Raising Attention to Retention: Student Success through an Agricultural Living-Learning Community

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Agenda

• Brief overview
• Literature Review
• Theoretical Foundations
• Implications for Future Practice
Brief Overview

- Twenty-eight percent of first-year students in four-year colleges do not return for their sophomore year (Feldman & Zimbler, 2011)
- Forty-four percent of those enrolled in two-year colleges do not return for their second year (Feldman & Zimbler, 2011)
Literature Review

- Academic Retention
- Living-Learning Communities
  - First-Year Experience Courses
Academic Retention

• Studies verify that retention will increase if students are:
  – exposed to academic and social engagement
  – participate in first-year experience courses (FYE),
  – partake in service-learning projects (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Newman, 2016)

• Development of the sense of belonging is crucial to first-year students, particularly for the retention of students who are considered to be at risk of non-completion (O’Keeffe, 2013)
Living-Learning Communities

- Studies reports that students who participated in a living-learning community had a richer support system with peers when compared to students who did not participate in a LLC (Arsendorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016)
- Students who participated in the LLC reported supportive, nurturing relationships with faculty (Arsendorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016)
First-Year Experience Courses (FYE)

- Many living-learning communities have an orientation or seminar attached included in the program to further assist in adjusting to college life (Cambridge-Williams, Winsler, Kitsantas, & Bernard, 2013)
Theoretical Foundations

- Theory of Student Departure (Tinto, 1988)
- Theory of Student Involvement (Astin, 1984)
Tinto’s Theory of Student Departure

Figure 1: Theory of Student Departure
Theory of Student Involvement

- Alexander Astin, 1984

Figure 2: Theory of Student Involvement
Implications for Future Practice

• Implement a CALS LLC
  – Include “block” housing
  – Include First-Year Experience Course

• 411 indicated interest
  • 239 FTF female
  • 157 FTF male
Best Practices

• LLC assessment methods
• Collaboration with multiple departments
• Intention Resident Advisor placements
• FYE course content


Thank you!