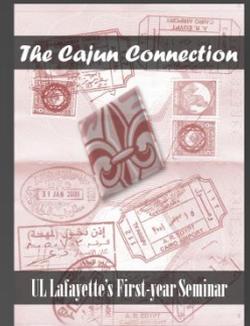


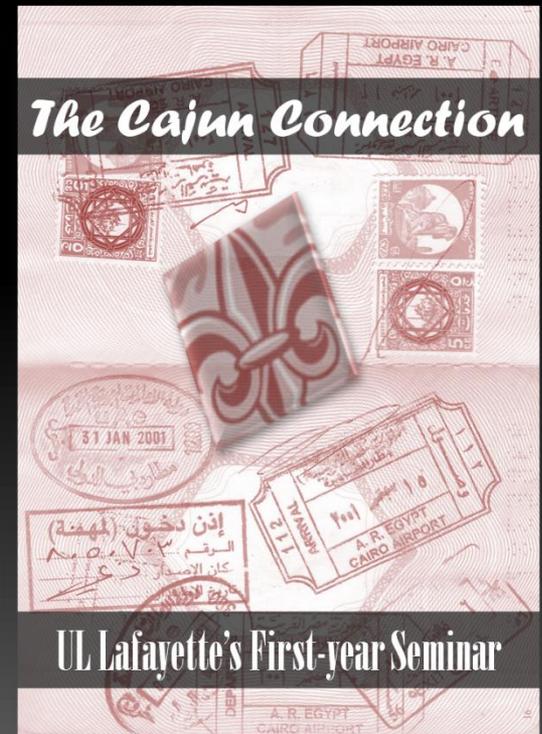
- In addition to the seminar, what else is involved in improving the First-Year Experience?

First-Year Experiences



In order to facilitate communication and coordination, the Chairs of the Learning Community initiative and the Library Learning Commons project participated as members of the QEP Steering Committee.

The First-Year Experience | Learning Communities



Thursday, September 10, 2009

Chronicle of Higher Education
U.S. News and World Reports

Which High School Students are Most Likely to Graduate from College?

- *Earned at least Bs in high school* – “High school grades are the single best gauge of how well a student will do in college, no matter how ‘easy’ or ‘tough’ the high school’s grading system is.” Measures ability better than SAT scores.
- *8th grade reading and math scores are significant predictors* of college enrollment – more so than high school characteristics and student race
- Women earn degrees at much higher rates than men
- White men are 6% more likely to graduate than black men with similar grades and scores
- Those who attend “wealthier” schools – slight edge; wealthier undergrads earn 11% more degrees from flagship universities than comparable students from the poorest income quartile

Concern: Falling Further Behind

- Upcoming crops of high schoolers filled with low-income and minority students who tend to have the least educational success
- Despite billions in federal and private sector funding the college graduation rate for first-generation, low-income Americans college students is *falling*

Distressing Signs:

- Demographic factors such as gender, race, and parental education play larger roles in determining a student's fate *no matter how smart or hardworking* the individual student is.
- Those failing at disproportionate rates EVEN WHEN COMPARED WITH STUDENTS WITH SIMILAR GRADES AND TEST SCORES:
 - Students from families with below average earnings
 - Students whose parents did not finish college
 - African-American, Hispanic and male students

- Bright, qualified students who enroll in “safety” schools such as community colleges are far more likely to drop out than those who get into “reach” schools
- Bright, well-prepared community college students are 36% less likely to earn a bachelor's degree than similarly qualified students who begin their college careers at a four-year institution



What Works

- More generous scholarships and lower net tuition prices can boost graduation rates by 5-10%
- Combining sufficient aid with extra support services
- *Colleges where most students live on campus and schools that create “honors” groups and “learning communities” are far more successful at graduating students than other universities.*

Learning Communities

- The term *learning communities* is used to describe efforts to link or cluster freshman courses as part of the first-year experience.
- Hybrid models include *residential* learning communities, *online* learning communities and learning communities which function in *virtual environments* such as Second Life.
- Three general methods for structuring learning communities:
 - > Student cohorts/integrative seminars: students enroll as a cohort in larger classes that are not coordinated by faculty. The LC cohort also enrolls in a separate integrative seminar which allows for knowledge and experiences to be shared by students.
 - > Linked courses/course clusters: In this model, faculty members coordinate activities in linked or clustered courses. Course content is often designed around a common theme, which is purposefully threaded through the linked/clustered courses. Students enroll in the linked courses as a cohort.
 - > Coordinated study: LC may also be structured around course work which is team taught by involved faculty.

Evidence Base

- Outcomes related to integration of LC include:
 - > Increased student engagement in peer groups
 - > Increased student engagement in campus life
 - > Increased student retention beyond the first year
 - > Increased student academic achievement and intellectual development
- LC may be especially important to the retention and future academic success of “at risk” students
- Faculty involvement in LC:
 - > Facilitates interaction with colleagues from a variety of disciplines
 - > Allows for integration of pedagogical approaches which are active, student-centered, and collaborative
- **Recognizing the importance of the impact of participation in LC on student retention and achievement, approximately 75% of research-extensive universities incorporate learning communities as part of the freshman year experience (Laufgraben, 2005).**

UL Lafayette

Recommendations

- UL Lafayette LC Goals:
 - Support students' intellectual, personal, and social growth while in college
 - Create opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning
 - Promote active learning and teamwork in meaningful contexts
 - Develop students' basic communication skills (written, oral, numeric, graphic and visual)
 - Increase student retention

UL Lafayette

Recommendations

- Implement linked/clustered courses model
- Link courses using a thematic approach
- Schedule one “free” period between required courses to encourage student participation in on-campus activities
- Only students enrolled in the LC courses should be scheduled and enrolled in the linked courses.

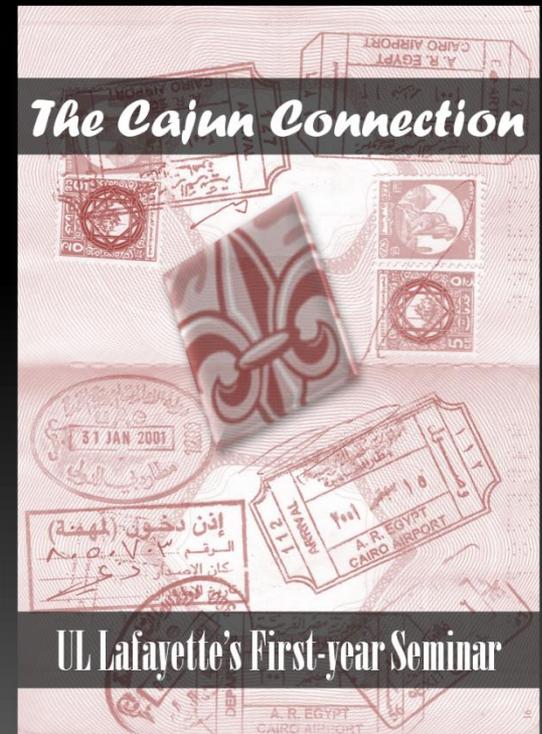
Learning Communities Committee Members

- Chair: Melinda Oberleitner, NURS
- Pegge Alciatore, BIOL
- Bob Carriker, HIST
- Terry Chambers, MCHE
- Donna Fatheree, MATH
- Jack Ferstel, ENGL
- Gus Gallo, CHEM
- Diane Oliver, EDFL
- Lana Rodriguez, Junior Division
- Robbie Stefanski, NURS



- Geoff Stewart, MKTG
- Sherry Curry, Dupre Library
- Karl Volkmar, Visual Arts
- Camille Bulliard, Performing Arts
- Dana Bekurs, Associate Dean of Students
- Brent Faul, Manager Database Systems

The First-Year Experience | Library Learning Commons



The Learning Commons



Edith Garland Dupré Library University of Louisiana at Lafayette

To enrich the educational experiences of UL Lafayette students and support the First-Year Seminars, a Learning Commons has been proposed to enhance Dupré Library's role as a vital and effective resource.

Library Learning Commons

The purpose of a Learning Commons is to involve students, librarians, and other university professionals in many aspects of the learning and teaching activities taking place in the library.

A Learning Commons combines library services and IT assistance, along with support and coordination of other student services, in one area.

Notice the variety of services offered in the Learning Commons at the University of Connecticut:

[University of Connecticut Learning Commons](#)

Collaborative Environment



Collaboration among students is popular in the library, and we see this type of collaboration frequently.

Students congregate on any floor space they can find.

Collaborative Environment

We would prefer to offer more student-centered areas that foster collaboration and promote active and social learning.

We would like to provide wide-screen monitors such as those used in the Learning Commons at the University of North Carolina Asheville.

[University of North Carolina Asheville Learning Commons](#)

A Learning Commons Featuring...

Library Services

IT Help Desk

Tutoring Services

Writing Center

Copy / Print Areas

Presentation Practice Studio

Individual & Group
Workspaces



Flexible Workspaces Incorporating...

Comfortable Seating

Wireless
Communication

Workspace Clusters



www.wordencompany.com

Social Areas

Most Learning Commons are social areas, and what better way is there to attract a gathering of students than to offer food and beverage? Jazzman's coffee shop is located on the 1st floor of Dupré Library. Students can wirelessly connect to the University's network and work together on assignments.

JAZZMAN'S
CAFE & BAKERY



www.jazzmanscafe.com

The Learning Commons



Our hope is to implement the Learning Commons in phases.

The Learning Commons will be a place where students can access and share information. It will be a one-stop-shop for assignments, writing, research, group projects or individual study, and, now, even recreational use.

Learning Commons Group



Susan Richard, Edith Garland Dupré Library, Chair

Mary Bourque, Junior Division

Lance Chance, Edith Garland Dupré Library

Sheryl Curry, Edith Garland Dupré Library

Linda Desormeaux, Edith Garland Dupré Library

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Patrick Landry, Computing Support Services

Betsy Miguez, Edith Garland Dupré Library

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Clancy Ratliff, Writing Center

Justin Thurman, Writing Center

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