

# Sustain and Enhance Learning Communities

## Integrative Excellence Strategic Initiative Task Force

CI will sustain and enhance Learning Communities (LCs) and Living-Learning Communities (LLCs). LCs/LLCs align with Mission Pillars, link two or more GE and/or major-requirement courses, and have embedded peer mentors.

This Strategic Initiative will

- 1) strengthen the infrastructure of [First Year Communities](#) model (already in place and beyond capacity without dedicated staff);
- 2) enhance LC/LLC interventions for 17-18 cohort in Spring (249 students) and expected AY18-19 cohort (300 students); and
- 3) analyze historical and current outcomes data and lay groundwork for expansion or redesign of LCs/LLCs in AY 2019-20.

A **new Undergraduate Studies Learning Community Coordinator** (staff position) will collaborate with the University Experience Program, LC/LLC faculty, Student Affairs staff, and Academic Affairs partners in the Colleges, Academic Advising, Center for Integrative Studies, SURF, SASEI, and Enrollment Management to coordinate tasks, processes, and partnerships that ensure quality, promote equitable educational outcomes, allow for robust assessment, and promote institutionalization of LCs/LLCs in 2018 and beyond. (Strategic Plan Priority: Facilitate Student Success; Provide a High Quality Education)

### **1. What population or populations does this project serve to impact in Spring 2018? Fall 2018 and/ or beyond?**

Scaling from 78 students (Fall 2011) to 249 students (Fall 2017), any freshman, living on or off campus, has had the opportunity to enroll in LCs; in the early years EOP students were required to do so. LLCs for housing residents were added in 2015. Some communities have been limited to STEM-declared or STEM-interested (RISE 2014-16, PROMESAS 2017).

#### Spring 2018:

Of the 249 students in the AY17-18 LC/LLCs, 136 will continue in classes together in the Spring, and all 250 will continue with peer-led communities and co-curricular programming coordinated between the University Experience Program and Student Affairs. In April, new LC/LLC Advising Module will be piloted with AY 17-18 cohort in peer-led Dolphin Interest Groups (DIGs) and Advising/Career Center joint sessions.

#### Fall 2018 and beyond:

Learning Community linked course planning for AY 18-19 begins in December 2017, with schedule building in PeopleSoft in early February 2018. Planning efforts in spring will be targeting recruitment of students with **low retention rates such as undeclared majors, pre-nursing students, under-prepared students, and under-represented students** for the AY 18-19 LCs/LLCs, with a target of 300 students.

## 2. What is the data or evidence that we will examine to gauge the effectiveness of the project?

[Institutional data](#) on past LC/LLC efforts suggest effectiveness.

- Evidence from last 5 years shows that first year students in Learning Communities are 4% to 10% more likely to persist to second year than those not in LCs.
  - Between 4% and 9% (2011-2015 cohorts) more students in First Year Learning Communities persist to a second year, and between 6% and 12% more to a third year (2011-2014 cohorts), and between 4% and 6% more to a 4th year than non-cohort students (2011-2013 cohorts).
  - For underrepresented minorities, first gen students, and Pell-eligible students in the FYE cohorts, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year persistence rates range from 4% to 15% higher than for non-cohort students in the same categories (except Fall 2012 first gen cohort).
  - For students under-prepared in English and Math, cohort students have between 7% and 16% higher retention to the 2nd year, 2% to 15% higher retention to the 3rd year, and 0 to 12% higher retention to the 4th year than non-cohort students who were under-prepared.
- A higher percentage of students in LCs/LLCs achieved sophomore status in Y2 than students who did not participate in LCs/LLCs (2013 7.8% more; 2014 10.2% more; 2015 10.4% more).

Institutional data on [FTF Not Retained](#) shows that about a quarter of undeclared freshman did not stay at CI for a second year (2012-2016 cohorts). For freshmen students declaring pre-nursing, up to a third are not retained. Intentional interventions with peer mentors, Academic Advising and Career Development around major selection will be built into the freshmen Learning Communities for undeclared and pre-nursing majors, and their persistence will be tracked.

We will continue to track retention, academic success, and degree progress for all students in LCs/LLCs. We will track major declaration for students starting LCs as undecided. Based on previous outcome data, target outcomes for this strategic investment in sustaining and enhancing LCs and LLCs are:

### Persistence rate outcomes

1. Achieve a persistence rate in the second year for the fall 2018 cohort that is 9% better or more than the persistence rate for non LC/LLC participants.
2. Achieve a persistence rate to the third year for the fall 2018 cohort that is 12% better or more than the persistence rate for non LC/LLC participants.
3. Achieve a persistence rate for the fall 2018 cohort at year four that is 6% better or more than the persistence rate for non LC/LLC participants. .
4. Persistence of undeclared and pre-nursing majors to the second year will be 5% better for those participating in LCs/LLCs than non-participants.

### Academic success outcomes

On average, students in the fall 2018 cohort will have a GPA that is 0.25 points higher than the general freshman population at the end of the 1st year.

### Degree progress outcomes

On average, student in the fall 2018 cohort will be at least 12% more likely than non-cohort students to have achieved sophomore status in Y2.

A final outcome measure using IRPE data is focused on students in the LCs and LLCs who are either undeclared or pre-nursing. It is anticipated that 50% of undeclared and pre-nursing students will have a declared major by the end of their freshman year.

### Student survey data:

Students in LCs/LLCs have been surveyed about level of engagement and quality of their experience since 2012. In Fall 2017, our capacity to process and analyze survey data has increased with qualitative research software ATLAS.ti. and the help of a research assistant consultant. Survey answers from 2012-2016 are being coded for questions related to sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and validation; transition to and navigation of the University; and student perception of effectiveness of HIPs (peer mentors, learning communities via linked courses, co-curricular learning communities via DIGs, experiential learning). This research project will continue in Spring, and will connect survey data to institutional data to provide baseline measures and shape survey instruments for AY 18-19 Learning Communities assessment.

## **3. What is the implementation timeline? Include budget and/or allocation determination.**

### January 2018

- Enhance administrative structure.
  - Undergraduate Studies hires **Learning Communities Coordinator** (1 FTE staff position, \$40-50,000/yr + benefits)
  - Student Affairs hires **Student Affairs Learning Communities Coordinator**, or leads assigned in HRE, Student Transition and Engagement Programs, and Career Development
  - Identify lead LC Advisor in Academic Advising
  - Sufficient staff time funded in Student Records and Registration to continue development of co-requisite building in PeopleSoft for all LCs/LLCs and Student Group course registration protocol for LLCs. (May mean re-allocating resources/staff time \$\$)
  - Integration of LLC application into Housing application and placement software
  
- LC Coordinator convenes **First Year Community Advisory Council**:
  - AVP Academic Programs, Interim Director Undergraduate Studies; Student Affairs LC/LLC coordinator/leads; SASEI Representative PROMESAS/OLAS LC/LLC; Academic program Chair reps from STEM, Humanities and Social

Sciences; Center for Integrative Studies director; Academic Advising rep; Admissions and Registrar staff rep; Housing and Residential Education staff rep; Housing Administration/Occupancy staff rep; Student Transition and Engagement Programs rep; Career and Leadership rep; Embedded Peer Mentor and RA reps; LC faculty rep

- AVP continues scheduling LC/LLC course links for Fall 2018:
  - Clusters two or more GE golden four, introductory major/GE courses identified in December/January with Academic Program chairs, PROMESAS staff, SURF coordinator, and Academic Advising;
  - Aim for 4 LLCs (one for each Mission Pillar; 80 students) and 11 LCs (220 students; distributed among Mission Pillars)
    - How many will continue to Spring 19 with linked classes, like SURF?
  - UGS/UNIV Analyst preps schedule for entry into PeopleSoft

### February/March 2018

- LC Coordinator facilitates collaboration between Embedded Peer Mentors, Interim University Experience Coordinator, Academic Advising, Student Systems, and Career Development Services to develop **integrated Advising Curriculum to enhance LC/LLCs**, including mentor-delivered short videos, to pilot with current 17-18 LC/LLC students:
  - How to use Smart Planner
  - 15 to Finish information
  - Advising Workshops
  - Major and Career/Internship Exploration
- LC Coordinator updates and maintains [First Year Communities](#) website with 18-19 information on Mission Pillar alignments and how to enroll in LC vs. LLC, and works with Student Affairs on application for LLCs through Housing application and placement software.
- LC Coordinator collaborates with Admissions, Academic Advising, and Student Affairs LC Coordinator/leads to plan outreach, recruitment and registration for 18-19 cohort (Admitted Dolphin Day, Orientation)
- LC/LLC faculty teams collaborate on course content and attend professional development workshops on team teaching, learning community/interdisciplinary pedagogy and assessment hosted by Interim University Experience Coordinator and Center for Integrative Studies, logistical support LC Coordinator and UGS/UNIV Program Analyst
- University Experience Coordinator facilitates continued work of LC/LLC faculty and embedded peer mentors with Academic Advising and Career Services to **integrate major and internship/career exploration LC/LLC enhancement for undeclared and pre-nursing majors** for Fall courses
- LC Coordinator facilitates faculty and Student Affairs staff collaboration on co-curricular Mission programming integration and assessment, building on what works for LLCs to enhance co-curricular programming for **commuter students**
- Canvas SLO rubric/assignment assessment capacity developed for LC courses.

### April/May 2018

- Hire peer mentors as part of Peer Education and Equity Programs hiring to embed in LCs/LLCs and Resident Assistants for LLCs, cross-train
- Registration links/process tested (co-req in PS, Student Groups for LLCs, block scheduling, whatever the mechanism is)
- Canvas SLO rubric/assignment assessment capacity development continues for LC courses.

### Summer 2018:

- Professional development activities
  - Cross-divisional team to Evergreen State College Washington Center Institute
  - LC/LLC Faculty Institute @ CI) **Faculty stipends (\$250/day x 20 = \$5,000)**
- Recruitment and registration at Orientation, ongoing monitoring of LCC application with Housing office and Registrar by LC Coordinator
- LC Coordinator continues planning for co-curricular Mission programming with Student Affairs for LCs/LLCs -- housing and commuter programs
- Available institutional data and survey data from AY 17-18 LCs/LLCs assessed by subgroup of Advisory Council

### Fall 18-Spring 19:

- Learning Communities delivered
- On-going meetings of Advisory Board
- On-going collaboration between LC/LLC faculty and peer mentors
- December Showcase of First Year Communities Student Work
- Students surveyed and SLOs assessed
- System and infrastructure improvements evaluated
- Institutional data on retention, student success and degree progress outcomes for AY 17-18 cohorts and fall 18 data assessed
- Planning for AY 19-20 begins December, continues with data analysis through Spring 19

### **4. Who (person, unit, etc.) will be responsible for implementing, tracking, and evaluating this project?**

AVP Academic Programs/Planning, University Experience Director (on leave Jan 18-May), Undergraduate Studies Learning Community Coordinator, University Experience Program Coordinator, Student Affairs LC Coordinators/leads, Advisory Board

### **5. What groups and/or individuals provided input during the development of this proposal?**

Action Plans from teams that attended the National Institute for Learning Communities Summer Institutes in 2015 and 2017 at the Washington Center at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington

Presentations to or proposals shared with Academic Senate, Student Government Senators, Student Affairs departments and staff, Advancement/Foundation Division meeting, Business and Finance Department meeting, other Subcommittees, Town Hall, Arts and Sciences Chairs meeting, Deans and Program Chairs meeting, Center Directors, SASEI leadership, Academic Advising, Embedded Peer Mentors

## **6. If successful, how could or should this project be scaled up?**

- Increase by 3-5 cohorts each year (N = 60 to 100 students).
- More majors embed an entry-level course in LC/LLC.
- Mission Centers have more formal role in programming and faculty development for Mission-Pillar Communities
- Dean/Director of Undergraduate Studies to manage scale up, processes, and relationships within Academic Affairs and across divisions
- Tenure-track faculty encouraged to participate in teaching in LC/LCCs, to be featured in teaching portion of RTP portfolios; lecturer faculty evals include recognition of participation in HIP for range elevations
- Multiple Academic Advisors associated with learning communities.
- Advancement/Foundation partner develops familiarity with LCs/LLCs to promote to donors
- Communication partner develops familiarity with LCs/LLCs and identify opportunities to promote LCs/LLCs and their activities
- Cross-divisional groups funded to attend the Washington Center trainings for three years in a row.
- Scholarships for students in learning communities
- Plan to pilot a two-year model (see Metro Academies model at SFSU) with two (or more) linked courses each semester for two years -- one GE Class and one major class  
<https://metro.sfsu.edu/about-metro-academies>