

Fall 11 participants

	FTFTF	Mentors	Advisor	Instructors	Staff(FRSH SEM)
CE:	28	2	Deutchman/Young	Nelson (FED)/Cummings(FED)	Quackenbush
CHE:	21	2	Baltzis	Yetman(FED/Hunt(HUM))	Gentul(CHE 101)
ECE:	63	5	Boodhoo	Sosnowski(FED)/Jelley(HUM) Modi/Hunt Paliwoda/Johnson	Redling/McCool/Riker
MIE:	78	6	Mani/Redling	Mani(FED)/Arnowitz(Hum) /Jelley /Klobucar	Saland/Bullock/Worley
CS:	31	2	Vandermark	Kapleau(CS 100)	Vandermark(CS 107)
CSLA:	20	2	Karen Roach	Kilroy(Hum)	Farrah Brown
SOM:	24	2	Lopez	Eljabiri(CS 103)/Curley(HUM) May(Mgmt 190)	
Total:	265	21	9	17	10

Fall 11 Model:

1) Enhanced Advisement:

Advisor as team-teacher in FRSH SEM (or CHE 101)

CC Advisor meetings (monthly advisor meetings)

Advisor-coordinated “CASEings” (6 meetings): Advisor communication with instructors and staff, mediating interventions

Advisor -peer mentors meetings (weekly)

Advisor as communicator of “early-warning”

CC Advisor coordination of change-of-majors

Suspension-pending/probation advisement

Observations:

Advisor participation in FRSH SEM classes enhanced their relationship with students. Advisors reported improved communication with student services and greater access to student issues and concerns early in the semester. For larger LC sections, this was difficult to coordinate; advisors were not able to attend all FRSH sections due to time constraints. Advisors pointed out that having an individual with counseling experience participate in the seminar is vital; counselors can identify behavioral issues that others might not. It was also suggested that students have more opportunity for writing experiences during the seminar. (Intended action: hiring of 6-10 interns with counseling experience for summer/fall 12)

CC Advisor meetings were a significant source of feedback; advisors reported that they would have a better ability to coordinate with student services (i.e CAPE and Math tutoring) if they had an online communication tool such as Grades First or Banner Relationship Management.

CASEings gave the advisors greater access to student academic profile and the opportunity to build relationships with faculty and counselors that existed at a minimal level, if at all. Meetings were difficult to schedule. Lack of communication with adjuncts lead to the decision to employ only Hum lecturers in spring 12. (Intended action: build a "common time block" into the fall 12 schedule).

Advisor need better access to common exam data to coordinate interventions.

The advisor's relationship with mentors is critical; where strongest, student engagement highest.

Change of major activity was highest in early January (after final grades were processed). Advisor presence at this time is critical.

Generally, advisors appreciated the opportunity to be brought "into-the-loop" with suspension-pending and academic probation students. Advisors with greatest commitment to the LC program recognize their role in monitoring and tracking these students and will participate in caseing meetings organized by the Center for First Year Students.

2) Peer Mentoring:

Mentors act as student liaison to advisor and faculty

Mentors facilitate study sessions

Mentors coordinate social and academic activities "out-of-class"

Mentors participate in recruitment events

Observations: Mentors need better training in facilitating study sessions, and students need to be better educated on the goals and outcomes of study sessions. Very early on in the fall semester it became evident that study sessions needed better structure and that a common space for all the LCs was critical. In late October, the Community Connections study lounge was opened in CAB 1006. (Action: a set of Guidelines has been developed, a workshop is planned for next week; a web presence will be created. In addition, a mentor has been assigned the role of scheduling coordinator - a mentor will be present in the lounge everyday, 10am-6pm. Hours will be extended prior to common exams. Modification to the mentor job description is necessary for better recruitment – no seniors or athletes should be considered due to competing commitments.)

Students have communicated to mentors before the start of the spring semester their desire to participate more in the sessions. Student communicated very clearly that they needed wanted more assistance from mentors during study sessions. Several advisor and instructors suggested that mentors should be more informed on classroom projects and assignments and be available to attend courses on occasion. (Action: Mentors with excellent academic records and communication skills have been assigned the role of “Academic Coordinator”: advisors will direct students with academic needs to these students; these students will tutor when available, organize students in groups with similar needs, and direct to other services: CAPE, Math tutoring, writing center, Piazza, etc.).

3) Curricular Activities:

Community Service project embedded in FRSH SEM curriculum

Advisors coordination major-related topics/speakers in FRSH SEM

Co-curricular activities in FED and Hum 101

Enhanced Hum 101 experience

Observations: Five cohorts participated in a Community Service project. Advisors and mentors reported that team-oriented events were the most successful (notably Branch Brook park clean up and Community Foodbank). Many students, particularly in ECE, expressed resistance to the notion of mandatory community service. (Action: Community Service will be reconsidered for Fall 12 as a requirement for FRSH SEM for select cohorts only)

The showcasing of FED “reverse-engineering” projects for the MIE students appeared to stimulate motivation and enthusiasm among the students. Students reported that they felt most engaged in the course when they were the material became hands-on and the teams more interactive. The SOM students participated in self-selected “management of technology” projects. Many of these project focused on the development of business models for smart phone apps. Students reported a great deal of enthusiasm for the course. (Action: A “Project-based learning” course, coordinated by Osama Eljabiri, is being piloted for the CE and CSLA LC students. The goal is engage students in “active learning” and showcase their work at the end of the semester ; Osama will bring the student projects to the attention of industry representatives, as Mani did for the MIE showcase. Reverse-engineering will be explored as a theme for other FED courses involved in the learning communities).

A core of six Humanities instructors reported very positively on their experience with the LCs, especially in terms of attendance and in-class engagement; they recognize that more systematic use of ETS criterion as a diagnostic tool, coupled with early intervention measures, may lead to improved outcomes for students. They have started to build a stronger relationship with a number of instructors in NCE; together these instructors report the following:

- The LC enhanced relationships.
- Cohort size is more manageable when less than or equal to 20.
- Seminars should run through semester. In chemical engineering, after the first five seminars, the following five focused on career options and career paths through alumni sharing their experiences.
- More interaction and engagement with learning communities, particularly in group projects.
- Groups formed in chemical engineering seminar and were carried over to FED.
- Five caseing meetings were held in chemical engineering where instructor attendance was almost 100%.
- The community service project was integrated with HUM 101 for chemical engineering.
- HUM instructors have a full load and need RT to continue in LC.
- Caseing meetings included one in civil engineering; the advisor and mentor were attentive with students.
- In the civil engineering FED, the Myers-Briggs test was used to form student groups.
- In civil engineering, it would be preferred to have all students in the LC.
- For the fall, integrating the seminar into the HUM/FED experience would be useful.
- In electrical and computer engineering, better integration of the HUM and FED courses is needed for report writing.
- The Writing Center is under utilized by at-risk students; this will be addressed in the HUM 102 syllabus.
- Mark Arnowitz will work with departments on the group writing projects.
- Instructors need to visit their collaborator's class once per month.
- Tools to increase student performance can be further facilitated through possibly ID stamp cards (as described by Mark Arnowitz) in completing assignments, meeting with instructors, and meeting with groups. Prizes could be awarded for completing all requirements including feedback surveys.
- More creative outlets for writing and applying material from class should be developed.
- For the spring include possibly three NCE LC seminars: 1. Coop Advantage, 2. Community Service Projects, and 3. Research Experiences for Undergraduates.

Proposed actions for Fall 11:

- a. Instructors linked in the FED 101 and HUM 101 courses will visit their collaborators course at least once each during the semester.
- b. FED 101 and HUM 101 instructors will attend three out of the five caseing meetings scheduled in the first 6 weeks of class. Efforts will be made to schedule a "common" meeting time slot that aligns with the schedules of all learning community instructors. Guidelines to CASEing meetings (organized by advisors) should be adhered to and minutes of meetings should be recorded so that discussions can be shared with those not in attendance.

- c. FED 101 and HUM 101 *will collaborate to create at least one connected assignment*, such as both instructors giving written feedback on a lab report, having CS students write an essay on programming, or having the students practice an oral presentation in HUM 101 for a showcase.
- d. At the end of the semester, students *will present their project work at a showcase* facilitated by the department with industry involvement.

Note that scheduling issues in spring 12 have limited the pursuit of many co-curricular activities. A much more proactive approach to scheduling will be taken for fall 12 and spring 13.

4) Extracurricular Activities

Mentors were discouraged by lack of student participation in study groups (about 50% participated regularly), and as a result, were not motivated to organize any extracurricular social or academic events. In response, student leaders in each cohort have been identified and will work with the mentors in organizing at least three events in spring 2012. Students and mentors across cohorts will collaborate.

Career Development events: CDS is organizing workshops on interviewing, networking, resume writing, and finding a summer position. Specific mentors will be coordinating.

Community Service event: April 15-21, National Volunteer Week, coordinated by mentors and CDS.

Academic competition: While mentors like the idea of team design projects and competition across communities, they are not confident that students will have the time or motivation for anything other than a “one-time” event. “One-time” event ideas included a “hackathon” involving CS, COE students and the ACM club, and a design competition involving legos. A design challenge was also proposed (Erika) where students would design a game to help solve calculus problems and better prepare students for exams.

Social competition: “Mini-olympics”: indoor/outdoor event