Learning Communities and First-Year Student Success

Focusing on the First Year Conference
January 27, 2015
Your Presenters: Who Are We?
The Audience: Who Are You?
Session Objectives
Why Learning Communities?

- High Impact Practice (Kuh et al.)

- Key outcomes for LC participants from the NSLLP (Inkelas et al., 2007)
  - Positive interactions with peers and faculty
  - Use of residence hall resources
  - Perceptions of an academically and socially supportive residence hall climate
  - Positive peer diversity interactions
  - More likely than their counterparts in traditional residence halls to experience an easy academic and social transition to college
  - More likely to indicate higher scores in their critical thinking abilities and application of knowledge abilities
Learning Communities at OSU

A Learning Community is a group of students who live together on a residence hall floor with common major, career and/or personal interests. We intentionally form LCs around a range of topics, including:

• Academic Majors
• Interest Areas
• Needs Based upon Year in College
Hallmarks of a Successful Learning Community:

Direct Connection to the Classroom Experience

Intentional Events and Opportunities

Dedicated Staff and Faculty Interaction

Critical Mass of Students

Residential
Residence Life currently offers 17 different programs.

LCs range in size from 20 to 100 students.

In 2014-2015, about 13% of all OSU first-year students are affiliated with one of our LCs.

We currently have LCs housed in 13 different residence halls on campus.
LCs: A “One University” Approach

**Partners include:**

- The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
- The College of Engineering
- The College of Nursing
- The College of Pharmacy
- The Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics
- The Fisher College of Business
- The John Glenn School of Public Affairs
- The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- University Exploration
LC Collaboration

**RL Support:** marketing, recruitment and admissions; program planning and implementation; student communication and engagement; budget support

**Partner Support:** content expertise and college perspective; faculty and alumni connections; presence in community through academic advising hours and program participation; course creation and support; occasionally budget support
Academic Majors

- Office of Student Life
  - Nursing Residence Life
- Office of Student Life
  - Pharmacy House Residence Life
- Office of Student Life
  - Future Health Professionals Residence Life
- Office of Student Life
  - Global Business Residence Life
- Office of Student Life
  - Business Honors Residence Life
Academic Majors

Office of Student Life
Food, Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
Residence Life

Office of Student Life
Exploration
Residence Life

Office of Student Life
Engineering House
Residence Life

Office of Student Life
Women in Engineering
Residence Life
Interest Area

ODI Scholars Learning Community
Needs Based Upon Year in College
Pre-arrival Programs, Welcomes & Orientations

• Setting the tone

• Transition to OSU

• Intensive team and community building

• Setting the stage for the year
Communication and Student Outreach

- Keeping students engaged and motivated
- Creating a unique community experience
- Packaging LC opportunities
- Building LC identity
Meaningful Learning Opportunities

• Minimum of two LC-focused programs and events per month

• Content designed to help students make connections between their academic interests and life outside of the classroom

• Focus
  • Faculty and alumni engagement
  • Career exploration
  • Leadership development
  • Service opportunities

• Ongoing opportunities for community development
Experiential Learning Opportunities

• Domestic/International Travel
• Courses
• Workshop Series
Capstone or Culminating Events

- Opportunity for reflection about their LC experience
- Celebration of the year’s successes and highlights
Benefits of LCs

- Make connections to faculty and staff members that can aid in their future endeavors
- Gain valuable experience and preparation to be a student leader on campus
- Report a greater degree of satisfaction with their overall college experience
- Graduate at a higher rate
- Higher GPAs
- Ease transition of first-year students by providing small, tight-knit communities
**Benefits of Learning Community Involvement at OSU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LC Students</th>
<th>Honors Students</th>
<th>Traditional Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student staff member’s efforts to get to know you</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student staff member’s organizing of programs/activities</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living on campus has enhanced ability to study more effectively</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with on-campus housing experience</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which living on-campus has enhanced learning experience</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If given choice, degree you intend to reside on campus next year</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.73</td>
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# Highlights from the HOME (Housing Outcomes Measurement Evaluation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-LC Students</th>
<th>FHP</th>
<th>Global Business</th>
<th>FYC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Growth</strong></td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Growth</strong></td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity Seeking</strong></td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Skills</strong></td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wellness</strong></td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.85</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Student Voice

“The connections made in the Learning Community have really made my experience as a new freshman easier and more comfortable. I’ve gotten to know the other people in my major very well. Being in the LC was like being a part of a family. We will learn and grow together through our college experiences.”

Jennifer Bacigalupo, Nursing Learning Community

“The Learning Community program places business students on the fast track. The alumni network, networking opportunities, professional workshops, and individualized attention have helped me focus on my goals for this year and the coming years.”

Jennifer Winther, Business Honors Learning Community
Opportunities for Growth and Innovation

• Development of opportunities for enhanced second-year involvement in LCs and connection to STEP

• Sustain and increase faculty and alumni participation in the LCs

• Creation of smoother pipeline for CHANGE students transitioning to main campus who could benefit from LC participation

• Development of new partnerships for LCs without existing partners

• Curricular development and course clustering

• More targeted recruitment of at-risk students who may benefit the most from and LC experience
Questions?

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