Ho-Chunk Living Learning Community Needs Assessment
Dr. Heather Ann Moody and Savannah Rigert

Data

To collect the data that was needed in the needs assessment a survey was sent out to students at University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College. So far the data we have gotten back is only from the students at the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire. Most of the questions that were asked were inquiring about what they would want to see in a LLC and what the students wished they had come into college. Over all we 36 responses, a 31% rate

Here are the questions and the top three responses we got:

- Important factors in making a decision on where to attend college
  - Offers the programs/courses I want (47%)
  - Availability of financial aid (46%)
  - Availability of job placement (22%)

- What assistance have you needed at college?
  - Financial aid (61%)
  - Career counseling (33%)
  - Study skills (24%)

- What you wanted to gain from our experience at UW-Eau Claire?
  - Academic/Intellectual skills (46%)
  - Career preparation (48%)
  - Personal Growth/Awareness; meaningful social relationships (36%)

- What American Indian related events would you attend if offered?
  - Spring powwow (79%)
  - American Indian speaker series (67%)
  - Ho-Chunk culture events (46%)

- What programs, events or academic courses relating to American Indians would you like to see at UW-Eau Claire?
  - More awareness of the Ojibwe foreign language course (86%)
  - Ojibwe Culture events/courses (86%)
  - Ho-Chunk language courses (86%)

- What type of residential housing would you prefer?
  - Traditional dormitory (64%, n=18)
  - Living Learning Community (36%, n=10)

- Which would you prefer Off-campus Priory or Main Campus?
  - Main campus (67%, n=6)
  - Off-campus (33%, n=3)

- Important aspects of a LLC and the UW-Eau Claire experience
  - Sense of social support (36%)
  - Ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from native communities (32%)
  - Ability to get to know students who have similar interests (29%)

- What aspects are important when thinking about the learning experiences you would hope to have within a LLC?
  - Making connections between my personal experiences and class learning (25%)
  - Final support in helping me learn (24%)
  - Applying what I learn in class to real world issues (23%)

- What American Indian specific aspects would you want included in a LLC?
  - The culture of all tribes (30%)
  - Story telling and service learning activity that gives us an opportunity to go to a reservation for a few days (29%)
  - Language of the present American Indian students to label objects around the LLC (27%)
  - A connection to my culture, not just to be in the presence of others who are enrolled in a tribe, but rather, be around others whose identity is based in their tribal culture (26%)
  - A connection to tribal “Elders” that are deeply connected to their culture (26%)

- What aspects are important when thinking about the learning experiences you would have within a LLC?
  - A more culture based atmosphere (29%)
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- What is a Living Learning Community (LLC)?
  - A huge thanks to Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

The Priory

Conclusions

The needs assessment is important because it is being used to make sure that those who are working to make the Ho-Chunk Living Learning Community happen can use the data and the information we have gathered to better cater to the needs of the Ho-Chunk students coming in. So with that being the needs assessment plays a very big role in this project and will be a deciding factor in how many potential students we get.

Benefits of Ho-Chunk LLC

There are many benefits that come from joining a living learning community. Here are some specifically for the Ho-Chunk LLC:

- Part of a community: this community is specifically designed for Ho-Chunk Students who are attending University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire or Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Connect to Ho-Chunk Culture: the option of taking language and culture classes at The Priory and on the main campus
- Enjoy The Priory: living at a residential campus with private rooms on 112 wooded acres just three miles from the main campus gives a unique learning opportunity
- Learn from Ho-Chunk Elders: there will be an Elders in Residence program where students will have the chance to talk with the elders in and out of the classroom.
- Join one or more of the 250 student clubs and organizations- represents a wide variety of interests
- Mentors: a chance to interact with student mentors, faculty, and staff who are dedicated to helping students succeed in college and outside of college.

The What?

A Living Learning Community is a group of college students who have something in common, such as their cultural background, who live and learn together. Students in a LLC have opportunities to meet new people, bear speakers, and participate in social and academic activities with other students, faculty and staff.

The How?

The process of the needs assessment started on December 9, 2012 and is still ongoing. The first steps were planning activities, including determining the best methodological approaches for data collection, creating a detailed project timeline, and seeking and obtaining Institution Review Board approval for both University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The second part of the needs assessment focuses on the data collection for the Ho-Chunk Nation, using surveys of students, focus groups with tribal leaders, and meeting with legislators. The final phase of the needs assessment will be the analysis of the data and presentation of the data that has so far been collected to the Ho-Chunk Implementation Team and continuing to do so as more data comes in, as well as dissemination results to the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The needs assessment has been led by Dr. Heather Ann Moody, American Indian Studies, with assistance from Social Work/ American Indian Studies student Savannah Rigert. The needs assessment has given Ms. Rigert an opportunity to assist throughout the research process. The needs assessment research on Native American living learning communities, and assisting in collecting data from the Ho-Chunk Nation surveys and focus groups. Also attending meetings with Dr. Moody and tribal elders, students, and legislators, as well as assisting in analyzing and summarizing the data gathered.

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Background

On September 23, 2013, The University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire entered a partnership with the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin. No other UW System institution has engaged in this type of partnership with a Native American community. The idea behind the partnership was to create cultural and economic opportunities for Ho-Chunk students. One project that came from this partnership is the creation of a living learning community specifically for Ho-Chunk students, both traditional and non-traditional at The Priory.

There are many other components to the living learning community like a Ho-Chunk language program, culturally specific course offerings and certificate and degree completion programs. In order to meet the needs of both partners there is a need for a needs assessment to determine not only programming needs but also space requirements to house the programs at The Priory.

Process of the Needs Assessment

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