

The Learning Communities Program

PRESENTER:

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Key Stakeholders for LC Development, MSU

Original Core Planning Group Members

- Academic Deans
- Director, FYE
- Director, Residence Life
- Student Relations Coordinator
- First Year Seminar Faculty
- Undergraduate Student
- Associate Director, Residential Life
- Asst. Director, FY Culture
- Housing Residence Director

Key Players For LC Development

Discussion Committee-Sounding Board

- Asst. Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Academic Deans
- Director, FYE
- Director, Residential Life
- Four Faculty Representatives
- Center for Faculty Development
- Director, Admissions
- Registrar
- Institutional Research

Current Planning Team Members

- Select Faculty
- Director, Residence Life
- Director, Office of First Year Experience
- Asst. Director FYE, Academic Initiatives
- Asst. Vice President, Academic Affairs
- Student LC Coordinator
- Assessment Coordinator

Collaboration & Partnership

Learning Communities Program

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graph TD; A[Learning Communities Program] --- B[Student Affairs  
Residential Life]; A --- C[Office of First Year Experience]; A --- D[Academic Affairs]
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The diagram is an organizational chart. At the top is a large blue box with a white border containing the text 'Learning Communities Program'. Three white lines radiate from the bottom center of this box to three smaller blue boxes with white borders below it. The left box contains 'Student Affairs' and 'Residential Life'. The middle box contains 'Office of First Year Experience'. The right box contains 'Academic Affairs'. The background features a pattern of concentric circles in a lighter shade of blue.

Student Affairs
Residential Life

Office of
First Year
Experience

Academic Affairs

Planning Calendar

- Planning occurred Fall 98-Spring 99
- Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives, FYE served as primary administrative coordinator
- First year of program – Fall 1999
 - Eight Learning Communities
 - Four planning meetings held each semester for program evaluation and development

Learning Communities Program Outcomes

- Higher Levels of Student Retention
- Increased Faculty-Student Interaction
- Stronger Student Academic Achievement
- Greater Student-to-Student Interaction and Social Support Networks
- Established Academic Support Networks
- Eased Transition to College
- Higher Levels of Satisfaction with College Experience

MSU Learning Community Model

Course Co-Enrollment

- Three Courses
 - Theme Course
 - English/Speech/Misc.
 - First Year Seminar/Misc.
- General Education Courses

Clustered Housing

- Community Members Live on Same Floor

Peer Mentorship

- Learning Community Coordinator
 - Undergraduate Student
 - Bridge Curricular and Co-Curricular
 - Supervised and Trained by FYE

MSU Critical Pieces to Consider

- Student Application/Admittance to Program
- Co-Enrollment Process
- Clustered Housing Process
- Marketing/Recruitment
- Assessment
- Budget Development
- Peer Mentorship
- Faculty Development
- Co-Curricular Program
- Total Program Development for Future

Marketing and Recruitment

- University Open Houses and Campus Visits during Fall and Spring Semesters.
- One page mailer sent beginning in January thru July to all first year students admitted to the University.
- Full page brochure with Learning Community application sent out by Residential Life to each student with Housing Preferences Survey beginning in late March thru July.
- Summer New Student Orientation.

Student Application/ Admittance to Process

- Student completes and returns Learning Community Enrollment Form with Room Preferences Survey and Housing Contract to Residential Life.
- FYE processes application for learning community.
- FYE notifies Residential Life for placement.
- Confirmation letter is sent to student confirming enrollment in learning community.

Course Set-up and Co-Enrollment Process

- Proposals are submitted by faculty, department chairs and deans for Learning Community Programs (Nov).
- Seats are held in identified courses (Jan-Feb).
- Students are enrolled for learning community courses by FYE via the Registrar's Office (April-July).
- Unused seats are opened to general enrollment at the end of New Student Orientation (July).

Clustered Housing Process

- Floor designations are determined jointly by Residential Life and FYE for learning community programs (Nov). Floor amenities are considered.
- Spaces are held for learning community students.
- When approved by FYE students are placed into held learning community spaces.
- Unused spaces are released at the end of New Student Orientation.

Budget Development

Budget is jointly supported by the Office of First Year Experience, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Residential Life.

Category

Support

Administrative Costs

FYE

Co-Curricular Program Costs

RL & AA

LCC Stipends and Training

SA & FYE

Marketing/Recruitment

SA, RL, AA, FYE

Assessment

AA

Recognition

FYE

Faculty Development

AA

Professional Staff

SA & FYE

Faculty Development

- Learning Communities Faculty Resource Manual
- Learning Community Calendar of Events
- Faculty Development Sessions
- “An Idea/Resource to Share”
- Learning Community Conferences
- Learning Community Articles/Research

Peer Mentorship

- Learning Community Coordinator(LCC) Position Description
- LCC Training and Planning
- Individual Resident Interactions
- Faculty Connection
- Activities
 - Welcome Events & Materials
 - Course Connection & Study Groups
 - Study Incentive Programs
 - Bookmark/Bulletin Board Series
 - Theme Related/Team Building Activities

Co-Curricular Program Components

- Learning Community Coordinator Programming Model:
 - Community Development
 - Campus Involvement
 - Group Initiative
 - Academic Success
 - Individual Resident Meetings
 - Campus Resource
 - Faculty Connection
 - Career Development
 - Academic Connection
 - Mid-Term/Final Preparation

Assessment Model-Tools

- Entering Characteristics
 - ACT, HS GPA, HS Rank
- Institutional Data
 - GPA, Retention, Major Selection, Course Completion
- CSXQ/CIRP Data
 - Administered during New Student Orientation
- CSEQ Data
 - Administered at the end of the Fall Semester
- Qualitative Data – Focus Groups
 - Conducted during the Spring Semester

Assessment Timeline

The background of the slide is a dark blue color. It features three sets of concentric circles, each set consisting of three circles of increasing size. The circles are light blue and are arranged in a triangular pattern, with one set in the top left, one in the top right, and one centered at the bottom. The circles overlap slightly with each other.

Assessment Findings

- Comparison of entering characteristics (ACT, HS Rank, HS GPA) show no significant differences between learning community students and non-learning community students.
- Comparison of CSXQ results show no difference in learning community student and non-learning community student expectations of the college experience.

Assessment Findings – CSEQ

Fall 2000

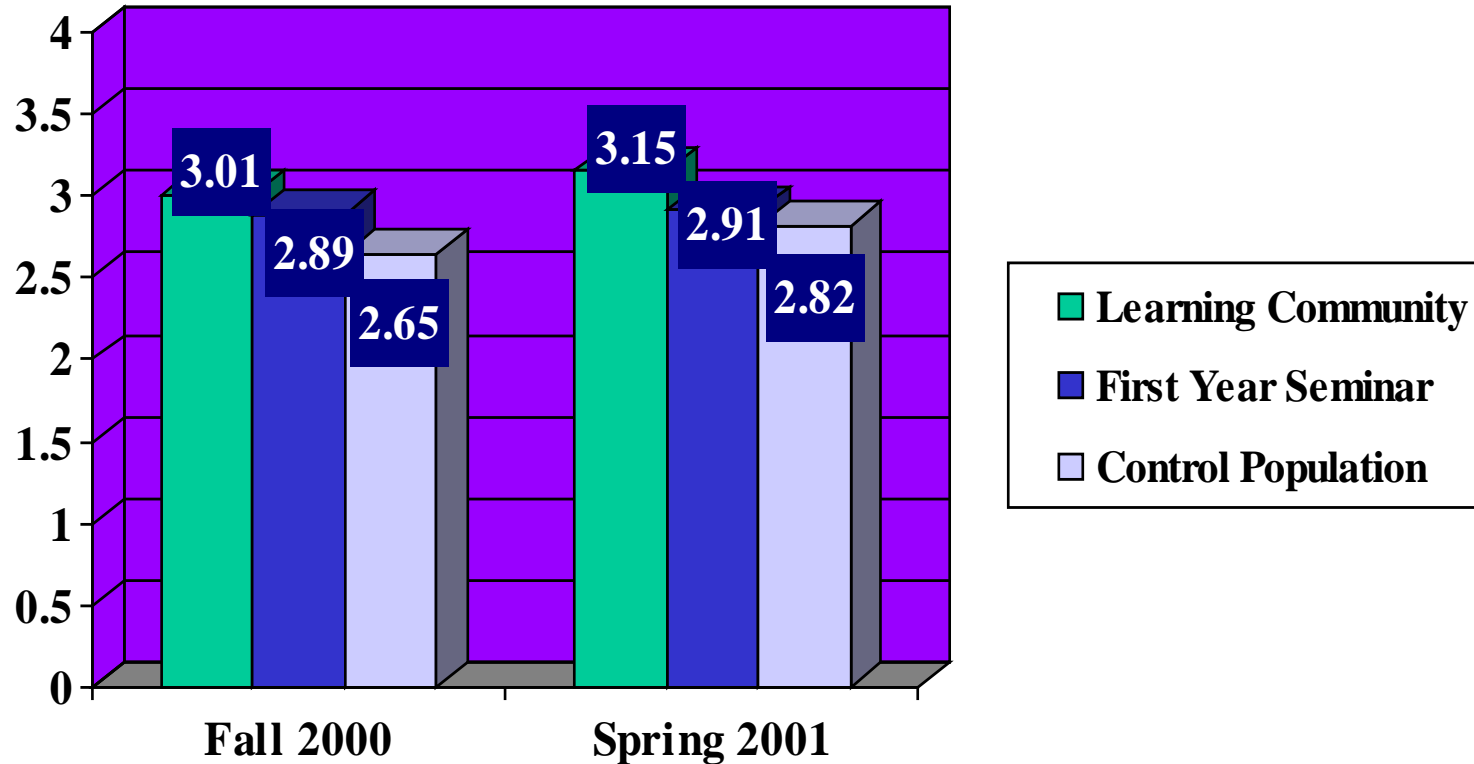
- Asks students about their experiences – how they have spent their time at college.
 - 13 Categories of focus
 - Demographic information
 - Opinions about the university
- Survey administered to:
 - Learning Community Students
 - First Year Seminar Students
 - Control Group

Assessment Findings – CSEQ

Fall 2000

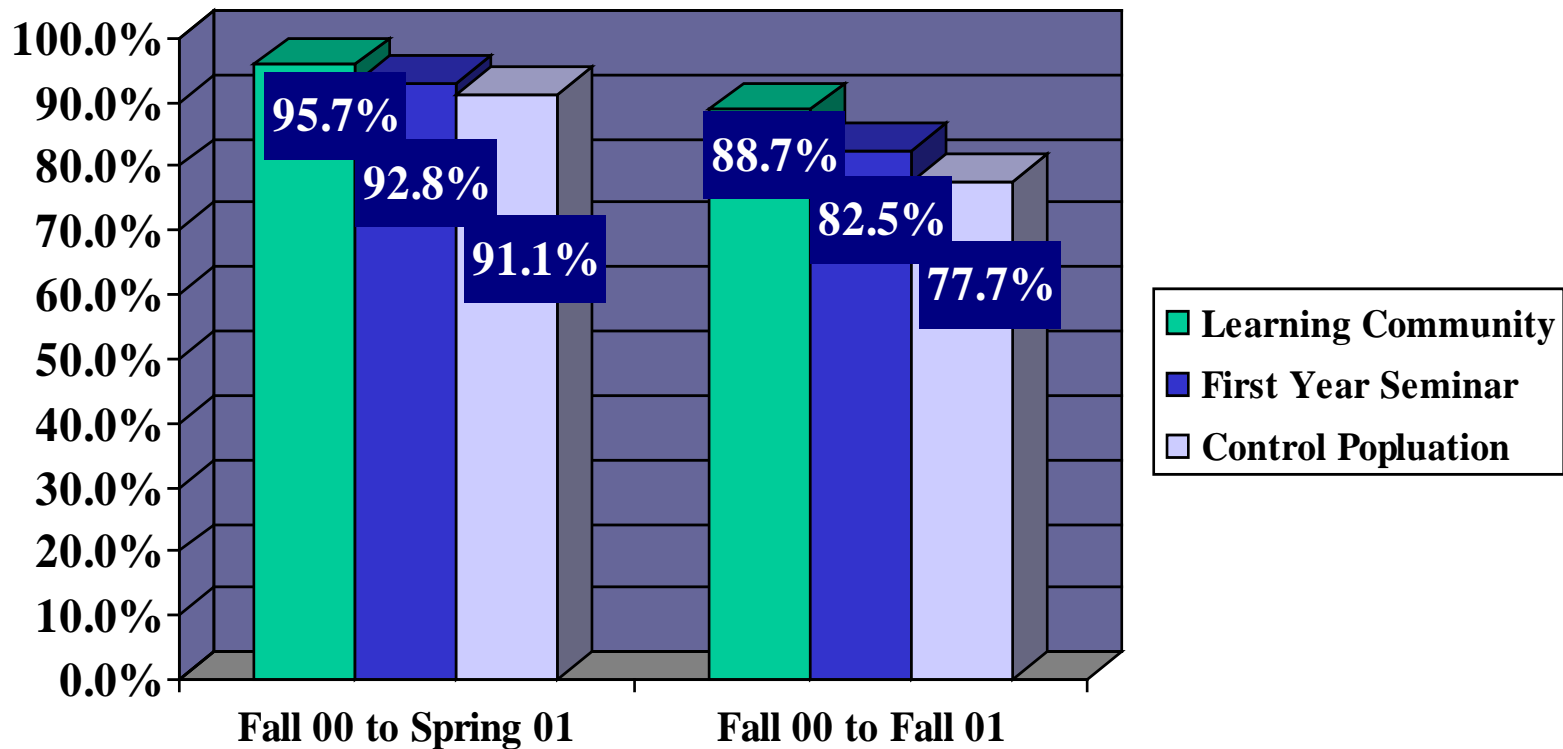
- Learning Community students were significantly different in areas of:
 - Course Learning
 - Writing Experiences
 - Experiences with Faculty
 - Campus Facilities
 - Clubs and Organizations
 - Personal Experiences
 - Student Acquaintances
 - Opinions About the University

Grade Point Average Comparisons



Study Participants: Learning Communities (n=71), First Year Seminar (n=126), Control Group (n=45)

Retention for Fall 2000 to Spring 2001 and Fall 2000 to Fall 2001



Study Participants: Learning Communities (n=71), First Year Seminar (n=126), Control Group (n=45)

Qualitative Study – Spring 2001

- The Learning Community:
 - Eases the Transition to College
 - Facilitates Social Integration
 - Facilitates the Development of Community
 - Helps Students Develop Personal Relationships with Faculty
 - Facilitates In-Class Learning
 - Creates a Living/Learning Environment
 - Works Against Peer Norms
 - Participation Cannot be Attributed Solely to Self-Fulfilling Expectations

Considerations For Learning Community Development

Identify Roles for Stakeholders

- A. Which side of the house is driving the initiative?
 - i. Top/down initiative
 - ii. Bottom up initiative
 - iii. Institutional Culture, resistance to change?
- B. How should sit at the planning table?
 - i. All stakeholders at table
 - ii. Collaboration, relationships key
 - iii. Choose wisely who will run your meetings
 - iv. How many faculty invited? Who?
- C. Student Involvement?

Considerations

Identifying Priorities/Goals for your Program

- A. Creating educational outcomes to accomplish for student
 - i. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs discuss what each other values and envisions for program
 - ii. Identify what both sides can contribute
 - iii. Look for crossovers, opportunities to collaborate
- B. What do students want to gain from experience?

Considerations

Create a planning calendar

- A. When do you start your planning
 - i. MSU-1 year prior to kick off of program
- B. Provide reliable note taking and dissemination practices
 - i. Appoint 1 Administrative Coordinator
- C. Know faculty and Academic Affair deadlines
 - i. Registrar deadlines
 - ii. Bulletin Printing deadlines
 - iii. Class schedule printing deadlines

Considerations

Logistics

- A. Define type of learning community
- B. Define locations
- C. Identify both AA and SA calendars and deadlines
- D. Registration process
- E. Re-identify goals for each LC Community
- F. Define LC outcomes for each LC Community

Considerations

Budget

- A. Who will pay for what?
- B. Amount available to spend on initiative?
 - i. Staffing/programmatic initiatives/supplies/marketing
- C. Will you charge students for the right to participate?
- D. Where to locate budget?

Considerations

Staffing

- A. Professional staffing?
- B. Student staffing?
- C. Administrative support?

Marketing of Program

- A. Type of marketing?
- B. What students to market to?
- C. Timelines?
- D. Delivery?
- E. Responsibility of?

Considerations

Registration Process

- A. Who will administer?
- B. Process?
- C. Application with expectations?
- D. Any limits on who can join?
- E. Timeline?

Considerations

Assessment

- A. What assessment will be conducted to measure Educational and programmatic outcomes?
- B. Who will administer assessment?
- C. Who will pay for assessment?
- D. Timeline for assessment?
- E. Populations to Assess?
 - i. Control groups?

Considerations

Continue Planning Groups/Overseeing body for program development

- A. Will you continue having planning group meet each year?
- B. Who will be at the table?
- C. Who will continue to lead group?
- D. What key players need to sign off on continued program development, growth, changing priorities, etc.

(Levine, Shapiro, *Introducing Learning Communities*,
About Campus, Dec. 1999).

