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National Study of Living-Learning Programs

University of San Francisco Customized Report

July 2007

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Sponsored by the National Science Foundation, Association of College and University Housing Officers International, College Student Educators International (ACPA), and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)

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Section I

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings from your institution for the 2007 National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP). The NSLLP is a multi-institutional study of living-learning programs conducted during the Winter and Spring of 2007 at 52 colleges and universities across the United States.

The National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP) initially was developed by a collaborative team of researchers led by Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas from the University of Maryland. The primary purpose for this research was to study the impact of living-learning programs on various student outcomes. The original collaborative team included Aaron M. Brower (University of Wisconsin), William J. Zeller (University of California, Irvine), Mary Hummel (University of Michigan), and Merrily Dunn (University of Georgia). This study was funded by a four-year grant from the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I). The first NSLLP data collection occurred in Spring 2004, when the NSLLP partnered with MSIResearch, led by Scott Crawford and Duston Pope.

Through generous grants from the National Science Foundation, Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I), College Student Educators International (ACPA), and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), the NSLLP continued its study of living-learning programs with a second generation of data collection from 2005-2008. The goals of the 2005-2008 NSLLP included: (a) a trend analysis of living-learning programming comparing baseline survey data from independent 2004 and 2007 samples; (b) a longitudinal follow-up survey of respondents from the 2004 NSLLP to examine the potential long-term impact of living-learning programs; and (c) campus site visits to exemplary living-learning programs identified by the survey data. In addition, in relation to the grant from the National Science Foundation, the 2007 NSLLP includes a special focus on the role that living-learning programs may play in facilitating the success of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. The survey data were collected in Winter and Spring 2007, and the campus site visits are scheduled for the 2007-2008 academic year. Colleges and universities with living-learning programs were eligible for the 2007 baseline study. For the purposes of the NSLLP, living-learning programs were defined as programs in which undergraduate students live together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall) and participate in academic and/or extra-curricular programming designed especially for them. The breadth of this definition permitted including in the study a wide variety of program types and campuses. Interested schools paid a fee to cover data collection costs, and were provided with a final analytic dataset and report of results. There are 52 participating schools in the 2007 NSLLP. Thirty-two schools participated in the baseline data collection, and 14 campuses participated in both the baseline and follow-up data collections (those 14 campuses having been one of the original 34 campuses from the 2004 study). Two campuses participated in the follow-up only, and four institutions will collect data in Fall 2007. For a complete list of participating schools in the baseline data collection, see Table I-A.

Research Context

In the last two decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in undergraduate education at large research universities (Boyer Commission, 1998, 2002; National Science Foundation, 1996; Ad Hoc Committee, 1987). "Shrinking" the megaversity to a manageable size for undergraduates, especially first-year students, requires administrative commitment and collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs practitioners. Living-learning programs represent a significant response to, and product of, the broader movement to improve undergraduate teaching and learning through learning communities. Shapiro and Levine (1999) identify four major types of learning communities: 1) paired or clustered courses; 2) cohorts in large courses or first-year interest groups (FIGS); 3) team-taught courses; and 4) residential learning communities. The first three types of communities are more curriculum-focused, and have been examined by several national studies, including the National Learning Communities Project, the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and the Learning Community Effectiveness Project. However, there have been fewer focused studies conducted on the fourth type - the residential learning community (also known as livinglearning programs) – and there were no multi-institutional or national studies of this category of learning community until the NSLLP conducted its first study in 2004.

Table I -AParticipating Institutions in the 2007 National Study of Living-Learning Programs

		NUMBER OF L/L PROGRAMS			NSLLP PARTICIPATION	
INSTITUTION NAME	CARNEGIE TYPE	<10 10-20		>20	2004	2007
Arizona State University	Research University very high	\checkmark			•	•
Baylor University	Research University high	\checkmark				•
Bloomsburg University	Master's Larger	\checkmark				•
Bowling Green State University	Research University high		v		•	•
Clemson University	Research University high		V		•	•
Colorado State University	Research University very high		J		•	•
Florida State University	Research University very high	v			•	•
George Mason University	Research University high		J			•
George Washington University *	Research University high			J	•	•
Georgia Institute of Technology *	Research University very high	J		•		•
Georgia Southern University	Research University					•
Illinois State University	Research University	•	J			•
Indiana University	Research University very high		•	J	•	•
Louisiana State University	Research University very high	J		•	•	•
Lynchburg College	Master's Small					•
Miami University (Ohio)	Research University high	•	J			•
Michigan State University	Research University very high					•
New Mexico State University	Research University high					•
New York University	Research University very high		•	5		•
Northeastern University	Research University high		J	•	•	•
Northern Arizona University	Research University high	J	•			•
Northern Illinois University	Research University high	J			•	•
Ohio State University	Research University very high	•		J		•
Oregon State University	Research University very high	J		•		•
Saint Joseph's University	Master's Larger	J				•
San Jose State University	Master's Larger				•	•
Seattle University	Master's Larger	•	J			•
Sonoma State University	Master's Larger	J	•			•

		N L/1	NUMBER O L PROGRA)F MS	NSLLP PAR	TICIPATION
INSTITUTION NAME	CARNEGIE TYPE	<10	10-20	>20	2004	2007
Syracuse University	Research University high			\checkmark	٠	*
Texas A & M University	Research University very high	\checkmark				•
Texas Woman's University	Research University		\checkmark			•
University of Arizona	Research University very high		\checkmark			•
University of California, Irvine *	Research University very high		\checkmark		•	•
University of Colorado, Boulder	Research University very high	\checkmark				•
University of Denver *	Research University high	\checkmark				•
University of Florida	Research University very high	\checkmark			•	•
University of Idaho	Research University high		\checkmark			•
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	Research University very high	\checkmark			•	•
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	Research University high	\checkmark			•	•
University of Maryland, College Park	Research University very high		\checkmark		•	*
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Research University very high	\checkmark				•
University of Michigan	Research University very high	\checkmark			•	•
University of Missouri, Columbia	Research University very high			\checkmark	•	•
University of Richmond	Baccalaureate Arts and Sciences	\checkmark			•	♦
University of San Francisco	Research University	\checkmark				•
University of South Carolina	Research University very high		\checkmark		•	•
University of Toledo	Research University high	\checkmark				•
University of Washington	Research University very high	\checkmark				•
University of Wisconsin, Madison	Research University very high	\checkmark			•	•
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater	Master's Larger	\checkmark				•
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Research University very high	\checkmark				•
Winthrop University	Master's Larger	\checkmark				•

¹KEY: \bullet =baseline only \blacklozenge = baseline and follow-up \diamondsuit =follow-up only * Denotes institutions participating in Fall 2007 data collection.

At the same time, public outcry for greater accountability in higher education has prompted widespread assessment efforts in almost every corner of academe. Responding to the assessment call, individual living-learning programs have endeavored to show how their activities and services enhance various student outcomes, from retention to academic performance to intellectual and social development. The results of these assessments, while informative in discrete ways, have created a patchwork body of empirical literature on livinglearning programs. Because most studies of living-learning effectiveness were conducted by individual programs with idiosyncratic research questions and varied empirical methods, the findings of these studies are mostly disconnected and limited in representativeness.

Campus leaders still need access to research that identifies common (not idiosyncratic) and positive student outcomes across different types of living-learning programs and across multiple institutional contexts. Practitioners need empirical evidence about the conditions that foster positive outcomes so that they can intentionally cultivate these desired outcomes by influencing institutional policies, planning, and programming. The initial 2004 NSLLP study built on and complemented previous research by introducing a thematic typology employing a standard method of inquiry for different types of living-learning programs, and investigating a range of outcomes related to student learning and development.

Findings from the 2004 NSLLP

The 2004 National Study of Living Learning Programs and its pilot studies represent the most comprehensive effort to understand the influence of L/L programs on undergraduate students. The following section first presents findings describing some overarching differences between L/L and non-L/L students as well as a summary of L/L program (LLP) characteristics. Next, this section outlines some of the most important student outcomes associated with L/L program participation from our presentations and published work, with a special focus on the specific living-learning environments that serve to promote—or hinder—those outcomes. The box below references all of the empirical research studies stemming from data collected through the auspices of the National Study of Living-Learning Programs.

NSLLP Studies

- Inkelas, K. K., Daver, Z., Vogt, K., & Brown Leonard, J. (2007). Living-learning programs and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(4), 403-434.
- Longerbeam, S., Inkelas, K. K., Johnson, D., & Lee, Z. (2007). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual college student experiences: An exploratory study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(2), 215-230.
- Inkelas, K. K., Vogt, K., Longerbeam, S., Owen, J., & Johnson, D. (2006). Measuring outcomes of living-learning programs: Examining college environments and student learning and development. *Journal of General Education*, 55(1), 40-76.
- Inkelas, K. K., Johnson, D., Lee, Z., Daver, Z., Longerbeam, S., Vogt, K., & Brown Leonard, J. (2006). The role of living-learning programs on students' perceptions of intellectual growth at three large universities. *NASPA Journal*, 43(1), 115-143.
- Inkelas, K. K., Zeller, W. J., Murphy, R., & Hummel, M. (2006). Learning moves home. *About Campus*, 10(6), 10-16.
- Inkelas, K. K. (2006). Living-learning under the microscope: Study puts real numbers to living-learning trend. *ACUHO-I Talking Stick*, 23, 23-25.
- Rowan-Kenyon, H., Soldner, M., & Inkelas, K. K. (2006, November). The contributions of living-learning programs on developing civic engagement in undergraduate students. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Anaheim, CA.
- Inkelas, K. K., Johnson, D., Lee, Z., & Alvarez, P. (2005, November). *Facilitating the early success of women in STEM majors through living-learning programs.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Philadelphia, PA.
- Inkelas, K. K., & Weisman, J. (2003). Different by design: An examination of student outcomes among participants in three types of living-learning programs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(3), 335-368.
- Vogt, K., Zeller, W., & Inkelas, K. K. (2003, April). Living-learning research project underway. *ACUHO-I Talking Stick*, 20, 25-26.

NSLLP Studies (continued)

- Johnson, D. R., Soldner, M., Brown Leonard, J., Alvarez, P., Inkelas, K. K., Rowan-Kenyon, H., & Longerbeam, S. (in press). Examining sense of belonging among firstyear undergraduates from different racial/ethnic groups. *Journal of College Student Development*.
- Longerbeam, S., Inkelas, K. K., & Brower, A. M. (in press). Second-hand benefits: Student outcomes in residence halls with living-learning programs. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*.

Differences Between L/L and non-L/L Students

The majority of L/L participants in the study were women in their first or second year of college. The parental education and income levels were heterogeneous, but generally higher for L/L students. SAT scores also ranged by program type, but generally were higher for L/L students. Racial/ethnic composition of students participating in L/L programs varied greatly across program types. Students who participated in L/L programs reported more positive peer interactions and perceived their residence hall climate as more supportive. L/L participants also reported a smoother transition to college, higher levels of civic engagement, and lower levels of binge drinking than their counterparts in the traditional residence halls. However, expected statistically significant differences among L/L students and non-L/L students in terms of cognitive development, self-confidence, and appreciation of racial/ethnic diversity were not found in these data (Inkelas, 2004).

Some of the expected student outcomes were compatible with the stated goals of the L/L programs (Inkelas, 2004). For example, students involved in civic engagement L/L programs had the highest means in commitment to civic engagement. Similarly, students in large programs facilitated by student affairs/academic affairs partnerships were more likely to interact with faculty. In other cases, the outcomes and environments were less intuitive. For example, students in multicultural L/L programs did not have the highest means in racial/ethnic diversity appreciation. In addition, students in L/L programs with greater course content did not indicate that they had gained more in terms of critical thinking skills.

L/L Program Characteristics

The L/L programs that participated in the NSLLP represent a wide range of program

sizes, oversight models, and programmatic offerings (Inkelas, 2004). For example:

- 48% of L/L programs had 50 or fewer students;
- 66% of L/L program students lived in a reserved portion of a residence hall, with other non-L/L program students;
- 54% were selective;
- 31% were funded solely by Student Affairs unit, 14% solely by Academic Affairs unit, 39% a mix of both;
- 68% directly reported to Residence Life/Housing unit;
- 73% of L/L programs offered no courses for credit;
- 78% offered no special sections of large introductory courses;
- 51% had 1-5 faculty members with direct roles in L/L programs, while 33% had no faculty involvement;
- 25% offered academic advising;
- 50% facilitated study groups;
- 50% of L/L programs had no required co-curricular activities.

Among optional co-curricular programming offered through the L/L programs, 50% of the L/L programs provided team building and cultural outings, 48% offered multicultural programming, 46% engaged in community service, 40% offered career workshops, and 33% offered intramural sports activities.

The Transition to College

Two research studies demonstrate the significant role played by L/L programs in facilitating undergraduate students' transition to college. In Inkelas and Weisman's (2003) study of three types of L/L programs—Transition, Academic Honors, and Curriculum-Based Programs—the authors found that students participating in L/L programs enjoyed a smoother academic transition to college than their counterparts living in a traditional residence hall setting. Some of the environmental factors facilitating academic transition included discussions of academic issues with faculty and studying in groups. An academically supportive residence hall environment was also important in aiding the academic transition of students in Transition Programs and Curriculum-Based Programs, while socially supportive residence halls had a positive effect on the academic transition of students in Transition Programs and Academic Honors Programs. L/L programs have also proved helpful in facilitating both the academic and the social transition of students who are the first in their families to attend college, when compared to first generation students in traditional residence hall settings (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Brown Leonard, 2007). In their academic transition to college, first-generation college students benefited especially from course-related faculty interactions and their use of co-curricular residence hall resources, such as career workshops and peer counselors. The social transition of first-generation college students was aided by an academically and socially supportive residence hall climate and their use of residence hall resources.

Student Learning Outcomes

Enjoyment of Challenging Academic Pursuits: Students participating in L/L programs indicated greater enjoyment of challenging academic pursuits (such as the enjoyment of learning new material, or taking courses that are intellectually challenging) than their peers living in traditional residence hall settings. Among the three types of L/L programs examined in Inkelas and Weisman's (2003) study, Transition and Academic Honors Program participants were aided in attaining this outcome by their discussions of academic issues with faculty. Academic Honors and Curriculum-Based L/L participants benefited significantly from their discussions of social or cultural issues with peers, such as human rights, multiculturalism, and personal beliefs.

Intellectual Growth: While participation in a L/L program was not significantly related to students' perceived growth in cognitive complexity (i.e., intellectual change during the college years), L/L participants did show significant gains in their growth in liberal learning (i.e., openness to new ideas and concepts) in comparison to traditional residence hall students (Inkelas et al., 2006). Among L/L students, growth in cognitive complexity in some campus contexts can be positively related to use of abstract critical thinking skills in coursework and socially supportive residence hall environments. Interactions with diverse peers were found to be related to L/L students' growth in liberal learning, and in some cases, to abstract critical thinking skills.

Civic Engagement

Students in civically based L/L programs exhibited a significantly stronger sense of civic engagement—reflected in their commitment to making a contribution to their respective communities and the greater public— than students in other types of L/L programs, as well as

those living in traditional residence hall settings (Rowan-Kenyon, Soldner, & Inkelas, 2006). Importantly, L/L programs achieve this educational outcome by supporting and providing opportunities for co-curricular involvement directed at civic pursuits, such as community service activities.

Sense of Belonging

Significant differences exist in college students' sense of belonging to the college environment based on race and ethnicity. Perhaps most importantly, students of color exhibit a less strong sense of belonging than White students. Johnson et al. (in press) found that while L/L programs did not play a role in increasing the sense of belonging of students of the racial groups included in the study, it is crucial that colleges and universities provide for a socially supportive residence hall environment in their efforts to support students' sense of belonging.

"Second-hand benefits" of L/L programs

In some instances, the benefits of housing L/L programs in residence halls extend beyond L/L participants. In Longerbeam, Inkelas, and Brower's (in press) study, in arrangements where a residence hall building gave home to both L/L and traditional residence environments, traditional residence hall participants perceived their residential climate as more socially supportive and were more likely to report positive diversity interactions with their peers than traditional residence hall students living in buildings with no L/L programs. In addition, the proportion of L/L programs in a residence hall building were more likely to report socially supportive residential climates than students in halls with less than two-thirds or no L/L occupancy.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the National Study of Living-Learning Programs is based on Astin's (1993) "input-environment-outcome" (I-E-O) college impact model, in which *outcomes* (student characteristics after exposure to college) are thought to be influenced by both *inputs* (pre-college characteristics) and *environments* (the various programs, policies, relationships with faculty and peers, and other educational experiences that impact students). Astin argued that research examining how the college environment influences student change or development will always be biased unless it controls for as many student inputs as possible. Living-learning participants come to college with diverse pre-college perceptions and experiences, or *inputs*, and they respond differently to the variety of campus environments that mediate the impact of college and influence student outcomes. By identifying and accounting for these differences, the NSLLP provides a robust assessment of the effects of living-learning programs on student learning and development. The NSLLP survey incorporates several input measures, including demographic characteristics, high school achievement, and pre-college motivations for college attendance. This last measurement attempts to account for students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that may shape their initial engagement with the college experience.

The *environments* of primary importance for the NSLLP are types of living-learning participation, faculty-student and peer interactions that occur in relation to living-learning participation, living-learning and residence hall resources, and students' perceptions of academic and social support in residence halls. The NSLLP also examines other forms of campus experience, such as academic majors, study group interactions, quality of effort in various activities, and extra-curricular involvement. In addition, the study added several environmental measures related to the pre-college and college experiences of women in STEM majors, such as significant mentors, professional development, academic expectations, and confidence in STEM activities.

Outcomes in the NSLLP include students' perceptions of their academic and social transition to college, intellectual abilities and growth, self-confidence, diversity appreciation, civic engagement, and satisfaction/sense of belonging, as well as reports of their alcohol use and behaviors, academic achievement, and plans for persistence. Table I – B outlines the major constructs examined through the NSLLP survey instrument.

Table I – B Major Constructs of the NSLLP Survey Instrument (Based on Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome Model)

Inputs

Demographics

- High school achievement
- Pre-college assessment of importance of college involvement and perceptions of self-confidence

Environments

- Academic major
- Peer interactions
- Faculty interactions
- Co-curricular involvement
- Study group interactions
- Alcohol-related experiences
- Use of residence hall resources
- Perceptions of residence hall climate
- Diverse interactions
- Perception of campus racial climate
- Time spent on leisure activities
- Significant mentors, professional development, academic expectations, and confidence in STEM activities
- Mentoring experience
- Academic and social influences on living-learning program participation

Outcomes

- Estimations of academic and social transition to college
- Perceptions of intellectual abilities and growth
- Perceptions of self-confidence
- Appreciation of diversity
- Sense of civic engagement
- Alcohol use and behaviors
- Plans to return to institution
- Self-reports of cumulative college grade point average
- Overall satisfaction and sense of belonging
- Drop-out risk

Study Methods

The NSLLP data collection was conducted using an Internet survey. Respondents were contacted primarily via email. All data were collected and most emails were sent to participants by Survey Sciences Group, LLC. Each participating school provided sample lists containing students and contact information. The sample contained two types of students: those participating in living-learning programs, and a comparison sample made up of students not participating in a living-learning program.

Two sample groups were identified to allow for a comparison between those students who participated in living-learning programs and those who did not. The living-learning sample was selected randomly or by census if the full population was used. The comparison sample was matched, as best as possible, to the living-learning sample by gender, race/ethnicity, academic class level, and residence hall occupancy.

Instrumentation

The NSLLP questionnaire contained two main sections; the base questionnaire and the custom question section. The original baseline questionnaire was created by the NSLLP staff through two years of review and pilot testing. The original questionnaire was pilot tested at four universities in the spring of 2003. Based upon those survey results, several tests were conducted to test the reliability and validity of the pilot questionnaire (Inkelas, Vogt, Longerbeam, Owen, & Johnson, 2006). Reliability was tested primarily through the internal consistency of scales designed to measure several of the constructs discussed in Table I - B. Composite measures representing the major constructs were developed in 2003 using exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach alpha reliability testing. Additionally, the consistency of the scales across the campuses was tested using data from each individual institution in the pilot study. Cronbach alpha reliabilities of the scales for the 2003 pilot test ranged from .623 to .898. Reliability of the scales was re-tested with the 2004 NSLLP data, and Cronbach alpha scores ranged from .624 to .918. For more information about the NSLLP composite scales, see Appendix A. Two kinds of validity of the NSLLP instrument were evaluated: content validity and construct validity. In order to establish the content validity of the instrument, prior to the 2003 pilot test administration, approximately 15 living-learning program administrators reviewed the items on the instrument. In addition, as mentioned previously, the survey was pilot tested at four campuses in the spring of 2003 and a previous version of the survey was administered on one campus in the spring of 2002. After each new administration, the content of the questions was revised for clarity.

Construct validity was evaluated by investigating expected similarities within themes, and dissimilarities across themes. Construct validity was also determined by studying group differences. The differences between living-learning and control students, and the differences among demographic groups, matched higher education theory and the results from prior research. For more information about the reliability and validity of the constructs on the NSLLP survey, see Inkelas et al. (2006).

The 2007 survey is an edited version of the 2004 survey. Questions related to choice of major and patterns of enrollment were added to the instrument, as well as items related to the pre-college and college experiences of women in STEM majors, such as significant mentors, professional development, academic expectations, and confidence in STEM activities.

I - 13

Composite scales were reconfigured to create a more parsimonious survey instrument, and retested for internal consistency with the 2007 data. Cronbach alpha scores of the composite measures from the 2007 baseline survey ranged from .655 to .960.

The custom question section contained two question types. The first type included required questions that had custom response choices (school/college of enrollment [e.g., College of Arts & Sciences], residence hall, living-learning program). The second type included questions written by the host institution and provided to the NSLLP staff by each school. Custom questions were asked only of the students enrolled in the school that provided the questions.

Data Collection

For the 2007 NSLLP, a data collection schedule was customized with each participating school. Generally, data collection lasted approximately five weeks on a campus, and was managed around major campus milestones such as spring break and final exams. Additionally, data collection generally did not start before two weeks had passed since the start of the Winter or Spring semester. These parameters resulted in many different data collection schedules. Each campus received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or provided an exemption letter before data collection could begin.

Email communications were sent to prospective respondents, inviting them to participate in the survey. Each email contained a URL and a unique survey ID number that was used to access the survey. The use of a unique survey ID allowed respondents who did not complete the survey in one sitting to return to the unanswered portion of the survey. Students who did not respond or who had incomplete surveys received reminder emails asking them to complete the survey. For those who did not complete the survey, up to three reminders were sent. In addition, some schools chose to make extra contacts with students to boost response rates.

The NSLLP encouraged participating schools to include an incentive for students to participate. The incentive was mentioned in all email communications. As an incentive, the University of San Francisco entered respondents in a lottery for an iPod shuffle or Palm Z22 Organizer.

Responses

The overall national response rate for the 2007 NSLLP was approximately 20.3% and the total number of respondents was 22,258. The final count of responses for your institution can be found in Table I - C.

Responses for enversity (or Bull I l'uncisco		
Sample	Sample Size	Total Responses	Response Rate
Living-Learning Sample	104	23	22.1%
Comparison Sample	500	79	15.8%
Total	604	102	16.9%

Table I - CResponses for University of San Francisco

We weighted the data used to generate your custom report so that the characteristics of respondents match the characteristics of the original sample provided to us by your institutional contact. This helps ensure that you can make more accurate generalizations about the conclusions reached in this study. Your institution's data was weighted by gender, race/ethnicity, and academic class level.

Data Delivery

Each school received a flash drive with an SPSS data file containing all data from their institution's respondents. This data file contained all data collected in the base questionnaire in addition to the data collected in the school's custom question section. Furthermore, the flash drive includes institutional responses to the Living-Learning Programs Survey (LLPS), as well as a PDF copy of the full custom report.

Data Analyses

Most of the survey questions were combined to form composite scales based upon the factor analysis and reliability testing described in the instrumentation portion of this chapter. Composite scales were used instead of individual survey items because they provided more rigorous reliability and validity than single items, and because, often, the individual items were designed to be developed into composite measures. For a complete list of all of the composite

measures and the constructs they represented, see Appendix A. Composite scales were analyzed using one-way ANOVAs, and the categorical measures were analyzed using chi-square.

Format of the Report

The customized data are presented in Sections III through VII of this report. Section II provides tips on how to read and interpret these tables.

Section III: Institutional Comparison Tables

Section III reports the findings for your institution's entire living-learning (L/L) and nonliving-learning (comparison) samples, as well as statistically significant differences between your institution's L/L and comparison samples.

Section III also includes the results by L/L and comparison samples for six types of institutions represented in the study:

- 1. Baccalaureate and master's universities
- 2. Research universities
- 3. Research universities with high research activity and fewer than 10 L/L programs
- 4. Research universities with high research activity and 10 or more L/L programs
- 5. Research universities with very high research activity and fewer than 10 L/L programs
- 6. Research universities with very high research activity and 10 or more L/L programs

The primary groupings for these categories were based on institutions' Carnegie classifications. The Carnegie Foundation classifies all institutions of higher education into distinct groups. The institutions participating in the 2007 NSLLP represented three groups in the Carnegie classification system:

• Doctoral granting research universities must award at least 20 doctoral degrees a year. Designations include Research University, very high research activity and Research University, high research activity. Of the 52 schools participating in the 2007 NSLLP 24 are Research Universities with very high research activity, 15 are Research Universities with high research activity, and 4 are classified as Research Universities.

- Master's colleges and universities offer graduate education through the masters degree, awarding 50 or more master's degrees per year and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees. Colleges and universities in this category are labeled as small, medium, or large depending on the size of their graduate programs. There were 8 Master's universities in the 2007 NSLLP.
- Baccalaureate colleges award at least 10 percent of their undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level and award fewer than 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees. The 2007 NSLLP included only 1 baccalaureate institution. This college was added to the Master's colleges and universities category to permit confidential comparisons.

Finally, Section III also includes the results by L/L and comparison samples for the entire sample.

Section IV: Living-Learning Comparison Tables

Section IV reports the findings for the individual living-learning programs at your institution. Because of the relatively small number of students in each living-learning program, student input data (including items such as gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) were not analyzed in order to preserve the confidentiality of respondents. In cases where there were fewer than 10 respondents from an individual living-learning program, in order to protect respondents' confidentiality, either the respondents from the respective program were combined with other similarly themed programs or they were not included in the school's living-learning comparison. The survey results are organized in a fashion similar to that of Section III.

Section V: Living-Learning Good Practices

Section V of this custom report outlines good practices in living-learning program design, as evidenced by data collected as part of the 2007 NSLLP. Focusing on 14 important collegiate outcomes, we seek to answer two questions that focus on the relationships among programs'

design features and programmatic elements, powerful educational environments, and outcome attainment.

First, we ask a question often posed by practitioners about the "direct" effect of good practices on student outcomes: how do differences in program design (e.g., the role of faculty or the offering of courses) relate to differences in student outcomes? Second, we explore the consequences of living-learning participation within a broader conceptual frame that includes the contributions of peers, faculty, and the residential environment. This "indirect" approach to evaluating good practices begins by considering what co-curricular and residential environments are most strongly related to desired outcomes, and then moves to a discussion of what design features and programmatic elements are most strongly related to developing educationally purposive environments.

Remaining Sections

Section VI of this report summarizes the custom questions asked only of the participants at your institution, and Section VII presents the responses that your students provided for the open-ended question at the end of the survey.

Uses of the Data

Strategic use of your institution's living-learning program data can provide you the ability to communicate to key stakeholders how living-learning programs contribute effectively to the institution's core mission and goals, in terms of:

- a justification of living-learning programs as legitimate uses of limited resources;
- evidence of student learning outcomes to contribute to programmatic and institutional accreditation reviews; and
- support for the effectiveness of academic and student affairs partnerships in promoting student outcomes.

External stakeholders such as accreditors and professional associations also require evidence of student learning and development in all aspects of college life – not only in the classroom. Several accrediting agencies have highlighted student skills and abilities, of which institutions must provide evidence, including:

• Analytical and information skills;

- Knowledge and cognitive abilities;
- Maturation in student attitudes, life skills, and involvement in co-curricular activities; and
- Effectively addressing student needs, experiences, and levels of satisfaction.

As a direct result of your institution's participation in the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP), you may be able to present concrete evidence of enhanced student learning outcomes when an accreditation review is scheduled. Detailed analysis of your institution's data may benefit both your living-learning programs and your campus, and a favorable review could persuade institutional administrators of the benefits of your program.

The data from the NSLLP can be used in a number of other ways in order to better understand and further enhance your living-learning programs. They will be useful for you and your colleagues in determining what approach will work best for your department and campus. After the 2004 data set was distributed, our participating campuses tailored their data presentations in some interesting ways. Sharing the results with a variety of different audiences constitutes the most prevalent best practice utilized by participating schools. This was a beneficial approach for practitioners, as they were able to use the data to train residential life staff professionals and paraprofessionals, to inform and affirm faculty stakeholders, and to design the future of their programs.

The NSLLP data can help residence hall staff in both understanding their students in new ways and in evaluating how their programs have been working. In training on the data, it is useful to help staff learn to realistically interpret data and understand what conclusions can be drawn. In-house, you may want to develop guides for activities in order to facilitate discussion sessions about the findings. One institution used the data from this study along with those from other national and institutional assessments to create a composite of what the typical student in a learning community looks like. This picture is shared during orientation of new professional staff, graduate students, and undergraduate staff. Then, as a large group, the staff members discuss the problem areas, identify who can tackle them best, and incorporate ideas into strategic planning for the year. Another way to use the data from the NSLLP might include breaking down the information by community, using a program like SPSS. By providing staff with access to their L/L program or communities' data, you create loci of control that they can work with individually and in smaller groups, such as staff teams.

As previously mentioned, having information collected by the NSLLP offered additional credibility to the work being done in L/L programs on campuses. These quantitative results also opened doors for working with faculty in varied ways. Several schools found that results from the NSLLP gave them a reason and opportunity to recognize the faculty who were already doing good work with L/L programs. In addition, through demonstration of the benefits of faculty involvement with their L/L programs, several campuses used the data to recruit additional faculty members to participate in their L/L programs. Finally, the departments were able to further educate administrators and faculty on the advantages offered by their L/L programs and raise awareness about the programs.

Internally, the NSLLP data can help guide the future of your programs. With the 2004 data, practitioners highlighted positive outcomes in students participating in L/L programs as well as specific strengths of programs. The data also helped individuals to identify areas for improvement and make appropriate changes. The data were used as a baseline for growth of programs and as performance indicators for current programs. Due to the broad nature of the questions asked in 2004 and now in 2007, you will find that the results provide important institutional data and allow you to compare them to findings from other sources of institutional data. One 2004 participant explained that he sent a fairly comprehensive data set back to the NSLLP, and they merged it onto their data, allowing him to do numerous additional, campusspecific, analyses.

One final recommended approach to determining how you and your colleagues can best use the data is to assemble a team of people interested in the study. Have a team member with some statistical skills run initial reports to whet the appetites of those involved. Encourage the team to meet regularly in order to ask questions, run additional statistics, and talk about the implications. The team approach serves several purposes—it gets people interested in talking about the results, helps offices see connections among their work, helps focus on a timeline for analyzing the data, and helps people make use of their assessments.

We at the National Study of Living-Learning Programs are always interested in learning how institutions have used our data for their own purposes. If you have utilized our data in your programming and/or policy decisions, please contact us at info@livelearnstudy.net. We would greatly appreciate hearing from you!

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How to Reach Us:

National Study of Living-Learning Programs



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