Building Community Portfolio Team

Report 6-24-20

This report details the work of the Learning Communities Assessment Portfolio Team. The committee was established in November 2015 by Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Martha Bradley. The initial goal of the committee was to develop learning outcomes for learning communities and recommend assessment tools. Specifically, the committee was asked to:

1. Develop a systematic approach to assessing the student learning that occurs in the context of learning communities
2. Examine the qualitative and quantitative tools to assess these learning communities

The committee was originally chaired by Sylvia Torti, Dean of the Honors College, and Carolyn Bliss, Director of LEAP. In the academic year 2017-2018, the committee was chaired by Erica Rojas, Director of Curriculum and Assessment of the Honors College and Marissa Diener, new director of the LEAP Program. In 2019-2020 the committee was chaired by Marissa Diener, Director of LEAP Learning Communities and was expanded to include members from learning communities around campus beyond those situated in Undergraduate Studies. Our goals for the 2019-2020 year centered around identifying what is happening with learning communities on campus and strategies for assessment. Some of these goals were derailed a bit by the move to remote learning and the efforts devoted to supporting students and faculty during this unexpected move.

The team consisted of the following members:

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Learning Community (College)** |
| Monisha Pasupathi | Associate Dean | Honors College |
| Marissa Diener | Director | LEAP (UGS) |
| Beth Krensky | Director | BlockU (UGS) |
| Taunya Dressler | Assistant Dean | Humanities Scholars (College of Humanities) |
| Steve Maisch | Assistant Professor, Lecturer  Assistant Director, LEAP | LEAP (UGS) |
| Rudy Medina | First Year Coordinator and Advisor | Diversity Scholars (Equity and Diversity) |
| Tricia Sugiyama | Director | CESA, Equity and Diversity |
| Mark St. Andre | Associate Dean | Undergraduate Studies |
| Linda Paternina | Program Manager | Beacon Scholars |
| Tanya Vickers | Director | ACCESS |
| Mandy Hamelstrom | Associate Director | Business Scholars |
| Kathy Hajeb | Director | Innovation Scholars |

The portfolio team met on September 16, 2019. Given the many new members, a large part of the meeting was spent sharing the history of the Learning Portfolio team and each member sharing the structure of their first year learning community. This helped inform what is happening on campus in terms of first year learning communities.

We identified 3 main goals in assessing the outcomes of the Building Community Portfolio:

1. **BC Goal #1: Enroll every first time student in a learning community that meets their needs.** We have worked with OBIA to have a learning community dashboard created which helps us track who is in a first year learning community and retention and graduation data for these students compared to non-learning community students. We also did a CIVITAS Impact study across all learning communities at the University. We are continuing to revise this dashboard with OBIA.
2. We developed communication plans for Future Freshman Fridays and provided information for learning communities at these events to prospective students. We aren’t sure how many students were reached at these events, so we need better tracking and communication with Enrollment Management to address this issue.
3. We developed an online module about learning communities for NSO. The module defines a learning community and provides information about why joining a learning community is important. It also provides information about two specific learning communities: LEAP and BlockU. As of 6/24/2020, 944 students had completed the LEAP survey about their interest in LEAP as a LC and 825 students had completed the BlockU survey about their interest in BlockU. The average rated interest for LEAP on a 10 point scale was 6.44, with a median and mode of 7. Student summer leaders are reaching out to these students to answer their questions and encourage them to put the LC course in their shopping cart.
4. We worked with the marketing division of Continuing Ed and the Office of Admissions to create a communication plan going out to admitted students this summer about learning communities.
5. We are working on tracking who is and is not enrolling in LCs to better understand why some students don’t choose LCs. Our initial step toward this goal was to compile a list of the first year LCs on campus. Based on that list, OBIA created a dashboard with a subset of these LCs on it. The dashboard currently includes Honors, LEAP, BlockU, Beacon Scholars, Diversity Scholars, Access, Humanities Scholars and Innovation Scholars. We need to add Business Scholars. Once we have the LCs in the Student Data Warehouse, we can query the students who don’t choose LCs. We don’t currently have access to this list. We were not able to nudge students to register for the 2nd semester of LCs, although we tried – Registrar did not give us access to that type of list. We would like to survey students who don’t choose a learning community. We will meet with OBIA in early July and can discuss strategies to get access to that list.
6. **BC Goal 2: Develop meaningful pedagogy for the population of first year students.**
7. We have developed a Canvas class to showcase first year pedagogy and share ideas. Right now the Canvas class is focused primarily on moving classes to a hybrid and online format, given our current instructional format and uncertainty about fall semester. We have all improved our technology skills. We will also put assignments there to share ideas.
8. **BC Goal 3: First-Time Students in Learning Communities will make connections.**
9. Design a LC rubric for assessing the “making connections” outcomes. This is in process for LEAP, led by Steve Maisch.
10. We are currently planning to implement the associator and reviewer tool with LEAP in Fall 2020. We will pilot test and make revisions.
11. Mark and Marissa will meet with OBIA folks to determine how to connect HIP/DELE involvement with LC involvement. Meeting scheduled for 7/8/2020.