



University of Michigan Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize

2018 WINNER



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Special thanks to Karen Bird, Associate Director of Instructional Development, Greg Lewis, BA100 Co-Faculty and Rob Bobowski, BA100 Curriculum Coordinator, for their significant contributions to the program.

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Peer Coaching of First-Year Students at Scale

Innovation Description

Arranging some degree of peer support for first-year students is hardly uncommon, but much more unique is comprehensive integration of peer coaching into a signature learning experience -- with as much attention to the development of the peer coaches as to the first-year students. In effect, not just one, but two courses have been created in support of the revised curriculum for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program.

BA 100 "Introduction to Ross, The Foundations for Learning Business" combines an orientation experience with mentoring from current BBAs and an overview of business basics. The year-long, one-credit course meets fourteen times over the fall and winter semesters. Each large section of 140 first-year students is subdivided so that every group of 6-7 students has a peer coach who is further along in the BBA program and who receives ongoing training in coaching. These paid coaches facilitate classroom discussions and activities and provide team and individual coaching sessions outside the classroom.

The coaches have a broad mandate to support the overall well-being of the first years, helping them to discover their passions and connect to university resources. In an era of rising calls for more support for student mental health, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion, this program expands networks and connections, enhances preparedness and student success, and increases self-awareness, confidence, and the ability to work collaboratively.

Student Comments

"This program trains the peer coaches on appreciative inquiry, empathetic listening, and overall social intelligence that equip the peer coaches to empower and support the freshmen like no program I have been involved in previously."

"The Ross peer coaching program makes first-year students feel seen and heard, and reminds them that they belong."

"Personally, I did not know that many upper classmen who I could ask about advice for classes or Ross in general, so it was really helpful having someone that you could ask about basically anything."

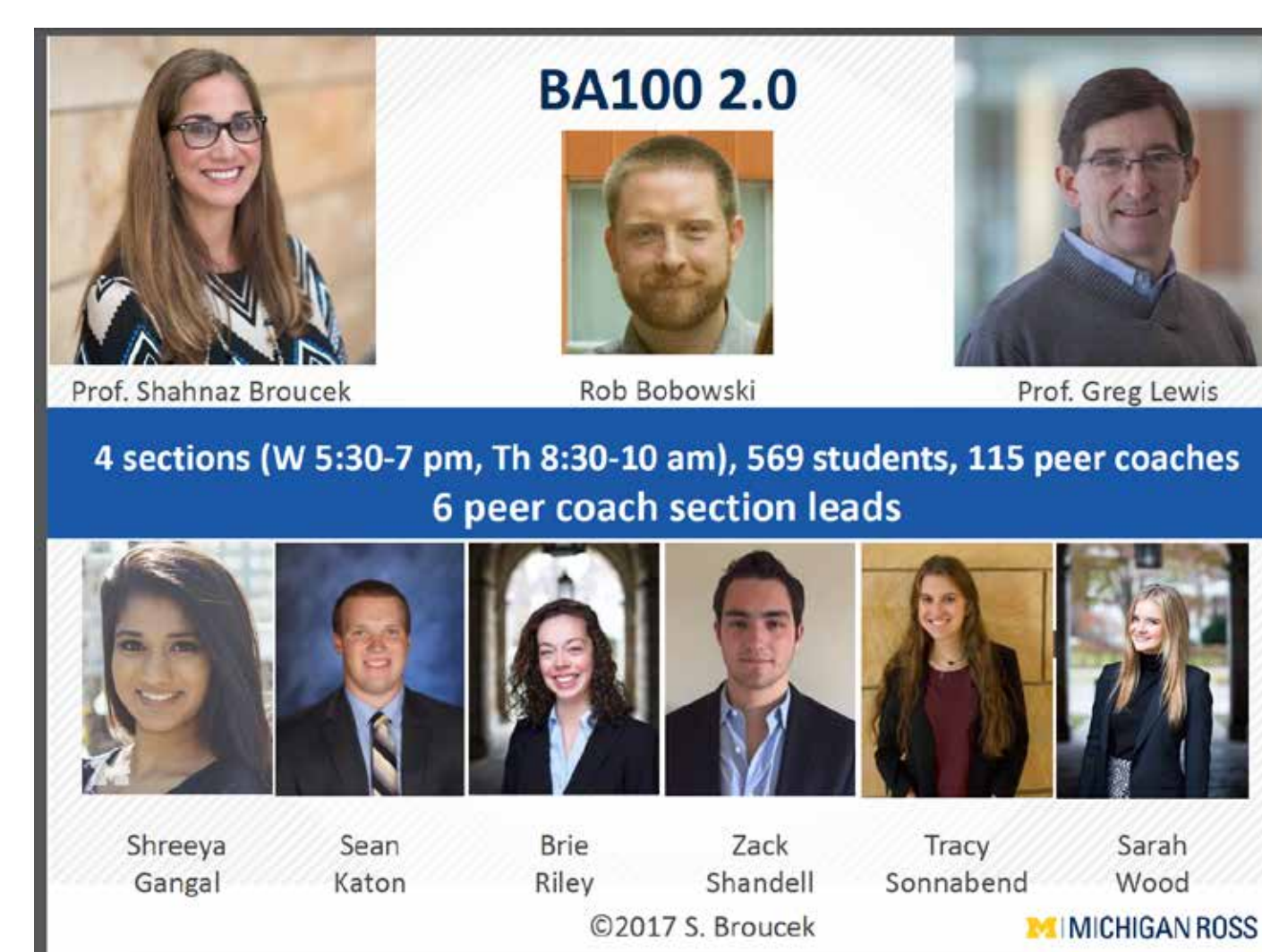
"Instead of focusing solely on academic achievement, the peer coaches are trained to support the freshmen in overall well-being."

"Having a peer coach has made the transition into Ross a lot less scary. They genuinely want to help you succeed and have opened my eyes to all the amazing opportunities available here that I would have otherwise not known existed."

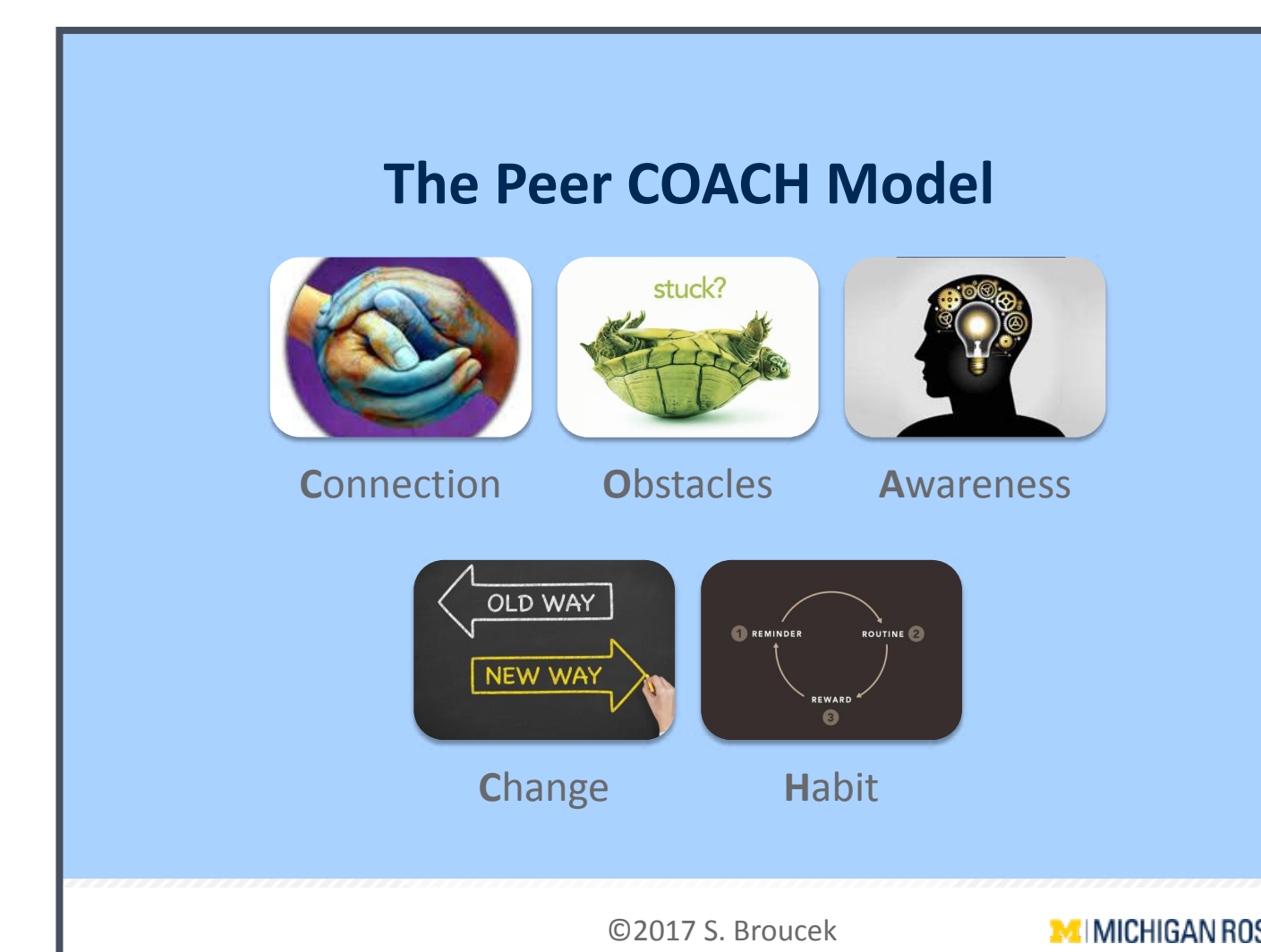
"This peer coaching system has started a cultural transformation within the undergraduate business program."

"The BA100 program is a great class that helps to create a positive Ross environment, a seamless introduction to the business school and college life, and a great learning environment."

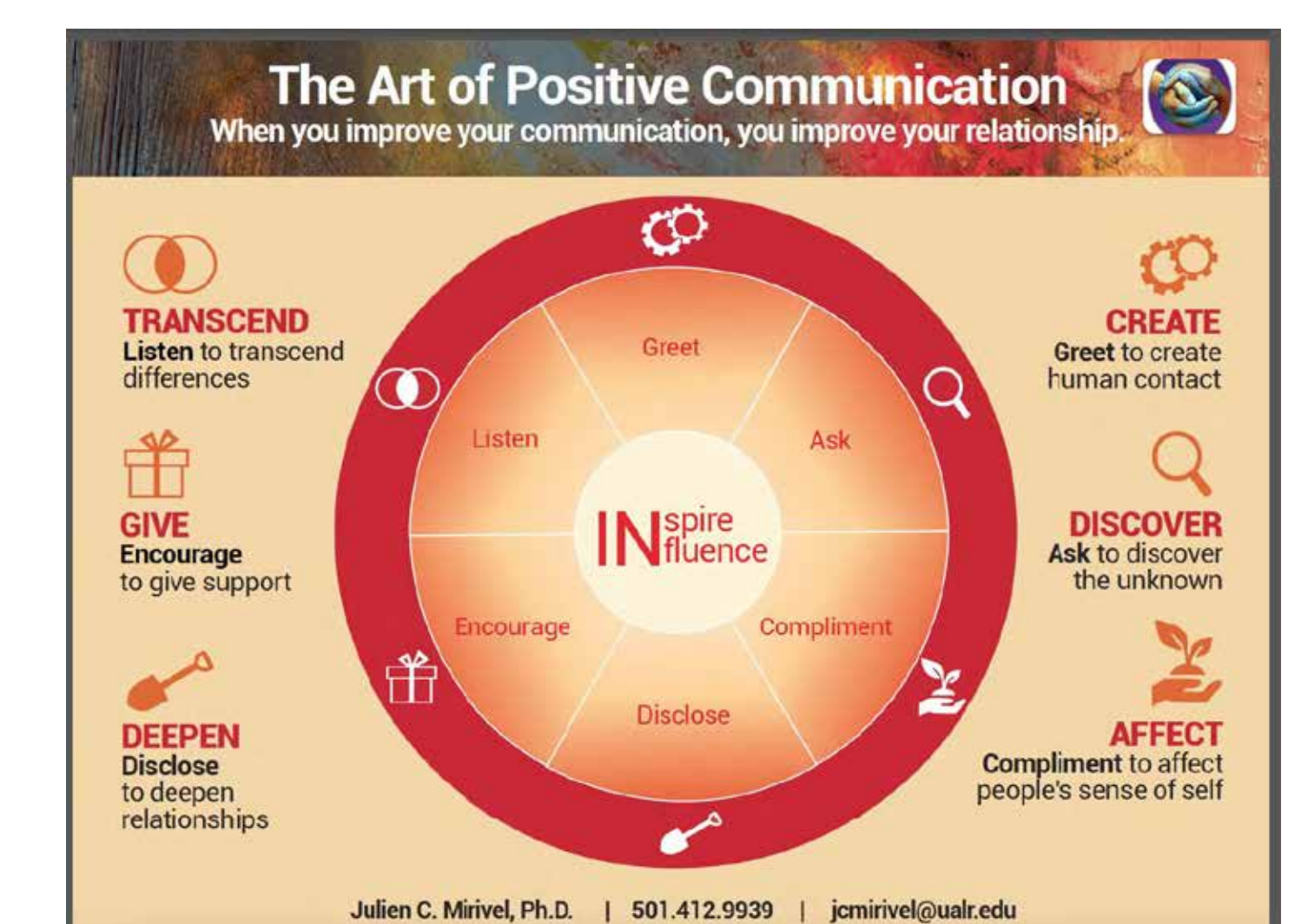
Examples of Teaching Innovation



Numbers of peer coaches and first-year students in the second iteration of the program doubled, compared to the first iteration in 2016-2017.



An August orientation, bi-weekly trainings, and an original 108-page workbook prepare the peer coaches to holistically support students professionally, socially, academically, and psychologically.



Peer coaches learn and model positive communication skills in their coaching approach. For some needs, students feel more comfortable seeking help from other students than from faculty.