**QEP COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**April 28, 2015**

**4:00 pm**

**Johnson Board Room**

**Unapproved**

**Members:** Jim Colbert (Chair), Vivian Gaylord (Enrollment Management), ~~Tyler Griffin~~ (Junior Student), Heather Jones (The Partnership Alliance), ~~Wayne Justesen~~ (Community Representative), ~~Angelle Laborde~~ (Community Representative), Jason Lee (Sciences and Mathematics), ~~Kelly McWhorter~~ (Community Representative), ~~John Moore~~ (Arts and Humanities), ~~Leland Nielsen~~ (Education),  ~~Catherine Sayre~~ (Sophomore Student), Kim Shannon (Student Affairs), ~~Kaitlin Sherfield~~ (Student~~)~~, Mike Shurden (Business and Public Affairs), Beth Taylor (Community Representative), ~~Cornisha Waller~~ (Student), Lisa Wiecki (Library).

1. Meeting was called to order at 4:00 by Dr. Jim Colbert.
2. April 15, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.
3. Dr. Colbert reported that, on April 23, 2015, he sent out a request for QEP Pre-Proposals to Lander Faculty and staff with a submission deadline of May 8, 2015.
   1. He has received statements from numerous faculty saying have plans to submit a pre-proposal.
   2. Dr. Colbert will forward all pre-proposals to the committee as he receives them. Committee members may respond back with comments/suggestions prior to the next meeting.
   3. During the next meeting the committee will review the pre-proposals received and will select 3-5 that will be invited to present “White Papers.”
   4. The VP for Academic Affairs has agreed to pay $300 toward professional development for each “White Paper” submitted, not to exceed $1500.
4. Dr. Colbert provided the committee with copies of two formal reports on the Enhanced Advising program currently taking place at Lander, coordinated by M. Paige Ouzts.
   1. First document – Enhanced Advising Report given to Lander’s VP for Academic Affairs.
   2. Second document – The presentation on the Enhanced Advising Program at Lander given on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by M. Paige Ouzts and Rebecca Cox-Davenport.
5. Dr. Colbert requested the Committee to review the Alumni Survey Topic Ideas document revised by Leland Nielsen since the last meeting.
   1. Dr. Colbert will talk with Tom Nelson about using the survey system he has used on campus for past surveys. Another option is to use Survey Monkey.
   2. Ms. Beth Taylor will send the survey out to Lander Alumni who are currently working in Greenwood District 50 schools. She suggested that the timing would be best if the survey went out within the next two weeks.
   3. Ms. Lisa Wiecki suggested we offer a prize for those who complete the survey, either a gift card or t-shirt from Lander. Dr. Colbert will consult with Ms. Taylor about possible legal questions.
6. General Discussion
   1. The summer will allow time for the White Papers to be written
   2. Dr. Colbert plans to talk with the Lander Alumni office to see about sending a survey out to the general alumni population.
   3. We are still open for ideas and topics for the QEP. Some of those that have come up are:
      1. The program should impact at risk students
      2. Enhanced Advising
      3. UNI 101
      4. Freshman Expo
      5. General Education
      6. Basic skills
      7. Professional Development (focused on teaching in the classroom; technology in the classroom; getting students to collaborate)
7. Next meetings of the committee will be held Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 4pm in the Johnson Board Room.
8. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelley Grund

Attachments:

* QEP Pre-Proposals
* Alumni Survey of Topic Ideas
* 2013-2014 Enhanced Advising Report
* Preliminary Outcomes from the Enhanced Advising Program

**QEP Pre-Proposals**

**Introduction –** Lander University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Every ten years, accredited institutions must undergo a review of their compliance with accreditation principles. We are currently preparing for our next review in 2017. A key component of that review is the development of a program, a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which must focus on improving student learning at Lander. Lander University has completed the QEP selected for the 2007 reaffirmation process and approved by SACSCOC in the 2012 Fifth-Year Review. That QEP, the EYE Program, will continue at Lander and provide future benefits to students participating in experiential learning at the institution. However, Lander University must now begin a process to identify a student learning outcome(s) topic for a new QEP for the 2017 reaccreditation process and develop a program to address the learning outcome(s) over the succeeding five years. The two SACSCOC principles relating to the QEP are printed below.

***SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.12*** *– The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.*

***SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2*** *– The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.*

**Current Actions Taken -**A QEP topic selection committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and community representatives has been appointed. The committee has reviewed several SACSCOC resource documents and started to review available Lander University assessment data relating to student learning outcomes and possible QEP topics. The committee would like to solicit the writing of proposals/white papers for ideas relating to QEP topics.

**Request -** Please think about ideas you might have to improve learning at Lander and participate in the following process. The QEP Committee plans a two-step process for a proposal/white paper writing project. The first step is a brief pre-proposal process. The format for the pre-proposals is provided on the next page and is intended to give the committee a range of ideas to choose from. The pre-proposals should not take much time for the writers as specific data and details are not required. We need simply a summary of your idea. In the second step, the QEP Committee will choose 3-5 pre-proposals and ask the author(s) to complete full proposals/white papers. Dr. Mash has agreed to provide $300 of professional development funds per paper for work by individuals or groups on the writing of the full proposals/white papers. The QEP Committee expects some proposals from individual faculty or staff and some from groups of faculty and/or staff with an interest in a particular idea. So, we hope you will consider ideas for this process and collaborate with others as needed and send us your ideas using the format that follows. Pre-proposals are due to Jim Colbert by May 8, 2015.

**Pre-Proposal Format**

**Title** to identify your pre-proposal

Name(s) of Author(s) and Title(s)

I. What learning outcome(s) do you intend to address?

II. Summarize the plan you would put in place to address the learning outcome(s).

III. Are you aware of Lander assessment data that provides support for your idea? Please describe the nature of this data. Specific data does not need to be cited in this pre-proposal.

IV. Are you aware of related literature sources that might be used in writing a full QEP Proposal? Please describe the nature of those sources? The pre-proposal does not require a bibliography.

V. What departments or administrative units at Lander would play key roles in the implementation of this plan?

Please send pre-proposals to Jim Colbert, [jcolbert@lander.edu](mailto:jcolbert@lander.edu), by May 8, 2015.

**Alumni Survey of Topic Ideas**

**for**

**Lander University’s 2017**

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

**Introduction –** Lander University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Every ten years, accredited institutions must undergo a review of their compliance with accreditation principles. We are currently preparing for our next review in 2017. A key component of that review is the development of a program, a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), to improve student learning at Lander. Lander University has completed the QEP selected for the 2007 reaffirmation process and approved by SACSCOC in the 2012 Fifth-Year Review. That QEP, the EYE Program, will continue at Lander and provide future benefits to students participating in experiential learning at the institution. However, Lander University must now begin a process to identify a student learning outcome topic for a new QEP for the 2017 reaccreditation process and develop a program to address the learning outcome over the succeeding five years. The two SACSCOC principles relating to the QEP are printed below.

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***SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2*** *– The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.*

**Current Actions Taken -**A QEP topic selection committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and community representatives has been appointed. The committee has met and reviewed several SACSCOC resource documents and started to review available Lander University assessment data relating to student learning outcomes and possible QEP topics. The committee would like to survey students for initial input regarding a QEP topic. Additional opportunities for input from students in other formats will occur in the coming months.

**Request -** Please take a few minutes to provide your input in this early phase of the process by answering the following survey questions. There are two quick ranking questions based on SACSCOC resource materials and four open ended questions for written comments or suggestions.

1. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has published the following list of QEP topics of various institutions. Given your time as a student at Lander, what are the top three topics that you think would improve the quality of a student’s experience at Lander University? You may add an unlisted topic by selecting “other” and providing a topic name.

* Critical Thinking/Inquiry/Analysis
* Written and Oral Communication
* Math/Science Knowledge/Quantitative Literacy/Information Literacy
* Teamwork and Problem Solving
* College Reading
* Technology Literacy
* Civic Knowledge and Engagement - Local and Global
* Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
* Ethical Reasoning and Action/Leadership
* Foundations/Skills for College Success and Lifelong Learning
* Integrative and Applied Learning
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. SACSCOC has published the following list of high impact practices used by various institutions to improve the quality of students’ college experience. Given your time as a student at Lander, what are the top three practices that you think would improve the quality of a student’s experience at Lander University? You may add an unlisted topic by selecting “other” and providing a name for the high impact practice.

* Capstone Courses and Projects /Integrative Learning
* Internships /Simulations /Case-Based Learning
* Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning
* Diversity/Global Learning
* Undergraduate Research/Faculty Mentoring
* Collaborative Assignments and Projects /Peer Tutoring / Supplemental Instruction
* "[Skill] Across the Curriculum" /Writing /IL /CT/Reading-Intensive Courses
* Learning Communities
* Common Intellectual Experiences /Curriculum Redesign / Common Reading
* FY Seminars & Experiences/Orientation/Placement/ Developmental Ed/Advising
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Regarding what you know about Lander’s Academic programs and/or practices as an alumnus, what do you think could help Lander enhance the quality of these programs?

4. Regarding preparedness for the real world, in what areas do you think Lander does well? In what areas do you feel Lander should improve?

5. If you were in the position to hire a Lander graduate, what knowledge, skills, or values do you think are most important for your workplace?

6. What experiences do you think are vital for Lander to provide in order to produce the highest quality graduates?

2013-2014 Enhanced Advising Report

Abstract

*This year the enhanced advising program was in its second year of implementation. This program tests the concept of intrusive advising along with the” just in time” pedagogical technique. Twelve faculty along with eleven upperclassmen were paired with 164 freshmen, for whom the program was voluntary. This was double the size of the program last year. In order to accommodate the larger number of students each meeting was scheduled twice in the given week. Incentives including senior registration status was used to encourage participation. The advisors and upperclassmen peer mentors met with the students regularly throughout the year. The program was evaluated by comparing those who participated, those who didn’t but had the participating faculty members as advisors, all those assigned to the advisors regardless of participation, and the entire first time freshmen population. The GPA, the percentage of those able to maintain their scholarships (GPA above 3.00), and the percentage of those who are in academic trouble (GPA below 2.00) were calculated. The overall GPA for those attending was higher than the GPAs of both those not attending and the overall freshmen class. Due to the sample size this difference cannot be determined to be statistically significant. The percentage of those maintaining their scholarships was higher for those participating in the program and this was statistically significant. The percentage for those in academic trouble was lower for those attending than the other two groups, and this too was statistically significant. This however could be due to the fact that those attending since it is voluntary is a self-selecting group and are the better students. The students assigned to the advisors involved in the program were compared to the total freshmen population and for this comparison the overall GPA were basically the same as well as the percentage of those in academic distress. The percentage of those still scholarship eligible (GPA>3.0) were slightly higher as was the retention of those in the fall. This we believe is a better indicator as it is comparing student who participate and don’t participate with the entire freshmen class which eliminates the self-selecting bias of those who attend. Even with the growing number of students participating, it is premature to say that the program and the success of those who participated are causally linked. Nonetheless, the faculty perceptions are that it was beneficial to the students as well as the faculty.*

Introduction

The Enhanced Advising Program is a freshmen initiative created by a faculty and student team that attempts to create a learning community of freshmen in similar fields of study along with an academic advisor and an upperclassmen peer mentor. This project’s goal is to facilitate the transition from high school to university life while guiding students to become responsible and active participants in their matriculation process. In our current system for advising, freshmen are assigned advisors in their field of study by the first day of classes in the fall. Their schedules are created by the registrar’s office during the summer. During the summer they meet with a departmental representative to discuss numerous topics in the course of two hours, most of which the students don’t retain due to information overload or perceived irrelevance. Currently there is no need to see an academic advisor until midway through the fall term when registration for the spring term begins. Thus, faculty rarely met their advisees before midterm. As a consequence for meeting for the first time late in the term, errors in schedules and academic problems are often recognized when it is too late to correct them. This creates a culture where the faculty advisor is working to retroactively take care of issues if they can be corrected at all, when a proactive method is much simpler. This was the catalyst for this pilot program.

During the fall term the faculty and peer mentors met with the students each week until midterm and every other week after that until final exams. To accommodate the number of possible students, each program was presented twice during the week (Monday and Wednesday’s during the University meeting times). The freshmen met the advisors prior to the first day of classes at a social where they also met the Deans and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. At this time they also signed up for advising appointments during for the following week. During that first week each student had an individual appointment with the advisor to check the schedule and for errors and discuss the course work expectations, this allows for changes before the add/drop period is over. In subsequent weekly meetings, the faculty mentor along with the peer mentor met with the freshmen group and discuss topics such as classroom expectations, appropriate communications, on- campus tutoring and counseling resources, plagiarism and cheating, safety, preparation for registration and appropriate use of social media. The topics were discussed as they become pertinent to the students, “just in time learning”. For instance we discussed talking with professors about help and tutoring after most courses had had a test or the first paper. Plagiarism was discussed the week before the freshmen English class’s first papers were due. For some topics we had guest speakers: plagiarism was discussed by English faculty Dr. Lillie Craton and Mrs. Cuenin, safety was discussed by Captain Peppers from the LUPD, the peer mentors ran the session on social media. There are also individual meetings scheduled during this time. Two social events were embedded into the term for the students to get to know the other students in the advising group. As the students are becoming more independent during the second term we reduce the contact. This year we added three large group work which we had not done the previous year. We had lectures on the following topics: learning styles which was graciously led by Dean Neufeld; opportunities at Lander which included Dr. Colbert discussing the EYE program and internships, Dr. McMillan discussing the Washington term, Mr. Jones discussing work study and campus jobs and we also discussed study abroad; and finally a discussion on the degree evaluation and summer school. There was also a social, one small group meeting and at least one individual meeting for advising.

In order to assess this program, the GPAs of our students were examined in comparison of the others. Each faculty member involved kept track of meetings with the freshmen outside of those for the program along with number of changes in schedules made during the add/drop period and the registration period. This year we also asked the students to evaluate the program at a small group meeting lead by the peer mentors.

The goals of this initiative were to improve the retention rate of freshmen as well as improve the GPA’s which influence scholarships. All the faculty involved in this program have had freshmen that leave the university for reasons that with some guidance could have been prevented. Another goal was to increase the students’ independence so they have fewer problems as they move through the curriculum and manage or at least know who to ask for help when problem do arise. The faculty had also seen a decrease in civility over the years, and by having open dialogues about such issues we hoped to reduce the number of the behavioral problems. This change in approach, being proactive and intrusive yet nurturing during the freshmen year, hopefully created students who understand how to be successful at Lander. The fewer problems academically and behaviorally the more likely the student is to remain at Lander and complete a degree.

Assessment

The faculty members involved (Dr. Rebecca Cox-Davenport, Dr. Chad Kinsella, Dr. Danny McKenzie, Dr. Matthew Fawcett, Dr. Pedro Lopez, Dr. Frank Rausch, Mrs. Brittany Cuenin, Dr. Gail Moore, Dr. Lee Vartanian, Ms. Nicole McCluney, Mr. Adam Haigh, and Dr. Paige Ouzts) were asked to keep track of some basic data throughout the year on their advisees. Attendance at the group meeting was also recorded. The following are the results.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
| Number regularly attending | 47 | 48 |
| Number attending at least one  meeting | 53 | 101 |
| Number of meetings | 8 Large group  3 Small group | 10 Large group  4 Small group |
| Times for advising | 4 (2x in Fall; 2x in Spring) | 3 (2x in Fall; 1x in Spring) |
| Number of schedules altered | 28 (26 fall; 2 spring)  All faculty reporting (5) | 23 (11 fall; 12 spring)  4 faculty reporting |
| Extra Email contact with students | 190 \*(120 fall; 70 spring)  All faculty reporting (5) | 179 (139 fall; 40 spring)  7 faculty reporting |
| Extra Office visits | \* | 64 (47 fall; 17 spring)   1. faculty reporting |

\*For the 2012-2013 year email and extra office visits were grouped together.

The faculty were also asked to give their perceptions of the program as well as any anecdotal evidence for the program. This information is in the appendix A. The student survey information is also included in appendix B. The peer mentors were not asked to evaluate the program officially; however, all those involved not graduating asked to participate again next year.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2013-2014  Lander Freshmen (517) | 2013-2014  EA attending (48) | 2013-2014  EA not attending (116) | 2013-2014  EA  (164) | 2012-2013  Lander Freshmen (569) | 2012-2013  EA  attending  (47) | 2012-2013  EA not  attending (62) | 2012-2013  EA  (109) |
| Fall GPA |  | 2.857  ±0.909 | 2.488  ±1.038 | 2.590  ±0.998 | 2.526  ±0.998 | 2.658  ±0.800 | 2.099  ±0.987 | 2.340  ±0.906 |
| Spring GPA |  | 3.03  ±0.654 | 2.491  ±0.929 | 2.649  ±0.848 | 2.489 | 2.698  ±0.865 | 2.044  ±1.065 | 2.326  ±0.979 |
| Overall GPA | 2.728 | 3.009  ±0.616 | 2.570  ±0.869 | 2.698  ±0.795 | 2.508 | 2.695  ±0.703 | 2.044  ±0.945 | 2.325  ±0.841 |
| % with GPA >3.0 for fall |  | 58.3% | 41.4% | 46.3% | 30.6% | 38.3% | 18.5% | 27.0% |
| % with GPA >3.0 for spring |  | 50.0% | 28.4% | 34.7% | 33.4% | 36.2% | 18.5% | 26.1% |
| % with GPA >3.0 for year | 37% | 56.3% | 36.2% | 42.1% | 32.5% | 31.9% | 14.8% | 22.2% |
| % with GPA <2.0 for fall |  | 14.6% | 26.7% | 23.2% | 27% | 19.1% | 44.4% | 33.5% |
| % with GPA <2.0 for spring |  | 14.6% | 31.0% | 26.2% | 28.4% | 17.0% | 44.4% | 32.6% |
| % with GPA <2.0 for year | 24% | 10.4% | 29.3% | 23.8% | 27.6% | 17.0% | 40.7% | 29.7% |
| Registered for fall | 72 % | 89.6% | 68.1% | 74.4% |  |  |  |  |

Conclusion

Given the number of students who participated in the program due to the voluntary nature it would be premature to speculate on the causal relationship between the enhanced advising techniques and the higher overall GPA’s, the higher percentage of those maintaining their scholarship eligibility, and the lower percentage of those on academic probation of those who attended compared to those who did not have this experience. The faculty who have a combined of over 50 years of experience in advising in higher education feel that the program was beneficial to those students who did participate. This is simply a difficult concept to currently quantify.

Looking forward

If this program continues in the future, the group would create a handbook for program including program outline, expectations for mentors, expectations for advisors, and meeting ideas. The program would need to be expanded to include more faculty members. A third year goal would be to maintain the size of the program and have 10 faculty members as enhanced advisors. This would allow the number of students involved to be 200. Currently the program offered incentives for the students to participate (a Lander planner, a Lander t-shirt, and early registration for courses). For the 2014-2015 year a single advising group of 24 students will be grouped into a single English 101 course. For these students the program will be mandatory as the English course material and the programs from enhanced advising will the integrated. The other students involved the program will remain voluntary.

Acknowledgements

This program was made possible by the financial support of the Office of Academic Affairs. A special thank you to Dr. Mash for his support and Melissa Thompson for her help in planning. Thank you as well to Kelly Proctor for her assistance with registration. Also thank you to the student involved in the planning and peer mentoring: Gabrielle McMahon, Brain Riehl, Anna Jones, Tiffany Vetter, Trip Guinn, Rob Simms, Seth Whitehead, Cody Teeter, Laura Gist, Emily Ashley, and Vicktoria Hernandez.

Appendix 1

Faculty number 1:

This was my first semester advising at Lander, so it was a learning experience in several ways.  However, I can certainly see all of the advantages, especially at the end of the semester, in knowing the students well.  Since Lander is a small school, it makes sense to use our size to our advantage and really help the students.  I think it really helped during advising week because they knew me, they knew where my office was, and they knew I expected them to come prepared with their schedules.  Therefore, we were able to use our time wisely to prepare the best schedule possible.  That was also the week the advisees were excited to have early registration! I thought the socials worked well to let the students mingle and get to know other freshman.  Overall, this program was a great experience.

Faculty number 2

In way of comment, and while I think this program is helpful to most freshmen, I am under the impression that including student-athletes in it becomes redundant. One of my two student-athletes had her access to the aforementioned survey cleared by someone else besides me, for example. And of course none of them has shown any interest in more Lander t-shirts…

Faculty number 3

I believe in this program and in the closer relationships it helps us establish with our students.

Faculty number 4

Regarding comments and suggestions, I am somewhat limited in what I can say as this is my first semester advising so I don't have anything to compare it too.  Some of the students really had it together and didn't really need much help.  Some of the students appeared to have other issues that I could not really do much about.  I can say that I felt much more confident as an adviser by being a part of this program and being able to ask you for help.  I think that also helped me to give better advising advice.  Meeting with students early helped too, as I did find a couple of places where students had been enrolled in courses that they didn't really need.  I had a transfer from another university who was in one of my classes.  I was chatting with her and we found out she was enrolled in a class she did not like and did not need, so another professor and I helped her fix her schedule.  I wonder if it might be helpful to expand this program to include transfer students?  One of my advisees told me she really liked the peer advising system. I wonder if that is an area where we could expand and put up front (perhaps even paying the advisors something, perhaps making it something like tutoring?).  If we put them up front, perhaps we could have some small group exercises led by the peer evaluators during that first meeting.

Faculty number 5

As far as the program is concerned, I think it is a very effective program.  I will say that it is time consuming, but you told me that from the start, so that was expected.  The information that students are receiving is very beneficial and it seems to reinforce that we are here for them.  My students who actually show up to enhance advising talk to me all the time about whatever issues they have, and I feel very good that they feel like it’s okay to approach me.

Faculty number 6

Once again I think the faculty benefit from the program as well as the students. It is nice to know your advisees and to be able to have meaningful conversations with them as opposed to seeing them twice a year for 15 minute advising sessions. This is my second year advising in this program and I still believe we make a difference, even if it is just by correcting errors in the schedule before the end of add/drop. This year my sophomores that were actively involved in last year’s enhanced advising program all made appointments with me during the first week of classes for me to go over their schedule and check to make sure summer courses transferred. All these appointments were unsolicited, each one contacted me as they wanted to talk. I also saw these sophomores regularly throughout the year as they wanted to discuss various issues. Some that have even changed majors and therefore advisors still make appointments to talk. I had a number of the freshmen email or schedule office visits outside those arranged by the program. I think they felt more comfortable than some freshmen do about talking and asking questions about issues. They asked very thoughtful questions about scheduling, classes, college in general, and summer options. I even had students bring roommates and friends to meetings of the program because they had questions.

Appendix 2

The students were asked to complete a survey. The peer mentors then led a group discussion about the freshmen experience.

The following are the survey answers from the freshmen:

1. What did you struggle with the most your first semester?

Making time to study

Finding ways to balance school work and studying for all classes

Time management- being away from home

Learning how to study for chemistry 105 and anatomy in the same semester

Staying focused when I was supped to be studying

Trying to keep up with all my classes and studying

Figuring out how to adjust and study for my college classes

My biggest struggle was going from a slow-paced learning style to having numerous things

thrown at you at once

My classes

I struggled most in my biology class

Stress and balancing classes

Figuring out my study habit and what helped me remember things for tests

Learning the level of difficulty compared to high school

The thing I struggles with the most was adjusting to classes, schedules, and homework

Managing my time

I struggled with studying for my exams because I wanted to go to parties and sleep. I also

struggled with waking up for 8:00am classes.

Time management, and making sure I get everything done on time

1. What advice would you give an incoming freshman?

Always study whenever you get a chance

Stay focused and don’t try to to too much at once

Not to worry if one test doesn’t go the way you wanted it to, it is possible to still get the grade

you want

Sat ahead pf all assignments

Study hard and stay focused

Manage time wisely

Balance your social time and study time. For every hour you spend studying you can have 30

mins of play

Talk to your professors regularly

Study more because it will be needed and get help when needed

I would tell then to study daily when taking hard classes they need to pass.

Do your homework; make plans (to do lists, priority lists)

Get into a study habit, so when tests are coming they will be ready

Make sure to study hard and don’t get behind; try to do work the day it is assigned if possible.

Get to know your teachers and do your work

Get a calendar and use it plan accordingly

Be organized; don’t party too much, study a lot; get plenty of rest

Make sure you keep organized and keep a planner (color coding helps!)

1. What are the three most important things you have learned and how has it helped you make the transition from high school to college?

Time management, study tips, safety

Being responsible enough to keep myself on track, learning to balance school, work and free

time, and learning new ways to study

Manage your time wisely, don’t worry about the small things, you can do it

Write EVERYTHING down, make a good grade on the first exams, don’t wait until finals

Taking summer school is easier to take here than another place, how to study better, what

learning style I am

Time management, being able to keep up with multiple classes and tutoring. It helped me

because I had to learn these things on my own to help myself. It made me mature.

Studying at least once a day, be on time, don’t be afraid to talk to your professors

Your professors will not bite, STUDY!, have friends in your classes

How to study, be your own and enjoy what you have. These helped out with class and for me to

be comfortable here away from home.

I have learned that I have to study no matter what, do my work on time and go to class

everyday. They have helped me with this transition b/c if I don’t do these things then c college would be a failure

Prioritize, know your professors, go out and do things (not always school), have fun

Study more improves grades a great deal, socialize- make more friends, easy going- the more

you can agree with something easier

Not to stress about finals because it doesn’t help anything, be on top of things, talk to your

advisor, he can help

Better communication, better time management, better work ethic

To have a connection with your instructors and advisors, learning how to study, being active and

proactive

To study longer (use flashcards) improved my grades, make smart decisions(be mature) b/c you

are given a lot of freedom in college, being organized

Finally getting all of my stiff organized, the Academic Success Center helps!

1. Which large group meeting was most useful for you as a freshman?

The police department meeting

They were all helpful to me. Having someone I could talk to about my classes and other

concerns was great.

The meeting about summer classes because I had no idea about the process of applying

The one that talked about summer classes

The learning styles one

The group meeting on preparing for exams

How to address your professors in an email

The one where you learned how to address you professor in an email

Being business like (professional)

Learning how to do my studying and my study habits

Talking with our advisor- getting to know then so it was less stressful

All my advising because it helped me learn how to get through my freshmen year with the

different advice

Learning how to apply for summer classes at a different school

Information about what to do and not to do

When we learned how to register for classes

When we talked about social media because I felt like that could apply to anyone and it just

reminded me to always think twice

Summer classes

1. Would you recommend this program to incoming freshmen that you know? Why or why not?

Yes it really gets you motivated

Yes! It helped so much to be able to sign up for classes early and the info given is usually very

Useful

Yes I would strongly recommend this program. It was very helpful and didn’t require too much

of my time

Yes; it teaches you very helpful information

Yes, because this program teaches you a lot and makes you feel more comfortable and involved

with the school

Yes; because you make friends in the group, learn how to transition and become close to your

advisor

Yes! It helps you so much with the transition

Yes because this program is very helpful; gives good advice for business/carrier goals

Yes, because it’s very helpful, it helped me a lot with things I didn’t know.

Yes! Early scheduling and knowing advisor

Yes, because the advice that was given helped me get through the year

Yes I definitely would. This program gave me some information I probably still wouldn’t know.

Yes, because they give you a lot of helpful tips

Yes, I would b/c it would help them to adjust smoothly to college, helping them to become more

informed about what they’re getting into.

Yes, because your advisor really helps you with your schedule and they give you advice on what

classes to take

Yes It allows you to communicate with people in your major and gives you advice throughout

the year.

1. Have you shared any of the information you have learned with your friends at Lander who are not in the program?

Yes, I have

Yes, friends ask what the program is about and when I tell them what we discuss, they find it

helpful also

Yes I have and several of them wish that they were in the program

Yes. My roommates

Yes, ways to study better

Yes I have and also with friends who do not attend Lander

Yes, I helped a lot of my friends sign up for classes

Yes!

Yes

Yes I have

Yes, one of my roommates, she really wished she was involved

Yes and they wish they were in it as well

Yes I have

Yes, my roommates

No, but will if needed

Yes

Yes

1. Did being a part of this program help you find your place at Lander? If so please explain.

Yes. These meetings encouraged me and showed me that other people understood.

Yes, meeting people and feeling like a part of something helped me find my place.

This program helped me make several new friends so I would say yes it helped me find my place.

Somewhat

Yes; I made some friends

Yes if did. It made me look at all the possible opportunities at Lander.

I haven’t found my place quiet yet but they have set a foundation.

Yes, it helped me make friends with people in my major

Yes because it gave me a sense of what to do when it came down to professors, classes and

studying.

Yes, because when I first came here I didn’t know what all was required and had to be done but

by coming to the meetings and listening to the speakers I know a lot more.

Not really find my place, but make me feel more comfortable.

Yes, made me realize how to get along with others and make more friends.

It did. It also helped me feel more comfortable about going and talking to my advisor.

No because I got really close to my roommates.

Yes, the program has helped me to find stable ground. The level of stress that I have suffered

taking this program is a lot less compared to the level if I would not have taken it.

Yes, I met people through this program that I hang out with almost everyday.

Yes, allowed me to meet people and find friends having the same problems.

1. Did you contact your advisor outside of the scheduled meetings (email, phone, office visits, etc.)

3 No

14 yes

1. Do you anticipate seeking out your advisor in the future for help and assistance?

0 No

17 yes

1. Please make any comments about the program along with how we can improve the program.

It’s a great program!

It has helped me a lot and I appreciate everything that I’ve received to help me become a better student. Maybe there could be a way to inform upcoming freshmen about the program’s objectives, before the start of school.

Program was helpful with seeking info. I like being one-on-one w/ advisor better b/c my

questions don’t apply to everyone.

Maybe later meeting times (labs, etc) (one day earlier, one later)

I wouldn’t change anything about the program I’ve enjoyed it.

I think the program is great just the way it is.

I didn’t have any problems with it!

Very well done program

The program is very helpful and I would recommend it to future students.

I like this program. It could be improved by enlisting more people. This program could increase

the graduation rate significantly.

Preliminary Outcomes from the Enhanced Advising Program

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*The Enhanced Advising Program was faculty created at Lander University to implement the concepts of intrusive advising and “just in time” teaching. For the past three years, faculty along with upperclassmen peer mentors have been paired with first time freshmen for this voluntary program. The advising team meets regularly throughout the year to help the new students navigate the college experience. Meetings include group activities and individual appointments, one of which is before classes begin. The program was evaluated by comparing those who participated, those invited who did not attend, and the entire freshmen class. The GPA, the percentage maintaining scholarships (GPA>3.0), the percentage on academic probation (GPA<2.0), and the retention rate were calculated and compared. In addition, the number of extra contacts between the faculty and freshmen were also recorded. For those actively participating the GPA, the percentage maintaining scholarships, and the retention rates were higher; while the percentage on academic probation was lower for these students. As the sample sets are currently small, it is premature to causally link the success of the students to the program; however, faculty and student survey data reflects the perceived beneficial nature of this intervention.*

**Keywords** — Intrusive Advising, retention, student outcomes

**Introduction**

In the fall of 2011 five Lander University faculty and one student were tasked to increase first year student retention by creating a program that would aid in the difficult transition from high school that many of our students face. The faculty previously came from diverse institutions with strong freshmen initiatives such as Kennesaw State University, the University of South Carolina, the University of the South and the University of Pittsburgh and from diverse backgrounds including physics, nursing, english, education, and political science. From this diversity, the faculty brought together concepts about the best practices in student retention and teaching pedagogy then adapted to meet the specific needs of Lander’s students. The hope that the through continued contact in both group and individual meetings the students will maneuver more easily through the matriculation process as well as assimilate into the university culture.

Earl (1988) defined intrusive advising as a “deliberate intervention in order to enhance motivation to utilize structured assistant models.” Varney (2007) suggested the goal of intrusive advising is to make to students “feel cared for by the institution.” The planning faculty at Lander, paired intrusive advising with the theory of “academically centered advising”, which focuses on academics and developmental advising which focuses on personal growth (Lowenstien, 1999). Crookston (1972) saw developmental advising as a partnership where both the advisor and student are active participants. A similar approach to our Lander Enhanced Advising Program, LEAP, Bloom, Hutson and He (2008) used these methods along with peer mentors is the Appreciative Advising program. In the Appreciate Program Bloom, Hutson and He (2008) “initially provide support and infrastructure, then remove the scaffolding to facilitate growth and development.”

The first goal of the LEAP was to connect to the student on an individual level and to create a learning community among the students. Earl (1987) stated “academic and social integration is the key to student success in the freshmen year.” The concept of learning communities was integrated into the program as the students are assigned advisors and peer mentor by major. LEAP also encouraged academic and social integration by making the initial contact with between freshmen and advisors a social gathering. Various research on retention rates (Heisserer and Paretta, 2002; Habley, Bloom, and Robinson, 2012) report that contact with a significant person at the university aids in retention. Kuh (2008) described from 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement freshmen survey that students who reported meeting with their advisor more frequently where more satisfied with the advising process as well as with the institution. The 2004 and 2010 What Works in Student Retention surveys demonstrated that the practices with the greatest perceived contribution to retention involved advising (Habley, Bloom, and Robinson, 2012).

**Methodology**

In the fall of 2012 LEAP was piloted with five faculty and five peer mentors along with 100 freshmen chosen to participate in the program. Since that inaugural year, LEAP serves 200 freshmen and 10-14 faculty members along with 10 peer mentors. The freshmen are assigned an advisor in their major field. These students chosen to participate were the “average” Lander students. The middle track of students was chosen for this program because those entering with predicted academic difficultly are automatically enrolled in an academic skills enhancement seminar and the top students enter into the Honors College, where they receive extra attention. The program rolls out each semester by faculty and students meeting before the first day of classes. At this first meeting students meet their advisors and mentors along with other freshmen in similar majors. At this meeting students are also given a planner and are prompted to schedule a meeting with their advisor before the end of registration add/drop ends. On average in the fall, 25% of the Enhanced advising schedules are adjusted to correct for errors in scheduling. From that kickoff meeting, faculty, peer mentors and students meet weekly throughout the first semester as a group until midterm. Faculty utilize the “just in time” techniques by choosing meeting topics that are a benefit just as the students need the information during the semester. Topics include presentations on behavioral expectations and professionalism, plagiarism, learning styles, and navigating the general education curriculum. Guest speakers are utilized for these meeting topics. The plagiarism talk is given by the English Department faculty and is timed in conjunction with the first ENGL 101 paper due date. Personal safety topic utilizes the Captain of the Lander police as a speaker in the weeks heading up to spring break. This year (2014-2015) to strengthen the learning community idea, one trial group of advisees were placed in a single ENGL 101 course.

At mid-term the students meet with the advisor to plan for spring classes. For students not involved with LEAP this is generally their first meeting with their advisors. However students in LEAP have had more than nine contacts with their advisor. Mid-term is also past the single course withdrawal date. Many students if only talking to their advisors for the first time would have passed the date for withdrawal. Passing the withdrawal date places students at increased risk of failure on their permanent record and scholarships. LEAP students would have already been in contact with advisors before midterm about their grades and been advised of all of their options.

After mid-term, the meetings are reduced to every other week. The idea is that the students should be gaining confidence and independence toward the end of the semester. The term ends with a social. Meetings are once a month during the spring term. Peer mentors are still actively involved in the process and meet with the students at the group meetings and give the presentation on social media.

In planning LEAP, the faculty sought a way to incentivize the students to come to the meetings. There is no course credit attached to LEAP. It was decided that the students should be rewarded for attending the meetings with senior registration status. Registering along with seniors this allows them to register for courses approximately three weeks before other freshmen.

**Results**

To assess LEAP a number of statistics have been reviewed. The students overall GPA, the percentage maintaining their scholarships, the percentage on academic probation, and the retention rates are collected and compared to the control groups, the entire freshmen class and those invited to the program, but who didn’t participate. The students and the faculty are also surveyed using an open ended question format. The faculty also report the number of interactions with their advisees outside the scheduled meetings.

The number of contacts with students and faculty advisors was approximately 190 emails for the year and 60 extra office visits. The data collected is given in Table 1. The overall GPA for those attending was higher than the GPAs of both those not attending and the overall freshmen class. The percentage of those maintaining their scholarships was higher for those participating in the program and this was statistically significant. The percentage for those in academic trouble was lower for those attending than the other two groups, and this too was statistically significant. This however could be due to the fact that LEAP is voluntary and can be viewed as self-selecting group of better students. The students assigned to the advisors involved in the program were compared to the total freshmen population. This comparison reflected the same pattern in the overall GPA and the percentage of those in academic distress. The percentage of those still scholarship eligible (GPA>3.0) were slightly higher in the EAP attending group. There was also an increase in the retention of LEAP participants in the fall. The faculty and LEAP participants’ perceptions of the program are positive.

Table 1: Results for the first two years of the Enhanced Advising Program

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2013-2014  Lander Freshmen (517) | 2013-2014  EA attending (48) | 2013-2014  EA not attending (116) | 2013-2014  EA  (164) | 2012-2013  Lander Freshmen (569) | 2012-2013  EA  attending  (47) | 2012-2013  EA not  attending (62) | 2012-2013  EA  (109) |
| Overall GPA | 2.728 | 3.009 | 2.570 | 2.698 | 2.508 | 2.695 | 2.044 | 2.325 |
| % with GPA >3.0 for year | 37% | 56.3% | 36.2% | 42.1% | 32.5% | 31.9% | 14.8% | 22.2% |
| % with GPA <2.0 for year | 24% | 10.4% | 29.3% | 23.8% | 27.6% | 17.0% | 40.7% | 29.7% |
| Registered for fall | 72 % | 89.6% | 68.1% | 74.4% | Not available | Not available | Not available | Not available |

**Conclusions**

Given the number of students who participated thus far in the voluntary program it would be premature to speculate on the causal relationship between the enhanced advising techniques and the higher overall GPA’s, the higher percentage of those maintaining their scholarship eligibility, and the lower percentage of those on academic probation of those who attended compared to those who did not have this experience. However, these data suggest that early and consistent contact with incoming freshman students has an impact. The faculty who have a combined of over 50 years of experience in advising in higher education feel that the program was beneficial to those students who did actively participate as well as beneficial for the participating faculty.

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Dr. David Mash for his continued support both logistically and financially. Also thank you for those involved from creation to inception: Dr. Danny McKenzie, Dr. Lillie Craton, Dr. Chad Kinsella, and Ashley Vertefuille. Thank you to the faculty advisors and student mentors.

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