TCS Living and Learning Communities

At the end of the Fall 2012 semester, Resident Assistants distributed paper evaluations to their residents to assess the Living Learning Community (LLC) programming for the semester. 108 residents responded. More specifically, 40 residents in the LiFE (Living in a Fit Environment) community, 21 in the MVP (Music, Visual, and Performance) community and 46 in the Business Community completed the evaluation. The evaluation questions were carefully crafted to foster responses to reflect the Living and Learning Community Objectives.

Living and Learning Communities Objectives

- Facilitate academic and social integration in the university and residential communities
- Improve retention and persistence to graduation
- Provide students with a practical framework for accessing resources within the university and your residential communities
- Build and reinforce the development of essential academic and life skills such as familiarity with information technologies, interpersonal communication and relationships, utilizing library and research tools, productive learning strategies and utilizing campus resources
- Develop and appreciation and sensitivity for the diversity that intertwines the university and residential communities
- Translate classroom learning to our greater community to effect and implement social change

Sample of Weekly Meeting Topics

- **SMATER Goals** (August)
  Resident Assistants worked with residents to create academic, professional social goals for the semester, academic year and their college career.

- **Coming Out Identity Activity** (October)
  In recognition of National Coming Out Day (October 12, 2012) residents were asked share a part of their identity. National Coming Out Day is dedicated to people expressing their sexual identity, and this week we expanded the mission and included other identities. Residents created art work that represented an identity that they chose to share with their floor mates.

- **Floor Social: Potluck** (November)
  As residents returned from celebrating time with their family and taking a break from school this was intended to be a time to come together and fellowship.

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1 It should be noted that no data was collected from the IDEA community because LLC programming for that floor ended midway through the semester.
Results

I learned much during the meetings.

71.3% (77 residents) of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that they learned much during the LLC weekly meetings.

I gained a better understand of academic resources on campus.

84.2% (91 residents) of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that they gained a better understanding of academic resources on campus.
88.8% (96 residents) of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that they became more aware of different social activities on campus.

76.9% (83 residents) of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that they learned more about the culture and social identities of their peers.
Overall Summary

Overall, the responses indicate that objectives are being met. Although the respondent pool is reflective of approximately 25% residents in Living and Learning Communities, the results show that weekly meetings have been effective. The TCS Student Staff have done a great job taking the curriculum and adapting it for their respective communities. For example, because of LLC membership, 96 residents reported that they learned more about opportunities for social activities on campus. The Resident Assistants working on LLC floors have organized trips to Late Night events, Noise Complaint events, City Eats Dining Center for sporting event screenings and Homecoming activities. This assessment also indicates that the Department of Residential Life’s commitment to social justice and diversity has been echoed in LLC programming. 76% of respondents agreed that they learned about the social identities of their peers. Respondents participated in activities such as the Step in the Circle activity.

Recommendations or Items to Consider for Next Fall Semester

- Contact faculty well in advance, so they can participate in LLC events.
- LLC weekly meetings would work even better if instead of sitting on the floor of their elevator lobby, RA’s had a lounge space to accommodate their community.
- The IDEA community was converted into a non-LLC floor during the semester. Working closely with the Housing Business Office to make sure students are placed on the proper floor for their respective LLC may alleviate the need for such a change.
- Since space is extremely limited in TCS, Residential Life should consider capping the LLC at 20 participants.

71.3% (77 residents) of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that they engaged with faculty.