Background/Outline
8th annual Conference on Living-Learning Program and Residential Colleges
Closing address
Indiana Memorial Union-Whittenberger Auditorium
8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2004

* approximately 300 persons …mostly student affairs personnel involved in learning community programs …some & admins. …range from those just beginning learning communities to those with several years of experience in building & sustaining LCs
* Kumble R. Subbaswamy, dean of College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Indiana Univ., will introduce you…his college is co-partner with UI Residential Programs & Services in new Global Village Living-Learning Center …70 students …he has been a strong supporter
* Topic: “How to create a campus climate of collaboration so that living-learning programs and residential colleges can develop and be sustained”

I. Opening

G. morning …first …congratulate all of you …interest and enthusiasm for learning communities …& living-learning programs

• …been …important part of last 2 universities …served
• …tremendous impact on both institutions
  o …on success of the students
  o …& on the universities themselves

On the plane …reviewed …program …wish I could have been here …to hear the many presentations …learn about the success of existing programs …& the new emerging programs and ideas

…will use the terms living-learning programs …& learning communities interchangeably
• …know there are differences …since not all learning communities …residential component
• …at UMD …Living-learning programs
• …at ISU …Learning Communities

…especially pleased …ISU participation …in what has become a national movement …
• …active in this conference
• …especially active in the assessment of learning communities
• …& proud of the role of our faculty & staff …helping other institutions begin learning community programs
• …acknowledge the great work …Doug Gruenewald …Corly Brooke …& many others at ISU

…one of the nice things I saw about this conference …covers entire spectrum …
• …those just beginning
• …those with very successful programs
• …an important sharing of ideas in both directions …successful experiences & fresh ideas
• …everyone benefits …ISU certainly has
…also …thank our conference hosts at Indiana Univ …hard work …pulling all of the details together to make a successful conference

II. Appreciation …

…I’m a very strong believer …importance of learning communities …

…seen the results
  • …as Provost at UMd …with its strong living-learning program …now expanded in several directions
  • …& now as president of Iowa State …with a very different …and v. large and strong program of learning communities

…bottom line …I’ve seen …universities can benefit …tremendously …from effective learning communities …& especially how learning communities
  • …positively impact student recruiting
  • …made a university more attractive for talented freshmen …& elevated the overall quality of the enrolled students
  • …help create many networks of friends …among stds sharing similar interests …& with faculty & staff
- ...help “make our big campuses ...feel much smaller”
  - ...most importantly ...help students be more successful ...in pursuit of their educational dreams ...& in refining exactly what those dreams are

...as we all look to improve student success
- ...in those critical first years of study
- ...in std persistence
- ...& in graduation rates
...v. strongly believe good system of learning communities ...one of the v. best places to begin

...want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you
- ...you are the leaders & innovators ...people on the “front lines” ...often creating these LCs out of “your own hide” ...
  - ...lots of extra time
  - ...often ...little or no new resources until you get them going & show results ...& even then new funding ...hard to come by ...hard to keep

...often little recognition for your efforts ...especially in early stages
• ...applaud you for persevering ...because you are making a difference ...& that’s what counts

III. Perspectives from past experiences

...before giving my thoughts on factors ...believe important ...ensuring the long term success ...of a learning community program ...let me briefly describe ...the two systems with which ...most familiar

• ...although I suspect many of you ...already know a lot about these two programs

The U. of Md ...now has a variety of living-learning programs and communities ...some of which I assisted in starting ...Provost

...set I am most familiar with ...College Park Scholars program

• 12 ...2-yr programs ...have to be invited to join ...created as an alternative to ...excellent & v. elite honors program
  o ...when stds apply to U. Md ...v. best ...most outstanding ...invited to join ...university honors program
  ▪ ...limited enrollment ...about 700 new stds each year
...meant turning away...large numbers of excellent stds...didn’t make the cut

- College Park Scholars...created by administrative leaders...as an alternative...go after...next group of stds just below those qualifying for invitation to the Honors Program...offer them something special...but very different
  - ...stds have to be invited to join...based on application credentials

- Each of the 12 programs...about 70 new stds yr...join similar number from previous yr
  - General topics
    - Life Sciences
    - American Cultures
    - International Studies
    - Public Leadership
    - Science, Technology, & Society...etc.
  - ...these stds get very special treatment...made to feel special during the admissions process...made to feel honored and elite...even though...didn’t make it into the honors program
  - ...great program...very positive reviews
...I know ...my son ...just finished his 2nd yr at Md ...Life Sciences program

- Impact on the campus has been huge ...
  - ...CPS ...widely credited with being the stimulus ...v. rapid rise in quality of entering stds ...U. Md
    - ...transformed the campus
    - ...elevated the overall quality of the student body
    - ...elevated faculty morale ...made the university more attractive for great sts ...& great faculty
    - ...created a lot of energy ...sense of positive momentum
  - ...also spawned several new ...v. innovative learning communities
    - ...Civicus ...Gemstone ...Entrepreneurship

ISU experience ...quite different
- ...basically grew from the ground up ...grass-roots effort
  - ...driven by faculty
- ...focused mainly ...only on freshmen
- ...earliest “learning team” ...Project Opportunity ...1993 (11 yrs ago)
  - ...faculty in Education
• …created cohorts of elementary & postsecondary educ majors
• …who had classes together …but didn’t live together

…first learning communities …9 yrs ago …Fall 1995 …12 …340 freshmen
• …aligned mainly with academic majors …agronomy, animal ecology, pre-business, biology

…program grew with little or no central support …spurred on by strong faculty leadership …with some dept support
• …by 1997 …~700 students enrolled

…LC’s then caught the attention of others …including President (Martin Jischke) …because of their v. good results
• …our faculty leaders …great job of measuring the impact of the program …showed LC’s resulted in a significant increase in retention of freshmen
• …that caught the attention of President Jischke
• …allocated $500,000/yr for 3 yrs …support existing LC’s …initiate new learning communities
• …base–budgeted 3 yrs ago …right before I arrived
...significant growth

- ...12 LC’s in 1995 ...340 stds
- ...50 LC’s in 2003 ...2,175 participants ...43% of freshmen class

...impact on std success has been huge

**slide with retention and graduation data**

...this kind of assessment data gets everyone’s attention

- ...in addition to enhancing student success
- ...huge impact of L.C’s on tuition revenues ...through increased retention of tuition-paying students
- ...”back of the envelope” calculations ...$3.2 million in addn’l tuition revenues accruing from the $700,000/yr direct investment in our LC’s
  - ...4.5:1 ROI
  - ...many other indirect costs
- ...can be one of the best arguments to use with university leaders & budget committees ...for increased support of an LC program
  - ...important to have the data!
IV. Ingredients for success …

…was asked to share …some of my thoughts …key ingredients in creating a campus climate

- …supports development of learning communities
- …sustains that success …once the newness has worn off

…identified 8 ingredients …I think are important

**First** …especially at the beginning …essential to have a Champion for the concept

- …ideally a group of influential champions
- …advocate …push …work to convince senior leadership of the need for & value …of a learning community program
- ….helps if the champion is a senior university leader …VP …Dean …or a group of truly well-respected faculty

Having those champions will also sustain the program …when threatened by budget cuts …other factors

- …at ISU …key champions are VP for Student Affairs …Associate Provost for Academic Programs …faculty leadership in our Ctr for Excellence in Learning & Teaching
• ...at U.Md ...initial push led by a v. highly respected faculty member, campus citizen, & Dean for UG Studies
  • ...sustained by strong support VP for Std Affairs ...many of the key deans
  • ...v. strong faculty advisory committee ...highly respected faculty members
  • ...remember several times ...came to meet with me ...when I was provost ...advocating for increased support ...& it was effective!!

...cannot overstate the importance of this factor
  • ...strongly advise generating a team of strong faculty champions ...advocate for the program with senior university leaders

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Second ...promise of a v. clear & real benefit...some benefit the university needs ...really wants to achieve
  • ...hope there is always desire for improved std success and std learning ...but by itself ...may not be enough to sell the program
• …at Md …way to increase the academic quality of the std body
• …at ISU …way to improve retention …overall student success …impacted revenues

…find a need …or a goal …that the university wants to advance
…& that a LC program can help achieve

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Third …to be truly successful …LL program …must be a real …effective partnership …between Academic Affairs …Student Affairs …with obvious strong involvement …residence system

…At UMd …initial partnership …Dean of UG studies …Dept of Residence Life
  • …each of the 4 initial LC’s …named & sponsored by an academic college …ownership by the college leadership …& staffed with faculty & graduate assts from that college
  • …funding was shared …about half from the college …half from central admin
  • …always felt that each LC …was “owned” by one of the academic colleges …shaped by that college
• …that ownership was very important
• …although sometimes struggled with finances …& with faculty leadership …college’s never wanted to give up on the program …it was theirs …especially impacted their students
• …colleges wanted Provost to pick up all or more of the costs …I resisted …felt college financial support was critical …because of that ownership issue

…at ISU …administrative leadership …shared …Provost’s Office & VP for Student Affairs
  • …two co-leaders of our LC program
  • …Corly Brooke …Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs …Professor of Human Development & Family Studies …Director of the university’s Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching
  • …Doug Gruenewald …Asst Dir of Residence …responsibility for Academic Support Services …& Adj Associate Prof of Higher Educ
  • …both well-respected campus citizens
…one of the keys to our success at ISU has been involvement & leadership of our Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching …since the beginning

- …ensures that faculty development …scholarship of teaching …is an important part of our LC program

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Fourth, …to ensure continued success …important to establish credibility & show results …good assessment is an absolute must

…for long-term success …essential to develop a strong & accurate assessment program

- …can be both quantitative …and qualitative
- …I believe …hard, quantitative data is best
- …data like that I showed you
  - …retention and graduation data
  - …impact on finances
  - …impact on student quality

…may be the most difficult part of administering an effective learning community program
• …takes a lot of time and effort …special expertise
• …but may be the most important aspect …sustaining a successful LC program …& keeping faculty involved
  • …faculty have to know …what they are doing works & makes a difference
  • …administration has to know that the investment is worth it

…another helpful component for establishing credibility
…periodic reviews by external evaluators
  • …those reviews …valuable internally …help improve the program
  • …reports build credibility with the administration
  • …have been tremendously helpful at ISU

…bottom line …important to show that learning communities are effective & worth the investment of institution’s resources
…money …& faculty & staff time

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...Fifth ingredient to a successful LC program ...must have support and commitment from the highest levels of administration

- ...President ...Provost ...Student Affairs VP ...College Deans

...important to know what gets a president’s & provost’s attention

- ...e.g., increased retention ...most universities see student persistence and graduation rates as an important measure of their success
  - ...also legislators ...& the public

- ...the financial impact through increased tuition dollars ...also get the attention of senior leadership

- ...& increasing the attractiveness of the university for talented students

...strongly urge ...work hard ...get the attention of senior university leaders ...find ways to have them take ownership in the program

- ...get them involved

- ...get them to talk about the program ...when addressing alumni & other groups

- ...generate “testimonials” ...students ...& faculty
...be “proactive” in making that happen

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...Sixth component to long term success ...ensure high campus visibility for the program

- ...on campus ...other faculty & staff ...must know what learning communities are & that they are important
- ...again ...important to be “proactive” ...in doing that ...& don’t just assume that everyone knows about the LC program ...& its impact

...be proactive ...look for opportunities to do things like

- ...getting involvement of university leaders ...top administrators in LC activities
  - ...hold special events & celebrations
  - ...ribbon-cutting for a new LC ...like we did a few weeks ago ...I participated in the ribbon-cutting ...Entrepreneurship & Innovation LC ...press invited ...resulted in several local news stories ...with very broad readership
• …also involve faculty …key university leaders in other LC activities
  ▪ …as invited speakers
  ▪ …attend special lectures
  ▪ …assist with field experiences
  ▪ …or just invitations to lunch or dinner with LC stds

...where possible ...
• …encourage media coverage
  • …student newspaper
  • …alumni communications

• …create recognition programs …stds & faculty …invite senior administrators & faculty to participate …to give the welcome …or perhaps the lead address

...bottom line …high campus visibility builds institutional ownership …makes the LC’s part of the institutional fabric

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Seven …if you can …build LC involvement into the institution’s reward system …including promotion & tenure
• …may be the hardest of all of these to do
• …certainly …can be part of a faculty members “service” portfolio
• …LC’s create new opportunities for research …& the scholarship & innovation in teaching & learning

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Finally, …important to understand your institution’s unique culture …& tailor your learning community programs to that culture
• …e.g. …an urban university …with a culture of community involvement & service learning …may want to build its LC program around that part of the institution’s culture
• …if study abroad is a major priority …explore ways to build LC around that initiative

…always helps to develop new LCs …closely connected to institutional priorities …initiatives …culture
• …at ISU …strong focus in Engineering …need to increase representation of women …led to …v.
successful Women in Science & Engineering LC program

• …at ISU …also advocating more entrepreneurial thinking among our stds …new Entrepreneurship & Innovation LC …one part of that broad institutional effort

V. Closing

…in closing …the experiences of many institutions …& the assessment data …shows …learning communities are effective in improving …the overall student experience

• …impact student learning
• …student persistence
• …student recruiting
• …& infuse a special culture of cooperation between academic affairs and student affairs …not always been there

…also the excitement …being innovators & participants …in one of the most important changes in higher education …addresses the most important part of our mission …educating students

• …learning communities truly help us “put students first”
...Thank you for your good work!  ...Keep it up!