Project Details

Title: Development of Academic Recruitment Strategy Plan
Category: 1-Helping Students Learn
Timeline:

Planned Project Kickoff: 11-01-2011
Target Completion: 05-01-2012

Status: REVIEWED
Updated: 09-30-2012
Reviewed: 10-12-2012
Created: 11-15-2011
Version: 1

1: Project Goal

A: This plan would include the analysis of aid structure, enrollment/retention profile, assessment of current academic programming and recruitment practices, and other data that may inform the development of an academically focused recruitment plan. Special attention will be paid to structured target programs (i.e., Scholars and Learning Communities) and related learning outcomes for these programs (which can, in turn, be used in the recruitment process).

2: Reasons For Project

A: The Director of our Scholars (Honors) Program has requested programming updates based on student feedback and response to current programming opportunities. We also believe that structured academic programming offered by Learning Communities or other academically driven programs may provide greater student interest, satisfaction, and retention. These meet recent central planning efforts to align recruitment emphasis with academic programs, and to support the improvement of our academic profile and retention.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: Scholars, Learning Communities Faculty Leaders Team, VPAA, AVPAA, Student Affairs, and Admissions.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Systematic promotion of academic programming and faculty/student highlights during the recruitment process, coordination and assessment of specific academic programming (Scholars, Learning Communities, etc) for current students, better alignment of aid structure with success profiles, retention and student satisfaction, etc.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Although some of the analysis has been completed as part of other action projects, there is still considerable data collection and analysis remaining. Likewise, the actual programs resulting from such analysis must be developed or updated (by Directors and faculty committees) and promoted through the recruitment process (requiring work with Admissions and the PR Office, WEB posting, etc).

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Results of Learning Community Faculty Leader meetings (including Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the VPAA), monthly Cabinet updates, and monthly Scholars (Honors) committee meetings.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Completed updates to Scholars Program (2012); development of Learning Communities Program (2012); assessment of new/updated programming (2012-13) including student student learning outcomes, satisfaction rates, program enrollment, engagement, performance, and retention indicators.
**Project Update**

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

**A:** A new scholarship matrix focusing on the top two student profile tiers has been created and will be applied during the 2012-13 recruitment cycle. Promotion of both the Honors (Scholars) and Learning Communities has increased with updated admissions materials, participation invitation letters from the Director of the Honors Program and the individual faculty leaders of the Learning Communities, and follow-up phone contact. The application pool for both Honors and Learning Communities increased significantly. Further, participation in Honors and Learning Community events and activities has increased with very positive feedback gathered from student focus groups and programming evaluations. We have also developed a retention tracking system for both programs (data will be available until the end of this academic year). We will also track recruitment efforts for both programs to determine which are most effective for this student profile. We have moved up the program application deadlines to better reflect timing of highest interest by students in relation to impact of the new scholarship matrix as part of the overall aid packages.

### 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** Admissions, the faculty Director of the Honors Program, the Learning Communities Faculty Leaders, members of a Faculty Senate committee reviewing the Honors Program, and staff in Academic Affairs were involved in this project. Input from both Honors students (through a survey) and the Learning Communities Student Leaders was considered as well. Institutional Research also provided information regarding Honors and Learning Community programming at our peer benchmark schools. In some cases, this information provided ideas for improved or new programming.

### 3: Next Steps

**A:** Although we have upgraded programming for both programs, increased recruitment efforts through Admissions and contact by faculty involved in the programs, we hope to document our accomplishments and increased services/programming with greater presence on the Lake Erie College WEB site (which is also a significant recruitment tool). We are currently working with Public Relations and the WEB Master to strategically update our Honors and Learning Communities pages. We also intend to monitor and assess retention as well as recruitment success within these programs. Strategies yielding the best results will be applied to other academic programs.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

**A:** An earlier application deadline and more strategic contact with students meeting the program criteria has resulted in a larger pool of students, with a higher academic profile. Although our first cohort is too small to draw conclusions (without consideration of multiple factors), it appears that follow-up phone contact was a strong factor in increased Honors participation, while the timing of the application deadline was a stronger factor in the Learning Communities participation.

### 5: Project Challenges

**A:** Resources continue to be of concern. However, a creative Honors Director and Learning Community Faculty Leaders have provided tremendous support and many upgraded programming ideas (with very positive student response). Yet, keeping up this level of enthusiasm may be a challenge over time without resources that are more closely aligned with our benchmark peers and competitors. Better coordination with competing WEB projects has also helped as we have attempted to provide a stronger WEB presence for this project.

### Update Review

1. **Project Accomplishments and Status**
The proposed program to reach this group of students appears to be comprehensive in scope and aligned to aid the institution in meeting the objectives in Category 1- Helping Students Learn. These approaches as outlined address a need to better align the institution's resources to better serve, retain and meet the needs of this unique population of scholars and reflects the institution's role as a High Performance Organization. The project aligns effectively with process 1P3, 1P4 and 1P15 in Category 1 and imbues collaboration among supporting departments as well as focuses on being an information gathering institution that uses "data enriched thinking" to develop its next steps and attainment of its strategic goals short and long term. The commitment to improving its processes is evidenced in this project and the institution is making meaningful and reasonable progress in developing and expanding its process for helping students learn.

2: Institution Involvement

The integration of key stakeholders in the process demonstrates a dedication to continuously improve in the area of Helping Students Learn and specifically addresses the needs of this population that the institution has identified. In their commitments to learning the institution through its attainment of information from its peer benchmark schools has an opportunity to extract best practices and further demonstrate its role as they engage with these bench-marked peer institutions to create a "culture of involvement." This will further the institution's efforts as they continue gathering quantitative and qualitative data to better enable them to strategically hone in on ways to demonstrate continuous improvement and engage the appropriate stakeholders more effectively in each incremental step in this project.

3: Next Steps

The institution has documented key strategic plans to help move the project forward and has been proactive in soliciting support from departments that will help the program further document its success to have an informed process for the necessary next steps. Identification of best practices is an ideal benchmark as it relates to continuous improvement. However, until the documentation process is developed the institution will be challenged to implement these best practices without the documented reference points in place. Making this a priority as a strategic next step will be crucial to the planning process and ongoing success of the project allowing the institution to be more agile in its response.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

The outcomes delineated by the institution have helped to frame some important factors to consider in the project going forward. Adapting their practices based on these outcomes is an effective strategy and will help to underscore other efforts in this special focus project under Helping Students Learn. The institution indicated early on in the project that key areas of focus include: student learning outcomes, satisfaction rates, program enrollment, engagement, and performance and retention indicators as "outcome" measures for the project. However, if the sample is too small to draw quantifiable conclusions of these outcomes the institution is encouraged to identify KPI's relative to the sample available to assess effective practices with which they can move forward in a more systemic way.

5: Project Challenges

Lake Erie College has made reasonable and meaningful progress on this project and is encouraged to continue to be proactive in its response to resource challenges. It appears well positioned to accomplish the goals it has set forth and should continue to respond to indicators as they move forward to coordination of effort with other departments.