

California Learning Communities Consortium (CLCC)
2nd Annual Curriculum Development Workshop
April 2-4, 2009
Fairfield, CA

Strengthening Your Learning Communities Program
Diane White- Solano Community College & Ana Torres-Bower- Cerritos College

Part I - 8:45 - 9:45 am

Introduction

Learning Communities Program Self-Study:

1. *History and rationale:* Give a brief history of your program including its initial rationale, its initial and current size, and the courses that have been included. In addition, please explain your reasons or strengthening for expanding the program. Note: We are interested in learning the extent to which your proposed learning community initiative has been designed in response to institutional data about student success.

Consider the following data about your institution:

Academic Preparedness:

- 1- Percentage of entering students place into pre-college or developmental classes in reading, writing, and/or mathematics:
- 2- How placement is determined (e.g. standardized assessments, locally-developed placement tests, in-class assessments)?
- 3- Compared to five years ago, are more or fewer students placing into pre-college or developmental classes? Why?
- 4- How would you describe the awareness of most faculty and staff on your campus regarding current student demographics and the implications for teaching/learning and student support services?

Student Success:

- 5- What data does your institution have about the quality of the undergraduate experience at your campus (e.g. NSSE, CCSSE, EBI, Noel Levitz, CIRP, and/or other institutional data such as reports based on focus groups)?

- 6- What insights does this data provide regarding the strengths of your undergraduate program?
 - 7- What does this data reveal about curricular trouble spots (i.e. classes where 30% of the students stop attending after one month; classes where 50% of the students earn low grades or withdraw)?
 - 8- What are the institutional retention rates for students?
 - 9- When you break down the overall retention rates by gender/race ethnicity, and/or language spoken at home are there noteworthy trends or patterns? Please describe.
2. *Student learning*: Your campus has likely had conversations about the nature and quality of learning experiences you hope your learning community program will provide for all students. Please share that information with us, including any learning communities program outcomes your campus has agreed on.
 3. *Program scope*: Include the number of anticipated students and faculty/staff who will be involved in your expanded learning community program by fall 2009 – Spring 2010. In addition, briefly describe the steps you have already taken in preparation for expanding or strengthening your learning community program

Part II 10:00 - 10:45 am

Learning Communities Program institutional strategies:

1. LCP leaders should look at their institution's educational master plan to determine how LC's fit into it, whether or not LC's are already embedded in that plan, and if not, leaders should think about how to do so;
2. LCP leaders might also want to consider how to embed LC planning into their 3 year plan/program review processes which typically feed into college budgeting processes;
3. LCP leaders should consider developing a 3-5 year plan for their program with goals built around data, timetable for completion, assignment of responsibility for specific tasks, measurements of program success, including marketing and community outreach plans.

Acknowledgment:

The first part of this session (8:45 – 9:45 am) follows the guidelines developed by the Washington Center at the Evergreen College for LCP participants attending the Learning Communities National Summer Institute. www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/

Further enquiry about strengthening learning communities programs is found in “*A New Era in Learning-Community Work: Why The Pedagogy of Intentional Integration Matters*” by Emily Lardner and Gillies Malnarich. Here is a link to the article in Change magazine:

<http://www.changemag.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/July-August%202008/full-new-era.html>