

Goal 1: Excellence in Teaching and Learning

D. Improve retention in the student pipeline; increase graduation rates

Learning Communities

Look at successes of current system, and assess what could be improved.

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Current Status

- Almost 90% of new freshmen participate in Learning Communities (LCs). Assessment studies over several years show that these students have higher GPAs than non-participants, lower DFW rates, and higher fall-to-spring retention.
- In Fall 2006, 16% of new freshmen participated in Themed Learning Communities (TLCs). This percentage is expected to increase in Fall 2007, with the planned addition of 10 new TLCs. Assessment studies show that TLC participants, including conditional admits and African American students, are more academically successful than non-participants.
- TLCs need wider school and campus support. For example, mathematics and the physical sciences do not participate, although the socialization provided by TLCs might support retention in these disciplines.
- Stagnant funding, despite program growth, and lack of professional development resources threaten the continued success of LCs and TLCs.

Recommendations

- Seek funding to support continuing growth of LC and TLC programs.
- Enhance collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide needed professional development for LC and TLC faculty.
- Consider continuing LCs and TLCs into the second semester and sophomore year to provide a more supported academic experience, especially for conditional admits.
- Develop a TLC for prospective majors in the hard sciences and mathematics and connect the TLCs to life sciences initiatives.
- Work to increase participation of African American students in TLCs.
- Create an LC or TLC for new transfer students.
- Publicize the successful outcomes of LCs and TLCs across the IUPUI campus.
- Improve rewards for faculty participants in LCs and TLCs.

Implementation

- Develop a plan for continuing and expanding the TLC program with support from the schools.
- Make deans aware of their responsibility to support TLCs.
- Incorporate participation in LCs and TLCs into promotion and tenure guidelines, making clear that participation "counts" toward excellence in teaching, in order to address declining participation among tenure-track faculty.

Resources

- Not specified.