

Learning Communities and First Year Programs: Tools for Student Success

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Bowling Green State University

- 21,132 students
- 16,085 main campus undergraduates
- Traditional student profile
- Vision: “To Become the Premier Learning Community in Ohio and One of the Best in the Nation”
- Focus on student learning and success

Student Success Initiatives in the Last 12 Years

- Assessment of student learning
- Revitalization of general education
- Critical thinking about values
- Undergraduate research initiative
- Focus on retention and timely graduation
- 300+% increase in student financial aid
- Learning communities and first year programs

Learning Communities and First Year Programs: Residential

- Arts Village
- Chapman
- La Comunidad
- Health Sciences Residential Community
- Honors Community
- La Maison Francaise
- Music Community
- Partners in Context and Community

Learning Communities and First Year Programs: Course-Based

- BA 150
- BG Experience
- Literacy Serve and Learn
- Springboard
- UNIV 100
- UNIV 131

Learning Communities and First Year Programs: Student Attribute-Based

- Academic Investment in Math and Science
- Center for Multicultural and Academic Initiatives
- President's Leadership Academy
- Students of Color Mentoring, Aiding, Retaining, and Teaching (SMART)
- University Program for Academic Success

Goals of LCs and FYPs

- link together courses, co-curricular experiences, common career interests, residential living experiences, and avocational interests
- help students overcome feelings of isolation and to encourage a sense of group identity and strengthen connections
- break students and faculty into smaller units than are normally found on campus
- provide a setting for students to understand the expectations of college life
- bring faculty together in meaningful ways to encourage learning
- provide a community-based setting for delivery of academic support programs

Impact of LCs and FYPs

- Participants generally match the profile of all BGSU first year students
- Participation rates have increased rapidly:
 - 1997: 36%
 - 2007: 99.9%

Impact of LCs and FYPs

- Participants in most programs have higher grade point averages, retention rates, and graduation rates, than students who don't participate in any of them.
- Many of these significant differences hold up even when entering characteristics (e.g., high school GPA, gender) are controlled for (Chapman, Honors, LSL, Springboard, and UNIV 100).

Impact of LCs and FYPs

- Some programs (e.g., Chapman, Honors, LSL, Music Community, UNIV 100) particularly benefit females and students of color.
- Participants in many programs showed a smoother transition to college life and greater academic engagement as measured by survey results.

Impact of LCs and FYPs

- Most of the programs are very cost effective:
 - Comparing operating expenses to income from improved retention
 - Literacy Serve and Learn: 290% ROI
 - UNIV 100: 400% ROI
 - Honors: 1460% ROI

To Learn More

- Web Sites for BGSU LCs and FYPs:
 - Residential LCs:
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/pr/communities/comm814.html>
 - BG Experience:
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/students/bgexperience/>
 - Literacy Serve and Learn
 - http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/service-learning/pages/BGSU_courses.htm
 - Springboard
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/springboard/index.html>
 - Academic Investment in Math and Science
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/aims/>
 - Multicultural and Academic Initiatives
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/cmair/>
 - President's Leadership Academy
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/leadership/index.html>
 - University Program for Academic Success
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/upas/>

To Learn More

- Web Site for Complete BGSU Study:
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/finance/file26550.pdf>
 - Warning: prints at about 250 pages!
- Web Site for BGSU IR Office:
 - <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/>

Thank You

- Questions?