

Success by Design: Supporting the First-Year Seminar Instructor

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The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)

- Public comprehensive four-year university
- Doctoral/Research Intensive
- Enrollment: 20,458 (Fall 2008)
 - Undergraduate: 16,976
 - Graduate: 3,482

UTEP (cont.)

- Student Profile
 - 23 years average age (undergraduate)
 - 12,222 (60%) full-time; 8,236 (40%) part-time
 - 11,324 (55 %) Female; 9,134 Male (45%)
 - 75% Hispanic
 - 83% from El Paso County
 - 98% commuter
 - 81% employed
 - 60% receive financial assistance
 - 54% first-generation college students

Entering Student Program: Components

- University 1301 (first-year seminar)
- Peer Leader Program
- Learning Communities
- CircLES

A background image of a university hallway with students walking. The hallway has large windows on the left and a tiled floor. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible.

University 1301

Seminar in Critical Inquiry

UNIV 1301: Seminar in Critical Inquiry

- 3-Hour Core Curriculum Course
- Discipline-Based, Theme-Driven
- Instructional Team
 - Instructor
 - Peer Leader
 - Librarian
 - Advisor

UNIV 1301: Seminar in Critical Inquiry

Course Goals

- Strengthen students' academic performance and facilitate their transition to college
- Enhance students' essential academic skills by engaging them intellectually in a topic of their choice
- Increase student/student and student/faculty interaction both in and outside the classroom
- Encourage students' self-assessment and goal clarification
- Increase students' involvement with UTEP activities and resources

UNIV 1301

- Our Faculty
- Their Needs
- Resources and Support

Entering Student Program Faculty

- The Demand: fall 95+ sections, spring 25+, summer 6+
- The Supply:
 - 21 Regular ESP—teach year-round, many split appointments
 - 22 “Guests”—teach every fall, part of regular workload
 - 16 Adjunct—hired as needed
- The Result: high demand for faculty development and support

Faculty Resources

- UTEP-specific textbook, Borders: Crossing Into Your Future (2nd ed., 2008)
 - Written by faculty and staff
 - Evaluated each semester, revised every two years
 - Addresses
 - Academic Skills
 - Transitional Issues
 - Careers
 - Finances
 - Campus Resources

Faculty Resources (cont.)

- Resources website
 - Classroom resources
 - Entering Student Program resources
 - UTEP resources and links
 - University calendar
 - Information regarding Peer Leaders
 - Message board
 - Learning Communities information
 - Borders PDF file

Faculty Resources (cont.)

- UNIV 1301 Computer lab w/skills modules
 - Note-taking
 - Annotation
 - Exam Prep: Essay & Multiple Choice
 - Time Management
 - Alcohol 101+

Faculty Resources (cont.)

- Online modules
 - Discover
 - Career exploration
 - Goal setting
 - Research
 - Information Literacy
 - Virtual tour
 - Tutorial
 - Online quizzes
 - Financial Literacy Module

Faculty Support

- Workshops
 - Best practices
 - Guest speakers
- Mentoring Program
 - Assigned partner
 - Form for suggested interaction plan
 - Rubric for classroom visits
- Partners—LC Partners, Campus Units, Librarians, Advisors, Peer Leaders



UNIV 1301

Peer Leader Program

Peer Leader Program

- Application and Selection Process
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Training Schedule
- Troubleshooting

Peer Leader Program

Application and Selection Process

- Completion of SLI (**S**tudent **L**eadership **I**nstitute)
 - SLI Application Process
 - SLI Training: Goals & Objectives
 - Enrich academic experiences
 - Develop leadership skills
 - Strengthen communication and learning skills
 - Learn group dynamics and collaborate with other student leaders and faculty
 - Enhance professional development opportunities
 - Explore culture and diversity
 - Learn the importance of community engagement
 - Understand the impact of global responsibility

Peer Leader Program

Application and Selection Process (cont.)

- UNIV Peer Leader Requirements:
 - Minimum GPA of 3.0
 - Completed at least 30 credit hours
 - Enrolled as a full-time student
 - Completed or enrolled concurrently in English 1312 (Research & Critical Writing)
 - Completed UNIV 1301

Peer Leader Program

Application and Selection Process (cont.)

- How Students are Appointed :
 - Requests from Instructor
 - Student Major/Minor
 - Topic Interest/Experience
 - Student Class Schedule

Peer Leader Program

Roles and Responsibilities

- Model ideal classroom behavior
- Mentor students
- Assist with lesson development and classroom instruction
- Act as liaison between students and instructor
- Monitor students' academic progress and make necessary referrals when appropriate
- Attend all class sessions
- Hold 2-5 office hours per week
- Attend scheduled training sessions

Peer Leader Program

Roles and Responsibilities (cont.)

- Responsibilities Peer Leaders held in UNIV classes
 - Took attendance 45%
 - Graded 44%
 - Met with students 44%
 - Recorded grades 37%
 - Led discussions 32%
 - Taught classes 29%
 - Tutored 18%

SURVEY RESULTS FROM FALL 2008

Peer Leader Program

Training Schedule

- Fall Schedule
 - Microteaching
 - Online Modules
 - Campus Safety
 - LASSI and Discover
 - Classroom Concerns
 - Motivating Students
 - December retreat
 - Recognize Fall Graduates
 - Awards & Recognition
- Spring Schedule
 - Career Services
 - Resume Building
 - Mock Interviews
 - Career Fairs
 - Case Studies
 - Classroom Concerns
 - May Retreat
 - Recognize Spring Graduates
 - Awards & Recognition

Peer Leader Program

Troubleshooting

- Direct Support for Instructors
 - Establish and Maintain Communication
 - Respect Confidentiality
 - Administer Assessments
- Indirect Support for Instructors
 - Maintain Communication with Assistant Director of Academics
 - Hold Regular Trainings and Workshops for Peer Leaders
 - Encourage Peer Leaders to Participate in Professional and Personal Development Opportunities
 - Maintain WebCT site for Peer Leaders



UTEP Resources for Learning Community Faculty

UTEP LC Statistics

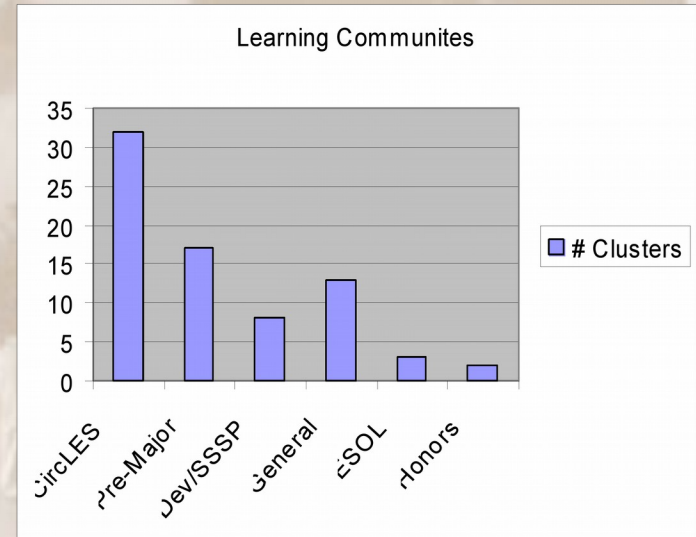
Fall 2008

Seats available for
students = 1,526
Clusters with UNIV 1301 = 60
Clusters w/o UNIV 1301 = 15

General 13
CircLES (PRES/PREE) 32

Pre-Major 17
(Health related professions, pharmacy,
kinesiology, education, law, and
business administration)

Honors 2
Dev/SSSP 8
ESOL 3



ESP Resources for LC partners

- Mini-grants
- Proactive planning and implementation
- Workshops
- Handbook
- Learning Community Resource Center (films and textbooks used by various LC classes)
- WebCT LC site for faculty (manual, LC best practices, and other information)

Learning Community Mini-grants

- Offered as incentive for instructors to collaborate, to plan integration of their courses in their LC, to develop detailed syllabi that outline the linkages between their courses, to develop shared assignments, and to share their activities with other instructors.
- Grants ranging from \$250-\$500 per participating instructor as supplement for the development and implementation of the integrated course and submission of a joint reflection report.
- Teams present their experiences at an instructor workshop in May. Guidance for teams provided by the LC Coordinator.



In what ways did the mini-grant affect faculty's learning community experience?

Encourages faculty to commit to integrating their courses

- “The mini-grant gave me an incentive to create more enriching exercises and assignments for that section.”
- “Got more involved and motivated to work on interdisciplinary tasks with students.”
- “Stayed more aware of the connection between classes that the students were experiencing.”

Rewarded faculty for their efforts

“The mini-grant was welcome because it made me feel that the "above the call of duty" effort I was putting into my own class preparation, attendance in cluster mates' classes, attendance in extra planning meetings, and preparation of extra reports was recognized and rewarded.”

“There is a sense of a reward for participating; I took extra time and care to prepare because of this reward. The grant is an incentive to learn and grow from the experience, to feel that the extra time spent in preparing, teaching and exploring results is valued.”

Proactive Planning and Implementation of LCs

- LC partners linked by subject material and teaching styles
- Active troubleshooting of LCs
- Surveys of LC partners

Workshops

- Sessions on planning an integrated LC
- Suggestions for linkages and interdisciplinary approaches
- Designing shared writing assignments
- Best practices sessions

Almost 90% of LC partners surveyed requested continuation of the current workshop, and many suggested additional workshops for LC partners.

UNIV 1301

Assessment Data

Average Overall Increase in Percentile Between Pre- Post-LASSI

Anxiety	Concentration	Info. Processing	Self-testing	Study Aids	Test Strategies
+10	+10	+13	+11	+20	+9

FTFTF One-Year Retention

	Enrolled in UNIV 1301 First Fall	Never enrolled in UNIV 1301
Fall 2003	69.7% (1612)	40.8% (306)
Fall 2004	69.9% (1611)	45.9% (212)
Fall 2005	68.1% (1822)	54.9% (185)
Fall 2006	68.7% (1887)	46.1% (217)

Average First Semester GPA

	Enrolled in UNIV 1301 First Fall	Never enrolled in UNIV 1301
Fall 2003	2.79	2.15
Fall 2004	2.68	2.45
Fall 2005	2.66	2.4
Fall 2006	2.62	2.26
Fall 2007	2.61	2.55

Designed for Success

- Offer resources for instructional support
- Provide faculty development
- Develop instructional teams
- Encourage partnerships



Questions?

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