



Learning Communities: Assessment, Communication, and Action

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Profile

Appalachian State University

- Located in northwestern North Carolina in Boone, a town of 14,900, in the heart of the Blue Ridge mountains
- 2004-2005 Student population: 14,653
- 2005 Freshman population: 2,550
- 95 undergraduate majors
- Major programs: liberal arts, education, business, music/performing arts



CONTEXT

- Learning Communities at Appalachian
 - Freshman Seminar
 - Freshman Learning Communities in General Studies
 - Watauga College
 - Honors Program
 - Student Support Services

Curriculum-Based Learning Communities: A Continuum of Offerings

Fewer curricular connections-----Greater curricular connections

<p>Special interest groups with shared experiences</p>	<p>Linked classes and academic experiences</p>	<p>Learning Clusters; FIGS</p>	<p>Coordinated Studies</p>
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Watauga College (120)



Honors (240)



Teaching Fellows (60)
ARMY ROTC (50)

Summer Preview (130)



Freshman Learning Communities in
General Studies (1700)



Appalachian State University – Freshman Learning Community Options

National Trends - Local Responses

Joni Petschauer, Nancy Spann, and Lee Williams

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
National Trends	DOD/DOE Space Race; Civil Rights movement; educational funding; alternative education experience	Dramatic increase in student enrollment; Federal TRIO/FIPSE/DOE legislation and funding	FYE movement; Federal Teacher Reform legislation; Economic Recession; What is working?	Higher Education Reform; Community and Diversity; Teaching or Research debates; Assessment: consultants, external agencies	Recession Access; Changing Face of the Nation; Faculty Roles; Change of Faculty
Appalachian's Challenges/Opportunities	Increase in Student Population; Isolated campus	Rapid growth (faculty and students); Evolution and inclusion into a statewide system	Recruitment/ Retention; High School enrollment dip; Economic downturn	Mission refocus on instruction (premier and model); issues of diversity and community; reliance on consultants and accreditation	Access; Retention; Degree Completion; State budgets (or lack thereof); heightened faculty governance
Appalachian Curricular Responses	Honors; ARMY ROTC	Watauga College; TRIO funding; Breakthrough and SSS	Teaching Fellows; Freshman Seminar; LAP; AAC; improved Orientation	SummerPreview Summer Reading FLC in GS; ACT office; Service Learning	Intentional coordination; LCC; new curriculum conversation



Activity - see handout 1

What local and national concerns have led to curriculum innovation on your campus?



LC Assessment, Communication and Action

- Assessment - part of the learning communities plan since inception
- Some institutional questions and purposes
 - What experiences are students having in learning communities at Appalachian?
 - What are we doing well?
 - What can we improve?
 - Retention – what we use; what we avoid
 - Accreditation (SACS)



Assessment Activity – see handout 2

What is being collected?

What is being done with it?

Who has it?



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- Specific Assessment Activities
 - Focus Groups
 - Students
 - Faculty
 - Advisors



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- Specific Assessment Activities
 - Surveys/Questionnaires
 - Learning Communities Experiences Questionnaire (LCEQ-36, Indiana State University)
 - College Student Expectations vs. College Student Experiences (CSXQ-CSEQ)
 - Noel Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI)
 - NSSE
 - EBI-First Year Initiative Study (FYI)



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- Specific Assessment Activities
 - Retention Studies
 - Persistence
 - Success (PGPA/GPA)



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- Specific Assessment Activities
 - External scrutiny and validation
 - Institutions of Excellence (Policy Center on First Year of College)
 - Retention Excellence (Noel Levitz)
 - Hesburgh Award
 - Publications
 - Conference presentations
 - Site visits by other campuses



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- Using the Results
 - Freshman Seminar Modifications
 - Increase Freshman Seminar Sections
 - Link all Freshman Seminars
 - Develop Non-Freshman Seminar Links
 - Increased Funding for LCs
 - CSI, and other assessment, Administration
 - Improved Communication Processes
 - Increased Grant Applications
 - Presentations



LC Assessment, Communication and Action

○ Future Plans

- *Foundations of Excellence* Self Study
- Study more of our campus “learning communities”
- Study non-LC students
- Specific projects conducted by HPC 6330: Assessment and Program Evaluation in Student Affairs



Survey Websites

- CSXQ/CSEQ
<http://www.indiana.edu/~cseq/>
- EBI-FYI
<http://www.webebi.com>
- Noel-Levitz CSI
http://www.noellevitz.com/solutions/retention/rms_csi/index.asp



Assessment Activity – complete handout 3

What next?



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