**Lander Enhanced Advising Program (LEAP)**

Paige Ouzts

I. Describe the general plan you would put in place to address one or more specific learning outcomes at Lander University.

 This program would focus on creating an environment to support student learning. This program would also be looking at student learning outcomes such as self-reliance and increased independence, the students should learn how to make wise academic decisions including what courses to enroll in. The program would also expect an outcome of increased awareness of academic issues such as plagiarism, Lander academic policies, and learning styles.

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 before 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.

II. Are you aware of Lander assessment data that provides support for your idea?

Currently we assessing the program using GPA and retention data from the Office of Institutional Research. 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 report the number of interactions with their advisees outside the scheduled meetings.

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.

The following is the contact data we have for the program from 2012-2015

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014  | 2014-2015 |
| Number regularly attending | 47 out of 109 | 48 out of 164 | 68 out of 155 |
| Number attending at least onemeeting | 53 | 101 | 91 |
| Number of meetings | 8 Large group3 Small group | 10 Large group4 Small group | 12 Large group2 small group |
| Times for advising | 4 (2x in Fall; 2x in Spring) | 3 (2x in Fall; 1x 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 | 22 (16 fall, 6 spring)7 faculty reporting |
| Extra Email contact with students | 190 \*(120 fall; 70 spring)All faculty reporting (5) | 179 (139 fall; 40 spring)7 faculty reporting | 452 (308 fall; 144 spring)9 faculty reporting |
| Extra Office visits | \* | 64 (47 fall; 17 spring)7 faculty reporting | 170 (135 fall; 35 spring)7 faculty reporting |

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

 The following table contains the GPA and retention data for the last three years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Fall GPA | Spring GPA | Overall GPA | % Fall GPA > 3.0 | % Spring GPA >3.0 | % Overall GPA >3.0 | % Fall GPA < 2.0 | % Spring GPA < 2.0 | % Overall GPA < 2.0 | % Registered for Fall |
| 2012-2013 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| LU Freshmen (569) | 2.526 | 2.489 | 2.508 | 30.6 | 33.4 | 32.5 | 27 | 28.4 | 27.6 | NA |
| LEAP Attending (47) | 2.658 | 2.698 | 2.695 | 28.3 | 36.2 | 31.9 | 19.1 | 17 | 17 | NA |
| LEAP Not Attending (62) | 2.099 | 2.044 | 2.044 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 14.8 | 44.4 | 44.4 | 40.7 | NA |
| LEAP all (109) | 2.34 | 2.326 | 2.325 | 27 | 26.1 | 22.2 | 33.5 | 32.6 | 29.7 | NA |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2013-2014 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| LU Freshmen (517) |   |   | 2.728 |   |   | 37 |   |   | 24 | 72 |
| LEAP Attending (48) | 2.857 | 3.03 | 3.009 | 58.3 | 50 | 56.3 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 10.4 | 89.6 |
| LEAP Not Attending (116) | 2.488 | 2.491 | 2.57 | 41.4 | 28.4 | 36.2 | 26.7 | 31 | 29.3 | 68.1 |
| LEAP all (164) | 2.59 | 2.649 | 2.698 | 46.3 | 34.7 | 42.1 | 23.2 | 26.2 | 23.8 | 74.4 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2014-2015 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| LU Freshmen (553) |   |   | 2.771 |   |   | 37.8 |   |   | 16.8 | 70.9 |
| LEAP Attending (68) | 2.847 | 2.935 | 2.914 | 55.9 | 25.9 | 48.5 | 14.7 | 8.8 | 8.8 | 85.3 |
| LEAP Not Attending (87) | 2.255 | 2.197 | 2.292 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 21.8 | 35.6 | 35.6 | 32.2 | 73.6 |
| LEAP all (155) | 2.537 | 2.495 | 2.546 | 38.7 | 37.4 | 33.5 | 26.5 | 23.9 | 21.9 | 78.7 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2012-2015 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| LU Freshmen (1639) |   |   | 2.666 |   |   | 35.7 |   |   | 22.8 | 71.4 |
| LEAP Attending (163) |   |   | 2.876 |   |   | 46 |   |   | 11.7 | 87 |

III. Do you envision development of new assessment strategies as part of your plan? If so, please describe.

The current advising surveys could be modified to better assess the program as well as the NSEE data could be used to assess parts of the program. The current surveys could ask questions specific to the materials covered in this program. At the end of the freshmen year for the current program, we use a set of material based questions to determine the winner of a prize, these questions could be placed in a survey on-line for the students to complete. The survey of question could be done at the start of the year and the end of the year to determine the progress of the students.

IV. Are you aware of related literature sources that might be used in writing a full QEP Proposal? Please identify as many resources as necessary to provide adequate support for your plan and include a bibliography.

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. In 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).

Bloom, J.L., Hutson, B. L., and He, Y. (2008). *The Appreciative Advising Revolution.* Champaign: Stripes Publishing, 13-17.

Crookston, B. B. (1972). A developmental view of academic advising as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 13, 12-17. Reprinted in *NACADA Journal*, 14:2, 5-9.

Earl, W. R. (1987). Intrusive advising for freshmen. *Academic Advising News,* 9 (3). Retrieved October 15, 2011 from www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising- Today/View-Articles/Intrusive-Advising-for-Freshmen.

Earl, W. R. (1998). Intrusive Advising of Freshmen in Academic Difficulty. *NACADA Journal,* September 1988, 8(2), 27-33.

Heisserer, D. L. and Paretta, P. (2002, March). Advising at-risk students in college and university settings. *College Student Journal,* 36(1), 69-84.

Habley, W. R., Bloom J. L., and Robinson S. (2012). *Increasing Persistence: Research-based*

*Strategies for College Student Success.* San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 219-227.

Kuh, G. D. (2008). Advising for student success. *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook (2nd Edition).* San Francisco: Jossey-Boss, 68-84.

Lowenstien, M. (1999). An Alternative to the Developmental Theory of Advising. *The Mentor*, November 22 1999.

Varney, J. (2007, September). Intrusive Advising. *Academic Advising Today,* 30(3). Retrieved October 15, 2011 from www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising- Today/View-Articles/Intrusive Advising.

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

The Office of Academic Affairs would play an integral role in the implementation of this process. The Office of Academic Affairs would also be involved with the recruitment and screening then evaluation of the faculty involved in the advising program (For a freshmen class of 600 this would take at least 30 advisors). This office would be in charge of faculty training as well as the day to day operations of the program including scheduling events. The Admissions Office would be involved since the advisees would need to be assigned through the admissions office.

VI. What resources would the plan require? You do not need a detailed budget, but should identify general human resources, facilities, and support needed for implementation of the plan.

This would require a faculty director which would need to be given a one course release each term in order to organize the programs along with a stipend of at least one course overload pay. The director would also need a summer stipend in order to prepare for the fall programs. For those faculty members involved as advisors there should be a yearly stipend as their participation is an increased work load. (a one course overload pay would be suggested). The peer mentors (1 for every 20 students approximately) that work with the program should also receive some compensation currently they are each given $350 on a bookstore gift card. There are also incidentals with this program as the freshmen will each be given a planner and a Lander T-shirt at the first meeting (approximately $9 per student) and the socials are catered (there are 4-5 socials or presentations where food is available-estimated $60 per student for the year). The cost would fluctuate depending on the number of freshmen in the program.

Jim Colbert will be available throughout the summer to assist authors with questions or to gather data. Please send white papers to Jim Colbert, jcolbert@lander.edu, by August 17, 2015.