Narrative

Student Success Model: Learning through Engaged and Authentic Practices (LEAP)

Drs. Lori Reinsvold & Susan M. Keenan

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Poster Presentation for 2020 AAC&U's Diversity, Equity, and Student Success Virtual Conference Evening Session 03 19 2020. Student Success Model: Learning through Engaged and Authentic Practices (LEAP) at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC), Greeley, CO

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Lori & Susan serve as Co-Directors of the LEAP Program. The activities seek to improve the persistence and graduation of marginalized students pursuing a pre-health degree in biology or chemistry at the University of Northern Colorado. The program is specifically focused on first-generation students, students of color, and Pell-eligible students.

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This program was funded through a Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative grant through the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Provost Incentive Fund at the University of Northern Colorado. The LEAP program is informed by student success practices in the School of Biological Sciences at UNC specifically active-learning strategies (for example Bonwell and Eison, 1991), early authentic research experiences (in the form of Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences or CURES) (for example Auchincloss L.C., et al., 2014), in combination with other known high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008).

There is community building throughout the summer bridge and academic year.

Program Highlights:

Summer Bridge Program
Students participate in a four-day summer bridge program, Students stay in the dorms, engage in team-building activities, participate in a research project, and engage with their biology and chemistry faculty that they will have in the fall.

Assistance Navigating the Financial Aid Process
Assisting with understanding bills, access to FAFSA workshops for help with completion, and referrals to appropriate offices.

Mentor Program
Upper LEAP students assist incoming freshmen with acclimation to UNC and STEM.

**Success Workshops**
Opportunities to attend various workshops, including the following: Self-Care, Time Management, Test-Taking Skills, and more.

**Social Events**
Once per month, students can attend a social event to continue to build community.

**Cohort Sciences Courses**
Students from the cohort are in the same lecture and lab sections for their biology and chemistry courses.

**Personalized Intrusive/Proactive Advising**
Individual student needs are assessed at the first one-on-one meeting with the LEAP Coordinator/Advisor to create individual success plans. Students meet with LEAP Coordinator/Advisor twice per month and with their major advisor with LEAP once per month.

**Study Hall Nights**
Creates a learning community for program participants. Promotes opportunities to learn from each other.

**STEM Faculty Engagement**
Faculty are given a list of LEAP participants to assist with academic progress reporting.

**Opportunities to Participate in Research**
Students receive assistance connecting to faculty for research experience.

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**Slide 4**
These photos represent what LEAP students do. Description clockwise (from the top middle): a gathering of new LEAP Students and their Peer Mentors during a 4-day summer bridge program, students develop investigations to understand how zebrafish development is affected by various conditions, community-building activity among the LEAP Students, LEAP Peer Mentors preparing an activity for students, LEAP Students guided through a rope course for community building, LEAP Students presenting their zebrafish research findings to the public through poster presentations, and center, Dr. Ginger Fisher, freshmen BIO 110 faculty, introducing LEAP Students to course activities and recommendations for success.

**Slide 5**
The LEAP program is highly successful in supporting minoritized students and is dramatically outpacing national and UNC (all students, Biology and Chemistry) retention and persistence rates.

**Slide 6**
Moreover, success extends through to graduation. We have a four-year graduation rate that is fifteen percent higher for all students in the same incoming freshman class studying Biology and Chemistry at UNC and more than double the four-year graduation rate for students of color and first-generation students. Additional LEAP students from our initial cohort are on track to graduate this academic year, which will bring our five-year graduation rate to over 65%, which outpaces the graduation rates of all Biology and Chemistry students by greater than 30%.

**Slide 7**
These are the aspects of the LEAP program that we have found necessary for our LEAP students, especially those who are first-generation students, to persist and graduate. Building these practices with
students helps them connect to both the social and academic support environments as they continue as sophomores and through their senior year.

**Slide 8**

How does our work compare to what you are doing? Please contact us with your questions and comments or connect with us through Slido: Go to [www.slideo.com](http://www.slideo.com) and enter event #E032