

STUDENT COWORKING GROUPS

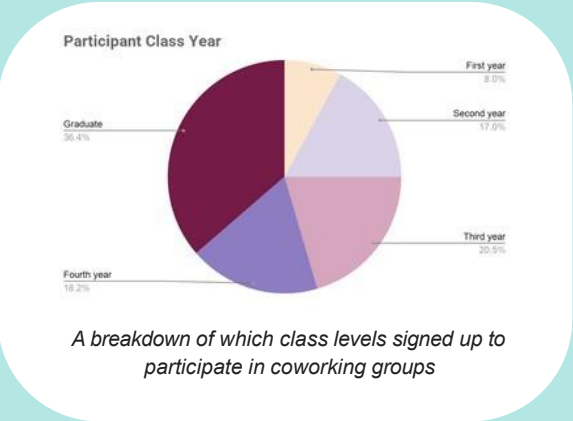
EXPLORING PROGRAMMING BEYOND ACCOMMODATIONS



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What are Accountability Groups?

For the past five semesters, Georgetown's Academic Resource Center (ARC) has hosted a program for interested students to join accountability groups.



Each group functions as a weekly coworking cohort in which several students come together to spend time on individual assignments. Each group of five to ten students meets in a set location over a multi-week period for one hour of coworking.

An email invitation is sent to students who are actively registered in the ARC's system. This includes students who currently receive accommodations as well as any students who have made use of individualized learning skills sessions.

"Coworking is a modern form of work or individual enterprise realized in a shared work environment...together with other people who independently perform their respective tasks." Kubátová, J. (2014)

Factors that Provide Accountability

External Accountability

- o The original goal was to create coworking groups that would run on their own, with little involvement from staff members
- o Students were less likely to attend when a staff member was not present, meaning that 'peer accountability' was not enough
- o These groups were reimagined so that a staff member was always present as an accountability partner

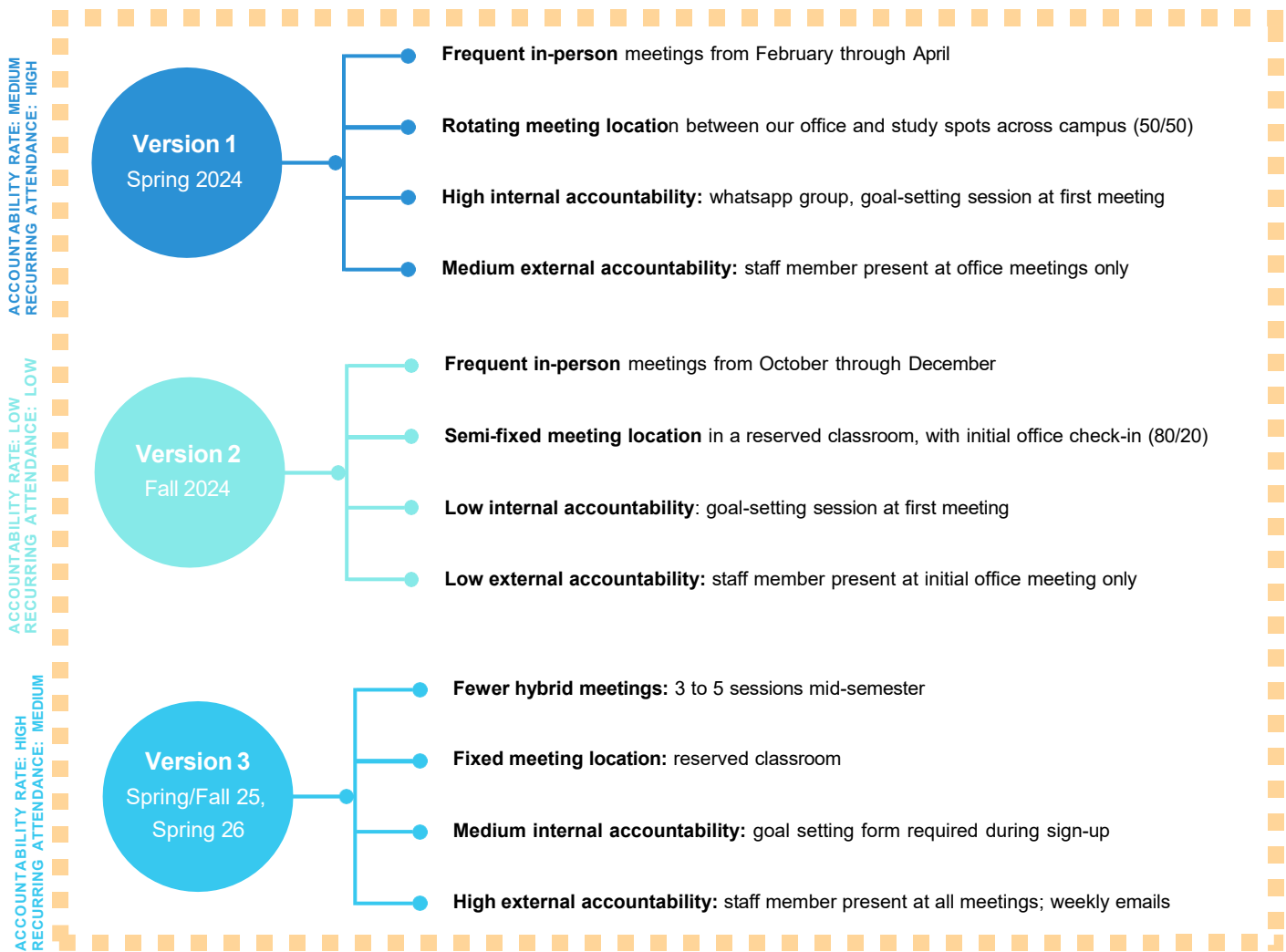
Internal Accountability

Goal setting as an anchor

- o In-person: students set goals verbally in a group conversation, checking in with one another organically throughout the semester
- o Virtually: students complete an intake form, outlining both big-picture goals and concrete tasks for the next several weeks

How Accountability Groups Evolved

Accountability Group structure varied across different semesters. Three primary versions of accountability groups emerged.



Consistent Limitations

Internal barriers still exist

- o Students want to participate, but the limitations that keep them from doing their own work also keep them from attending coworking sessions
- o Too many forms of external accountability cause student disengagement

Limited resources impact ability to incentivize accountability

- o Physical work spaces that are most effective for coworking are frequently unavailable
- o Without the promise of a motivating study setting or any reward for attendance, students have no additional incentives to participate

"As someone with ADHD this sounds like it will be very effective ...thank [you] for arranging this."
-No Show Participant, Spring '26

Key Takeaways

Meeting Times Impact Continued Attendance: Students signed up based on their aspirations, not their reality.

Location Impacts Continued Attendance: Exclusivity of location (studying in a unique and generally unavailable study space) increased attendance.

Developing Community Increases Accountability: Sharing goals increased sense of community in a way that simply being present did not.

Modality Affects Community: Coworking groups were most effective when all participants shared the same modality (all virtual or all in-person). Consistent participation supported clearer communication and a stronger sense of community.

Accountability as Access Support

Accountability groups, though not a formal accommodation, can be used as a model to support students who may not qualify for formal accommodations and/or supplement a student's formal accommodations.

Accommodation	Accountability Groups
Documentation Required (high barrier)	Available to all interested students (low barrier)
Individualized	Flexible Groupings
Reactive	Proactive
Access Only	Strategy for Success

A table comparing formal accommodations to accountability groups

Coworking programs could:

- o Be available to all students, regardless of program or accommodation status
- o Offer low-barrier, community-based accountability and study support
- o Create opportunities for early support before academic challenges escalate
- o Be offered in a consistent multimodal format, online or in-person, depending on staff and student availability

"Coworking models can democratize and improve education by reducing geographic, institutional, and disciplinary barriers." Bennis, et al. (2025)