

Anchoring Learning Community Programs in An Institution's Infrastructure

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Program Objectives

- Explore the external influences of institutional and national issues on the development of learning communities

The Plan

- We will look at the development of learning communities *in the context of national and institutional influences*
- We will look at the major factors influencing learning community sustainability
- We will look at factors in building an appropriate infrastructure

The Critical Point

Learning communities do not (and should not) develop in a vacuum and it is important to carefully plan for implementation and sustainability.

ASU Learning Communities		1972 - Watauga College 1974 - Student Support Services 1974 - Honors Program	1985 - Teaching Fellows 1988 - Freshman Seminar	1997 - Learning Communities Council 1998 - Freshman Learning Communities in General Studies		
	ASU Issues	Concerns about size and mission	Rapid growth UNC system membership	Refocus on teaching mission Recognition of special needs of freshmen	Recruitment Retention Diversity	Retention Collaboration
National Trends	Alternative Education Models	Vast increase in student population Federal Legislation, re: access (anti-poverty)	Federal Legislation Teacher reform movements "Freshman year" issues Economic recession	Higher Education calls for reforms Access/diversity	Recession Changing faculty Institutional competition	
		1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s

Learning Communities Timeline ▶

Can you imagine the future?

- What will be national trends and priorities?
- What will be your institution's priorities?
- How can your learning communities initiative adapt to these? *or*
- How can a learning communities initiative *be developed* in response to these?

Some Examples

Institutional/Regional Priority: Preparing students to work in scientific fields

Learning Community response: Freshman learning community in applied science, affiliation with Career Services to offer short-term internship/ "shadow" program

Priority: Increasing global awareness and education

Learning Community response: Link classes, possibly language, business and/or education, connect with Study Abroad programs

Challenges to Future Learning Communities Efforts

- Internal structures of an institution
- Clash of cultures within the institution
- Different opinions regarding institutional priorities
- Rapid rate of institutional and social change

Rapid Rate of Change

- "Permanent whitewater"
- Technology renders predictions inaccurate
- Economic shifts occur quickly
- Others?

Different Opinions on Institutional Priorities

- Who do we want to recruit?
- What is our obligation to underserved, underprepared students?
- How are we different because we're (private, public, land-grant, women's, church-affiliated)?
- Who governs this institution?

Clash of Cultures Within the Institution

- Within faculty: disciplines, pedagogy, tenured v. non-tenured
- Teaching v. research
- Faculty and student affairs/services
- Recruitment/Admissions v. academics
- Others?

Internal Structures of Institution

- Faculty reward structure
- Organizational structure of college
- Innovation centers ?
- Faculty development opportunities
- Responsibility for remedial education
- Turf issues
- Champions. Power structure
- Reward system for collaboration

**The Benefits of Grounding LC
Efforts in Institutional and
National Priorities**

- More (and more likely) allies across campus
- Efforts less vulnerable to shifting resources
- Other departments/people share responsibility for ensuring success

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