

Summary of the Peer Music Teaching Program Updates for ARMTA - December 30, 2025

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<1. FALL 2025 PROGRAM ACTIVITY & OUTCOMES>

Participant Registration and Engagement

Registration numbers:

- 10 peer teachers signed up (6 certified, 4 general)
- 24 peer students signed up
- 17 observation teachers signed up

Active participants (Fall 2025):

- 3 peer teachers actively taught lessons (2 piano, 1 guitar / 1 certified, 2 general)
- 5 peer students actively received lessons (4 piano, 1 guitar)

The gap between registration numbers and active participants reflects the challenges we faced with matching the instrument availability and peer teacher recruitments, which we've addressed through the structural changes outlined in this document.

ARMTA Teacher Contributions

We want to extend our sincere gratitude to the ARMTA teachers who generously provided observation sessions to our peer teachers this fall term. While ARMTA has access to our observation teacher roster, we wanted to specifically recognize these members who actively contributed to our peer teachers' professional development this semester. Based on confirmation emails from our peer teachers, the following ARMTA teachers offered observation sessions:

- **Etelka Nyilasi** - 1 session
- **Heather Hindman** - 2 sessions
- **Marek Orszulik** - 2 sessions
- **Viktoria Reiswich-Dapp** - 1 session

No peer teachers have taken advantage of the optional mentorship opportunity yet.

Main Challenges Faced in Fall 2025

1. Management capacity constraints

Our Chapter executives were stretched thin managing both the program's administrative demands and regular Chapter activities.

→ *Addressed through:* Director recruitment and Soundscapes partnership (see Program Team Structure Changes)

2. Instrument matching challenges

Specific instrument needs were unmet between the peer teacher and peer student registrants. For example, we had a peer teacher registered to teach trumpet, but received no peer student registrations for trumpet lessons.

→ *Addressed through:* Dedicated recruitment coordinator director to conduct targeted outreach based on existing registration gaps (see Program Team Structure Changes)

3. Peer teacher recruitment shortage

We received significantly more peer student registrations (24) than peer teacher registrations (10), interested in participating in the volunteer program.

→ *Addressed through:* Transition to flexible payment model (see Major Program Changes)

4. Music department hesitance in supporting recruitment

The graduate music advisor raised concerns about fair compensation for musicians, expressing strong opposition to actively promoting our program to music students, as they'd be working as unpaid volunteers. This limited our ability to recruit peer teachers through official department channels.

→ *Addressed through:* Transition to a flexible payment model that respects musicians' work while maintaining accessibility (see Major Program Changes)

Despite these challenges, the program successfully facilitated 5 student-teacher pairings and provided valuable teaching experience and professional development opportunities to our peer teachers, with the support of ARMTA's observation teacher network.

<2. PROGRAM TEAM STRUCTURE CHANGES>

1. Partnership with Soundscapes (a UofA student club)

In October 2025, Soundscapes—a registered student club at the University of Alberta focused on music education and appreciation, with most members coming from non-music programs—reached out to partner with our Chapter on the Peer Music Teaching Program.

At the time, our Chapter executives were stretched to capacity, managing both the program's demanding administrative work and our regular Chapter activities. We accepted this partnership in November 2025 to help distribute the workload and expand our reach to students outside our immediate music student network.

Half of our Chapter executive members have since moved away from being directly involved in the program management to focus on their regular Chapter responsibilities. As a result, I'm now working with two teams - (1) **the Chapter executive team** of 6; (2) **the collaborative team**, which involves 3 Chapter executives, 2 Soundscapes executives, and 3 Chapter directors (explained in the next section).

What Soundscapes has been helping with since November 2025:

- Cross-promotion of the program to their membership
- Support with promotional materials and recruitment/outreach activities
- Idea generation for improving the program and the program management structure
- Day-to-day administrative tasks (spreadsheet maintenance and observation training reminders to peer teachers)

Current partnership assessment: While we initially envisioned co-management, the partnership has evolved into a workload distribution of approximately 80% (Chapter) and 20% (Soundscapes), with Soundscapes functioning primarily as a promotional and administrative support partner rather than a co-manager.

Chapter's program ownership: The Peer Music Teaching Program remains an ARMTA UofA Collegiate Chapter initiative. The Chapter created and continues to own the program, serving as the main point of contact for program participants, the UofA Music department, and ARMTA. We maintain authority over all major decisions regarding program structure, training requirements, and quality standards. All observation training, mentorship opportunities, and professional development continue to be coordinated through our network of ARMTA and Music faculty observation teachers.

2. New Executive Position and Director Recruitment

To better manage the program's growing administrative demands while maintaining our regular Chapter operations, we've made significant changes to the Chapter executive team's structure in the last two months:

New Executive Position - VP Operations (November 2025): We created a new executive position and recruited Raphael Jahnert as VP Operations. Raph co-manages the Peer Music Teaching Program with me and assists with other Chapter initiatives, helping ensure we can sustain both the program and our regular member activities without overwhelming the Chapter executive team.

Specialized Directors for Program Management: We've recruited three music-student directors to handle specific aspects of the program, allowing us to distribute responsibilities effectively:

- **Observation Confirmation & Matching Coordination (Gabe)** - Matches peer teachers and peer students

- **Lesson and Practice Room Booking Coordination (Paolo & Neil)** - Coordinates weekly lesson room bookings and practice room requests for our participants
- **Recruitment Coordination (Neil)** - Analyzes recruitment needs by instrument type and leads targeted recruitment efforts to address gaps in peer teacher, peer student, and observation teacher availability

This distributed leadership model has been essential for managing the program sustainably. Each director receives training on their specific responsibilities and has access to the relevant documentation and systems they need to fulfill their role. This structure allows us to maintain the program quality while preventing burnout among our core executive team.

<3. MAJOR PROGRAM CHANGES THIS MONTH>

Blue = Completely new things brought to participants

Red = Old things that have been revised

1. Transition to Flexible Payment Model (Winter 2026)

We've moved from a volunteer-only model to a flexible payment structure to improve peer teacher recruitment and program sustainability.

Suggested Rate Ranges:

- General Peer Teachers (GPT): \$10-15/half-hour (\$20-30/hour)
- Certified Peer Teachers (CPT): \$12.5-20/half-hour (\$25-40/hour)
- Volunteer teaching remains an option
- Teachers can charge within, above, or below these ranges

Why this change?

- Edmonton market rate: \$28-32/half-hour
- Our rates are 40-60% below market value - still attractive to peer students
- Teachers keep 100% of what they charge (no Chapter commission) - attractive to peer teachers

The Basic Framework:

- Peer students pay the teacher directly after each lesson
- No trial lesson complications - just normal lessons
- We facilitate the match but don't handle money or enforce rates

Why this might work:

- Respects teacher autonomy and market dynamics naturally

- Removes the Chapter from payment disputes and administrative liability
- Addresses Rebecca (Music graduate advisor)'s concern about fair compensation for musicians without creating a complex fee structure
- Still allows students with limited budgets to participate
- Teachers who want higher rates can request them; those prioritizing teaching experience can keep it nominal

2. Updated Program Forms

New forms created:

- Winter 2026 Continuing Peer Teacher Interest Form (for those in our “waiting list”)
- Winter 2026 Continuing Peer Student Interest Form (for those in our “waiting list”)
- Fall 2025 Feedback Form for Peer Teachers (for those who actually had lessons in fall)
- Fall 2025 Feedback Form for Peer Students (for those who actually had lessons in fall)

Old Documents updated (for future registrants in the winter term):

- Peer Teacher Sign-Up Form
- Peer Student Sign-Up Form
- Program Outline Document

Some of the important new/updated information we're now collecting from our participants:

- [Budget ranges and payment preferences](#) (students) & [Desired lesson rates and flexibility](#) (teachers)
- Lesson length preferences for both teachers and students (**30min OR 1hr**)
- [FAB locker rental requests](#) (this was discussed between the Chapter and the Music Students' Association, a UofA music student association that takes care of the FAB lockers. The Chapter will collect the requesters' payments -\$20 per semester- and deal with the MSA.)
- Maximum student capacity (teachers) - instead of a maximum of 2 students per teacher, now teachers can have **up to 4 students**, and they can indicate this in the sign-up form
- Whether enrolled in music courses (teachers), we've made it clear that if the peer teacher is currently taking a music course, they have access to the music student room booking guide and should [book the lesson rooms themselves](#). This doesn't apply in cases where only the peer student in the pair has the room booking access.
- Additionally, the forms make it clear that the same rule applies to booking rooms [for practice purposes](#). However, for practice sessions, **both** teachers and students are asked not to request a booking from us if they are currently taking a music course, as they can book for themselves.
- Practice room booking requests **with frequency** - now there are more specific options for the practice room booking frequency

3. Updated policy written in our program outline

- **Information about the Soundscapes partnership** (also in the updated teacher and student sign-up forms)
- **Peer teacher training Requirements**
Previously, a 2-part training (3 observation sessions) was required for all peer teachers → **Now, certified peer teachers (CPTs) with prior teaching experience may be exempt from the Part 2 training requirement**, meaning the rule is lenient on them - they could just do 1 pre-teaching observation and be done with the training requirement.
- **Simplified Cancellation/Rescheduling Policy**
Previously required 24-48 hours' notice, CC'ing the exec team for the formal documentation → **Trust-based, peer-to-peer coordination**
 - Partners communicate directly about changes
 - The exec team is only involved for room rebooking or repeated problem resolution
 - As mentioned previously, if the peer teacher has the room booking access, they rebook their own rooms; other peer teachers should contact the exec team to ask for the rebooking

We've created and sent out the feedback forms and continuing participant forms (see Resources) to all current registrants to inform them about the paid-model transition and collect their Winter 2026 preferences. The early response data have been encouraging: out of 11 peer student responses so far, only 2 indicated they'd prefer to be matched exclusively with volunteer peer teachers, 2 requested to be removed from the winter term registration, and the remaining 7 selected specific budget ranges they're comfortable with paying. **This suggests the flexible payment model addresses both the recruitment shortage and fair compensation concerns while maintaining program accessibility for university students with limited budgets.**

<4. RESOURCES>

(Revised) Program Outline: [Peer Music Teaching Program Outline](#)

Participant Forms (responder version):

- (Revised) Peer Teacher Sign-Up: <https://forms.gle/8dMtdN4WBM8Wu6BB7>
- (Revised) Peer Student Sign-Up: <https://forms.gle/xxGPbmVnefTAZ8up7>
- (New) Winter 2026 Continuing Teacher: <https://forms.gle/eUeSjw8mTfsFhsZR7>
- (New) Winter 2026 Continuing Student: <https://forms.gle/p38j8HfGyRPSVG1x9>
- (New) Fall 2025 Feedback Form Teacher: <https://forms.gle/NBSfrhoHp1U7RBhu9>
- (New) Fall 2025 Feedback Form Student: <https://forms.gle/RiJh4YMFbYZQHNg6A>

(Revised) Master Spreadsheet: [Peer Teacher & Peer Student Sign-Up Form \(Responses\)](#)

- I've added/removed/revised some columns to all the tabs of the master spreadsheet to reflect the new questions we've added to the program forms. (e.g., budget).

Reported by Angelina Lee, President
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Observation Teacher Roster Spreadsheet: [Observation Teacher Roster - ARMTA Collegiate Chapter](#)