

2006-2007 :: Living-Learning Communities

1. Mission Statement:

The mission of Living Learning Communities is to create a living learning environment for UTD students that involves the collaboration of staff, faculty and community with the goal of creating a well-rounded and engaged student population prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

2. Objectives:

2.1 Create a program model to address student learning competencies: Develop a model in which students gain leadership competencies in civic engagement, professionalism, and ethical responsibility; Ensure students have a balance between social and academic programming by creating a model that incorporates these activities.

2.1.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 1. Communication; 16. Independent Thought; 18. Practicum

2.1.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s): II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities

2.1.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s): SP-7 Enhance Graduation Rates

2.1.4 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

2.2 Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff:

Review staffing structure to provide qualified staff to ensure students receive successful programming.

2.2.1 Related Strategic Plan Item(s): II-2 Living-Learning Communities

2.2.2 Related Institutional Priority Item(s): COM-2 Protect Enrollment Gains, Access and Student Quality as part of moving toward Tier One Status

2.3 Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives: Develop and maintain effective partnerships to create opportunities for students and faculty involvement.

2.3.1 Related Strategic Plan Item(s): II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities

2.3.2 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-2 Add 5,000 New Students; SP-7 Enhance Graduation Rates; COM-2 Protect Enrollment Gains, Access and Student Quality as part of moving toward Tier One Status

3. Measures & Findings:

3.1 Strategic Stakeholder Committee Meetings: Review data and outcomes.

3.1.1 Assessment Timeframe: August 2007

3.1.2 Success Criteria: Report of discussions, issues, and approved actions.

3.1.3 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

3.1.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.1.5 Further Action: No

3.2 Program attendance records: Sign in sheets for each event.

3.2.1 Assessment Timeframe: August 2007

3.2.2 Success Criteria: Participation of at least 50% of the all Living Learning Community students in each program.

3.2.3 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

3.2.4 Numerical Results:

Fall Attendance was 32% of 3 of all LLC members' events; spring attendance dropped to 12% of 13 all LLC member events; Additional spring events were held for specific LLC's; Attendance was 11% for Pre-Law Events; 16% for Pre-Health; 75% for Outreach

3.2.5 Influencing Factors:

Ineffective staff structure; During the fall semester there no direct reporting line between the Peer Advisers and Living Learning Assistant Director; During the spring only one Living Learning Adviser was hired to work directly

with the Living Learning Assistant Director to provide programming

3.2.6 Achievement Level: Not Met

3.2.7 Further Action: Yes

3.3 Living Learning Student Participant Surveys: Administer surveys online and at events to measure student involvement & satisfaction in programming; Administer one month into program and at end of program.

3.3.1 Assessment Timeframe: December, 2006 and August, 2007

3.3.2 Success Criteria:

At least 70% of respondents indicate they are satisfied with Living Learning experience (rating of 3-5).

3.3.3 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

3.3.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Likert scale employed with the following assigned values:

5-strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neutral, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree

3.3.5 Numerical Results:

2 surveys were administered one in the fall of 06 and the other at the conclusion of the academic calendar; Fall Findings showed 100% of respondents showed a positive response (3.83) about the question of programming "had been meaningful"; spring answers to the same question had a marked increase in the affirmative (4.5) also agreeing that programming had been "meaningful"

3.3.6 Influencing Factors: Small respondent rates; 1st survey had 12 respondents and the 2nd survey only had 4

3.3.7 Achievement Level: Met

3.3.8 Further Action: No

3.4 Meeting with Living Learning Adviser and Assistant Director: Assistant Director to meet with Living Learning Adviser to reflect on student attendance, student satisfaction in programming delivered, and the affect of hiring new Living Learning Adviser on successfulness of new programs.

3.4.1 Assessment Timeframe: August 2007

3.4.2 Success Criteria: Summary report and analysis of discussions and suggestions for improvement.

3.4.3 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff

3.4.4 Numerical Results:

Review of student attendance showed that although numbers of programs increased from 3 in the fall to 30 in the spring, overall attendance did not increase but rather decreased from 32% to 12%.

3.4.5 Influencing Factors:

When selected into the Living Learning Communities, students weren't prescreened to determine level of interest or commitment; programming was not required and attendance reflected that

3.4.6 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.4.7 Further Action: Yes

3.5 GPA Report of Living Learning Students:

GPA's will be compared from 1st to 2nd semester to see if the addition of Living Learning Adviser in second semester is reflected in GPA's.

3.5.1 Assessment Timeframe: August 2007

3.5.2 Success Criteria: At least 5% Increase in GPA's from 1st to 2nd semester.

3.5.3 Related Objective(s):

Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff

3.5.4 Numerical Results:

The following findings were discovered for fall 06 semester: GPA's of LLC 3.04, GPA's of Residential Non LLC 2.78, GPA's of Non Residential Non LLC 2.69; LLC students had an overall GPA which was 8.75% higher than all UTD freshman and 6.725% higher than all residential non LLC freshmen; Data for spring 07 semester not currently available-NUMERICAL ANALYSIS INCOMPLETE

3.5.5 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.5.6 Further Action: Yes

3.6 Focus groups and individual meetings with students: Discuss in both individual meetings and focus groups the quality of programming throughout the semester to determine student satisfaction; Gauge achievement of learning competencies.

3.6.1 Assessment Timeframe: August 2007

3.6.2 Success Criteria: Summary report and analysis of discussions and suggestions for improvement.

3.6.3 Related Objective(s): Create a program model to address student learning competencies

3.6.4 Numerical Results:

Meet during fall and spring semesters with several students on an informal basis including: Kaela Smith, Ryan Blodgett, Cris Almeida, Catalina Cuervo, Amanda Booth, Harper Weaver, Jacek Stopa, Logan Knowles, Megan Newman, Adrianna Perry, Amy Fulbright, and Darla Reber; All LLC groups were represented; Findings showed more student staff needed to provide more relevant programs/mentoring, needed more interested and motivated LLC students that would participate in planned events, lack of participation created lack of sense of community, students interested in new communities; Most did gain relationships and create study groups;

3.6.5 Influencing Factors:

Lack of staffing reporting directly to the program administrator; Lack of intentional pre-selection of students involved in LLC

3.6.6 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.6.7 Further Action: Yes

3.7 Performance Evaluation of Assistant Director: Evaluate Assistant Director's capacity to meet program objectives of Living Learning Communities.

3.7.1 Assessment Timeframe: May 2007

3.7.2 Success Criteria: A rating of at least "Meets Expectations" on the annual performance appraisal.

3.7.3 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

3.7.4 Numerical Results:

Assistant Director received a formal evaluation mark of 5-Occasionally Exceeds Expectations

3.7.5 Achievement Level: Met

3.7.6 Further Action: No

5. Closing the Loop:

5.1 Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs to students: Ensure each LLC of 20 students has its own peer mentor called a Living Learning Advisor who is tasked with providing relevant programming, creating a sense of community, mentoring, and maintaining records of LLC student involvement

5.1.1 Related Objective(s):

Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

5.1.2 Related Measure(s):

Program attendance records; Living Learning Student Participant Surveys; Focus groups and individual meetings with students

5.1.3 Responsible Person: Mary Jane Suarez Partain

5.1.4 Target Date: August 2007

5.1.5 Priority: High Priority

5.2 Student Surveys:

Administer formal student surveys in addition to informal measurements to track emotional growth and learning competencies

5.2.1 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

5.2.2 Related Measure(s):

Living Learning Student Participant Surveys; Focus groups and individual meetings with students

5.2.3 Responsible Person: Mary Jane Suarez Partain**5.2.4 Target Date:** September 2007, May 2008**5.2.5 Priority:** High Priority

5.3 Creation of a more intentional selection and recruitment process of students: Created more involved community application and added phone interview to measure level of interest and communicate community requirements; Included letter of intent that states program requirements on back of application which much be signed; Met with university recruiters to increase recruitment rang and introduce new communities for fall 08

5.3.1 Related Objective(s): Create a program model to address student learning competencies**5.3.2 Related Measure(s):**

Program attendance records; Living Learning Student Participant Surveys; GPA Report of Living Learning Students; Focus groups and individual meetings with students

5.3.3 Responsible Person: Mary Jane Suarez Partain**5.3.4 Target Date:** August 2007**5.3.5 Priority:** High Priority**5.4 Creation/deletion of communities:**

Additional Living Learning Communities were sought out to provide students with more choices; relationships were formed with Criminal Justice and Engineering/Computer Sciences to bring them on as new LLCs in fall 08; Due to poor response Pre-Law and Service Learning will be deleted as communities

5.4.1 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

5.4.2 Related Measure(s):

Living Learning Student Participant Surveys; Focus groups and individual meetings with students

5.4.3 Responsible Person: Mary Jane Suarez Partain**5.4.4 Target Date:** August 2007**5.4.5 Priority:** High Priority**5.5 Creation of 2nd semester class:**

There was a lack of classroom connection in the 2nd semester; LLC Leadership Colloquium (1 credit hour class) was approved and will begin 4 sections in the spring of 08; Students agree to take this class as part of their LLC application

5.5.1 Related Objective(s):

Create a program model to address student learning competencies; Provide qualified staff to ensure successful programs for students including the hiring of Assistant Director and student staff; Develop and maintain effective partnerships with stakeholders to increase programs and program initiatives

5.5.2 Related Measure(s):

Program attendance records; Living Learning Student Participant Surveys; Focus groups and individual meetings with students

5.5.3 Responsible Person: Mary Jane Suarez**5.5.4 Target Date:** January 2008**5.5.5 Priority:** High Priority**6. Analysis:****6.1 Program/Unit Strengths:****6.1.1 Objectives/Outcomes Exceeded or Met:**

Portions of each objective were met or exceeded. No objective was left unmet. 70% of the surveyed LLC population was satisfied with their LLC experience, understood the value of LLCs and had formed connections with faculty. The GPA's of the LLC also reflected positive outcomes regarding the program. The overall GPA for LLC students was 3.02 as compared to 2.78 for other residential, non LLC freshmen and 2.69 for other non residential non LLC freshmen.

6.1.2 Other Strengths:

The major strengths of the program are the interdepartmental commitment to working together; inclusion in the

Strategic Plan; faculty dedication and involvement; and the service learning focus. In addition to an exceptional LLC GPA which was 2.75% higher than the rest of the freshman class, LLC students also had a higher retention rate from fall 06 to spring 07. LLC students retained at 98.50%, residential non LLC students retained at 95%, and non residential non LLC students retained at 91%. This left an overall retention rate of 7.5% higher for LLC freshman.

6.2 Program / Unit Weaknesses:

6.2.1 Objectives / Outcomes Partially or Not Met: Partial successes occurred in all objectives. We were able to create a program model that addressed specific learning competencies including civic engagement, professionalism and ethical responsibility. New staffing of an Assistant Director and single Living Learning Adviser aided in creating and cementing relationships. However, the initial lack of dedicated student staffing for each community resulted in poor attendance and lack of student involvement. To close the loop on this issue, we created a new staffing model for the fall of 07 which included hiring one student mentor for each LLC. Although the students reported via survey and focus groups of an overall satisfaction with the program, a formal assessment was not issued this school year. The EQI (Emotional Quotient Instrument) will be administered as a pre and post test for FY08 among LLC and non LLC students to more definitively gauge student growth and to allow for comparative analysis.

6.2.2 Other Weaknesses:

The current housing model does not promote social connectivity due to lack of common spaces and multiple entry points. The former staffing model was also weak in that it provided for student mentors that did not have a direct reporting line or responsibility to the Living Learning Communities. Another weakness which resulted in poor attendance was student selection into the communities. For the fall 06 year, students were not prescreened in any effective manner. They just stated that they wanted to live in LLC. The result was students that were unengaged and uninterested. To close the loop on this issue we created a detailed selection process for fall 07 which included a more structured application, letter of intent, and phone interview process. There was also a lack of a second semester in class connection. To close the loop on this issue, the LLC Leadership Colloquium will be put provided for spring 08.

7. Report:

7.1 Executive Summary:

UTD's inaugural year of Living Learning Communities brought together academic and student life professionals with the goal of creating a holistic learning model which resulted in students with more social connections, better GPAs and a higher retention rate. Sixty-seven students completed the inaugural year of the Living Learning Communities. We had three communities with the following numbers of student members: Health (46), Law (18), and Outreach (3). The Bower & Dettinger Living Learning educational model was chosen and implemented. All programming was designed to help students achieve competencies in the following areas: professional understanding, civic engagement, and ethics.

7.2 Top 3 Program/Unit Accomplishments:

GPAs of LLC students as compared to non LLC residential and non LLC non residential were 3.04, 2.78, and 2.69 respectively. Therefore LLC students had a GPA of between 6.725 to 8.75% higher than their UTD freshmen peers. Retention of LLC students as compared to non LLC residential and Non LLC non residential students were 98.5%, 95% and 91% respectively. Therefore LLC students had a retention rate of between 3.5 to 7.5% higher than their UTD freshmen peers.

Seventy percent of the surveyed LLC population reported satisfaction with their LLC experience, understood the value of LLCs and had formed connections with faculty.

7.3 Instructional/Training Activities (presented or received):

The Assistant Director has attended the following conferences and trainings:

The Feminization of Poverty Joint Policy Forum, Dallas, TX May 2007
 Sophomore Year Success, Teleconference, University of Texas at Dallas April 2007
 Trends in Campus Housing, Virtual Seminar, University of Texas at Dallas April 2007
 Work/Life How-To's Women's Conference, University of Texas at Dallas April 2007
 Annual First Year Experience Conference, Addison, Texas February 2007
 Women's Leadership Conference, University of Texas at Dallas February 2007
 Service Learning Reflections Workshop, University of Texas at Arlington October 2006
 Village of 100 Presentation, University of Texas at Dallas October 2006
 Living Learning Conference, Syracuse, NY October 2006
 Living Learning One Day Conference, University of Texas at Arlington September 2006

7.4 Public Service:

Students volunteered independently and in groups for the following organizations: Bryan's House, Northwest Legal Aid, UTD student food drive, Habitat for Humanity, Collin County Homeland Service Medical Reserve Corps, Richardson Regional Memorial Hospital, and Alternative Spring Break.

7.5 Other External Activities:

Pre-Law LLC students joined the John Marshall Pre-Law club students at the National Law Forum where they were able to conduct informational interviews with over 150 law schools. They also joined the pre-law advisers in spending a day visiting the University of Oklahoma School of Law. Pre-Health students were able to visit the Body Worlds Exhibit, receive Red Cross instruction and training, and attend a health panel with medical professionals and students.

7.6 Contributions to UTD:

UTD's inaugural year of Living Learning Communities brought together academic and student life professionals with the goal of creating a holistic learning model which resulted in students with more social connections, better GPAs and a higher retention rate. In the future, additional communities will be added based upon student demand and faculty interests. This program can be an excellent source for both recruitment and retention for UTD.

7.7 Top 3 Program / Unit Challenges:

Lack of dedicated student staff posed an issue this year to program delivery and creation of meaningful student connections. Lack of community style housing posed and continues to pose an issue to the development of social connections. Lack of a second semester class connection created a gap in the second semester where an academic connection should have existed.

7.8 Detailed Resources Needed to Improve and Fulfill Mission: Funding for student mentors for each community has been approved. Additional funding for student programming was sought and approved to allow for more meaningful events and team building opportunities. Additional funding has also been sought and approved to be used for faculty incentives to increase and retain faculty involvement in the communities.