Business and Economics Living Learning Community in Student Housing

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Scott Strittmatter, Director of Student Life and Interim Director of Housing
Arlette Palacios, Student, General Business Major

Abstract
Learning communities can take many forms. They include communities within and across classrooms as well as living-learning communities. While IUSB, and the Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics in particular, has been able to form several forms of learning communities, the advent of student housing allows the campus to explore living-learning communities and assess their impact on positive student outcomes.

Living-learning communities are a high impact practice that have been found to have positive academic outcomes. They help students with both academic success as well as forming social relationships. They have also been found to be particularly beneficial for first-generation college students in terms of transitioning to college life. The proposed Leighton School of Business Living-Learning Community (B&E LLC) would be a pilot project to explore their efficacy for the campus.
Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics Living-Learning Community

Background on Living-Learning Communities

Zhao and Kuh (2004) indicate that learning communities are structured to help students form connections between different academic areas as well as among their fellow students. They have been recognized as a high-impact practice that leads to positive student learning outcomes (Kuh 2008). A growing body of research (Inkelas et. al. 2007; Pike et. al. 2011) posits that positive learning outcomes often are derived from the enhanced student engagement that comes from these settings.

Over the past several years, the Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics (B&E) has worked to build learning communities for its students in an effort to improve student engagement and thereby improve educational outcomes. Lenning and Ebbers (1999) indicate that learning communities can be categorized into four forms: curricular, classroom, targeted group learning and residential communities. Below is a chart indicating learning community types as well as B&E’s efforts to enhance student engagement via building communities for its students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Current Programming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Learning Community</td>
<td>Comprised of the same students enrolled in two or more courses</td>
<td>Freshmen Cohort Programming: our freshmen may elect to take some of their required courses in either the freshmen semester 1 or freshmen semester 2 cohorts. The cohorts combine the community that forms from the students taking classes together with supplemental programming such as tutoring, advising and mentoring from upper class students. Our cohort-based students have higher retention rates than our students who are not in the cohorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom learning communities</td>
<td>This community is classroom-based with pedagogies such as cooperative learning and other group learning strategies used.</td>
<td>This is a common mode of instruction in many of the business and economics classes with many business and economics classes using team-based projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning communities</td>
<td>These are communities for targeted student groups.</td>
<td>B &amp; E has several student clubs formed around disciplines and interests which offer a number of out-of-class activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential learning community</td>
<td>An on-campus living arrangement whereby students live in close proximity to enhance the opportunity for out-of-class social contact and learning opportunities</td>
<td>This learning community is the focus of this proposal. It would allow the School to offer an array of opportunities for our students to engage with each other and their studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B&E is attempting to create a multi-faceted learning community for its students. Having an active, vibrant residential learning community will complete our efforts to create multiple means by which students can create important connections to enhance their success. With regard to residential living-
learning communities, Inkleas et. al. (2007) find that they lead to positive learning outcomes. In particular, they find that first generation college students who participate in a residential living-learning community have easier academic and social transitions than first-generation students who do not live in a residential living-learning community. Since many of our students are first generation students and living-learning communities are a high impact practice that have been found to be beneficial in general for student outcomes, we propose to have a Judd Leighton School of Business & Economics Living and Learning Community (B&E LLC) in our residential housing.

Pike et. al. (2011) find that much of the benefit from learning communities comes from the higher student engagement which then leads to beneficial educational outcomes. We therefore propose to have many student engagement activities within our LLC. Our newly appointed Associate Director of Student Retention, Tabitha Kingsbury, will help develop programming for the LLC. We will need to hire a student mentor who will live in the LLC with the students to carry out the programming. Proposed activities include, but are not limited to: student clubs meeting at the LLC, social events involving faculty, supplemental tutoring brought to the students, field trips to businesses both within and outside Michiana, and alumni panels. We would also like to make some of programming available to non B&E LLC students so that our students can make more connections with the greater IUSB community.

**Number of Students**

We anticipate 24 Business and Economics students living in the LLC. Student club meetings will bring in additional students not living in the LLC. In addition, we plan to open our programming that has a potential wider interest to those outside of Business and Economics to students not in the B&E LLC.

**Assessment**

To evaluate if the LLC is leading to beneficial outcomes, we propose to compare the retention rate for our LLC students to that for housing in general as well as B&E students who are not in housing. We also plan to perform GPA comparisons. These will be in the form of comparing GPAS for student in our LLC to those for students in housing that are not in an LLC as well as comparing the GPAs of our LLC students to those of B&E students who do not live in an LLC. In addition, we plan to give our LLC students a survey asking their opinions regarding what programming items they find most helpful. This will be administered at the end of the first semester to guide our programming for the second semester. We also plan to have end of the year focus groups with the goal of receiving more holistic feedback from the students.

**Fiscal Sustainability**

If this is successful, we will attempt to secure additional funding from a donor to underwrite the costs of the program. The assessment we perform will be used to form the “pitch” to the potential donor.
Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Summer 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
<th>Summer 2018</th>
<th>Years 2 &amp; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hire student mentor</td>
<td>Continue to recruit students</td>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>Revise plans for programming for Year 2 based on survey results as well as retention and academic success analysis</td>
<td>Recruit a new entering class of students for each year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertise LLC</td>
<td>Train Student Mentor</td>
<td>Local Businesses Visiting Housing and Housing Visiting Local Businesses</td>
<td>Chicago Trip to Visit Businesses</td>
<td>Revise assessment plan based on value of information received</td>
<td>Modify programming based on feedback from assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit students</td>
<td>Move-in facilitated with faculty and current upper class students</td>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>Student Clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hire and train new student mentor if this is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome reception with faculty and current upper class students</td>
<td>Student Clubs Meeting in Housing</td>
<td>Tutoring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>Career Exploration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First Assessment: administer first survey</td>
<td>Second Assessment:</td>
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<td>Assess persistence from Fall to Spring</td>
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<td>Assess GPA comparisons for first semester</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conduct focus groups</td>
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Budget

The budget for each year of the three year project will be similar. The majority of the cost will be to pay a stipend for a student mentor who would live in the LLC and assist with executing the programming. The remainder of the budget is for programming costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Basis for Cost</th>
<th>Cost of Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Mentor</td>
<td>10 hours/week * 32 weeks <em>$10.15/hour</em>1.0685 = 3,470</td>
<td>$3740</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will try to hire a work/study student to lower the cost, but the appropriate individual may not qualify for work/study. The 6.875% additional cost is to cover FICA costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Trip to Chicago Businesses</td>
<td>South Shore Tickets *24 tickets *$26.50/roundtrip</td>
<td>$636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Snacks for Programming in Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>$625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Note:

The Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics applied for and received a grant for an LLC in 2015. The person who was to administer the programming for the LLC fell seriously ill in May of that year necessitating a medical leave followed by a resignation from the position. The funding from the 2015 grant was not used. UCET’s Director indicated that a submission for this year should be treated as a new grant proposal rather than a renewal of a prior grant.