

2006-2007 Annual Report—LEAP Program

Office of Undergraduate Studies

The University of Utah



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Introduction

LEAP enjoyed another successful year in 2006-2007, its thirteenth since inception. The program continues to grow and change. The big news this year was the addition of three new LEAP tracks: Fine Arts LEAP, Pre-Law LEAP and E-LEAP Plus, designed and taught by Dr. Jennifer Bauman, Dr. Ann Engar, and Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta respectively. (Pre-Law LEAP and E-LEAP Plus are both multi-year programs, the second years of which will begin in Fall 2007.) Additionally, the College of Engineering has decided to begin requiring LEAP classes of all engineering students (starting first with Civil and Environmental Engineering and Materials Science and Engineering, to be followed later by Electrical Engineering), which will entail adding 2 sections next year, with more to follow in subsequent years. Another addition this year was the debut of an optional one-credit hour course in major selection, open only to LEAP students, that was first offered in Spring Semester. This course was designed and taught by Martina Stewart, from University College Advising.



Students at Glenn Bailey's Workshop

These and other developments have made it increasingly difficult to explain the program to prospective students. For this reason we made another change in the program, which is how we talk about it. In order to stress the similarity of all LEAP courses, and thereby to reinforce the

pedagogic identity of the program, we decided to describe the program's bewildering variety of offerings as one basic course adapted for three different groups of students: those who are interested primarily in the course themes (courses for these students are now called "Thematic LEAP"), those who want to be grouped with students who share their professional interests (now called "Pre-Professional LEAP," which includes the multi-year tracks in law,

engineering and health sciences), and those who are living in the Residence Halls and want to learn and build community with other students living on campus (“Residence Halls LEAP”). This change in nomenclature is an effort to explain and thereby market the program more effectively to prospective students than in the past.

We also undertook a number of other initiatives to improve our outreach to prospective students. They included: A new LEAP Orientation PowerPoint



Glenn Bailey's Workshop on Poverty in Utah

presentation (featuring a new video on the program), a revamped website, improved publicity (two press releases on LEAP activities in the spring semester, a first for the program), outreach letters to High School Guidance counselors in local schools and to international students, a welcome email to newly admitted students, a new program brochure,

the constitution of a Community Advisory Board, and a LEAP Year Celebration for students and Parents upon the successful completion of the LEAP year.

LEAP Program Description

LEAP is a year-long learning community for entering University students. It consists of two three-credit-hour courses – one fall semester, one spring semester – taken with the same professor and classmates, allowing students to build community. LEAP’s two classes fulfill the diversity requirement and two general education requirements and are linked to optional classes in writing, library research, major selection, and service.

LEAP’s mission is three-fold:

1. To promote and implement scholarship and service for first year students through an integrated, interdisciplinary, and collaborative teaching and learning community;
2. To attract and retain a diverse student population; and

3. To engage students in an interactive exploration of diversity issues both in the classroom and through community outreach.

A Program Overview for the Year

The program experienced a slight decline in student enrollment (down from 614 students in Fall of 2005 to 594 in Fall of 2006), but this was offset by slightly better retention in the second semester: 378 students stayed for the Spring semester (64%) compared with 382 in Spring 2006 (62%). As mentioned above, LEAP saw a slight decline in students numbers, but—having anticipated an increase—offered more sections of 1100 and 1101: 22 sections this year as compared to 21 in 2005-2006. That one extra section was, however, cancelled in the Fall. Its students were added to another section meeting on the same days and at the same hour.

- Fall Semester 2006. LEAP offered 21 sections of 1100 for 594 students, and, in addition, 1 section of Architecture 1610, taught by Erin Silva (who took the course over this year from Martha Bradley). Of these sections of 1100, 10 were Explorations LEAP, 2 were Business LEAP, 3 were Engineering LEAP, 1 was College of Health LEAP, 1 was Health Sciences LEAP, and 2 were Residence Halls LEAP. There were also two new courses: Pre-Law LEAP and Fine Arts LEAP. As mentioned above, this compares to 21 sections offered in Fall 2005 for 614 students.
- Spring Semester 2007. LEAP offered 21 sections of 1101, 2004 (the second semester of College of Health LEAP and Health Sciences LEAP), and 1150 (the second semester of Pre-Law LEAP), but, given the attrition from Fall to Spring, only 378 students were enrolled as of January 9th, 2007 (this number includes Architecture 1611). (Thus, approximately 36% of the LEAP students enrolled in the Fall chose not to continue with the second semester.) Of these sections, 10 were Explorations LEAP, 2 were Business LEAP, 3 were Engineering LEAP, 1 was College of Health LEAP, 1 was Health Sciences LEAP, 1 was Pre-Law LEAP, 2 were Residence Halls LEAP, and 1 was Fine Arts LEAP. This compares to 21 sections the previous year, during Spring semester 2006, for 374 students.

In addition to these sections, LEAP also offered the following courses:

- LEAP 1050: Major Selection, a new course taught in the spring by Martina Stewart from University College Advising, for 16 students.
- LEAP 2002: Peer Advisor Seminar for 17 students.
- LEAP 2003: service learning for Peer Advisors (spring semester only) for 15 students.

- LEAP 1300, sections 1 (Dr. Carolan Ownby) for 37 students and 2 (Dr. Ed Barbanell) for 10 students: service learning add-ons (spring semester only).
- Writing 1060-01: library research add-on for 197 students.
- UUHSC 2500-001: second year of Health Sciences LEAP (fall semester) for 20 students.
- UUHSC 3000-001 (fall) for 18 students and 3001-001 (spring) for 18 students: third year for Health Sciences LEAP.
- UUHSC 4000-001 (fall) for 11 students and 4001-001 (spring) for 11 students: fourth year for Health Sciences LEAP.

See Appendix 1 for representative syllabi of these LEAP courses. (See Appendix 2 for the Peer Advisor Handbook which contains the LEAP 2002 syllabus.)

Changes in LEAP

1. New Faculty

Dr. Michael White was hired this year, to begin teaching two Thematic LEAP sections focused on the environment in Fall 2007. Mike comes to LEAP from the English Department, where he has just completed his PhD in English/Creative Writing.

2. Departures

Dr. Rachel Borup, who taught College of Health LEAP this past year, has decided to take a leave of absence for the academic year 2007-2008.

3. New Teaching and Administrative Assignments

There will be a number of changes for the coming year. Dr. Kris Koford will be switching from Residence Halls LEAP to College of Health LEAP and Engineering LEAP (of which he'll be teaching three sections). Dr. Jeff Webb will be switching from Explorations LEAP (now called Thematic LEAP) to Residence Halls LEAP (2 sections) and Dr. Meg Harper will be switching partially from Explorations to Business: she'll be teaching 2 Thematic LEAP sections and 2 Business sections.

4. New Programs and Partnerships

LEAP offered several new programs this year, as mentioned above.

- Dr. Seetha Veeragantha taught E-LEAP Plus, a two-year LEAP program for economically disadvantaged and female Engineering students, modeled on the hugely successful 4-year Health Sciences LEAP. E-LEAP Plus began for a cohort of freshmen in Fall 2006. This second year of the program will be taught for the first time in Fall of 2007 and will emphasize shadowing and internship placement.
- Dr. Bauman taught a new College of Fine Arts LEAP.
- Dr. Ann Engar taught a new pre-Law LEAP for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students planning to attend law school. This 3-year track emphasizes humanities in the first year, shadowing and UROP-related research in the second, and service and the law school application process in the third. In the Fall, Dr. Engar will teach the first cohort of second year students in LEAP 2700.

In addition, there will be 2 new sections of Engineering LEAP in the Fall to accommodate the Engineering students now required to complete LEAP.

LEAP also worked with, or entered into, new formal partnerships with the following programs:

- *Venture Program*. From the “Venture to LEAP” proposal: “The Venture program is a year-long interdisciplinary course in the humanities sponsored by the Utah Humanities Council for underserved, financially struggling adults. By establishing formal relations with the Venture program LEAP faculty will be able to invite or organize panel discussions and/or workshops with the Venture students (currently 40 in all) for their LEAP 1101 or 1100 classes. In exchange, LEAP students and/or LEAP Peer Advisors will share their knowledge of university life with the Venture students.” For a copy of the proposal see Appendix 3.
- *International Center*. LEAP is working with the International Center to invite international students to sign up for LEAP and to facilitate their registration for LEAP.
- *Academy for Math, Engineering, and Science (AMES)*. During Spring Semester students in Service LEAP 1300 tutored AMES students. Further possibilities for collaboration with AMES are being explored.

In addition LEAP maintained its existing partnerships with Odyssey House, Horizonte School, Northwest Middle School, West High School, Crossroads Urban Center, and University Neighborhood Partners.

5. Program Assessment

We continued to implement the assessment plan put in place last year. This plan has the following components.

- *Online Fall and Spring surveys*, administered by the online assessment company, StudentVoice (for this year's surveys see Appendix 4). The surveys have been redesigned, particularly the Spring survey, to provide more detailed information from students about their expectations of LEAP (in the Fall) and their sense of what they've learned in LEAP (in the Spring). The Spring survey, additionally, reiterates questions asked on the University's graduating senior survey (<http://www.obia.utah.edu/dm/sdm/>) about educational outcomes. This survey is an important piece of our assessment plan, and asking the same questions on the LEAP spring survey will allow us to determine to what extent the LEAP experience may be responsible for students' satisfaction with their educations upon graduation, as reported in the senior survey. The response rate to the Fall Survey was 29% (171 responses), while the response rate to the Spring Survey was 51% (193 responses). The difference in response rates can be explained by the fact that we administered the Spring Survey in the final library class.
- *Analysis of the Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis (OBIA) Senior Survey*, which includes a LEAP question, and which therefore allows us to compare LEAP and non-LEAP students in their answers to some 80 questions. The questions we are particularly interested in, however, are the 17 that concern educational outcomes.
- *A portfolio study of student work* designed to measure the effect of LEAP on student learning. This study is proving more difficult to conduct than we expected, simply because it is difficult for faculty to remember to copy student papers for the portfolios. This study is ongoing and we hope to have our first results by August 2008.
- *Analysis of Fall-to-Fall retention of LEAP students* compared to non-LEAP students.
- *Analysis of time to graduation of LEAP students* compared to non-LEAP students.

Assessment of LEAP is discussed in more detail below, under "Program Assessment Analysis."

6. Peer Advisor Program

See the Annual Report for AY 2005-2006 for a description of the Peer Advisor Program. (http://www.leap.utah.edu/media/leap_05-06_report.pdf)



Peer Advisors 2006-2007

The Peer Advisor program had another spectacular year under Dr. Carolan Ownby's leadership. This year's cohort of Peer Advisors numbered 23—one per LEAP section plus a Senior Peer Advisor. They met twice a month as a group and planned a variety of program activities including:

- *The opening and closing picnics*, which occurred on September 15, 2006, and April 26, 2007.
- *The food drive*, which included the following activities: trick or can, bowling for food, February drive, collecting change at the Huntsman



Annual Food Drive 2006-2007

Center, a coin drive after a basketball game, and partnership with Jewish Community Center. Peer Advisors raised \$1,424.14, 3,929.6 pounds of food, and two carloads of clothes to benefit

Crossroads Urban Center. (The final total last year, for reference, was \$907.50 and 2,286 pounds of food.)

- *See You at the U*. This event brought 100 potential first generation university students from Northwest Middle School to the campus for half of a day. Many of these students are from immigrant families or are



immigrants themselves, and at least half of them don't speak English. The students were introduced to things such as physical therapy, dance, the Museum of Natural History, and soccer. The day ended at the Heritage

Center for lunch and a prize drawing.

- *The Faculty Film Series*, held in the LEAP House, with seven films presented throughout the year.
- *Registration help for spring semester*. Peer Advisors helped both by giving presentations in class, and by staffing computers in the Sill Center to help freshmen who dropped in. LEAP students are granted early registration for spring semester classes.
- *Bi-monthly meetings*. The Senior Peer Advisor, Maggie Hortin, set the agenda for the bimonthly meetings as well as conducting them. She also organized and conducted a mid-semester retreat for the Peer Advisors to help set goals for spring semester. We secured funding to send next year's Sr PA to LeaderShape.
- *Presentation to the Legislature*. Two PAs, Marko Mijic and Ashley Swapp, represented LEAP as University Ambassadors to the Legislature.
- *Staffing of the LEAP House*. The PAs staffed the LEAP House M-Th evenings, and were usually there on Fridays as well. This enabled the LEAP House to become a gathering center for LEAP students.
- *Workshops*. The PAs organized a series of Peer Advisor Workshops on everything from cooking to time management to using WebCT.
- *Other service*. Peer Advisors helped with the Guuleysi Girls' Running Club. They assisted young girls from the Heartland apartments, which serves a large refugee population, to set goals toward healthy lifestyle choices.

- *LEAP to the U!* This is an outreach initiative focusing on students from West High school. This year 34 students came to campus to for “Shadow Day” on February 28. See Appendix 6 for the press release.

See Appendix 5 for a list of PA Committees for 2005-6, and Appendix 2 for the PA Handbook (which contains the syllabus for LEAP 2002, the PA Seminar).

7. Program Activities

LEAP sponsored the following program-wide activities in 2005-06:

- *LEAP Convocation*, Sept. 6, 2006; Keynote Speaker: Councilman Dave Buhler. A reception at the LEAP House followed. The Convocation is sponsored by a generous gift from the Bamberger Foundation.
- *Opening Picnic*, Sept. 15, 2006
- *Closing Picnic*, April 26, 2007
- *Fall and winter food drive* for Crossroads Urban Center, October 2006-February 2007.
- *Plenary Lecture Series*: LEAP faculty arranged a plenary lecture series—two lectures in the fall and one in the spring—to offer additional perspectives on the subject matter then under discussion in classes. In the fall Luz Robles and Tony Shirley spoke. In the spring, Glenn Bailey of Crossroads Urban Center gave a series of workshops on poverty in Utah during students’ regular class times. Though the Robles and Shirley talks were both very good, attendance was not strong, given the size of our student population, and it is not clear at this point whether we will continue the lecture series.



Dave and Jennifer Buhler

8. Service

There are two formal service learning opportunities in the LEAP program: Dr. Carolan Ownby’s sections of Thematic LEAP, and Dr. Ed Barbanell’s add-on service course in the spring. Dr. Barbanell’s class tutored at risk students at AMES. Students in Dr. Ownby’s classes are required to complete 20 hours of

service (ten during fall semester and ten during spring semester) and are involved in the following service projects:

- One section is partnered with West High School. This project is called LEAP to the U, and completed its third year this year. LEAP to the U students are starting to graduate from West High School. Six seniors graduated this year, and all of them are headed to college: three to SLCC, and three to the U. One of those students, Eduardo Reyes, won the Larry H. Miller Scholarship to study at the U.
- The other two sections volunteered with ESL students at Horizonte for the fall semester. For the spring semester, students chose either to continue volunteering at Horizonte, or to undertake a separate project. That project had to meet the requirement of being service-learning tied to the curriculum.

9. Advising

LEAP continued an effective partnership with University College advising this year, with the aim of helping students investigate and choose majors.

- University College advisors visited LEAP classes in October to advise students preparing to register for spring semester. For the coming year, when advising is scheduled to become mandatory at four points throughout a student's career, this advising visit will satisfy the first advising obligation. It will continue to guarantee students early registration for spring semester classes.
- A 1-credit hour class, LEAP 1050, taught by University College Advisor Martina Stewart, was offered this Spring for LEAP students. 17 enrolled. The class will be offered annually in the spring.

10. LEAP Advisory Boards

A LEAP Community Advisory Board, composed of 4 University of Utah faculty and staff, and 8 members from the community (primarily Salt Lake City, though one member, Carl Reed Jr., is from Phoenix!), was constituted during the Spring semester (see Appendix 7 for a list of members and the minutes from the most recent meeting). The board is planning to meet again in October. The LEAP Advisory Board, constituted last year and composed of approximately 30 University faculty and staff, met twice this year in October 2006 and March 2007. See Appendix 8 for the minutes from this year's meetings.

Student Recruitment and Program Outreach

Partly as a result of mild declines in enrollment, and partly out of a desire to address a longstanding program deficiency, LEAP Program Director Carolyn Bliss and LEAP Associate Program Director Jeff Webb worked hard to improve program outreach this year. The following is a list of initiatives undertaken to improve LEAP publicity and enrollment. Special thanks to James Griner for help with the technical aspects of these initiatives.

- *LEAP video.* We secured a short clip on the LEAP program that is part of the U's current promotional video. It features students talking about their experiences in the program and nicely captures all of the major selling points. It is currently available on the homepage of the new LEAP website, and we've also made it the centerpiece of the new Orientation presentation.
- *A new LEAP website: www.leap.utah.edu.* The existing LEAP website was outdated and performed poorly. In the Fall we constituted a committee (Seetha Veeraghanta, Jeff Webb, James Griner, Josette Price, and Maggie Hortin) to begin working on a revision, which is now complete. The initial work was done by web designers from the University's Department of Marketing and Communications. We subsequently hired Rebekah Grow in TAAC to finish the work, and we had a functional website up and running in time for Orientation—for well under our budgeted \$2000. Going forward, we hope to migrate the site to the HUMIS system which would allow us to easily maintain the site ourselves. Highlights of the new LEAP website include: a short video about the program, downloadable materials such as the new program brochure and assessment results, and a thorough description of the program including the various kinds of LEAP courses, along with individual course descriptions. We have also installed useful links, including many to student services on campus.
- *Publicity.* This is the first year that LEAP has worked with a publicist to get the word out about the program's many amazing endeavors. Colleen Casto, Community Relations Specialist in the U's Public Relations Department, has been instrumental in this effort. During Spring Semester, two press releases were put out, one on the Peer Advisor-sponsored event, "LEAP to the U," and the other on a remarkable performance, "Neighborhood Jungle Pie," put on by Dr. Jennifer Bauman's Fine Arts LEAP class in conjunction with Neighborhood House. See Appendices 6 and 9 for the press releases. This partnership represents a big step forward for the program, and should help improve LEAP's name recognition in the community.
- *A letter to College Guidance Counselors* in local High Schools reminding them about the LEAP program and encouraging them to make their students aware of the program. This letter, as well as the email to

new students, described below, is intended to boost awareness of LEAP among U-bound high school seniors and thereby to improve enrollment. See Appendix 10 for a copy of the letter.

- *Email to new students.* In May we emailed an invitation to newly admitted students to sign up for LEAP during Orientation. The email mentions Orientation, quotes students talking about LEAP, and directs students to the new LEAP website. See Appendix 11 for a copy of the email.
- *New Program Brochure.* The brochure gives the essential information on the program, in easily readable format. It will be available at Orientations and may be downloaded at the website. See Appendix 12 for a copy of the brochure.
- *The constitution of a Community Advisory Board.* Discussed above.
- *Fine Arts LEAP “Neighborhood Jungle Pie.”* The students in Fine Arts LEAP, under the direction of Jennifer Bauman, worked with students from Neighborhood House and put on a dramatic production at the end of Spring Semester. See Appendix 13 for the flyer advertising the evening, as well as a letter of thanks from the Director of Neighborhood House, and a news article from *West Valley News*. A story about this production also appeared on the homepage of the U’s website.
- *Revised Orientation PowerPoint Presentation.* The new presentation starts with the video of students talking about the program, and the subsequent slides expand on the points they make. The presentation is short—8 slides—but can serve as the basis for longer presentations and will, we trust, make the program attractive and comprehensible for prospective students. See Appendix 14 for a copy of the presentation.
- *New program description.* With recent changes in the program, it has become increasingly difficult to explain LEAP to prospective students. For this reason we’ve changed how we talk about the program. In order to stress the similarity of all LEAP courses, and thereby to reinforce the pedagogic identity of the program, we decided to describe the program’s bewildering variety of offerings as one basic course adapted for three different groups of students: those who are interested primarily in the course themes (courses for these students are now called “Thematic LEAP”), those who want to be grouped with students who share their professional interests (now called “Pre-Professional LEAP,” which includes the multi-year tracks in law, engineering and Health Sciences),



and those who are living in the Residence Halls and want to learn and build community with other students living on campus (“Residence Halls LEAP”).

- *LEAP Year Celebration.* This was an evening for LEAP students and parents to celebrate the successful conclusion of the year in LEAP. It was held on April 18. In addition to honoring the achievement of LEAP students, we also announced the new PAs and scholarship recipients at this event. Part of our intention in inviting parents is to begin developing a network of community supporters. See Appendix 15 for a copy of the letter of invitation.
- *International Students.* In collaboration with the International Center, LEAP is now inviting international students who will be entering the university as freshmen to sign up for LEAP. We sent a letter out to prospective students in April. See Appendix 16 for a copy of the letter.

Milestones and Awards

1. Student Achievements

Nicole Nguyen, Health Science LEAP student and former Peer Advisor, was elected President of the U's Senior Class.

Eduardo Reyes, who participated in “LEAP to the U,” won the prestigious Larry H. Miller Scholarship to study at the U.

The winners of the Health Sciences LEAP Fourth-Year Student Service Award were Akela Bellazetin and Charles Kim. Both will use their award money on YouthLINC international service trips this summer.

Shontol Burkhalter was the winner of the Williams Award for outstanding Health Sciences LEAP student. She is also a former Peer Advisor. Engineering LEAP Peer Advisor Jennifer Wheelwright shared with Zivile Dobson the 2007 Micron Engineering Prize for bioengineering technology.

The Bamberger/Francis Scholarship and Frost Award Winners were:

- Nerehida Carranza, winner of the Bamberger/Francis Scholarship for a Multi-Year LEAP student.
- Vanessa Johnson, Jonattan Leano, Kathryn Maasberg, Tuyet Nguyen, and Candelario Saldana, winners of the Bamberger/Francis Scholarships for freshmen LEAP students.
- Carla Suarez, Ashley Swapp, and Jaime Winston, winners of the Bamberger/Francis Scholarships for Peer Advisors.
- Carla Suarez, winner of the Frost Award for Outstanding Peer Advisor.

Last year's 7 Bamberger/Francis award winners are doing very well at the U: they have a cumulative GPA of 3.6 and 5 are on the Dean's List; 1 had a 4.0.

The winner of the ELEAP Award this year was Lynae Nielsen, and Nerehida Carranza won the ELEAP Plus award.

2. Conference Presentations on LEAP by LEAP Faculty

Carolyn Bliss, Carolan Ownby and Martha Bradley presented "The First-Year Experience at the University of Utah: Partnering Across Campus and Community" at the 19th International Conference on the First-Year Experience, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 26 July 2006.

Carolyn Bliss and Mark St. Andre presented "Measuring the LEAP: Assessment Initiatives for a Freshman Learning Community" at the Association for General and Liberal Studies 46th Annual National Conference, Indianapolis, IN, 20 Oct. 2006.

Carolyn Bliss presented "Health Sciences LEAP: Infusing Humanities into Pre-Professional Medical Education" at the National Association for Humanities Education Conference, San Francisco, CA, 28 Feb. 2007.

Carolyn Bliss gave talks on LEAP at University of Utah Preview Days, 10 Mar. 2007; Ambassador Day, 13 Mar. 2007; High School Services, 10 Apr. 2007; Junior Day, 21 Apr. 2007; to University College Advisors, 5 June 2007; and to Summer Orientation Leaders, 6 June 2007.

Carolyn Bliss chaired the Workshop for Diversity Course Instructors, 16 Apr. 2007, and gave a presentation there as part of a panel.

3. Publications on LEAP by LEAP Faculty

Although LEAP faculty publish regularly in their individual academic disciplines, they also publish on the LEAP program. During 2006-7, the following were accepted for publication:

- "Measuring the LEAP: Assessment Initiatives for a Freshman Learning Community," by Carolyn Bliss and Mark St. Andre, was accepted for publication by *AGLS News*.
- Carolan Ownby's case study on encouraging civic engagement in the first year of college has been accepted for inclusion on a web site to appear in the fall of 2007, supervised by Martha LaBare of Bloomfield College, and managed by the *New York Times*.

4. Continuing Education for LEAP Faculty

LEAP Program director Carolyn Bliss completed the Harvard Management Development Program in June of 2006.

LEAP Associate Director Jeff Webb attended the Summer Institute on First Year Assessment in Savannah, Georgia, in June of 2007.

5. Committee Work by LEAP Faculty

LEAP was represented on the following campus committees: Diversity Course Faculty Committee, Undergraduate Council, University Academic Advising



Bumper Stickers

Committee and Freshman Advisory Committee, Pre-Med Advisory Committee, two Service Learning Scholar Faculty Committees, Preview Day Planning Committee, New Student Advisory Team, Search Committee for Asst. VP for Academic and Student Affairs, Cooke Foundation

Grant Application Committee, Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation Committee, Safe Passages, Monson Prize Selection Committee, and Undergraduate Council Subcommittee on General Education Requirements.

Carolyn Bliss been asked to join a university-wide Diversity Effort Coordination Group.

Program Assessment Analysis

See the Annual Report for AY 2005-2006 for a detailed discussion of LEAP's plan of assessment (http://www.leap.utah.edu/media/leap_05-06_report.pdf).

Our assessment efforts this year were somewhat frustrated by the unavailability of the OBIA senior survey data for 2006 and by the difficulty of collecting student portfolios. Last year's breakthrough in assessment was enabled by the OBIA

data from the senior survey for 2005. This year our hope was to refine our use of that data and add another year, 2006, for comparison. We have been able to refine our use (more on this below) but, unfortunately, without the addition of the 2006 data. And with respect to the portfolio study, we have not yet been able to collect a useable sample of student writing. Some teachers have collected portfolios; others have not. Hopefully by next summer we will be able to finish this study, and will try in the meantime to improve our approach to collecting portfolios.

Nevertheless, there are some interesting new findings to report. Gary Levy in OBIA provided us with the following results from his recent logistic analyses:

- *Retention.* Students who participate in LEAP are 36-43% more likely to return for the spring semester than are students who do not participate in LEAP. This is based on 7 years of data.
- *Graduation.* Students who participate in LEAP are about 40% more likely to graduate in six years than are students who did not participate in LEAP. This is based on 2 years of data.

Moreover, zero-hour first-time freshmen who participate in LEAP consistently return for their second year at a rate higher than other zero-hour first-time freshmen who do not participate in LEAP. (Zero-hour first-time freshmen are those who enter the U for the first time with no college credits.) This is an important finding because it suggests that LEAP's apparently strong influence on retention is not merely a function of the students it attracts. Here is the table of Fall –Fall retention for LEAP vs. non-LEAP students, through 2004.

Fall-to-Fall Retention of LEAP vs. non-LEAP students: 1998-2004

Year	% of students returning to the U in the Fall after their first year (n)**	
	LEAP	Non-LEAP
1999-2000*	67% (430)	61% (2,045)
2000-2001*	68% (462)	58% (1,598)
2001-2002*	67% (501)	62% (2,063)
2002-2003*	67% (540)	62% (2,190)
2003-2004*	74% (540)	64% (1,870)

* Difference in means for these years was statistically significant at the .05 level.

** The University typically adjusts retention rates to accommodate for the approximately 20% of students who leave in their second year to serve religious missions. These figures do NOT include that adjustment. The assumption was made in this analysis that those who chose to leave to serve missions were randomly distributed among LEAP and non-LEAP students.

The average difference in retention of LEAP vs. non-LEAP students is 7.2%. One possible response to this result is that LEAP's influence on retention is illusory because the students who choose LEAP are motivated and would choose to return for the second year of college anyway, with or without LEAP. The data on retention rates of zero-hour first-time freshmen suggest otherwise. These zero-hour students

may have great potential, but their high school preparation does not suggest superior motivation, at least not as measured by the accumulation of college credit. Here are the retention rates for these students:

Zero-Hour First Time Freshmen Retention Rates by LEAP Status: 1998-2005

			Difference
Fall 1998	LEAP	58.51	-1.26
	Non-LEAP	59.77	
Fall 1999	LEAP	65.03	8.72
	Non-LEAP	56.31	
Fall 2000	LEAP	66.83	9.5
	Non-LEAP	57.33	
Fall 2001	LEAP	66.84	5.26
	Non-LEAP	61.58	
Fall 2002	LEAP	66.92	6.73
	Non-LEAP	60.19	
Fall 2003	LEAP	72.77	12.35
	Non-LEAP	60.42	
Fall 2004	LEAP	70.37	4.81
	Non-LEAP	65.56	
Fall 2005	LEAP	65.07	1.8
	Non-LEAP	63.27	
8 yr AVG			5.98875
5 yr AVG			6.19

A

cursory inspection of these numbers seems to suggest that whatever effect LEAP may have had on retention is dwindling: in 2005 the difference between LEAP and non-LEAP student retention is negligible. But focusing on any one or two year period is misleading: the data is noisy. If, however, we take a step back and try to discern broad trends we find that that on average the difference between LEAP and non-LEAP student retention, though fluctuating between -1.26 % in 1998 and 12.35% in 2003, is a respectable 5.99% for the past 8 years, and has even improved in the past 5 years to 6.19%. This latter difference in retention rates, the 5 year average, is only slightly less than the 7.2% difference for all LEAP and non-LEAP students cited above, suggesting that this difference is a function of the LEAP experience and not of the pre-existing qualities of the students who choose LEAP. LEAP’s influence on retention is not illusory.

1. OBIA 2005 Survey of Graduating Seniors

Upon graduation from the University students are asked to complete an exit survey. This survey is administered by OBIA and includes some 80+ questions that explore students’ experiences at the University. One of the questions concerns LEAP: “Did you participate in the LEAP Freshman Cohort Program for first-year students, and if so how beneficial was it to you as a

student?” This question allows us to sort the data according to LEAP participation and therefore to compare directly the responses of LEAP and non-LEAP students. A series of questions near the beginning of the OBIA survey (see below) focuses on students’ perceptions of how they benefited from their university education:

17. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in accessing, analyzing, and using information from varied sources?
18. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career after graduation?
19. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in appreciating fine arts, music, literature, and the humanities?
20. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in defining and solving problems?
21. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in developing and improving your study skills?
22. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in being creative and generating original ideas and products?
23. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in developing openness to new and/or different ideas and practice?
24. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in effectively using technology, including computers?
25. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in getting along with people from various cultures, races, backgrounds, etc.?
26. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in improving your verbal communication skills?
27. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in improving your written communication skills?
28. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in listening to and understanding what others have to say?
29. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in reading with better comprehension?
30. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in thinking and reasoning logically and objectively?
31. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in understanding and applying math and/or statistical concepts?
32. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in understanding and appreciating cultural and ethnic differences among people?
33. How greatly has your U. education contributed to your growth in understanding world and international issues (e.g., political, economic)?

OBIA presents student answers to these questions on a convenient website called the “Datamart.” The following is a screen shot of the first question.



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Survey Datamart - Survey of Graduating Seniors

How greatly has your U education contributed to your growth in accessing, analyzing, and using information from varied sources?

	Very Greatly	Greatly	Little	Very Little	Count (n)
No	23.5%	62.1%	13.3%	1.1%	1,990
Beneficial	20.8%	69.8%	9.4%	0.0%	106
Extremely Beneficial	42.9%	53.6%	3.6%	0.0%	56
Overall	23.9%	62.3%	12.8%	1.0%	2,152

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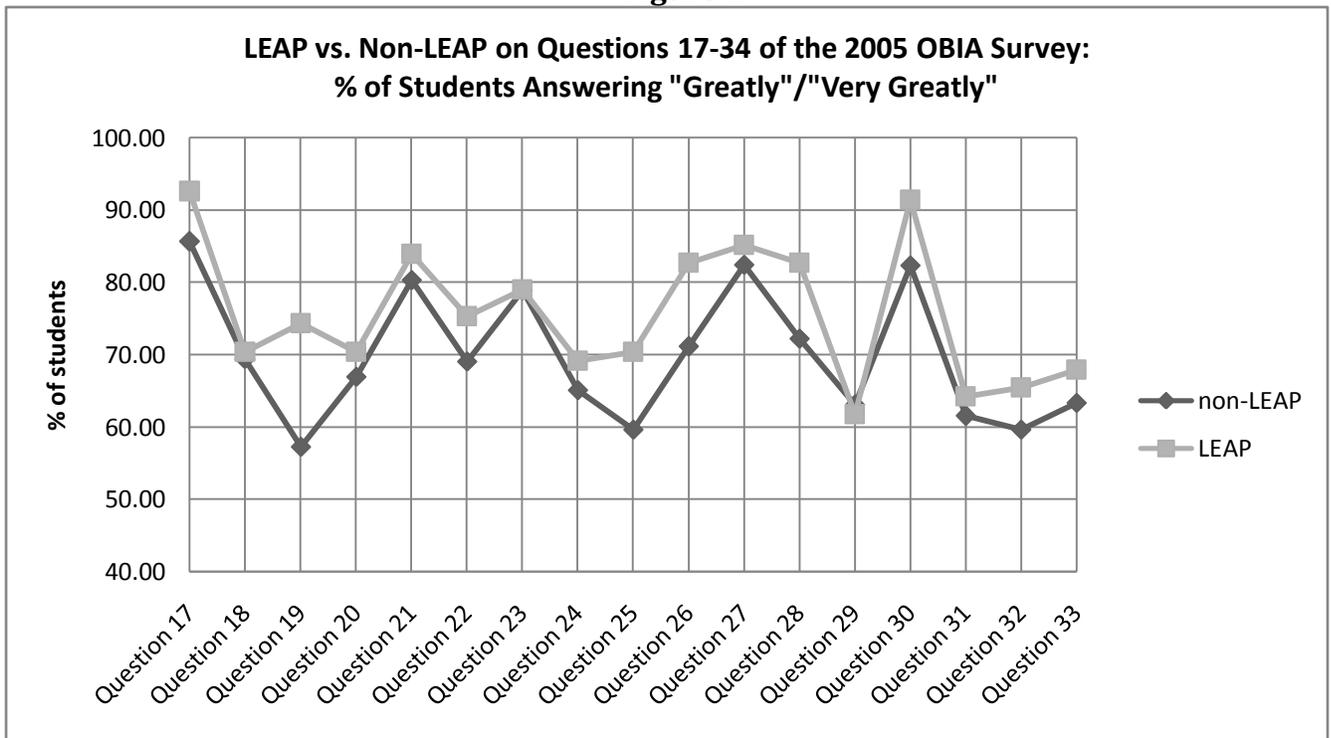
Students have five options in answering the question on LEAP: "no" (meaning: did not participate); "yes, [but] extremely unbeneficial"; "yes, [but] unbeneficial"; "yes, beneficial"; and "yes, extremely beneficial." The 2005 survey compiles responses from 1076 students, 995 of whom did not participate in LEAP. Of the 81 students who did participate in LEAP, 28 thought the program was "extremely beneficial," and 53 thought it was "beneficial." NONE answered that the program was "unbeneficial" or "extremely unbeneficial," a significant finding in itself.

The number of LEAP students responding to the survey is, admittedly, quite small: n=81. Critics have argued that our sample size of 81 students is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions from their answers to the survey. But what matters for our analysis is not the size of n. Rather, we are interested in n only insofar as it is necessary to calculate what percentage of the total LEAP population graduating in 2005 responded to the survey. 5070 students graduated in 2005, 311 of whom were former LEAP students. In other words, in 2005 there were 311 former LEAP students graduating and 4759 non-LEAP students graduating. Thus, 26% of the graduating LEAP population responded to the survey ($81/311=.26$) as compared to only 20.9% of non-LEAP students ($5070-311=4759$; $995/4759=.209$). A higher percentage of LEAP students than non-LEAP students responded to this survey. So if we have confidence in the representativeness of the non-LEAP

responses to this survey, we should have even more confidence in the representativeness of the LEAP responses.

In order to discern broad trends in the differences between LEAP and non-LEAP students, we have reverse engineered these numbers, collapsing student responses to LEAP into two categories, “beneficial” and “unbeneficial,” and collapsing their responses to the questions (that is, as to the impact of their university education) also into two categories, “greatly” and “little.” When we compare only those LEAP and non-LEAP students who answered “Very Greatly” and “Greatly” the following pattern emerges. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



(See Appendix 17 for a larger version of this chart, which displays the text of the questions.)

We are interested not so much in any particular answer but in the pattern of answers: in all but one question (question 29, reading comprehension) LEAP students feel more positively about their educational experience at the U than do non-LEAP students. We are not confident that the difference between how LEAP and non-LEAP students answer any particular question has discernible significance—after all, 3-5 years have elapsed since these students completed the LEAP program. Nevertheless the pattern of responses is striking, and we think that this general pattern does have significance. It suggests that beginning a college career with a cohort

experience like LEAP pays dividends later on, equipping students to get more out of their college experiences than they otherwise might.

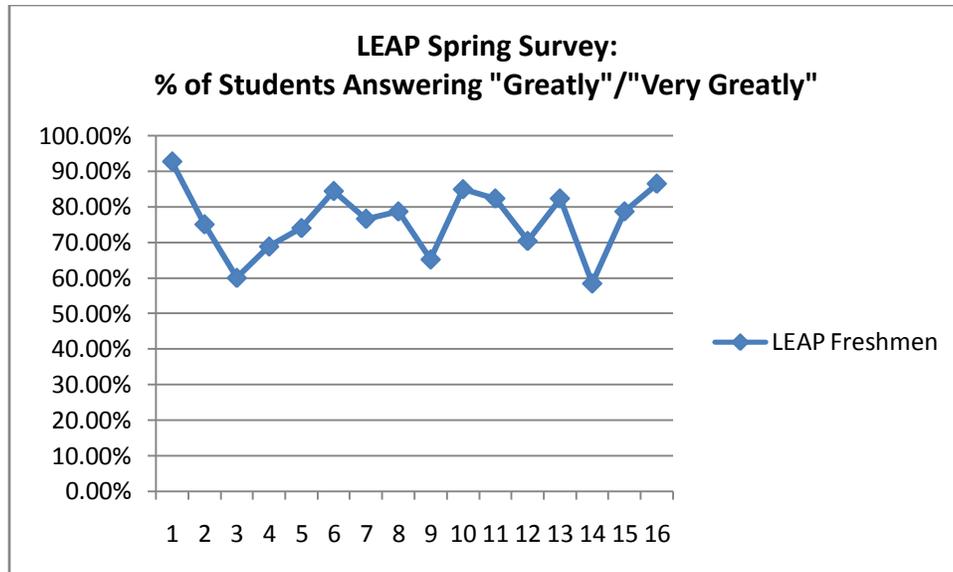
Can we prove this? No. But the data is certainly suggestive, and it would indeed be odd if an intensive learning experience that manifests all the recognized best practices of higher education did NOT help students get more out of college. We think the Senior Survey data show that the LEAP program is doing exactly what it was designed to do.

We hope in the coming year to include the 2006 and 2007 Senior Surveys in our analysis.

2. The Spring Survey

As mentioned above, the LEAP Fall and Spring Surveys have now been redesigned, particularly the Spring Survey, to provide more detailed information from students about their their sense of what they've learned in LEAP. The Spring survey, additionally, reiterates the 17 questions from the University's Senior Survey about educational outcomes. This survey is an important piece of our assessment plan, and asking the same questions on the Spring Survey will allow us to strengthen our case that LEAP is responsible for students' satisfaction with their educations upon graduation, as reported in the Senior Survey. The response rate to the Fall Survey was 29% (171 responses), while the response rate to the Spring Survey was 51% (193 responses). The difference in response rates can be explained by the fact that we administered the Spring Survey in the final library class.

Here is a graph of students' responses to questions 1-17 (corresponding to 17-34 on the Senior Survey).



At the completion of their year in LEAP a high percentage of students feel that they have acquired in LEAP the skills identified in the Senior Survey. (The average of their positive responses is 71.7%, as compared with 75% on the Senior Survey.) This pattern lends support—and will lend further support, we hope, as we accumulate Spring Survey data year by year—to our contention that LEAP and non-LEAP students answer the Senior Survey questions as they do for a reason: that reason is LEAP.

One final piece of data: 91.2% of the LEAP students responding to the Spring Survey report that their expectations were met or even exceeded by LEAP.

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