The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader for all Postsecondary Student Transitions
The Power of Peers: Exploring the Impact of Peer Leadership Experiences

Jennifer R. Keup, Director, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

Jodi Koslow Martin, Vice President for Student Engagement, North Park University

March 15, 2016
Session Learning Objectives

As a result of attending this session, participants will:

• ...gain a greater understanding of the characteristics and outcomes of peer leadership experiences.

• ...have the opportunity to compare features of their peer leadership programs to a national profile and other institutional examples.

• ...be able to use empirical evidence to consider innovations or refinements to their programs.

• ...advance their understanding of peer leadership as an emerging and innovative high-impact practice.
Jodi Koslow Martin: My Story

EDUCATION

• **Ph.D.** Loyola University Chicago, Higher Education, 2010  Dissertation: First-Year College Students and Faculty: A Comparison of Expectations for Success

• **M.Ed.** Ohio University, College Student Personnel, 1999

• **B.A.** St. Norbert College, Double Major in English and Communication, 1997

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

• Vice President for Student Engagement, North Park University: 2013 – present

• Interim Dean, College of Professional Studies; Assistant Provost; Dean of First-Year Students; Assistant Dean of Students; Director of Student Activities; Aurora University: 1999-2012

• NODA Summer Intern

• Higher Learning Commission Peer Reviewer

FAMILY

Michael, Spouse for 15 years

Lyla, Daughter, 5 years old
Jennifer R. Keup: My Story

JENNIFER RINELLA KEUP, Ph.D.
National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
1728 College Street, Columbia, SC 29208
keupj@mailbox.sc.edu (803) 777-2570

EDUCATION
Doctor of Philosophy, Higher Education and Organizational Change, UCLA 2002
Dissertation title: Great Expectations and the Ultimate Reality Check: The Effect of Student Expectations on First-Year Adjustment
Graduate student distinctions: Honors pass on doctoral qualifying exam; ACPA Standing Committee for Graduate Students & New Professionals’ Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, 2002
Master of Arts, Higher Education and Organizational Change, UCLA 1998
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, UCLA 1993

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE & STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
Director 2008-present

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICIES, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Affiliated Faculty Member 2010-present

STUDENT AFFAIRS INFORMATION AND RESEARCH OFFICE (SAIRO), UCLA
Director 2006-2008
Principal Research Analyst 2005-2006

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (HERI), UCLA
Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)
Director of Follow-Up Surveys 2003-2005
Project Director 2002-2003

FAMILY

PETER KEUP, Husband of 20+ years (Attorney)
AIDAN KEUP, 14 year-old son (high school, baseball team, piano, aspirant biomedical engineer)
SHANE KEUP, 11 year-old son (middle school, baseball team, guitar, future architect & MLB star)
Introduction

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Support Networks in the First Year

*2009 YFYC Survey

- Close friends at this institution: 81%
- Family: 37%
- Close friends not at this institution: 30%
- Close friends from HS: 24%
- Faculty & staff: 15%

Interacted “daily” with:
Peer Pressure

“The student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years” (Astin, 1993, p. 398)
Peer Pressure

• Peers have a significant and profound impact on the undergraduate experience:
  – Intellectual development
  – Academic Engagement
  – Moral Development
  – Clarification of Political and Social Values
  – Determination of Academic and Social Self-Concept
  – Interpersonal Skills
  – Critical Thinking Skills
  – Positive Gains in Writing and Reading Comprehension

(Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Skipper, 2005)
Defining Peer Educators

“Students who have been selected and trained to offer educational services to their peers. These services are intentionally designed to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals. Students performing in [these] paraprofessional roles are usually compensated in some manner for their services and are supervised by qualified professionals.”

(Newton & Ender, 2010, p. 6)
Background on Peer Leaders

- Historically, Peer Leaders were situated in co-curricular roles in orientation or residence life *(Ender & Kay, 2001)*
- Recently, the use of Peer Leaders in the classroom and academic realm has become more widespread *(Greenfield, et al., 2013; Shook & Keup, 2012)*
  - Roles: tutors, Supplemental Instruction leaders, and peer advisors
  - Courses: English composition, introductory mathematics, gateway courses, and first-year seminars
Background on Peer Leaders

• Peer leaders are empowered to exert influence in a less intimidating way than staff or faculty (Cuseo, 1991; Hart, 1995)

• Student paraprofessionals are an effective and efficient resource

• The use of peer leaders provides benefit to:
  – Programs: improved student outcomes, stronger bridge between faculty/staff and students
  – Students: more opportunities for student interventions
  – Peer leaders: engagement with faculty & staff, leadership training
Methodology

2013 NATIONAL SURVEY OF PEER LEADERS

Dear Student,

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina is conducting a research study on the peer leader experience and would like to invite you to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a student who has been involved in one or more peer leader experiences on your campus.

The purpose of this research is to gather information students’ involvement and experiences as peer leaders. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a 10-15 minute survey about your involvement in peer leadership roles and the impact this involvement has had on your educational experience.

By participating in this research, you are providing information that will contribute to the knowledge of peer leadership in Higher Education. This information can be used to better and expand peer leadership experiences for others in both student and professional form.

Your participation is confidential. The information from this study will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results from this study will be reported in the aggregate and participants will not receive any further contact after completing the survey. This survey will take place at approximately 60 campuses across the United States and will be administered to an estimated average of approximately 1,000 students at each campus.

Participation in this survey research allows you to enter a drawing for one of two $500 airline gift cards or one of 10 $100 American Express gift cards. At the conclusion of the survey, the website will ask for your information to be entered into the drawing. This information will be kept confidential and will be destroyed upon the conclusion of the distribution of the prizes. You are eligible for the prizes whether or not you complete the survey.

Your participation is in this study is your decision and you may choose to withdraw from this study at any time. Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal from this study will not have an impact on your grades, credit, or any other benefit to which you might otherwise be entitled.

We would be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. If you have any questions or feel uncomfortable about participating, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

University of South Carolina

9% Complete

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experience as a peer leader. We define a peer leader as an undergraduate student who has been selected to serve as a mentor, educator, or advisor to other students through a position with a campus-run organization.

As you answer each question, please reflect on your experience(s) as a peer leader. Your responses will be used to help researchers study and better understand the peer leadership experiences. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Responding to this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

What college or university do you attend?

Status as a Peer Leader

We define a peer leader as an undergraduate student who has been selected to serve as a mentor, educator, or advisor to other students through a position with a campus-run organization.

Are you currently serving as a peer leader?

Yes
No
I don’t know

Type of Peer Leader Experience(s)

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (Check all that apply)

Athletics
Academic - peer advisor
Academic - Supplemental Instruction leader
Academic - tutor
Academic - other (e.g., teaching assistant, lab assistant)
Admissions
Campus activities
Community service or service learning
Counseling or mental health
Financial literacy
First-year experience
Greek life (i.e., social fraternity or sorority)
International student office
Judicial affairs or student conduct
Multicultural affairs
Orientation (e.g., new student, extended, or summer orientation)
Outdoor or recreational sports
Physical health
Religious
Method: Data Source

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

• 2013 survey was a partnership with 5 leading educational organizations involved with peer leaders:
  – ACUHO-I
  – International Center for Supplemental Instruction
  – NACA
  – National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
  – NODA

• Institutional recruitment took place first
49 Participating Institutions:
2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

Angelo State University
Appalachian State University
Bethany College
Brigham Young University
Campbell University
Cedar Crest College
Colorado State University
East Carolina University
Eastern Illinois University
Fort Hays State University
Framingham State University
Furman University
Georgia Southern University
Hofstra University
Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne
Indiana University East
Kennesaw State University
Lesley University
Lyndon State College
Madonna University
Minot State University
Missouri State University
Montclair State University
Morgan State University
Northern Illinois University
Ohio University
Oklahoma State University - Main Campus
Oregon State University
San Jose State University
South Dakota State University
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Illinois University
Stetson University
Temple University
The College at Brockport
The University of Maryland - College Park
The University of New Orleans
The University of South Florida
The University of Tampa
University of Central Florida
University of Florida
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
University of Maryland Baltimore County
University of South Carolina Columbia
University of South Carolina Upstate
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Wayne State University
Wells College
Wittenberg University
Method: Data Source

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

• Student survey administered from 3/26/2013-6/1/2013
• 4,932 student peer leaders responded to the survey (28.6% response rate)
• Student sample over-represents women and high academic performers
• Student sample has adequate representation by race/ethnicity, class standing, & Pell Grant eligibility
Findings

TYPE AND NUMBER OF PEER LEADER EXPERIENCES
How are peer leaders being used on your campus?
## Most Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4,016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Leader Experience</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student clubs and organization(s)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
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<td>First-Year Experience</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus activities</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic - peer advisor</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service or service learning</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic - Tutor</td>
<td>23.4</td>
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## Most Common PL Sponsors

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### Least Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4,016)

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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic-Supplemental Instruction leader</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural affairs</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor or recreational sports</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling or mental health</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student productions or media</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial affairs or student conduct</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International student office</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial literacy</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
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“Students who have been selected and trained to offer educational services to their peers. These services are intentionally designed to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals, Students performing in [these] paraprofessional roles are usually compensated in some manner for their services and are supervised by qualified professionals.”

Results

PEER LEADER SELECTION, TRAINING, & COMPENSATION
PL Selection Process

Which of the following best describes the peer leader selection process you went through (n = 3,942)

Application: ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ (86.4%)

Election: ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ (38.8%)

Nomination: ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ ☑️ (35.9%)

Other: ☑️ (2.8%)
Training

Were you trained for your peer leader position(s)?
(n = 3,942)

- Yes: 85.6%
- No: 13.5%
- I don't know: 0.8%
How long was the initial formal training for your current and/or previous peer leader position(s)? (n = 3,353)
Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training? (n = 3,353)

What type of additional ongoing formal training did you receive? (n = 2,303)

- **Retreat**: 38.5%
- **Staff meetings**: 61.2%
- **Meetings with supervisor**: 47.8%
- **Other**: 7.1%

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **I don't know**
Trends in Peer Leader Training

• Longer training modules
• Ongoing support & professional development
• Curricular components
• Outcomes focused
• Focus on supervision as part of training
• Peer leadership & training among peer leaders
• Integrated across campus and across PLE
Compensation

What compensation did or do you receive for your work as a peer leader? (n = 3,942)

- Volunteer: 59.4%
- Financial Compensation: 56.0%
- Room and board: 23.7%
- Course credit: 15.1%
- Other: 4.4%

Form of Compensation
Findings

PEER LEADER OUTCOMES
What are the stated outcomes for peer leaders at your institution?
Outcomes of Peer Leader Experiences

• Student peer leaders were asked to report their growth in four outcome areas:
  – “To what degree has the following (outcome) changed as a direct result of your peer leadership experiences?”

• Outcome areas
  – Skills
  – Undergraduate Experiences
  – Employability Outcomes
  – Academic Performance
# Outcomes of PLEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Development</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Outcomes of PLEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Experience</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of campus resources</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with peers</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of belonging at institution</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with staff members</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with people from different backgrounds</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with faculty</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people from different backgrounds</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to engage in continuous learning</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to persist at institution</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Outcomes of PLEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employability Outcomes</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building professional interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying knowledge to a real-world setting</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing together info from different places</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing direction through persuasion</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing a problem from new perspectives</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for success in a FT job after grad</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating innovative approaches to a task</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in ethical decision-making</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing ideas with others in writing</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes of PLEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Performance</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic skill development</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall academic performance</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of credit hours completed each term</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate timely graduation</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Rated Impact on Undergraduate Experience

“When I first got the job I was shy and unsure of myself a lot of the times but over the past almost two years I have grown and become more confident. I have learned to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds. I have also had the opportunity to become close to faculty and staff that I work with. I feel more connected to campus and have enjoyed being there for freshmen students that are struggling with the college transition.”
Satisfaction with PLEs

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your peer leadership experiences?

- Very dissatisfied: 1.5%
- Dissatisfied: 0.4%
- Slightly dissatisfied: 0.9%
- Neutral: 19.4%
- Slightly satisfied: 4.9%
- Satisfied: 39.5%
- Very satisfied: 50.9%

Would you recommend being a peer leader to other students?

- Yes, absolutely: 80.4%
- Yes, for most of the peer leadership positions I have held: 14.9%
- Yes, for some of the peer leadership positions I have held (but not most): 3.0%
- No: 0.4%
Institutional Practice

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE
North Park University

• Traditional Peer Leadership Opportunities
  - Crew Leaders, Student Ambassadors, Student Organization Leaders

• New Traditional Peer Opportunities
  – Writing Advisors linked to Cornerstone (FYE) Courses
  – Faith and Justice Group in Urban Outreach
  – Student Mentors in Bridge Programs beyond Welcome Week
  – Music and Worship Leaders
University of South Carolina

- Three-credit, extended orientation course
- 80% of first-year class enrolls annually
- 220 sections offered during fall 2015
  - 204 faculty and staff instructors
  - 214 peer and graduate leaders
  - 4 senior peer leaders
Peer Leaders: The University 101 Peer Leader Program at the University of South Carolina has been an important component of the University 101 course since 1993. Outstanding rising junior and senior students are recruited to serve as role models and mentors for incoming first-year students. Peer leaders must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 and also must demonstrate leadership/involvement in other substantive areas of university life. It is the goal of the University 101 staff to recruit a quality cohort of peer leaders that will allow for each section of the course to be co-taught by an instructor and undergraduate or graduate student.
PEER LEADERSHIP AS A HIGH-ImpACT PRACTICE

Conclusions
Definition of High-Impact Practices

“Teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending upon learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts. [HIPs are] practices that educational research suggest increase rates of retention and student engagement.”

(Kuh, 2010)
10 High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
What does it mean to be HIP?

Scruffy facial hair

Look of nonchalance

Thick-frame glasses

Tight pants

Trendy boots

Ironic T-shirt

Camera for photo blogging

Be on the lookout for hipsters like these...
Characteristics of HIPs

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Accountability
Consider Adaptability of HIPs

“[HIP] key conditions can be adapted and incorporated into any teaching and learning situation inside or outside the classroom to promote higher levels of student performance. There are doubtless other high-impact activities...in which large number of students participate.”

Kuh in Brownell & Swaner, 2010
High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars & Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- Internships
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Capstone Courses & Projects
- Peer Leadership
Thought is action in rehearsal.
Sigmund Freud

Conclusions

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & TAKEAWAYS
Applications and Implications

• Talk about Peer Leadership as a High Impact Practice with Senior Student Affairs Leaders
• Specifically for retention – Link Peer Leadership to Early Warning System
• Financial Literacy Education Peer Leadership Potential
Takeaways - Overall

• Peer leaders report engagement in experiences
  – Largest concentration of respondents reported spending between 6 and 15 hours per week on PL responsibilities
  – Most report active involvement in selection process
  – Many have training experiences of a week or longer
  – Majority report ongoing training
  – Many do not receive compensation (i.e., volunteer)

• Peer leaders report satisfaction with the experience
  – Nearly all respondents (96%) would recommend at least some peer leadership positions to other students
Takeaways - Overall

• Insight into common and potential selection, training, and compensation models

• Peer leaders report growth due to experiences
  – Overall majority report gains on nearly all outcomes in skills, undergraduate experiences, and employability outcomes
  – Academic outcomes not as strongly affected by PLEs
  – Method of advancing intercultural competency
  – Highly transferable to career

• Peer leadership as an emergent HIP
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jkoslow@northpark.edu