2010-2011 LEAP Program Annual Report

Office of Undergraduate Studies

The University of Utah

Prepared and Submitted by:

Jeff Webb Ph.D.,
LEAP Program Associate Director

Carolyn Bliss, Ph.D.,
LEAP Program Director

July 31, 2011

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Executive Summary

LEAP continues to flourish and grow. The Program offered 34 sections for 1000 students (919 in first-year classes, including Architecture LEAP, and 81 students in the Multiyear programs), which represents 34% of the incoming freshman class. This was an increase over last year's enrollment of 958. Given this increase, combined with the retirement of Dr. Kris Koford and the likelihood that Engineering LEAP will continue to expand, LEAP hired two new professors for the 2011-12 school year: Dr. Norah Wood and Dr. Steve Maisch. Dr. Wood, who comes to LEAP from the Political Science Department, will take over Education LEAP and teach a section of Explorations LEAP, while Dr. Maisch, who recently earned his PhD in Economics, will teach two sections of ELEAP. Welcome to both! And thanks to Dr. Koford for his years of dedicated service to LEAP. These staffing changes bring the total number of faculty for 2011-12 to 14.

Another important staffing change occurred within Undergraduate Studies with the retirement of Dr. John Francis, Senior Associate VP for Academic Affairs, who took a great interest in LEAP and advocated far and wide on behalf of the program and its faculty. Dr. Martha Bradley, who is Dean of the Honors College, and who happens to be one of the founding faculty of LEAP (back in 1994), replaced Dr. Francis as Associate VP for Academic Affairs as of July 1, 2011. We are excited to continue our efforts in LEAP under her leadership. Dr. Carolyn Bliss prepared a comprehensive summary of the LEAP Program ("The Past, Present, and Future of the LEAP Program, a Learning Community for Entering Students") for Dr. Bradley, which is included in the appendix.

A notable development last year in LEAP concerned the rank status of LEAP faculty at the university. In March of 2010 the Academic Senate passed Rule and Policy 6-310, which allows LEAP professors (along with those affiliated with other interdisciplinary teaching programs on campus such as Gender Studies, Honors, Writing, and Ethnic Studies) to apply for faculty status at the lecturer rank. This year five LEAP faculty applied for, and were granted, faculty status under Rule and Policy 6-310: Dr. Carolyn Bliss, Dr. Ann Engar and Dr. Carolan Ownby became Professors on the lecturer track; Dr. Jeff Webb and Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta became Associate Professors, also on the lecturer track. Other LEAP faculty will apply for this designation next year. The appointments are for 5 years. We think this is a significant change, not only because it formally recognizes the importance of LEAP to the university but also because, in the case of LEAP specifically, it will support our effort to hire and retain top-notch faculty, which ultimately benefits our students. See the appendix for a summary for LEAP's detailed plan for implementing Rule and Policy 6-310.

LEAP will be offering a new "track" next year, Veteran's LEAP, for military veterans who are starting college and for other students interested in the issues raised by the reintegration into society of returning veterans. Dr. Matt Bradley will be teaching this class.

Our efforts in program assessment this year broke some new ground. We suspended our customary fall and spring student surveys in order to use an instrument developed by Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI). (Our use of this survey was supported by a $2000 grant from the Parent's Fund.) Administered in April by email, the survey promises to provide us with much useful data on the program's effects on students. It allows us to benchmark our performance against that of other, similar programs around the country, enabling identification of areas of relative strength and weakness. We can also track our improvement from year to year. A comprehensive review of this year's findings is included in this report below, under "Assessment."

Our paper on the matching study of LEAP student performance that was begun in 2008 is now under review at the *Journal of College Student Retention*. The most recent version of this article is included in the appendix. Most noteworthy among our findings is that women seem to benefit more than men do from the LEAP experience, though the effect sizes are small (meaning that, all things considered, LEAP contributes a fairly small piece to this performance difference). In comparison to their non-LEAP matches, that is, LEAP women show significantly improved retention, GPAs and time-to-graduation ($p<.05$). LEAP men also outperformed their non-LEAP matches in these areas, but the differences were not statistically significant. We plan to follow up on the matching study by conducting a large scale regression analysis of LEAP student performance. Mark St. Andre will be conducting this study.

Social network data was also collected both semesters in a new and ongoing study of the formation of classroom community in LEAP courses. Students were asked to identify those classmates with whom they have contact as well as those they consider friends. The hypothesis of the study is a) that more connected students will report higher levels of course satisfaction and have higher rates of retention than more isolated students, and b) that they will also have higher grades since being more connected implies being well-informed about assignments, due dates, and course content generally. Our objective, in essence, is to model classroom community in the LEAP Program and to correlate it with

student performance. Preliminary results are positive. The density of friend and acquaintance ties in spring semester LEAP classes is significantly correlated with course satisfaction (r^2=.44), suggesting that students associate classroom community with improved learning. (This relationship was not present in fall semester.) This result is a confirmation of our approach and of the concept of learning communities in general. These data are discussed at greater length below, under "Assessment."

LEAP Program Description

LEAP is a year-long learning community for entering University students. It consists of two three-credit-hour courses – one fall semester, one spring semester – taken with the same professor and classmates, allowing students to build community. LEAP's two classes typically fulfill the University's diversity requirement and two general education requirements (one in social science and one in the humanities) and are linked to optional classes in writing, library research, major selection, and service. (Health LEAPs fulfill two humanities requirements and the diversity requirement; Architecture LEAP fulfills fine arts and humanities or two humanities.)

LEAP's mission is three-fold:

1. To promote and implement scholarship and service for first-year students through an integrated, interdisciplinary, and collaborative teaching and learning community;
2. To attract and retain a diverse student population; and
3. To engage students in an interactive exploration of diversity issues both in the classroom and through community outreach.

A Program Overview for the Year

As mentioned above, LEAP enrolled 1000 students (919 in first-year classes, including Architecture LEAP, and 81 students in the multiyear programs),

as of September 7, 2010 (the day tuition was due). Counting enrollments is always tricky, since class numbers continue to fluctuate through the year. For the purposes of the following overview, which presents enrollment in different programs, the number of students who remained enrolled through the semester (and continue to be represented on the archived class schedule) will be used. By this measure, the program enrolled 893 first year students in the fall, as compared with 876 students last year. (These enrollment numbers all include Architecture LEAP; 64 of these students were in the multiyear LEAP programs: Health Science LEAP and Pre-law LEAP.) Fall-spring retention was again strong. Of the 893 students who began in the fall, 665 students, or 74%, registered for the spring semester (as of January 10). LEAP offered 29 sections this year for first year students during fall semester and 28 sections in the spring semester.

- Fall Semester 2010. LEAP offered 15 sections of 1101 for 413 students, 6 sections of 1100 for 203 students, and 1 section of Architecture 1610 for 35 students. Of these 1101 sections, 6 were Exploration LEAP (2 of which were designated Service Learning sections), 3 were Business

  LEAP (one of which was for ASAP business students), 2 were Residence Halls LEAP, 1 was Education LEAP (offered for the first time), and 1 was International LEAP, a new course offered for the first time in 2010-11. There were 7 ELEAP courses (up one section from last year) offered for 242 students. Among the LEAP 1100 sections, 2 were Fine Arts LEAP, 2 were College of Health LEAP, 1 was Health Sciences LEAP (first year), and one was Pre-Law LEAP (first year).

- Spring Semester 2010. LEAP offered 15 sections of 1100 for 331 students, 3 sections of 2004 (the second semester of College of Health and Health Sciences LEAP) for 76 students, 2 sections of 1101 (the second semester of Fine Arts LEAP) for 55 students, 1 section of Architecture 1611 (Architecture LEAP) for 35 students, 1 section of 1150 (the second semester of Pre-Law LEAP) for 17 students, and 6 sections of 1500 (the second semester of ELEAP) for 151 students. 665 students were enrolled in total in these courses (as compared with 657 in spring 2010).

In addition, LEAP offered the following courses:

- LEAP 1050: Major Selection, a course taught in the spring by University College Advisers, for 16 students.
- LEAP 2002: Peer Advisor Seminar elected for credit by 10 Peer Advisors.
- LEAP 2003: service learning for Peer Advisors (spring semester only) for 6 students.
- LEAP 1300: service learning add-ons (fall semester only) for 12 students.
- Writing 1060-01: library research add-on for 219 students.
- LEAP 2700: second year of Pre-law LEAP (spring semester) for 9 students.
- LEAP 3700: third year of Pre-law LEAP (fall semester) for 6 students; 3701 (spring semester) for 6 students.
- UUHSC 2500-001: second year of Health Sciences LEAP (fall semester) for 24 students.
- UUHSC 2500-001: Health Science Transfer course (spring semester) for 6 students.
- UUHSC 3000-001 (fall) for 16 students and 3001-001 (spring) for 16 students: third year for Health Sciences LEAP.
- UUHSC 4000-001 (fall) for 17 students and 4001-001 (spring) for 16 students: fourth year for Health Sciences LEAP.

These enrollments are very comparable to last year's.

For next year, 2011-2012, we plan to add an additional section of College of Health LEAP (bringing the total to 3 sections) and an additional section of ELEAP (bringing the total to 8 sections). We will also offer, as mentioned above, a new LEAP class for military veterans. The total number of Explorations LEAP sections will be 5, one fewer than last year. There will be only 1 Residence halls LEAP offered, down from 2 last year. In all, 30 sections of LEAP will be offered to new students (counting Architecture LEAP), 1 more than was offered last year.

Changes in LEAP

1. New Teaching and Administrative Assignments

As mentioned above, LEAP hired two new professors for the 2011-12 school year from a very talented pool of applicants: Dr. Nora Wood and Dr. Steve Maisch. Both come to LEAP with a great deal of teaching expertise and success. Both will start out teaching 2 sections each. Dr. Wood will teach Education LEAP and Residence Halls LEAP. Dr. Maisch will teach two

sections of ELEAP. Both received the PhD's from the U, in Political Science and Economics respectively. Dr. Wood has been teaching and advising in Political Science where she developed several new courses and received rave teaching reviews. Dr. Maisch brings strong social science credentials to LEAP (his dissertation was on the economics of sports) as well as a lot of teaching experience as a graduate student, also to rave reviews. We are excited to have both of them join the LEAP faculty. Welcome!

Dr. Kris Koford will be moving on from LEAP. We gratefully acknowledge his long dedication to the program and wish him the best in future endeavors.

2. New Programs and Partnerships

Veterans LEAP. Dr. Matt Bradley will be teaching a new Veteran's LEAP for military veterans who are returning to, or starting, college and for other students interested in veterans' issues. The class will satisfy the same three graduation requirements as other LEAP classes.

New and Ongoing Partnerships. LEAP maintained or added partnerships with the Horizonte ESL Program, Guuleysi, Highland High ESL Program, West High School, Crossroads Urban Center, University Neighborhood Partners, Jackson, Riley and Mountain View Elementary Schools, Washington Elementary, Hser Ner Moo Center, International Rescue Committee, and Bryant Middle School as well as various departments and entities across campus. A new partnership was formed with the AMES School.

LEAP Mentorship Program. A new program matching members of the Board of Advisors for Undergraduate Advancement and the LEAP Community Advisory Board with LEAP Peer Advisors and LEAP students from the multi-year programs in a two-semester mentoring relationship was initiated in the fall of 2010. By all reports, the program was successful and will be continued in 2011-12. We matched 13 community leaders working in a variety of fields with 13 students. The program will continue this coming year. See the appendix for the information packet for mentors.

Times Café. LEAP has begun working with the *New York Times* to sponsor an annual essay contest and discussion series. Last year's topic was immigration. Drs. Matt Bradley and Rebecca Larson organized a discussion for students on November 19 on immigration issues. The essay contest was on the same topic and was won by Leslie Cepeda Echevarria. There were 12 submissions. This year's topic will focus on September 11, in conjunction with the *Times*'s special ten year anniversary series.

3. Program Assessment

We continued to implement and expand the assessment plan put in place in 2005. Here are the current components of LEAP Program assessment.

EBI Survey, administered in spring semester. For an analysis of this year's survey see below under "Program Assessment Analysis" (synopsis) and the appendix (full report). As noted above, the EBI survey provides LEAP with a powerful means for identifying areas for improvement, tracking performance, and benchmarking our success against other similar programs and institutions. The main selling point of the EBI survey is that is comes with a host of sophisticated statistical analysis tools that would be very difficult for us to replicate. The survey response was low this year, since it was administered by email (26%), but next year the survey will be filled out in class to ensure better response rate. The low response rate this year did impact our ability to look at individual LEAP sections.

Regression study comparing LEAP and non-LEAP students on GPA, retention, and time-to-graduation. This study, which Mark St. Andre is initiating this summer, follows the matching study that has been discussed at some length in previous Annual Reports. The regression study will include median income by zip code and should allow more satisfactory disentangling of student performance and socioeconomic status (SES) than was possible in the matching study, where high school attended served as a proxy for SES. We also hope that the greater number of students in this study (our dataset, going back to 1999, is quite large) will enable us to look at the performance of non-white students more closely than we were able to in the matching study.

Social Network Analysis. In fall and spring semesters surveys were administered to students that asked them to identify friends and acquaintances in their LEAP classes. Although social structure is often ignored in studies of college student performance, our hypothesis is that it matters quite a lot in LEAP classes. We know this anecdotally as teachers. The goal of this study is to map the social networks of classes and correlate students' network positions with their performance. This study is IRB approved and will be ongoing. Preliminary results will be discussed below under "Program Assessment Analysis."

4. Peer Advisor Program

See the Annual Report for AY 2005-2006 for a description of the Peer Advisor Program. (http://www.leap.utah.edu/media/leap_05-06_report.pdf)

The Peer Advisor program had another very successful year under Dr. Carolan Ownby's leadership. This year's cohort of Peer Advisors numbered 29: one per LEAP section including a Senior Peer Advisor. They met twice a month as a group and had the following committee responsibilities:

Senior PA - *Justin Clifford*
The Senior PA is the designated leader of the Peer Advisor cohort. S/he has already served one full year as a PA, and is therefore in a strong position to mentor the group. This PA is charged with strengthening the sense of team and collaboration among all PAs, and defining the vision for the year. S/he is in charge of organizing and carrying out a retreat between fall and spring semesters. S/he draws up the agenda for and helps conduct the monthly meetings. This PA represents LEAP at occasions such as recruitment events and campus meetings, where LEAP is asked to send a representative.

Justin's introductory PowerPoint for the Peer Advisors is included in the appendix.

Service: See You at the U – *Savannah Manwill, Justine Starks, Shahara Tiatia, Shawn Whitney*
In the spring of 2005, the LEAP Peer Advisors adopted a service activity which has become a Peer Advisor tradition. Through University Neighborhood Partnership, Peer Advisors sponsor a *See You at the U* activity, where approximately eighty to one hundred students from Northwest Middle School come to the University campus for a full morning of activities. People on this committee are responsible to make all

arrangements for the campus tour in the fall [including planning with Ellie Brady at Northwest, contacting University departments for tours, making sure transportation is arranged, collecting items for 'goodie bags' which the students take with them when they leave] and a follow-up in the spring [soliciting community donations for tee-shirts for the students, having the shirts made, arranging to have certificates made, and arranging a visit to Northwest Middle School towards the end of the school year to present these to the students].

Service: **Food Drive** – ***Aria Irani, Amy Tran, Grant Zimmerli***
Grant reports: "My committee was the food drive committee. We ran a food drive in both the fall and spring semesters and took part in the trick or can food drive in the fall semester as well. We ultimately collected about 2000 lbs of food and 1000 dollars by the end of the two semester period. I think that this committee assignment is a good one, but I would stress to future committee members the importance of doing the first food drive earlier in the fall semester. Once the other food drives run by the school begin, students are less inclined to donate to what they see as just another food drive. Also, it helps if the committee members know ahead of time that they can use the Sill Center for a food drop-off point as it is much easier to access and load/unload at than the LEAP House. Plus, make sure the members know that the food can be weighed at Crossroads and doesn't have to be weighed separately by them. It helps donations if PA's can put a face on the food drive so having information for the PA's to use to describe Crossroads to their students would make students more inclined to donate.

"I feel the food drive committee plays a very important part in the LEAP program, showing students that even a bit of help here and there can add up to a big payoff for the less fortunate later, and stressing the importance of charity and community involvement in the LEAP program."

Service: LEAP to the U – ***Cassie Mabey***
This person worked with the "LEAP to the U" Service LEAP section, which has a partnership with students at West High School. This person attended all meetings at WHS, networked with the LEAP student leaders at WHS, took full responsibility for the LEAP/WHS bowling activity, helped organize the campus tour and Shadow Day, and assisted the *LEAP to the U* Intern to make the program run smoothly. See the description of this year's accomplishments under "Service" below.

Service: Fine Arts Community Liaison – *Dani Biner, Tristyn Bingham*
The LEAP Fine Arts sections gave a major production at the end of spring semester. These Peer Advisors helped make necessary contacts during the fall, and were responsible for production details during the spring, as directed by Dr. Bauman.

Service: University Service Corp Representative – *Sarah Hammer*
The University has formed the University Service Corps this year to try to coordinate the many service activities that are carried out on campus. This PA attended occasional meetings and kept the other PA's and through them the LEAP students informed of service opportunities on campus. Each organization has been asked to give active support to one event, and because of our existing commitment to a food drive we have committed to working with the campus Trick or Can. The USC Rep was also responsible for coordinating the activities of the Food Drive Committee with the campus Trick or Can.

Sarah Hammer writes: "The University Service Corps is a group of student representatives from different organizations who send a representative to tell other organizations about the service projects they are planning to do. USC is great because it offers the chance for other student groups to jump on board with one organization's idea and help support it or co-sponsor the activity. This way instead of a million little service projects that are trying to do the same thing, there can be one that will get more people and support than all the other little ones could by themselves. As the LEAP representative at USC, I was able to let the group know when we were planning our food drives and do them at the same time as theirs in order to not make students worn out with food drives. Also, I was able to learn about other service projects on campus that either the Peer Advisors or students could participate in."

Administrative Assistant – ***Gaby Jensen***
This person was responsible to help Dr. O keep all necessary records:

- Email reminders to Peer Advisors to hand in monthly time sheets
- A running record of all monthly time sheets on Excel
- A summary of the PA time sheets to Dr. O at the beginning of each month
- Notes taken at our bi-monthly PA meetings, and emailed to all Peer Advisors and professors

LEAP House Staffing – *Mazi Nourian*
It's important that LEAP students have access to the LEAP House. However, we need Peer Advisors to staff the LEAP House so that the LEAP students can gain that access. A list of the Peer Advisors' names is kept at the desk in the Heritage Center, and Peer Advisors can pick up a key to the LEAP House there. When finished, the PA must securely lock up the LEAP

House and return the key to the HC desk. Time spent staffing the LEAP House counts toward Pas' required ten hours per week. The PA in charge of staffing needs to compile a full schedule for both fall and spring semesters by the third week of each semester. The LEAP House is staffed from 5-9 pm, Monday through Thursday.

Activity: Opening and Closing Events – ***Lindy Downs, Linda Shober***
The opening and closing picnics have traditionally been well attended by LEAP students. They are a physical manifestation of the community we study and strive to build in the curriculum. The students on this committee planned both. They were in charge of publicity, activities at the picnics, arranging for food, etc. These students also help with the planning of any informal events.

Budget – ***Logan McWilliams***
The person who takes this responsibility serves as a liaison between LEAP and ASUU. Peer Advisors constitute the leadership of the LEAP Club, and are entitled to apply for money from ASUU. The person in charge of the budget has at least five responsibilities:

- Contact ASUU [as well as last year's budget person] immediately, and find out how we access the money we are allotted for the current year, how we make line-item changes, etc.
- Communicate frequently with Dr. O, evaluating how money was spent or might have been spent for LEAP that month. These communications should result in recommendations on what money we will apply for, for next year.
- Attend the meeting [which usually happens in February or March] sponsored by ASUU where one learns how to submit a budget, and then actually submit the budget on behalf of LEAP.
- Write a short summary of budget procedures at the end of the school year, which will be used to help next year's PA in charge of budget
- Be available to attend the PA Workshop in August to orient the new PA in charge of budget
- Be ready to petition ASUU for additional funds in September, based on the response to last spring's budget request.

Publicity – ***Shauna Ma***

- Committee members are responsible to fully document activities and service projects organized and carried out by the Peer Advisors for the academic year. Documentation includes pictures, as well as information like how many people attended, who the service projects benefitted, how much food and money was collected in the case of the food drive, etc. Shauna's report for the 2010-11 school year is included in the appendix.
- In connection with the written report, committee members are responsible to produce a power point presentation [due at the end of

the school year] which documents the year, and which can be used in the next Peer Advisor workshop.
- They maintain the Peer Advisor Facebook page for high school students.
- They contact the Chroni with any noteworthy news items
- They solicit noteworthy news about LEAP students for inclusion on the LEAP web page
- They update outreach material when needed.

Handbook Revision – ***Whitney Allison***
This person is responsible for updating information contained in the student resources section of the Peer Advisor handbook. This is done largely by referring to suggestions made during the summer class. This update is due to Dr. O by mid-October on CD.

Sweatshirt Design - ***RyLee Stowell***
For the past several years Peer Advisors have opted to have a sweatshirt identifying them as PAs in the LEAP program. The person in charge of this needs some skill in art [including graphic art]. S/he designs the shirt, helps the budget person lobby ASUU to partially fund the shirts, collects any necessary money from interested Peer Advisors, and arranges to have the shirts made. Sweatshirts should be in the hands of the Peer Advisors by November, so that PAs can wear them for *See You at the U.*

Peer Advisor Workshop Series – ***Rebecca Rasmussen***
This idea originated with a Peer Advisor. The first series consisted of informal meetings held at the LEAP House, where Peer Advisors talked to LEAP students about things they felt they had expertise in. Last year's series was more formal, with speakers being drawn from experts on campus. We have had workshops in public speaking, time management, where to go for fun in SLC and how to get there, etc. The person in charge of this series draws up a schedule, makes sure that the LEAP House is free, and advertises . This year's focus was on workshops to help LEAP students be successful at the University. This PA has a rough schedule for the first semester drawn up by mid-September.

Convocation - ***Mallory Millington, Andy Pham, Taylor Forsgren***
The LEAP Convocation, featuring a guest speaker who is a leader on the campus or in the community, sets the tone for the entire year, and LEAP faculty have been asked to make this annual event mandatory for their students. PA's on this committee help with the physical arrangements for the event. The Senior PA introduces the speaker.

LEAP SAC - ***Lexie English, Ange Holland, Emmylou Manwill, Nathaniel Cordova, chaired by Justin Clifford***

These four PA's along with the Sr. PA functioned as the first official LEAP SAC [Student Advisory Committee] The University Senate voted last year to approve a faculty advancement system for several Interdisciplinary Teaching Programs on campus including LEAP. This means that LEAP faculty could begin submitting applications for advancement in rank. All academic departments on campus include students in this process. The LEAP SAC was involved throughout the year reading the applications, meeting, voting, and reporting, in writing, on their recommendations.

Ange writes: "I really enjoyed the opportunity of being part of the first ever LEAP SAC. It was very interesting to read about the professors' views on their teaching philosophy and review their curriculum vitae. I knew all the professors prior to their reviews, which made the decision process even that much easier. The only complaint I have is the incredibly short lead time the SAC was given to be able to make our evaluations. It seemed unprofessional and was not long enough to be able to actually interview students or make any thorough research. As I mentioned earlier knowing the professor made this unnecessary; however I would strongly recommend fixing this problem for future SAC reviews."

Lexie writes: "My committee assignment was being part of the LEAP SAC. Although most of the year we didn't have a responsibility because professors were not up for evaluation at the time, there was two weeks out of the year that we had to evaluate professors and approve them for promotion, if deemed worthy. The LEAP SAC was highly organized and we were able to sift through and evaluate an enormous amount of paperwork in a short amount of time. We first evaluated professors individually and then individually sent in our recommendations. From there, the SAC leader compiled the results and sent them off to the next evaluators. As a student, I feel that I learned quite a bit about the importance of promotion and tenure for professors. I realized that students have a voice in the academic world when it comes to professors' positions, and it is important to pay close attention to student evaluations and letters of recommendation when doing the professor evaluations. I think being a part of the LEAP SAC committee was an interesting and unique opportunity and I feel that, as a group, we were able to accomplish a lot and promote several professors to positions they deserved."

Other Peer Advisor Program Developments:

Shawn Whitney was chosen to be Senior PA for the 2011-12 school year.

Gaby Jensen was chosen to deliver the report from the Peer Advisors at this year's PA Luncheon. Her remarks are included in the appendix.

There will be one additional PAs next year (including the Senior PA) because of the addition of one first-year section overall, to bring the total to 30.

5. Program Activities

LEAP sponsored the following activities in 2010-11:

- *LEAP Convocation*, Sept. 2, 2010; Speaker: Kirk Jowers, Director of the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics. See Appendix for this year's program.
- *Opening Picnic*, Sept. 17, 2010.
- *Parent Reception* for parents of this year's LEAP students, September 24.
- *PA Workshops:* Class Registration and Suggestions (October 20), Finance: Budget, Credit, Savings, and Interest (November 3), Writing and Evaluating Arguments (November 17), Stress Management (December 2). All workshops were held in the LEAP House.
- *LEAP Welcome Back Breakfast* for returning students, January 12.
- *Closing Picnic*, April 22, 2011.
- *Fall food drive* for Crossroads Urban Center, October 2010. The LEAP House collected over 522 pounds of food and donations of $231.29. Trick or Can collected 355.7 pounds of food.
- *Child Poverty Awareness Week,* October 4th-8th, 2010. This week long event is organized by Jennifer Bauman's LEAP classes. This year's event raised $1700 (all proceeds go too Neighborhood House) and was covered by KUER.
- *Times Café discussion on immigration* (mentioned above), November 19. Dr. Matt Bradley and Dr. Becky Larsen hosted a discussion on immigration issues, which was attended by about 50 LEAP students. This event was sponsored by the *New York Times*.
- *See You at the U* on November 5. 90 students from Northwest Middle School attended a campus events organized by the PAs (see below under "Service" for details).
- *Spring food drive, February 14th-18th,* also for Crossroads. 175 pounds of food and $680 were collected.
- *LEAP Creative Gala,* March 9, 2011. This event combined readings of poetry, short fiction and nonfiction with a display of photography.

- *Pre-Law LEAP luncheon,* April 8, 2011.
- *Closing reception for Health Sciences LEAP students,* April 6, 2011.
- *Fine Arts LEAP Theater production* with the students of Neighborhood House. *Color Your Way Home* premiered on April 28, 2010, and received money and support from a variety of donors.
- *Peer Advisor Luncheon* on April 12, 2011. This occasion involves campus-wide and community partners in honoring our Peer Advisors and celebrating their accomplishments. Peer Advisor Scholarships and the Frost Award for Outstanding Peer Advisor of the Year are presented. The scholarship winners are listed below. See appendix for this year's program.
- *LEAP Scholarship Reception*, April 7, 2011. This is an event honoring scholarship winners. Our *Times* essay contest winner and mentors and mentees from the LEAP Mentorship Program were also recognized. Parents and family are invited. This year's reception was held at the Alumni House.

6. Service

Formal service learning opportunities in the LEAP program for which first-year students get academic credit include Dr. Carolan Ownby's service sections of Explorations LEAP, Dr. Jennifer Bauman's spring semester sections of Fine Arts LEAP (designated as service learning sections in 2009), Dr. Ann Engar's third year Pre-Law Leap (LEAP 3700), and both semesters of Dr. Bliss's fourth year Health Sciences class (UUHSC 4000 and 4001). In addition, Dr. Bauman's fall semester sections of Fine Arts LEAP offers an optional service learning credit through the add-on course, LEAP 1300. Here are details on LEAP service during the 2009-10 school year.

Fine Arts LEAP Service. Here is a list of the service accomplishments of Dr. Jennifer Bauman's Fine Arts LEAP sections:

- Fine Arts LEAP ran LEAP Child Poverty Awareness Week. The entire effort resulted in over 1600 volunteer hours raising $1,710.16. This is 3 times more than these sections have ever collected and enough to make t-shirts for each child at Neighborhood House and to offer a cash donation to the organization as well. The effort was covered in one radio announcement on KUER and three articles in the *The Daily Utah Chronicle*. Fine Arts LEAP sections also created an exhibit of children's art at the Union Building and hosted a guest speaker. Dr. Bauman comments: "Many people have now thought about children living in poverty, and I am confident this has had an enormous impact that will touch and change many lives for the better."
- Fine Arts LEAP students created an original musical *Color Your Way Home* working with students from Neighborhood House (which included original script, music, choreography, costumes, sets, publicity, press

releases, fundraising, rehearsing with the children, etc.) as well as a "behind-the-scenes documentary." The production was performed at the U of U Fine Arts Auditorium April 27, 2011, with a grant from The William H. and Mattie Wattis Harris Foundation. This project gave children at Neighborhood House exposure to and experience in the fine arts and also confidence and community-building experiences. After the performance children and families were given gifts (thanks to many sponsors and donors) and a DVD of the documentary and performance. Each time Fine Arts LEAP students worked (and played) with the children at Neighborhood House, moreover, they brought healthy snacks and fun prizes.

- Fine Arts LEAP Provided publicity for the community partner, Neighborhood House, thanks to articles in the *Daily Utah Chronicle* (two), and *City Weekly*, an indoor and outdoor exhibit at the University of Utah, flyers, banners, t-shirts, fundraisers and program inserts.

Summary Information on the play:
1. Number of children at Neighborhood House involved: 35
2. Number of U of U volunteers: 76
3. Number of volunteer hours: 2,280
4. Money donated to the project: $5,800
5. Audience size: 280

Service LEAP. Dr. Carolan Ownby's students continued to work with West High ("LEAP to the U"), and the Horizonte ESL Program. This was the first year that both sections of Service LEAP gained Service-Learning designation. In connection with that, several service partners were added as options for students needing service hours: Washington Elementary, Hser Ner Moo Center, International Rescue Committee, and Crossroads Urban Center. Representatives of these organizations were invited to class to discuss the service options at their organizations.

Here are details on LEAP to the U:

L2TU held six meetings throughout the year. October 27 was "First Contact" where 30 students from West High School (WHS) came to campus to talk about community, and meet their partners from LEAP for the year. On November 10 the WHS students came again. They walked the campus, saw a physics demonstration, and ended up at the LEAP House. Shahara Tiatia, a LEAP Peer Advisor and first-generation college student, spoke to them about why they should consider getting a college education, and the unique challenges faced by first-generation college students. On November 17 they came again. First they had pizza in the Sill Center and then they went bowling for an hour. In spring semester the WHS students came to campus on March 9 for Shadow Day, during which they attended a LEAP class and then a random class [depending on whatever class their partner had]. On March 16 we held a joint Service Day at

Washington Elementary for Dr. Seuss's birthday. The WHS and LEAP students helped the elementary students build Dr. Seuss hats, actively read Dr Seuss stories, and play Dr Seuss games. Finally, on April 15 we held our Final Celebration at WHS where we talked about what we had done during the past year. Alonso Reyna, a U student who worked with L2TU, was a guest speaker.

Other service: Dr. Ann Engar's third year Pre-law LEAP class, also a designated service learning section, did over 160 hours of service at the Salt Lake Peer Court; Legal Aid clinics; Utah Dispute Resolution; and Village Project; as well as for Sylvia Pena-Chacon, an immigration attorney, and Congressman Jim Matheson.

Dr. Bliss's Health Science students worked with students from Riley and Mountain View Elementary Schools and with Bryant Middle School students. They also worked on projects with Neighborhood House and with students identified as candidates for college scholarships and now attending West and East High Schools.

The Peer Advisors also do a great deal of service, which is detailed above in the PA committee assignments. In all, PA service totaled 5,500 hours!

As mentioned above, this year's food drives produced 1052.7 pounds of food and $911.29 for the Crossroads food pantry.

7. Advising

LEAP continued an effective partnership with University College advising this year, with the aim of helping students investigate and choose majors.

- University College advisors visited LEAP classes in October to advise students preparing to register for spring semester. This year advising became mandatory at four points throughout a student's career; the advisor visit to LEAP classes satisfies the first point for LEAP students. This visit also has guaranteed and will continue to guarantee students early registration for spring semester classes.
- A one-credit hour class, LEAP 1050, taught by University College Advisors Martina Stewart, Steve Hadley and Sara Rollo on the process of major selection, was offered again this spring for LEAP students.
- Advisor John Nilsson visited College of Health and Health Science LEAP sections this year to advise students on admissions requirements for various professional schools in Health Sciences.

- Study Abroad Advisors visited Dr. Jeff Webb's sections of College of Health LEAP in the spring to talk about health-related study abroad opportunities. Advisors from the College of Health also visited College of Health LEAP to tell students about the different majors in the College.
- Three LEAP teachers, Dr. Carolyn Bliss, Dr. Jeff Webb, and Dr. Carolan Ownby incorporated the SSI (Student Success Inventory) into their classes in order to give structure to student engagement activities.
- Other pre-Professional LEAPs, such as Engineering, Business, and Education, also incorporate visits by college advisors.

8. LEAP's Library Partnership

Since 1995, LEAP has partnered with instructional librarians to introduce students to library research strategies and techniques. This partnership continued in 2010-11, with each LEAP section (with the exception of Architecture LEAP) visiting the library for ten instructional sessions over the course of the two semesters. Librarians worked with each LEAP instructor to tailor library sessions to the particular needs of the class. Students who successfully completed eight of the ten exercises assigned at these meetings could earn an extra hour of credit for a course in library research.

9. Partnership with the Writing Program

As was the case last year, during fall semester of 2010, the LEAP Program offered its students fourteen sections of Writing 2010 classes (which fulfill the lower division writing requirement) initially reserved for LEAP students. Although non-LEAP students were allowed to register for places not taken by LEAP students, this partnership allowed students in LEAP courses to take Writing 2010 classes taught by instructors who partnered with the LEAP faculty such that being in one class would assist them to do better in the other.

10. LEAP Advisory Boards

The LEAP Community Advisory Board met twice this academic year on September 14, 2010, and on March 30, 2011. For the past three years external advisory board members have helped the program by serving on scholarship selection committees. Kathryn Lindquist deserves special mention in this regard. See Appendix for minutes from this year's meetings.

A new body, the LEAP Policy Board, was constituted to help implement the new promotion policies for LEAP instructors nominated for Lectureship ranks. It met several times over spring semester. Membership on this body is meant to be representative of the many LEAP partnerships on campus; members serve three-year terms. Minutes of the spring 2011 meetings are

confidential, because they represent evaluations of those instructors nominated to Lectureship ranks.

11. Student Recruitment and Program Outreach

The following is a list of initiatives undertaken this year to improve LEAP publicity and enrollment.

- *The LEAP website: www.leap.utah.edu.* The existing website was moved to the HUMIS system and updated by Liz Taylor in preparation for summer orientations starting in June 2009, and she has continued to maintain the site expertly.
- For summer orientation of 2011, LEAP engaged five Summer LEAP Advisors to assist with tabling at the Information Fairs held on the second day of every orientation and to help students register for LEAP and LEAP-linked Writing 2010 classes. The five were Kelsey Knight, Shauna Ma, Evangeleena Manzanares, Nicholas Miera, and Jessica Woeppel.
- *News Articles.* Informative news articles on LEAP appeared in various publications this year. See Appendix for a selection of them.

Milestones and Awards

1. Student Achievements

Leslie Cepeda Echevarria won the *New York Times* Essay Contest this year. She writes: "I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Scholarship Committee and the New York Times Essay Contest in selecting me as one of the Health Science LEAP scholarship recipients and the essay contest winner, too. Both awards will be of great assistance to me in my goal of attaining a college degree. It is an honor to be chosen for these awards. It is wonderful to know that there are people like those in the LEAP organization who support a student's efforts to excel. I will work hard to make sure that you feel that you have made a wise decision in selecting me as one of your recipients. Again, thank you for your generosity."

2. LEAP Scholarship and Award Recipients 2010-11

Approximately $62,000 was given out in scholarships and awards to:

Peer Advisor Scholarships
Gaby Jensen
Nate Cordova

Honors College Scholarships
Sarah Hammer
Mazian Nourian

Merit
Kylie Farris
Dolan Lucero
Mazian Nourian
Tristan McIntosh

Bridge Scholarship for a LEAP student moving to the Honors Program
Shahara Tiatia

Writing Program for Best Student Paper
Kelsey Knight

Frost Award for Outstanding Peer Advisor
Shawn Whitney

Honor's Thesis Award
Clint Hugie

Scholars of Promise for LEAP students in the Honors Program
Jessica Woeppel
Olivia Hu
Sierra DeBry
Joshua Strait
Dalena Tran

Diversity
Margarita Chagolla
Brian Powell
Katelin Woodbury
Amy Tran
Sarah Hammer
Derek Jonap
Emily Mangelson
Merissa Nakamura
Tessa Nell
Rosetta Nguyen
Julia Popp
Jeremy Sanchez
Dan Vu

Pre-Law
MeleFinau Folaumoeloa

Health Professions
Leslie Cepeda Echeverria
Shawn Whitney
Daisy Ionesou
Camilla Silva

Kennecott Scholarship
Mallory Millington

College of Humanities Essay Winner
Jacob Andra

3. Faculty Activities and Achievements

Dr. Ed Barbanell was promoted to Associate Professor/Lecturer rank in the Department of Philosophy. He also shared with Dr. Steve Burian the 2011 Glen L. Martin Best Paper Award for the Civil Engineering Division of the American Society for Engineering Education. The paper is titled, "Hydrotopia: Integrating civil engineering and humanities to teach water resources engineering and management"; it can be found in the 2010 *Annual Conference Proceedings of the ASEE.*

Dr. Jennifer Bauman co-organized the LEAP Creative Gala and mounted two exhibitions of art and photography by LEAP students, one in fall semester and one in the spring. She also organized Child Poverty Week in the fall semester.

Dr. Carolyn Bliss was promoted to Professor/Lecturer rank. Here are her other accomplishments last year:

- Received the U of U's nomination for the McGraw-Hill and National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars Award;
- Secured the Utah Campus Compact Award for a Community Engaged Program for LEAP;
- Joined the Board of Directors of the AMES School;
- Assumed responsibility for the concurrent enrollment agreement between the AMES School and the U of U;
- Assumed responsibility for the projects formerly managed by the Asst. VP for Academic Outreach;
- Published a review of Peter Carey's *Parrot and Olivier in America* in *World Literature Today;*
- Presented a paper on the same book at the American Association of Australian Literary Studies conference in Ft. Worth, TX, 18 April 2011;
- Was recognized as an excellent teacher by the LDSSA.

Dr. Matt Bradley received the Honor's Professor of the Year Award as well as a 2011 Diversity and Equity Award. He was also named to the USA Cycling team and will be travelling to the 2011 Paracycling World Championships in Denmark this September. See the appendix for a recent news report.

Dr. Ann Engar was promoted to Professor/Lecturer rank. She also became a "Distinguished Bibliographer" for MLA and published "To Kill la Mockingbird: Fifty Years of Influence on the Legal Profession" in *Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, New Essays*, edited by Michael J. Meyer (Scarecrow Press). Dr. Engar also served on the Undergraduate Studies and Graduation Committees and was recognized as an excellent teacher by the LDSSA.

Dr. Carolan Ownby was promoted to Professor/Lecturer rank. She was also recognized as an excellent teacher by the LDSSA and won the Bennion Center's Civically Engaged Scholar Award. The program for the award ceremony notes: "This year's recipient [of the Civically Engaged Scholar Award] is Carolan Ownby. Carolan is an instructor in the LEAP Program where she leads three service learning classes and provides many students in this first year cohort and peer tutor program opportunities for their own community engagement."

Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta was promoted to Associate Professor/Lecturer rank.

Dr. Jeff Webb was promoted to Associate Professor/Lecturer rank. He served on the University's Retention and Assessment Committee. His student, Justin Clifford, served as a USET scholar for the 2010-11 year researching, under Dr. Webb's supervision, the formation of social networks in the LEAP Program. This work was part of a two year study proposed by Dr. Webb which received IRB approval in June 2010. The study is entitled "Social Network Analysis of Classroom Community in the LEAP Program." Dr. Webb started the Master of Statistics Program at the University of Utah in August 2010.

Dr. Mike White co-organized the LEAP Creative Gala and served as a judge in the *New York Times Café* essay contest. In 2010-11, he had poems published or accepted for publication in the following journals: *Denver Quarterly, Pleiades*, *FIELD*, *The Antioch Review*, *Court Green*, *RATTLE*, *The American Poetry Journal*, *Sycamore Review*, *Margie*, *West Branch*, *Witness*, *Natural Bridge*, *Spillway*, *Poem*, *Gulf Coast*, *Cimarron Review*, *Sugar House Review.* Three of his poems also appeared in the anthology, *New Poets of the American West* (2010). His poem "NASCAR" was awarded the $500 Neil Postman Award for Metaphor from *RATTLE* magazine, "Go Ahead" was nominated for a 2011 Pushcart Prize by *Sycamore Review*, and "Love" was reprinted on the *Poetry Daily* website (April 28, 2011). His poetry manuscript, *How to Make a Bird with Two Hands*, was named a finalist in both

the 2010 and 2011 *Waywiser Press* Anthony Hecht Prize competitions and won the 2011 *Word Works* Washington Prize. The prize carries book publication, slated for February of 2012, and a cash award of $1,500.

The following faculty taught classes outside of LEAP:

1. Dr. Ed Barbanell taught classes in the Philosophy Department.
2. Dr. Mike White taught classes in the English Department.
3. Dr. Ann Engar taught classes in the University of Utah Honors Program.
4. Dr. Becky Larsen taught Political Science classes at BYU.
5. Dr. Carolyn Bliss taught classes in the University of Utah Health Sciences Center curriculum.
6. Dr. Jennifer Bauman taught classes at Salt Lake Community College.
7. Dr. Matt Bradley taught classes for the University of Utah Honors Program and at the AMES School.

4. Program Awards

LEAP was recognized by the Bennion Center as the first recipient of the new Utah Campus Compact Community Engaged Program Award. The program for the award ceremony notes, "This is a new award for the University of Utah and the LEAP Program is our first recipient. Since 1994 the LEAP Program has provided opportunities for students to learn about and get involved in their community. The LEAP Program offers a number of service learning designated courses. Its faculty regularly offers opportunities for students to explore community through community-based research. Several annual service projects offered by the various LEAP cohorts and peer tutors also serve under-represented and at-risk people in our local area. For their ongoing commitment to community engagement we recognize the faculty and students of the LEAP Program as this year's 'engaged program.'"

5. Conference Presentations on LEAP by LEAP Faculty

Dr. Carolyn Bliss attended and represented LEAP at the Educated Persons Conference (Nov. 5, 2010, Utah) and the Reinvention Center Conference (Nov. 12-14, Washington, DC), and presented LEAP at four "Connecting U Days" gatherings over the course of the two semesters.

6. Continuing Education for LEAP Faculty

Dr. Jeff Webb is doing coursework in the Master of Statistics program the University of Utah.

Dr. Matt Bradley is working on a Masters degree in Economics at the University of Utah.

7. University Service by LEAP Faculty

LEAP was represented on many campus committees, among them: Search Committee for the new Associate VP for Academic Affairs, Undergraduate Council, the Monson Prize Selection Committee, the Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation Committee, the Committee for English Writing and Language Support, the Undergraduate Studies and Graduation Committees, and the Retention and Assessment Committee. LEAP faculty also served on several additional earch committees during the year.

Dr. Carolan Ownby continued her role as the University's advisor for Phi Eta Sigma, a Freshman Honor Society.

Dr. Ann Engar was Library Liaison for LEAP during 2010-11.

Dr. Meg Harper served as the liaison from LEAP to the University Writing Program during the 2010-11 year.

8. Program Achievements and Financial Support

LEAP Scholarship funds increased again this year, from around $55,000 last year to nearly $62,000 this year. Scholarship money was donated by the following organizations/individuals, to which and to whom we are grateful:

- The Lindquist-Moore Family
- Jan and Doug Frost
- Roger Leland Goudie
- Suitter Axland
- The Ruth Eleanor Bamberger and John Ernest Bamberger Memorial Foundation (who also support our opening convocation)
- The Undergraduate Studies Board of Advisors
- The Marriner S. Eccles Foundation

The University Administration has announced its intention not only to expand the LEAP Program but also to designate LEAP as one of several MUSE experiences for University of Utah students. (MUSE stands for "My University Signature Experience.") As one of the MUSE experiences, LEAP will be featured in a professionally photographed video introducing students to the MUSE Project. All MUSE experiences are being represented by students; LEAP will be represented by Senior Peer Advisor Shawn Whitney and former Peer Advisor Sarah Hammer.

Program Assessment Analysis

See the Annual Report for AY 2005-2006 for a detailed discussion of LEAP's plan of assessment (http://www.leap.utah.edu/media/leap_05-06_report.pdf). Recent assessment is an elaboration of this basic plan. We will discuss our current research efforts in turn.

1. The Matching Study

Included below is the introductory section of the most recent version of this paper, titled "ENGENDERING EFFECTS: FINDINGS FROM A MATCHING STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH'S LEAP PROGRAM," which is under review at *The Journal for College Student Retention*. See the Appendix for a copy of the entire paper.

Abstract

This article discusses the results of a quantitative study investigating the impact on first year students of an optional two-semester learning community, the LEAP Program, at the University of Utah. Results indicate a statistically significant association between LEAP participation and positive outcomes in student retention, GPA, and time-to-graduation, with larger effect sizes for women than for men. The article concludes by considering possible reasons for the difference in effect sizes.

First year experiences **(**FYEs) are now ubiquitous on U.S. campuses. Between 85 and 95% of four-year American colleges and universities currently have some sort of freshman seminar or introductory program; the figures vary depending on how these programs are defined (Barefoot 2002; Tobolowski & Associates, 2008, 99). Often these take the form of learning communities (LCs), which, by definition, group a cohort of students for more than one course, either concurrently or sequentially, or for some other sort of intensive and prolonged educational experience (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2007, 109; Tinto, 1998).

The generally salutary effects of engagement in FYEs and LCs have been conclusively demonstrated, the data collected in such meta-analyses as *How College Affects Students*, Volume 2: A Third Decade of Research (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Among the most studied and reliably documented of these effects is increased student retention from first to second year, an outcome demonstrated for both men and women, majority and minority students, and students living on or off campus (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, 401). Positive and statistically significant links between FYE participation and increased GPA have also been consistently noted (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, 403). Pascarella and Terenzini sum up the data as follows:

> In short, the weight of evidence indicates that FYS [First Year Seminar] participation has statistically significant and substantial positive effects on a student's successful transition to college and the likelihood of persistence into the second year as well as on academic performance while in college and on a considerable array of other college experiences known to be related directly and indirectly to bachelor's degree completion. (2005, 403)

LCs in general seem to have similar effects. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith in a meta-analysis of 300 studies found that LCs promoted development of supportive peer groups, increased student

participation in classroom and social activities, and encouraged other aspects of academic development as well as the integration of students' academic and extra-academic lives (1998).

Yet the causal relationship between such experiences and their purported outcomes remains hard to fully establish and understand. The substantial structural differences between actual FYEs and LCs, for example, make it difficult to generalize about their effects on students. Moreover, students enter these programs with their own differences, backgrounds and characteristics that clearly influence their subsequent performance in college independently of their participation in FYEs and LCs. Yet, as Pascarella and Terenzini remark, "[m]ost studies of the effectiveness of first-year seminars provide few controls for such potentially confounding factors as gender, race-ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or academic ability and achievement" (2005, 402). The failure to control for these factors makes it difficult to discern not only the unique effects of such programs on students but also their differential or conditional effects on particular groups of students. Concerning possible differences in gender effects, for example, Linda J. Sax notes that "Little is known [about how] important forces in college might operate *differently* for women and men" (4). She rightly stresses the importance of researching "the ways in which aspects of college—such as classroom climate, peer culture, or extracurricular activities—differentially affect groups defined by race, gender, or other characteristics" (4).

This article discusses a matching study of the University of Utah's optional FYE, the LEAP Program, which controls for potentially confounding factors and investigates the program's differential effects on men and women. The study matches students who are demographically identical, one of whom enrolled in LEAP and one of whom did not.

The purpose of matching is to correct for differences in student characteristics and backgrounds in order to isolate the program's unique impact on a range of performance measures: retention, GPA, credit hours attempted and completed, graduation rates, and time to graduation. Prior to this study, our research had revealed that LEAP students have higher first-to-second year retention rates, graduate more quickly, and express greater satisfaction with their overall educational experience than do non-LEAP students. These results were gratifying but, as research always does, raised more questions. Are these outcomes for LEAP students an effect of their participation in the program or an expression of their preexisting characteristics? Does LEAP have different impacts on different groups of students, specifically men and women? The matching study was designed to answer the first question as a necessary precursor to answering the second.

The study showed that, overall, students enrolled in LEAP had significantly higher retention rates, four and six-year graduation rates, and first and second semester GPA's than their matched pairs who were not in LEAP. However, these performance differences were significant only for LEAP women. The question of why LEAP has a greater impact on women is one we take up in some detail later in the article. For now, before discussing the methodology and results of the study, we turn to a description of the LEAP Program itself, whose somewhat unusual structure is important for contextualizing our findings.

2. Regression Analysis of the LEAP Program

This study will look at the same dependent variables as the matching study—retention, grades, time-to-graduation—and a refined set of independent variables. For example, rather than looking only at high school attended as a proxy for socioeconomic status, we will add the zip code of the student's home address. Using these improved data, as well as more sophisticated statistical techniques, we hope in particular to investigate the performance of sub populations within LEAP, in particular women and ethnic minorities.

While a regression analysis is less intuitive for a lay audience to understand, the analysis itself, while mathematically identical to that of the matching study, should be more powerful, yielding information about the relative contribution of the various factors controlling student performance.

3. EBI Survey

We received a grant from the UGS Parent Support Fund to subscribe to the Educational Benchmarking Incorporated survey service last year. This turned out to be money well spent, producing insights into our program far in advance of what we were able to learn from our self-designed and self-administered spring survey. The analysis report of these survey data written by Dr. Jeff Webb in included below.

Introduction

LEAP purchased a survey from EBI (Educational Benchmarking Incorporated) with funds provided by the Parents' Support Foundation. Our intention was to replace the somewhat outdated and limited survey that we had been using, the LEAP Spring Survey, with a more sophisticated instrument. The EBI Survey was administered to all LEAP students during April 2011 by email (optional participation) with 181 surveys returned out of 663 for a 27% response rate (the lowest among our comparison institutions—more on that later). The EBI instrument is indeed sophisticated. It benchmarks LEAP against other institutions on a range of factors and, if used for more than one year, allows for longitudinal tracking of performance. Moreover, the online report provides interactive filtering so that questions about LEAP's impact on specific populations can be answered.

Executive Summary

The EBI Survey will be an important resource as we try to institutionalize a culture of improvement in the LEAP program. It gives us a way to identify the important factors in our performance as a program and to track our efforts to improve them. Moreover, if we can manage to get better student participation (perhaps by doing the survey late in the spring semester by paper administration in class or online during one of the library classes) then we can gather section level data that will be helpful to instructors as they strive to improve. This year's survey identified one factor with the greatest impact on students' perception of LEAP course effectiveness: instructional focus on critical thinking. Recommendations are given for how LEAP might better approach teaching critical thinking (even though our averages for this factor are well above those of our peer institutions): 1. Sequence assignments according to Bloom's taxonomy and discuss with faculty other approaches to teaching critical thinking. 2. Clearly set expectations for time spent out of class on homework and hold students accountable for that work. 3. Do further research on gender differences in perceptions of overall LEAP course effectiveness.

Given the fairly low response rate to the survey (particularly in some sections where there were few or no responses) and the fact that email administration may have created self-selection bias (discussed in detail below), we take the results of this survey seriously—especially in broad outline—but do not see them as definitive.

The Big Picture

The EBI survey includes 69 questions which are grouped into 15 factors (sets of questions with overlapping content) that can be evaluated for their capacity to predict student course satisfaction (the dependent variable is, to be exact, "Overall course effectiveness"). Using these factors the

EBI software builds a regression model, the aim of which is to identify those factors most predictive of course satisfaction. If we want to address course effectiveness, the reasoning goes, these are the factors we need to focus on. In LEAP's case, there were three predictors: Factor 3 (Course Improved Critical Thinking), Factor 12 (Usefulness of Course Readings), Factor 14 (Course Included Engaging Pedagogy). The other factors were not predictors.

Table 1: Factor Priority Statistics

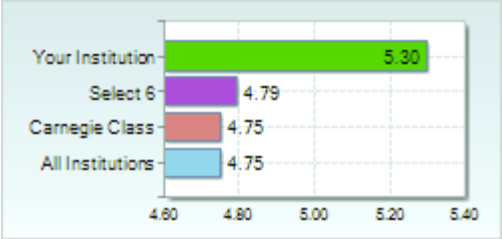
	Regression Variables		Impact on Overall Course Effectiveness		Performance of Factors	
Factor	**R^2**	**ΔR^2**	**Value**	**Description**	**Mean**	**Description**
Top Priority						
Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking	0.850	0.174	5.25	High Impact	5.30	Good
Maintain or Improve						
Factor 12. Usefulness of Course Readings	0.446	0.446	6.19	Extreme Impact	5.56	Good
Factor 14. Course Included Engaging Pedagogy	0.676	0.230	5.53	High Impact	5.62	Good
Monitor						
Factor 1. Course Improved Study Strategies	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.63	Good
Factor 2. Course Improved Academic and Cognitive Skills	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.98	Good
Factor 4. Course Improved Connections with Faculty	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.85	Good
Factor 5. Course Improved Connections with Peers	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.88	Good
Factor 6. Course Increased Out-of-Class Engagement	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.10	Fair
Factor 7. Course Improved Knowledge of Campus Policies	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.50	Fair
Factor 8. Course Improved Knowledge of Academic Services	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.89	Good
Factor 9. Course Improved Managing Time and Priorities	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	4.58	Good
Factor 10. Course Improved Knowledge of Wellness	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	3.11	Poor
Factor 11. Sense of Belonging and Acceptance	0.000	0.000	0.00	No Impact	5.45	Good

EBI recommends concentrating on Factor 3 to most impact students' sense of overall course effectiveness. R^2 change is actually higher on factor 12, but we are already doing quite well on that factor (mean=5.56 out of 7). Factor 3 is the predictor on which we are underperforming (according to the arbitrary 5.5 performance standard set by EBI), which is why they recommend concentrating on that factor for greatest impact on course quality: there is more room for improvement. It should be noted that, the 5.5 standard notwithstanding, we are also doing quite well on factor 3 in comparison with other institutions, ranking first in our set of six self-selected comparison institutions and in our Carnegie Class:[1]

Table 2: Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking

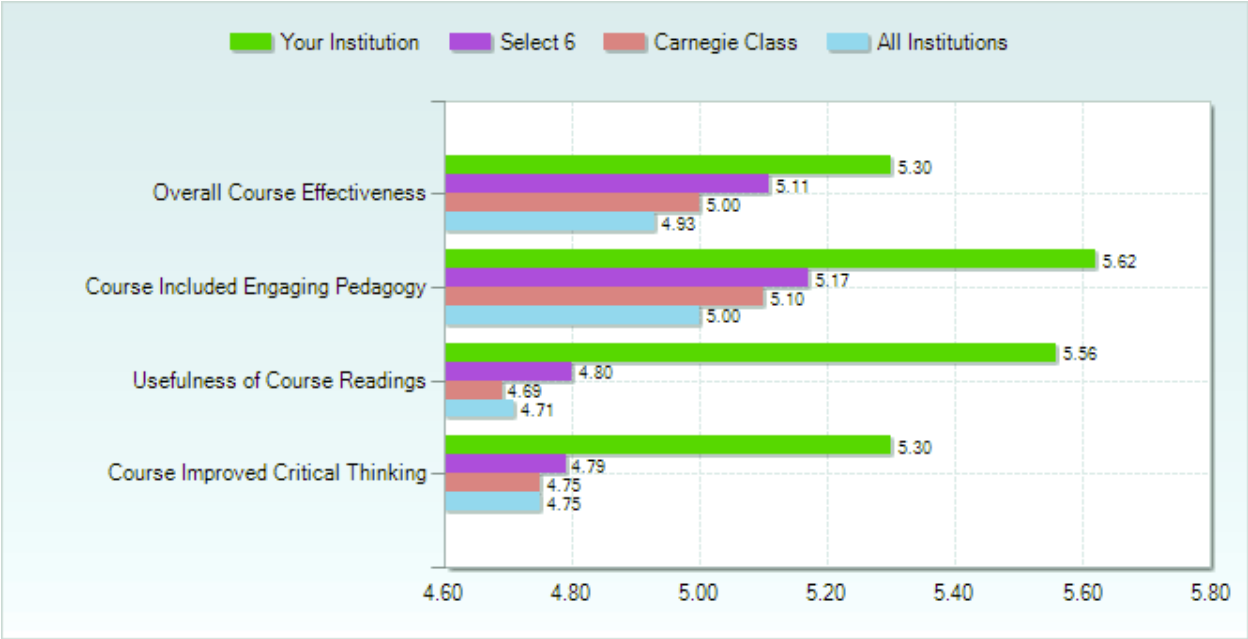
	N	Mean	Std Dev				
Your Institution	180	5.30	1.49				
	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	Difference	Rank
Select 6	5117	4.79	1.57	4.31	5.30	0.51	1 of 7
Carnegie Class	5074	4.75	1.65	4.31	5.30	0.55	1 of 6
All Institutions	28952	4.75	1.58	4.04	5.41	0.55	5 of 59

[1] Select 6 institutions include: Bowling Green State University, University of Oklahoma (2010), Hofstra University (2009), University of South Carolina, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Carnegie Class institutions include: University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of South Carolina, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, University of Oklahoma (2010), University of Utah.



In fact, we are doing equally well on all of these predictors on a comparative basis, as indicated in the following table, which includes the dependent variable in addition to the predictive factors:

Table 3: Comparison of Means: LEAP vs. Benchmark Institutions on Dependent Variable and Predictive Factors



The fact that we are ahead of our peers on these measures should not imply that these factors deserve no attention. Rather, if we want to improve course effectiveness (and we do), then improving our instruction in critical thinking will have the biggest impact on overall course effectiveness. As a faculty we can discuss strategies for how to teach critical thinking more systematically, perhaps—and this is just one idea—by keying assignments more carefully to the cognitive skills identified in Bloom's taxonomy.

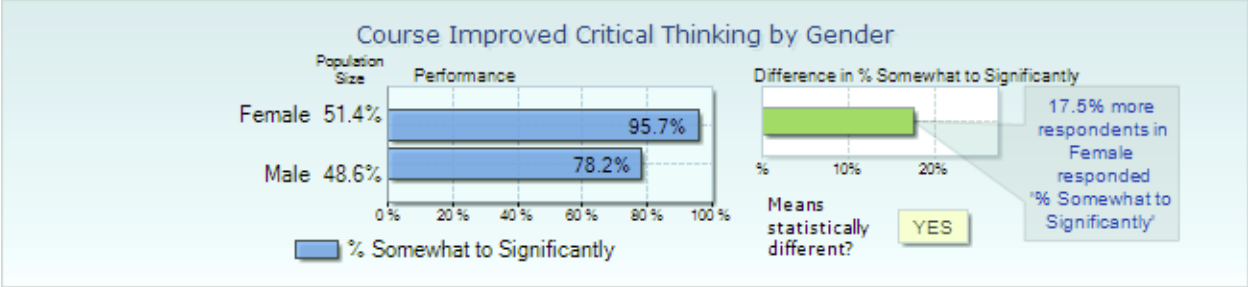
More Detail

The program averages in the above table may be masking considerable variability across LEAP populations. If we want to improve the above factors, in other words, it might be strategic to focus on populations within LEAP for whom, in comparison to other populations, our courses are less effective. The interactive feature of the EBI survey report allows us to ask whether there are LEAP populations with lower than average levels of satisfaction with critical thinking pedagogy.

There are three demographic categories in which there are significant differences on this factor among LEAP populations: gender, race/ethnicity, and time spent studying.

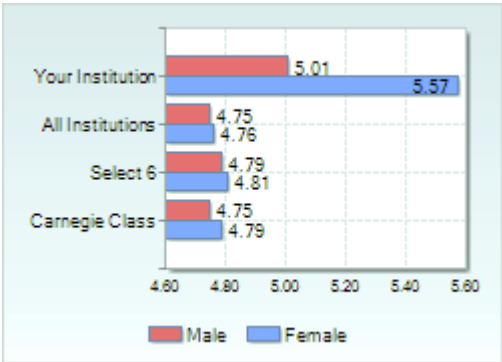
Let's start with gender. How do men and women LEAP students differ on their assessment of LEAP's impact on critical thinking?

Table 4: Results by Gender for Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking



This difference between men and women in LEAP is significant ($p<.05$). (It should be noted that this result is not a function of the number of men and women answering the questions making up this factor. The numbers are about equal: 51% women to 49% men.) However, the difference between men and women at other institutions is not significant.

Table 5: Comparison of Institutional Means: Results by Gender for Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking[2]

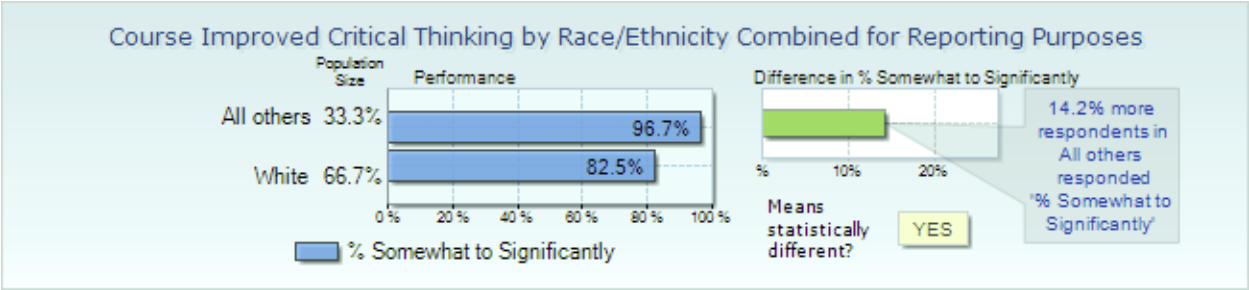


Women clearly have a more positive sense of LEAP's impact on critical thinking than men do, a difference that is not, moreover, replicated at other institutions. This suggests that there may be something about LEAP specifically that works better for women than for men.

What about race/ethnicity?

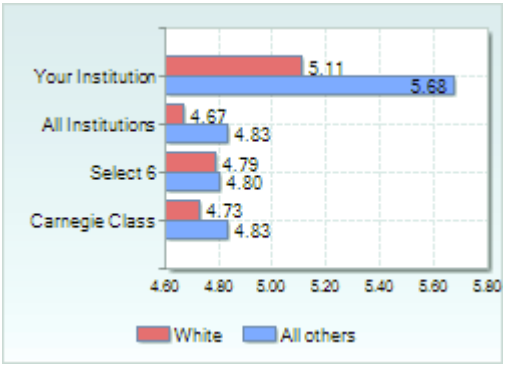
[2] Significant differences in means for the comparisons in tables 5, 7 and 9 are indicated in the text.

Table 6: Results by Race/Ethnicity for Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking



This difference in LEAP is significant ($p<.05$), but so is the difference at all institutions and at institutions within our Carnegie Class.

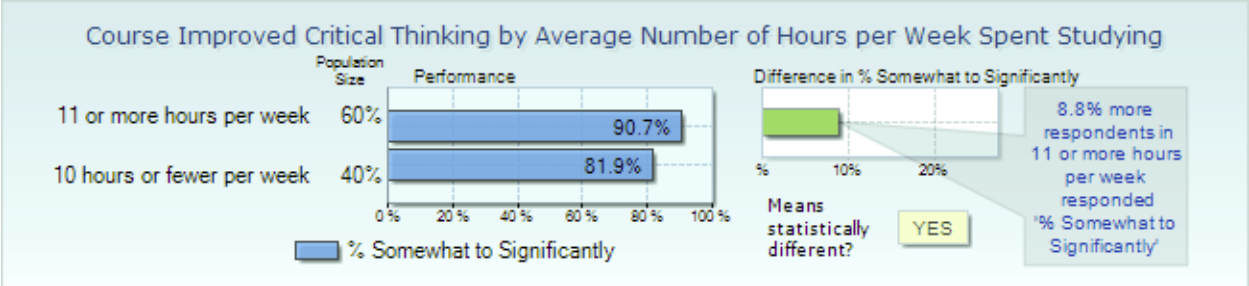
Table 7: Comparison of Institutional Means: Results by Race/Ethnicity for Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking



Non-white students in LEAP, as in other institutions nationwide, tend to report larger improvements in critical thinking than white students do. This result is probably class-based. Being largely middle class and well-prepared for college, white students simply don't have as much to gain in critical thinking as non-white students, who are often "first generation" college students. We'll call this the "class effect."

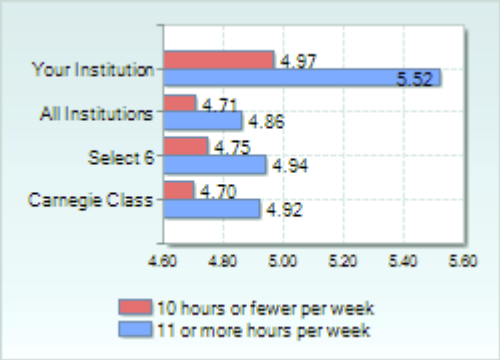
Time spent studying?

Table 8: Results by number of hours spent studying for Factor 3. Course Improved Critical Thinking



The fact that studying more helps students become better critical thinkers should not be surprising. This result in LEAP mirrors that in other institutions across the country: the difference is significant ($p<.001$).

Table 9: Comparison of Institutional Means: Results by number of hours spent studying for Factor 3: Course Improved Critical Thinking



These three demographic categories—gender, race/ethnicity, and time spent studying—are the only ones in which we see significant differences among LEAP students in their assessment of LEAP's impact on critical thinking.[3]

Discussion of Factor 3 Results by Demographic Category

One approach to improving our performance on Factor 3, then, would be to do better with three populations of LEAP students: men, white students, slackers. Let's take these in reverse order.

Slackers. It stands to reason that students who put more into a class get more out of it. We should discuss as a program how to motivate students and hold them accountable to high standards. It may help for teachers simply to emphasize throughout the semester their expectations for out of class work and to hold students accountable by having periodic quizzes or the equivalent.

White students. If race/ethnicity is in fact a proxy for college preparation, then it makes sense that well prepared students have less to gain in critical thinking than do poorly prepared students.

[3] Here is the full list of demographic categories, in addition to the ones discussed above: SAT or ACT score, Race/Ethnicity Combined for Reporting Purposes, Age, High School Grades, Current Academic Performance, Number of College/University Sponsored Extracurricular Activities, Average Number of Hours per Week Spent Working, Current Residence (meaning on or off campus), Commuters: Number of Hours Spent on Campus Out of Class, Frequency of Home Visits In Addition to Regular Breaks, Frequency of Alcohol Consumption per Week, Amount of Alcohol Consumed per Event, To what extent do you plan to transfer to another institution?, To what extent do you plan to attend any college next fall?, Amount of tuition/fees/books covered by financial aid, Major source of financial aid you are receiving this year.

Given that we see this difference in critical thinking gains across the country, it may well be ineradicable, a reflection of preparation rather than racial differences in how students respond to critical thinking pedagogy. Thus, our efforts are best focused on improving critical thinking for all students. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that LEAP may well be less effective for some outperforming students, as is suggested by the following tables.

Table 10: LEAP Results by ACT/SAT for Dependent Variable: Overall Course Effectiveness

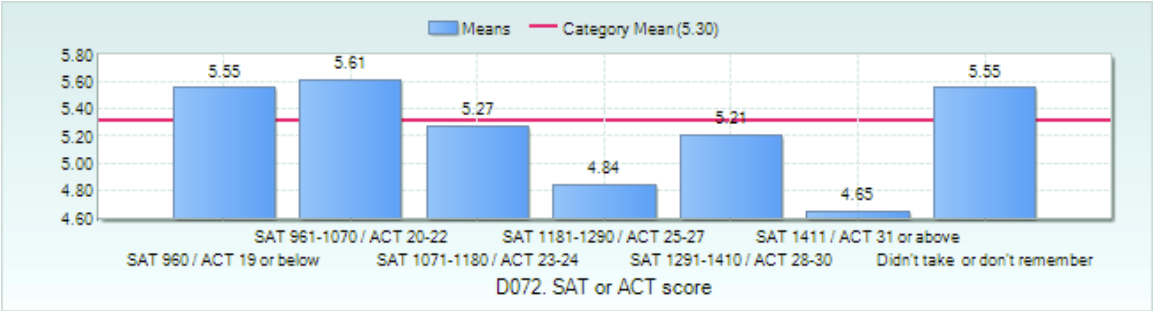
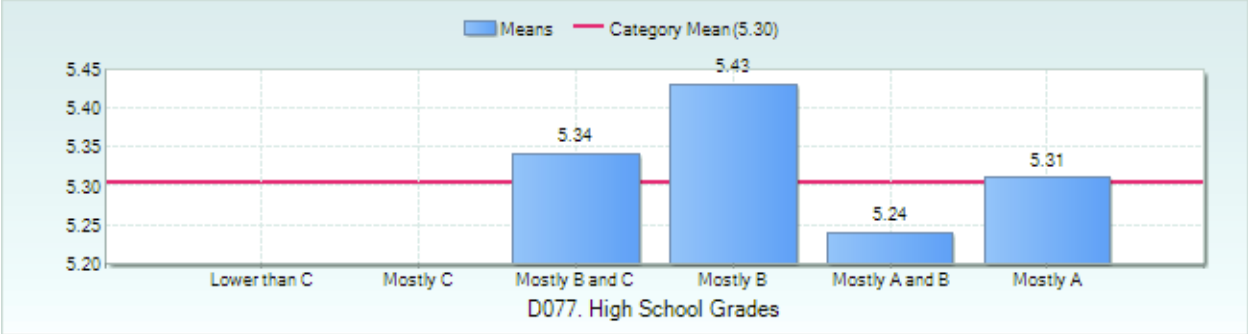


Table 11: LEAP Results by High School Grades for Dependent Variable: Overall Course Effectiveness



The trend of the bars on the right hand side of these graphs is noticeably lower, though the gross differences are non-significant. The subject requires further study. In the meantime, we could consider better ways to communicate with prospective students at orientation so that students who would prefer Honors get directed to Honors. It should also be pointed out, however, that many high performing students are very happy in LEAP and end up becoming Pas and/or joining the Honors Program later in their college careers.

Men. The relative underperformance of men is perplexing but does confirm other research we've done on LEAP. The matching study we conducted last year considered objective and not merely self-reported data—grades, retention, time to graduation—and showed the same thing: men do not seem to obtain the same benefits from the program as women. Moreover, the benchmarking

feature of the EBI survey allows us to see that, when it comes to gender effects, LEAP is different from other institutions. This difference demands further analysis.

More on Gender

The majority of LEAP teachers are women, but not by much. Last semester 16 sections were taught by women, 13 by men. And while it is conventional wisdom that students learn better from people who are like them, Linda Sax reports in her recent book, *The Gender Gap in College*, that men actually benefit more from having female teachers than women do. Hence the gender composition of the LEAP teaching faculty is not explanatory.

Sax also reports that women tend to study more than men do. If this is true in LEAP (as seems likely), then it would explain why women report more gains on critical thinking. However, we would also expect to see such gains reflected in the other institutions in the EBI survey, since Sax is reporting national trends. Yet we don't (see Table 5). It doesn't look like time spent studying explains the difference between LEAP women and men on critical thinking gains.

So what could be driving the gender differences in LEAP? We don't have an answer to this question at present, but here are some possibilities that bear further investigation: 1. There are observable differences between LEAP men and women in college preparation as reflected in test scores and high school grades. Are these differences statistically significant and do they impact critical thinking—by the same mechanism we hypothesized above, namely the class effect? 2. Are the proportions of racial/ethnic minorities the same among LEAP women and men? Could differences here be impacting critical thinking by (again) the class effect? 3. Is there a dynamic in LEAP classrooms, by virtue of curriculum or instructional method, that better suits women than men (for some unknown reason) and that shows up in LEAP's impact on critical thinking? 4. LEAP women do report statistically higher levels of extracurricular engagement and connections with faculty than do LEAP men. We know that engagement is typically correlated with academic performance. Does this explain the LEAP difference? (Women at other institutions are also more engaged than men, which implies that it does not, but the subject demands further study.)

Answering these questions will get us closer to understanding how we can better serve men in LEAP.

Survey Methodology: A Note of Caution and a Recommendation

Given that the survey was distributed by email, there may be a gender-related self-selection bias that is skewing results. While men and women are about equally represented (survey respondents were 51% women and 49% men, which is pretty close to the gender balance in the program as a whole), this equal representation was not true in individual sections: in all ELEAP sections the majority of responses were from men, while in all the other LEAP sections (with one exception) the majority of responses were all from women. The gender differences under discussion in the preceding section could well be an artifact of the survey methodology. In order to remove the possibility of sampling bias, the survey needs to be administered next year to all students, either in class using a paper instrument or during library class electronically.

LEAP Sections

One of the virtues of the EBI survey is that it includes section level data. Unfortunately, this year the response rate was so low in some sections that numbers were not sufficient for comparison. To solve this problem, we should next year adjust our administration procedures as suggested above. This will ensure that we get adequate responses for each section. These section reports can be used by the program in two ways: 1. Distributed to individual faculty to help them to self-

assess their performance. 2. Analyzed by administration to identify areas of weakness among faculty that could be addressed in trainings or identified as goals for improvement. Differences among sections on overall course effectiveness are summarized below.

4. Social Network Analysis of the LEAP Program

Background: To what extent do LEAP students benefit from the community that develops in LEAP classrooms? The ongoing social network analysis of the LEAP Program aspires to answer this question.

The LEAP program is, of course, structured to emphasize the development of community in the classroom. LEAP Peer Advisors actively promote the engagement of LEAP students in LEAP classes, in LEAP program activities, and in university and community life more generally. Does such engagement, especially as measured by the resulting development of social networks in LEAP classes, make a difference to students' satisfaction with their LEAP class? The social network study seeks to quantify the density of social networks that develop in LEAP classes (actual number of ties per student divided by possible number of ties per student), and to establish correlations between that density and students' satisfaction with their LEAP class as well as (in later iterations of the study) their subsequent academic performance.

The objectives of the study include the following:

1. To map social networks in LEAP classes using a survey instrument administered online to all LEAP students towards the end of fall semester and again toward the end of spring semester, using social network software to calculate the density of student relationships, and to compare the social network densities among LEAP classes.
2. To map the location of PAs in the social networks of LEAP classes.
3. To use statistical analysis to test for correlation between the density of social networks in LEAP classes, student satisfaction (from course evaluations and end-of-year LEAP surveys) and subsequent academic performance (GPA, retention and time-to-graduation).

IRB approval of this study was granted in June 2010. Justin Clifford was accepted as a USET Scholar for 2010. USET is a program offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence that gives stipend support to

undergraduates doing research in teaching and learning. Justin proposed the social network analysis of classroom community in LEAP as his focus for USET.

Social network surveys were administered in LEAP classes during both fall and spring semesters during the 2010-11 school year. See the appendix for a news report on the project and a PowerPoint presented at a faculty meeting which summarizes the objectives of the project. (The online version of the report includes a video interview with Dr. Jeff Webb: http://www.ctle.utah.edu/?&pageId=5973.) Though we tried to collect a variety of data, both network related and demographic, our central objective with the surveys was to map friend and acquaintance networks in each class. Students were asked to identify those classmates they regarded as friends or would describe as acquaintances.

Preliminary Findings and Discussion. The data collection process was arduous: each LEAP student needed to be presented with a customized survey for his or her class, which entailed the creation of many different surveys and required careful coordination with teachers to ensure timely administration of the survey. The analysis of the LEAP network data is also proving to be quite arduous, involving laborious downloading of data from the survey company, StudentVoice, and extensive manipulation and transformation of the data. Data organization has now been completed for both fall and spring semesters and some preliminary analysis has been completed.

As it turns out, social network data can be neither organized nor analyzed in conventional ways. The data is organized as a matrix, with cell weights indicating the strength of the relationship between students:

	John	Jane	Frank	Amy
John	0	1	2	0
Jane	1	0	1	2
Frank	2	1	0	0
Amy	0	2	0	0

This particular (fictional) matrix is "undirected," meaning that cell weights have been set at the maximum relationship reported by one of the members of the pair. A matrix that captured disagreement about the nature of the relationship would be "directed." Directed matrices are asymmetrical. One of the ways that we dealt with missing data in the LEAP study (when students were absent on the day of the survey) was to transform a directed matrix (with missing cell weights) into an undirected one in which empty cells were automatically filled with the value supplied by the other member of the pair.

Statistical analysis of network data is complicated by the fact that conventional methods assume the independence of the observations being analyzed. In the case of network data, however, observations are not independent. For example, a particular student's position in the class network is dependent on the structure of the network, which is itself dependent on all the other students. The analysis of networks must thus use nonconventional methods—newly developed statistical techniques that simulate network formation by generating random graphs. (These procedures are very computationally intensive, which is why the random graph techniques have become available only recently, with advances in computing power.)

Our hypothesis was that classroom community in the LEAP program contributes to student satisfaction. We tested our hypothesis with a simple test of correlation between each class's network density (the number of observed connections, friendship or acquaintance, divided by the number of theoretically possible connections) and each class's course evaluation score. (This particular approach does not violate the assumption of independence since at the class level these observations—group network density—are independent. One class's density has nothing to do with another's. Course, as opposed to teacher, evaluations were used for the analysis.) In the fall semester the correlation was tiny and actually slightly negative ($r=-.07$) and was not significant. In the spring semester, however, the correlation was surprisingly strong ($r=.66$; $r^2=.44$; adjusted $r^2=.40$) and was significant ($p<.05$). This means that in the spring semester about 40% of the variation in course evaluation scores is attributable to the variation in class density: the more densely networked a class is, the more satisfied students are with the course. The r^2 is a measure of effect size; the magnitude of .40, while recognized by statisticians as "moderate," is, in an educational setting where many, many variables contribute to an outcome like course satisfaction, unusually high.

The relationship in spring semester between network density and course satisfaction suggests that something different is happening both socially and educationally in the spring semester. The social environment in a class is often regarded as irrelevant in higher education, and the first semester's LEAP network data would suggest that this perspective may not be unreasonable. But something different happens in the second semester: the social environment matters. This shift, long recognized by LEAP teachers, now validated by this study, evidently derives from the community part of the LEAP "learning community." The magic that creates the "LEAP experience" thus seems to emerge in the second semester.

Another dimension of network analysis is the mapping of subgroups or cliques. Which groups of students tend to form semi-exclusive relationships?

LEAP classes all had multiple groups both semesters. However, there were significantly fewer groups second semester (mean for fall =3.9 groups; mean for spring =3.1 groups; independent samples t-test for the difference was significant, $p<.05$), though the number of groups in the second semester was not significantly correlated with course satisfaction. The fact that the number of groups diminishes suggests that in the second semester LEAP classes are becoming less fragmented. They are also significantly more densely networked. Average network density in the fall was .34 compared to .49 in the spring. (Density is a number that ranges from 0 and 1. 0 would be no connections; 1 means that all possible connections are activated; .34 means that 34% of all possible connections have been activated.) An independent samples T-test of the density scores in fall and spring was significant, $p<.05$.

Another change in the second semester is that classes becomes less centralized; PAs, who occupy the center of the social network in the fall, are still central in the spring, but they are not alone: other student leaders have emerged who are equally central, as measured by the number of connections to others in the class. While all PAs are densely connected by virtue of their formal role, there is some variation. Some PAs are simply more effective at connection across social boundaries than others and enjoy rates of almost 100% connection. However, there does not appear to be any correlation between PA centrality and student course satisfaction.

These analyses suggest that the social difference in the second semester of LEAP makes a difference to students. It's not that course evaluations are significantly higher in the spring than they are in the fall—they're not. LEAP course evaluations are uncommonly high in both semesters, and there's no statistical difference between fall and spring evaluations. It's rather that the social environment in the second semester of LEAP comes to play a bigger role in student course satisfaction than it does in the first semester. This is an interesting finding and probably points to the key difference between LEAP, as a learning community that nurtures the cohort experience, and other classes at the university.

Caveats and Future Studies. Because of the difficulty of administering the social networking survey, not all LEAP classes were able to take the survey, or, in some cases, the rate of response was too low for the class level data to be usable. We are planning to do another year's worth of social network research (at least), and it is possible that more complete data in subsequent years will change the patterns in our results. At this point our findings should be considered preliminary and exploratory.

We would like to extend our analysis beyond class level data to investigate the performance of individual students. Is the network position of students in LEAP—the degree to which they are connected—predictive of their grades

(in LEAP as well as in other classes, as measured by GPA) and of their persistence, the rates at which they return to the university for their second year? The social network study thus far has indicated the importance of community in LEAP classes. The goal of pursuing these further questions is to find out whether community is important to student performance as well as to student satisfaction, and for whom. Does being connected impact the performance of students? Does it impact the performance of all students equally? This research should aid program improvement. We now know that students' sense of community is strongly correlated with their course satisfaction. As a program, how can we ensure that classroom community is developing consistently in all LEAP classes?

List of Appendices

1. LEAP's detailed plan for implementing Rule and Policy 6-310.
2. Dr. Bliss's comprehensive summary of the LEAP Program: "The Past, Present, and Future of the LEAP Program, a Learning Community for Entering Students."
3. Matching study article: "Engendering Effects: Findings from a Matching Study of the University of Utah's LEAP Program."
4. Information packet for LEAP mentors.
5. Justin Clifford's introductory PowerPoint for the Peer Advisors.
6. Shauna Ma's PA report.
7. Gaby Jensen's address at this year's PA Luncheon.
8. Convocation Program.
9. PA Luncheon Program.
10. Community Advisory Board meeting agendas.
11. Community Advisory Board minutes.
12. LEAP in the news.
13. Matt Bradley Cycling article.
14. News report on Social Network Study.
15. Social Network Study faculty powerpoint.