

# Learning Communities

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Advisors Group

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

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# Learning Communities – Why?

- Ease transition to college
- Provide ready-made connections with peers through team work and study groups
- Provide faculty connections
  - student-faculty connection
  - faculty-faculty connection
- Improve retention

# Learning Communities -- Background

## ■ Quick facts

- ❑ 14 LCs in 1<sup>st</sup> year
- ❑ 35 LCs in 2006 -2007
- ❑ 42-45 LCs planned for 2007-2008

### ■ Breakdown by college:

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| ❑ COB: 2    | CAST: 14 |
| ❑ GCCIS: 5  | COLA: 1  |
| ❑ KGCOE: 18 | CIAS: 2  |
| ❑ COS: 3    |          |

- Average GPA for 2006-2007 LCs in the fall – 2.94 (high of 3.58, low of 2.21)

# Learning Communities - Attrition

## ■ 04-05 Cohort

- 1<sup>st</sup> year attrition – 9.9% (compared to 12.8% for non-learning communities)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year attrition – 16% (compared to 19.5% for non-learning communities)

## ■ 05-06 Cohort

- 6.54 % attrition (compared to about 13% for non-learning communities)

# Learning Communities – Flow of Communication

- Dr. Mayberry → Deans
- Dr. Mayberry → Department Chair
- Dr. Mayberry → Sue
- Dr. Mayberry → Students/Parents
- Sue/Dept. Chairs → Advisors
- Advisors → Students
- Advisors → Sue
- Ongoing Loop

# Learning Communities - Who

## ■ **Choosing Students**

- Dr. Mayberry sets parameters
- Department Chairs/Advisors select students
- Dr. Mayberry invites students (and informs parents) with letter to those who are identified by their home departments and fit the parameters
- For departments who schedule all their students in LCs – letter to students to let them know with letter to parents

## ■ **Tracking students through the first year**

- Casing meetings with LC faculty to discuss students' progress
- Data collection

# Learning Communities – Success Factors

- Good Communication
  - within academic departments
  - with Dr. Mayberry's office
  - between LC faculty
  - with LC students
- Quarterly Tracking –
  - who's in
  - who's out and why
  - who needs to know? why is that important?
- Feedback

# Learning Communities

- Barry Robinson – Mechanical Engineering
  - Tips and tricks from a department who schedules all their first-year students in LCs
  - Ways to stay connected and make students *feel* like they are part of something

# Learning Communities

## ■ Group Activity

- Break into groups of 4-5
- Respond to the following questions:
  - What do you need to know to work more efficiently with learning communities?
  - What kind of training/support do you need?
  - What's working for your department? Best practices to share.

## ■ Summary Document of responses

- Shared with all of you and with Dr. Mayberry

# Learning Communities

- Discussion
- Website: (<http://www.rit.edu/~learning/>)

*Thanks!*