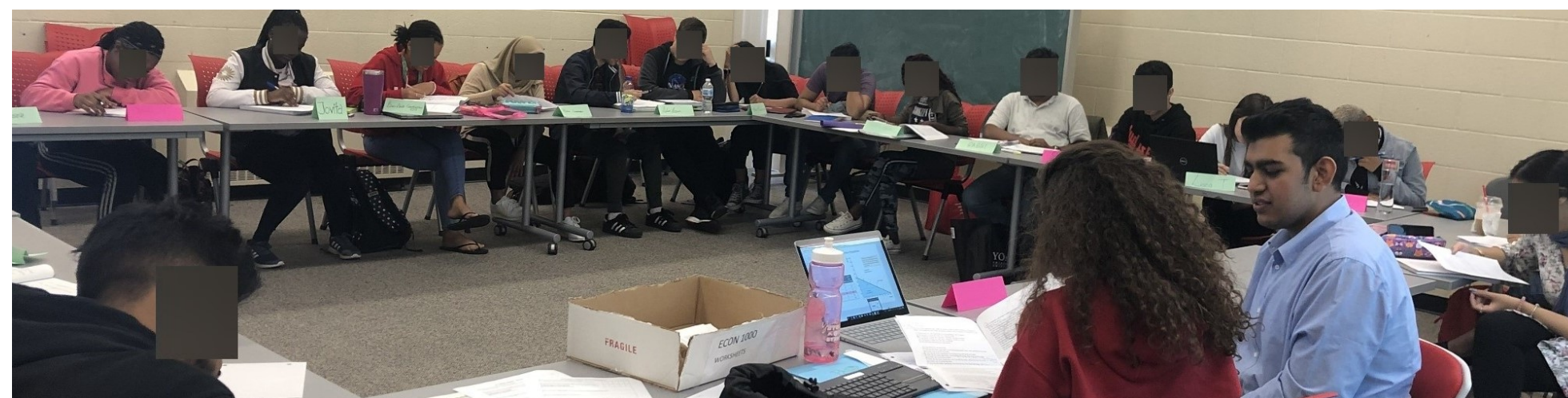
\*York University

## 1. Life Before PASS

- High DWF (Drop, Withdraw, Fail) rates affected many economics courses.
- Declining enrollment in Intro Micro and Macro
- Students often struggled with ineffective study habits.
- Limited on-campus supports were available.

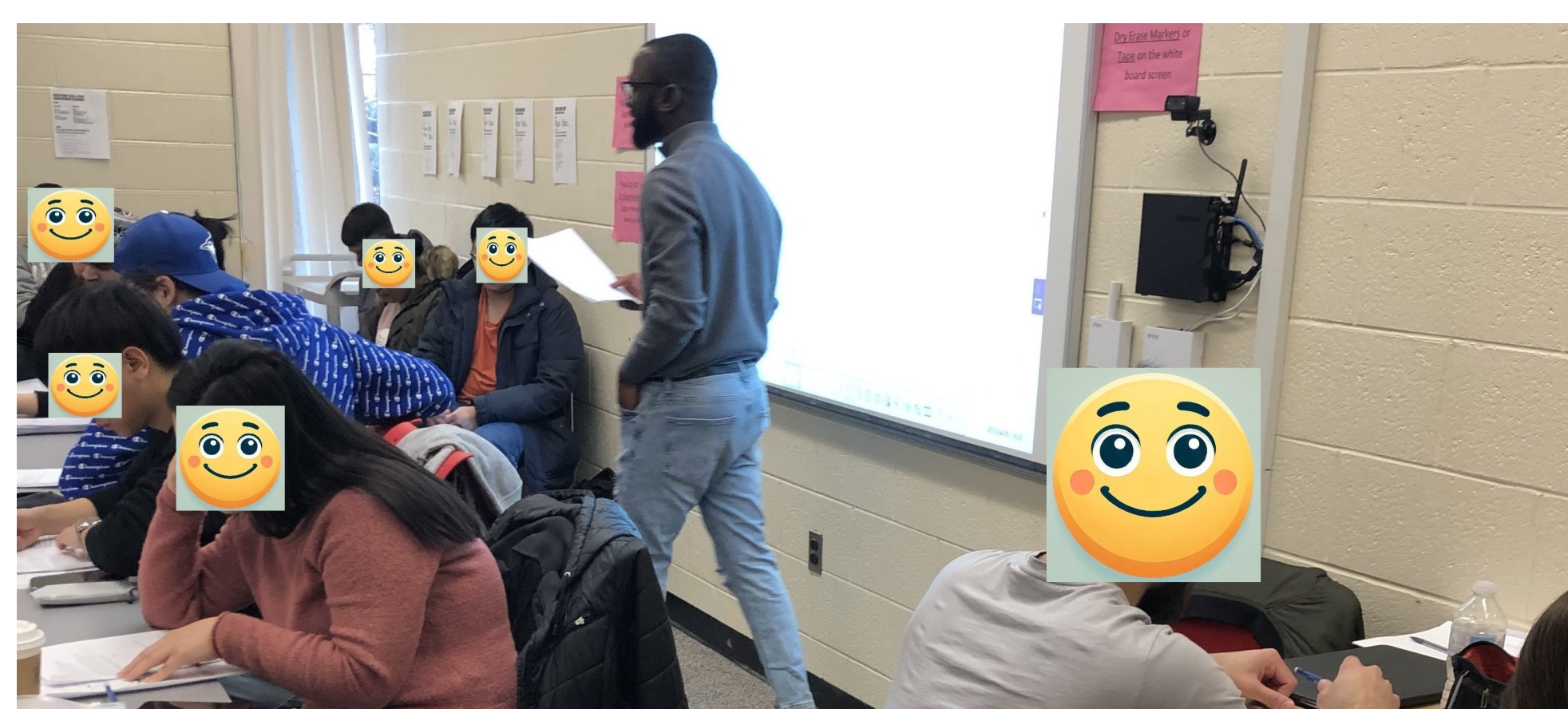
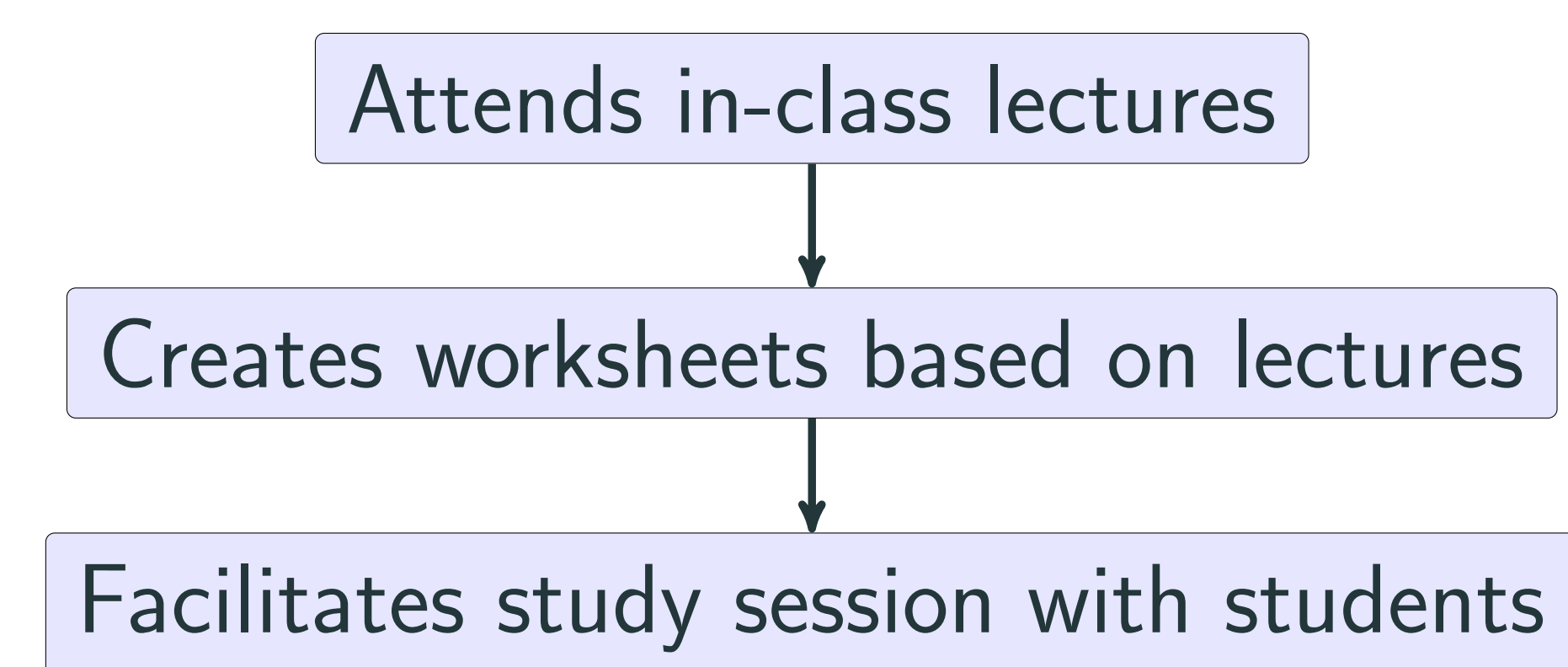
## 2. Motivation to Implement PASS

- Promotes independent learning within a collaborative, student-focused environment.
- Offers course-specific, timely help.
- Outcomes-driven: higher grades, reduced DWF rates, and improved retention and graduation rates – Dawson et al. (2014).



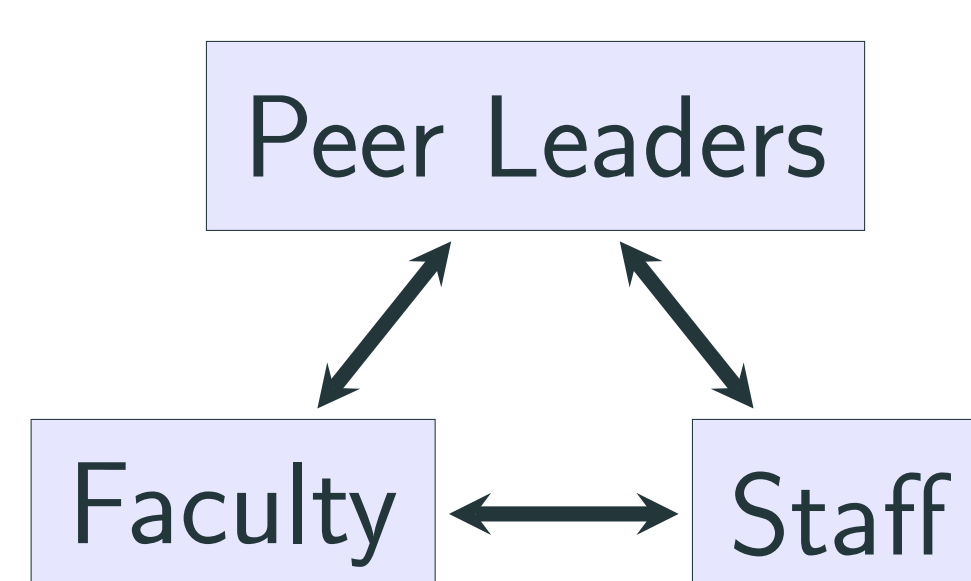
A PASS Leader works with a student.

## 3. Role of A Peer Leader



A PASS Leader oversees a study session.

## 4. Faculty-Student-Staff Partnership



- Faculty: offer guidance and feedback.
- Peer Leaders: work with learners.
- Staff: Manage 30-50 peer leaders.

## 5. Initial Challenges and Push-Back

- Students had never heard of PASS.
  - Low engagement, attendance.
- Lack of faculty support.
  - Peer Leaders not allowed in class.
  - Students were not encouraged to attend study sessions.
- Scarce funds to pay Peer Leaders

## 6. Path to Success: Start Small

- Promote evidence of early success
  - Attendance, grades, retention
- Build new faculty relationships by leveraging existing ones.
- Secure funding through administrative collaboration, ROI analysis, and external grant applications.

## 7. Success! Usage Rates

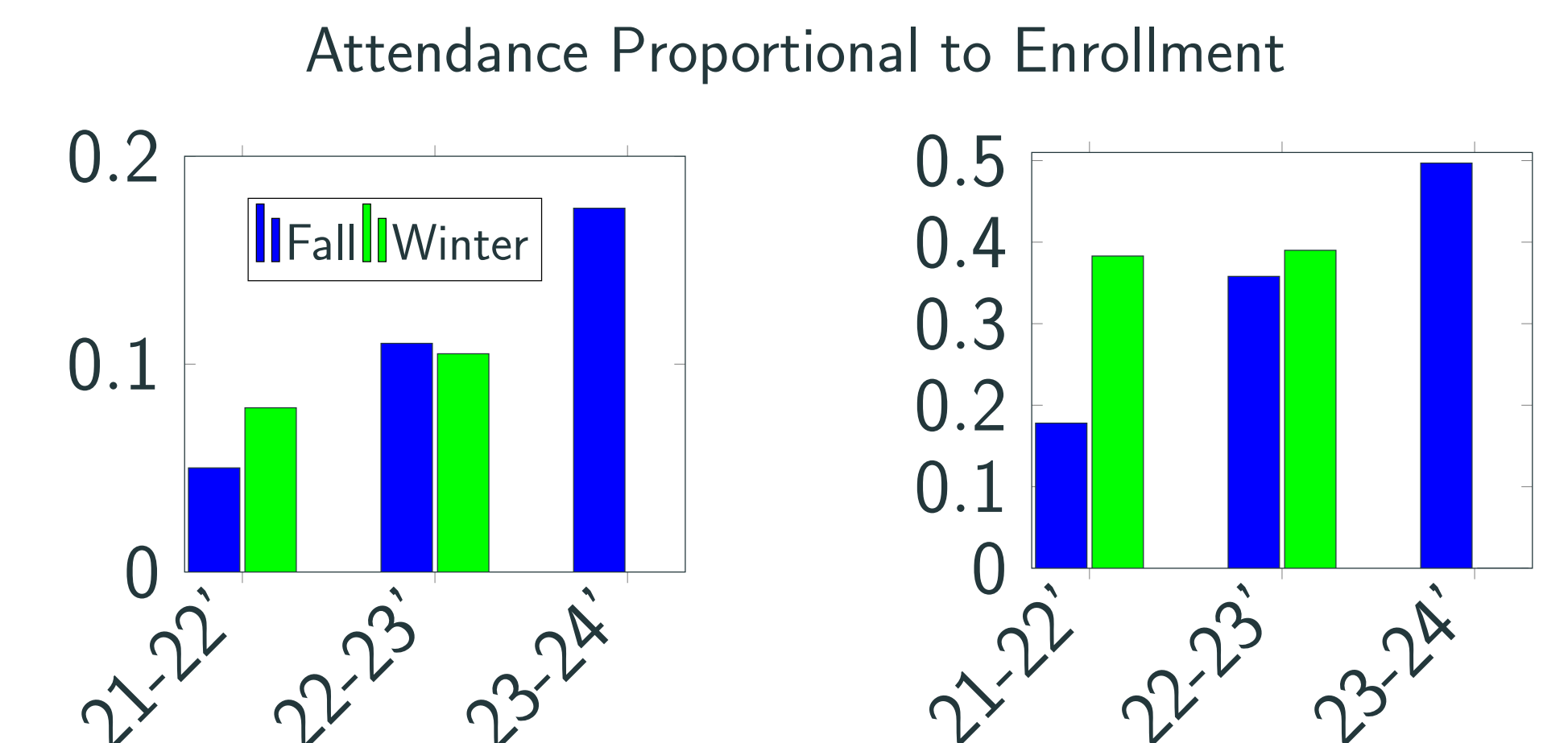


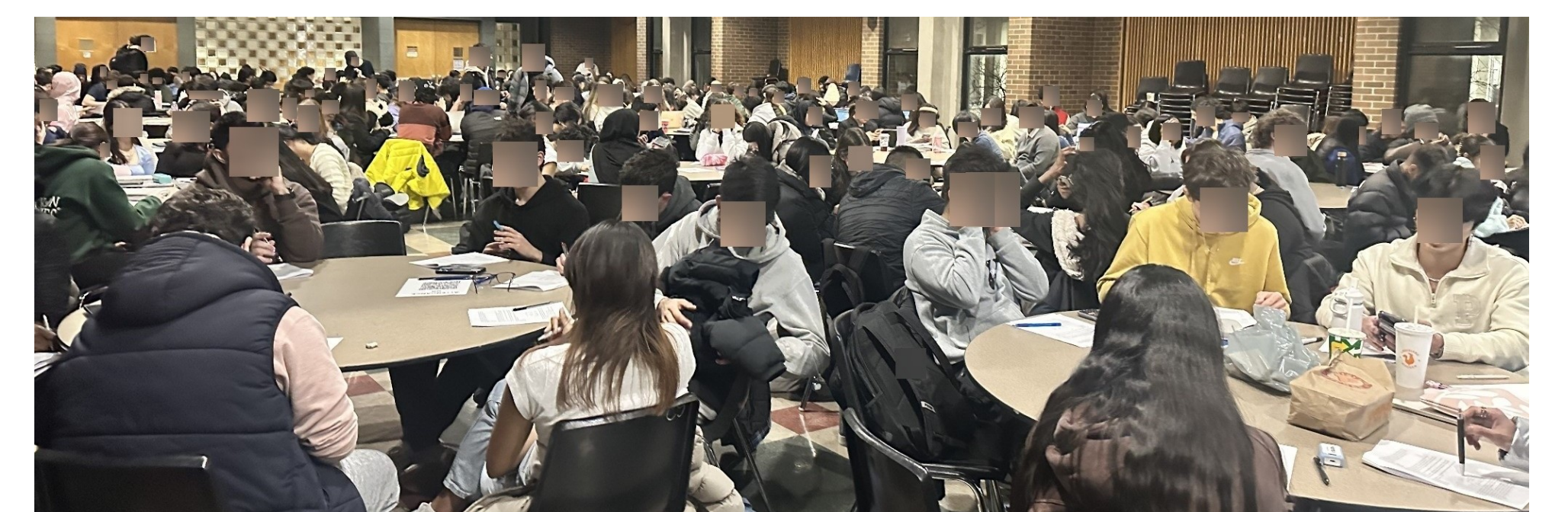
Figure 1: Attended at least once

Figure 2: Total Attendance

Proportional to enrolment in Intro micro/macro, stats, math I & II, Intern. Micro I & II

- Attendance rates have steadily increased, demonstrating growing student engagement with PASS.

## 8. Feedback from Students



Students in Intro Micro attend a PASS review session.

- *Study skills*: “The leader helped me organize the concepts from class and study properly.”
- *Effectiveness*: “I learned so much, it was like a review after every lecture.”
- *Collaborative*: “I really liked the collaborative and friendly atmosphere”

## 9. Statistical Matching

Table 1: Midterm and Final Grade Match – Intro Micro

Midterm	Matched Final	Std	Matches
< 30	15.22	12.31	3
30-40	3.67	12.19	12
41-50	2.01	10.28	21
51-60	7.91	7.65	49
61-70	4.89	5.51	66
71-80	3.71	4.26	88
81-90	1.05	3.52	89
91-100	3.12	2.52	27

## 10. Keys to Success

- Start small with trusted faculty – small successes lead to large.
- Target courses with high DWF rates.
- Prioritize the recruitment of skilled and motivated Peer Leaders.
- Build faculty support and collaborate.

*Peer-Assisted Study Sessions have led to substantial improvements in academic performance, reflecting its growing popularity and effectiveness among students.*

## References

Dawson, Phillip, Jacques van der Meer, Jane Skalicky, and Kym Cowley (2014). “On the effectiveness of supplemental instruction: A systematic review of supplemental instruction and peer-assisted study sessions literature between 2001 and 2010.” *Review of educational research*, 84, 609–639.