Academic Programming in Residence

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Session Outline:

- Introductions
- Characteristics of U. of Guelph
- Initial Development of the Academic Clusters (1991)
- Definitions, Goals and Objectives for the ALC
- Description of ALC
- Staffing & Budget
- Academic Programming Options
- Evaluations
- Questions & Discussion

Guelph at a Glance:

- City of Guelph ~100,000
- U. of Guelph ~ 16,000 undergrads & 2,000 grad sts.
- Research-oriented/comprehensive
- Strong Science and Agriculture Traditions – OVC,OAC
- Residence ~4,800 students
- Strong Student Affairs history

First-Year students at Guelph

- ~4,500 first-year students
- High admission grades – 99% with average of 75% +
- 90% from outside our local community
- Over 90% live on-campus (~4,000)
- 65% women
- High retention rate (~91.3% from year 1 to 2)

History of Academic Learning Communities – aka Clusters

- 1990 Akademia Program – joint Science and Arts program
- University College Connection – University College to Office of First Year Studies
- 2001 – moved to Student Housing, renamed Academic Learning Communities

Program Goal of ALC

To help new students
make a successful academic,
social and personal transition
to university.

Program Objectives

- Primary reference group
- Intentional collaborative learning
- Formal & informal interaction
- Empower students as learners
- Leading balanced lives
- Independence and resourcefulness
- Leadership & organizational skills for student leaders

Academic Clusters for

- Agriculture
- Applied & Social Science
- Arts
- Arts & Science
- Biological Science
- Commerce
- Engineering
- Environmental Science
- Physical Science
- Athletes (new)

Participation rates

~ 17 %
of incoming residence
student population
choose cluster

Operational Needs ’09 –‘10

- Student Staff $109,000
- Training 10,000
- Operating 4,500
-
- TOTAL $123,500

Staff Compensation

- Honorarium:

- 2 Senior Academic Leader $5,300 for 2 semesters

- 3 Academic Programmers
- 17 Cluster Leaders
- 4 Academic Leaders (Johnston Hall)
  - @ $3600 each, plus benefits

Roles & Relationships

- Cluster/Academic Leaders
- Residence Assistants
- Academic Programmers
- Hall Council

Programming Requirements per semester

- Facilitate regular cluster/section meetings
- Interact with cluster/section members
- 6 Study Sessions – (Winter – office hours)
- 2 Faculty/Student events
- 2 Discipline-related events
- 1 Cross-discipline events
- Passive Programs – 1 per month

Encourage collaborative programming!

Assist with staffing the A.D.C.

Liaison & Communication

- Participate in weekly ALC meetings
- Collaborate with other RLS
- Maintain connection with building Residence Life Manager
- Meet with Academic Program Counsellors (1 per sem.)
- Attend College or School Student Council meetings – (1 per semester)
- Contact Hall Council and attend meetings as needed

Documentation – E-Rez

- Weekly logs
- Program logs
- Contact sheets
- Positive contribution sheets

Training & Development

- *Core Training:*

With all RLS, includes communication, assertiveness, programming, safety, legal issues, community building, diversity, ethics & academic integrity, group development, crisis management

Training & Development

- Specific *job-related training* includes, learning styles & strategies, study sessions, student development theory, small “c” counselling, program counsellor meetings, library resources, students with disabilities, time management & study skills

- *Ongoing training* on timely issues, include course selection, academic rules & procedures, academic stress management

Evaluations

- End of 1st semester
- Past Participant Survey – end of 2nd year (occasional)
- Retention & Academic Achievement – end of 2nd sem.
- Hall specific/community surveys (occasional)

End of 1st semester evaluations:

Cluster Leader rated on:

(Very good, good, poor, very poor)

- Contact with cluster members
- Ability to organize programs & activities
- Effort put into organizing programs
- Approachability
- Availability
- Communication skills
- Knowledge of academic program

Evaluations cont.

- Referral skills
- Willingness to provide help
- Tolerance and open-mindedness
- Met expectations

Program Evaluations

- How often do they participate in cluster events
- Orientation Week
- Professor-Student events
- Guest speaker presentations
- Study sessions
- Course Selection assistance
- Cluster Meetings
- Individual Talks with Leader
- Print Materials/Boards

Evaluation

- Quotes:

- *“Living in a cluster has helped me to be academically and socially successful here at Guelph. It really helped me strike a balance between the two so that I could do well and have fun.”*

Evaluation

- Quote (one year later):

- *“I found the cluster was very helpful. It was great having everyone in the same program, with the same classes. We could really relate to each other, get help, work together. I’m still good friends with a lot of the people from my cluster, we still see our cluster leader. It was a fulfilling experience being in a cluster in 1st year.”*

Academic Achievement Scores (1999-2008)

- Academic Achievement

Admission Average 1.2% for ALC
(~82.2% vs. ~81.2%)

End of 1st semester 2.9% for ALC
(~71.5% vs. ~68%)

End of 2nd semester 3.1% for ALC
(~71.5% vs. ~68.1%)

All differences are statistically significant (P<.001)

Retention & Graduation (1999-2006)

- 1st – 2nd semester Not significant
- 1st – 2nd year 6.54% for ALC

- Graduation in 4 years ~10% for ALC
  (For example: 74.2% vs. 65.9% for students starting in Fall 2000)

Campus integration of cluster members

- **Leadership**

  - College student governments
  - Cluster/academic leaders
  - RA.s, Peer Helpers, give keynote addresses at Campus Days, receive leadership opportunities
  - Millenium and Rhodes scholarships....

Academic Projects

- Academic Programmers
- Academic Drop-in Centre
- Study Sessions for 2nd Year Courses
- Academic Enrichment Project
- Faculty Data Bank
- Training for RLS :

  Academic Issues, and Ethics & Academic Integrity

Academic Programmers (3)

- Large Scale Events
  - - Chem Profs in Rez
  - - “Behind the Scenes” at the Metro Toronto Zo0
  - - Program Counsellors for Course Selection
  - - 2nd Year Course Study Sessions
  - - Academic Bulletin Boards in each res.
- Academic Drop-in Centre

Academic Projects

- Academic Drop-in Centre
  - - centrally located above a cafeteria in our largest residence building (1800)
  - - open Mon – Thurs 7-9 pm and Fri evenings before big Saturday midterms
  - - staffed by Academic Programmers, Cluster Leaders, Peer Helpers and professionals from other departments, including Learning Commons, Library, Career Services, Chaplains, College Student Government
  - - promotional materials
  - - open study sessions

Academic Projects

- Academic Enrichment Project - “lively” bldg!!
  - -blend of clustered and non-clustered students who are sorted by academic program
  - - staffed by Academic Leaders
  - - same programming requirements as Cluster Leaders

- Outcomes – no differences in grades when compared to residents in non-clustered areas
  - students are extremely positive about the support they received and leadership opportunities

Academic Projects

- Faculty Data Base
  - - faculty and professional staff interested in sharing their professional or personal experiences with first-year students, in a small group setting

Resources

- Association of College and University Housing Officers – International, “Academic Initiatives – Extreme Make Over”, *Taking Stick*, 2005, 22(5).
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