

2008-2009 LEAP Program Annual Report

Office of Undergraduate Studies

The University of Utah



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Introduction

LEAP had another great year in 2008-2009. We offered 23 LEAP sections (the same as last year), tripled the size of the ALLY program (which offers additional support for some first year students), and hired a wonderful new Executive Assistant, Liz Taylor, as well as a wonderful new E-LEAP instructor, Dr. Becky Larsen. Student satisfaction with LEAP remained high, with 90.3% of the students who responded to the 2009 LEAP Spring Survey reporting that their expectations were met or even exceeded by their LEAP experience! Additionally, 87% of former LEAP students who completed the 2006-2008 Survey of Graduating Seniors rated their LEAP experience as either “beneficial” or “extremely beneficial.”



Assessment of the LEAP program continued this year with additional work on the matching study. Previously, assessment had relied on retention and time-to-graduation statistics comparing LEAP and non-LEAP students, but without correcting for possible pre-existing differences between these groups of students. If LEAP students happen to be more persistent than non-LEAP students, as statistics show they are, it is possibly not due to LEAP participation, critics

say, but to the type of students—those with above-average motivation—who choose to participate in LEAP. The matching study pairs demographically identical students for comparison, in order to isolate, as much as possible, the program’s unique impact on student performance, as measured by (among other things) GPA, retention, and time-to-graduation. The initial results of this matching study were reported at a conference in Dublin in June 2008. We spent this year refining the matching study and interpreting it. Updated results will be discussed below. In addition, a portfolio study of student writing in the E-LEAP Program was completed this year, which showed that E-LEAP students make impressive gains in critical thinking during the LEAP year. The results of this study will also be discussed below.

In yet another effort to present LEAP simply at Orientation, we’ve updated our way of explaining the program to prospective students. Last year we came up with a tripartite description, distinguishing between LEAP classes based on college affiliation, residence and theme. This led to a new title for an old class: Explorations LEAP became Thematic LEAP. This year at Orientation, partially on the advice of Terry Pavio, whose classes in

the business school will be working with us during 2009-10 to develop strategies for marketing the program, we've decided to make a broad distinction between LEAP and LEAP Plus (the single and multi-year programs) and, after emphasizing the basic similarity of all LEAP classes, to explain the varieties of LEAP. As a result of this simplification, we've scrapped "Thematic LEAP" and returned to calling it "Explorations LEAP," which everyone agrees intuitively captures the purpose of the course. See Appendix for the PowerPoint used during the summer 2009 Orientations.

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 (usually one social science and one humanities) 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 enrolled 617 students in the fall (as of the tuition due date), as compared with 621 students last year and 594 in fall 2006. (These enrollment numbers all include Architecture LEAP.) Fall-spring retention was up significantly from previous years. Of the 617 students who began in the fall, 488 students, or 79%, registered for

the spring semester. This is a spectacular improvement over past years, in which retention has typically been in the low 60% range, an improvement attributable largely to reversing the sequence of semesters: rather than starting in the fall with LEAP 1100, which satisfies two graduation requirements, we have, since fall 2007, been ending with it. LEAP offered 23 sections this year, in both fall and spring semesters, same as last year.

- Fall Semester 2007. LEAP offered 18 sections of 1101 for 465 students, 4 sections of 1100 for 119 students, and 1 section of Architecture 1610 for 28 students. Of these 1101 sections, 8 were Thematic LEAP (3 of which were designated Service Learning sections), 2 were Business LEAP, 5 were Engineering LEAP, and 2 were Residence Halls LEAP. Among the LEAP 1100 sections, 1 was Fine Arts LEAP, 1 was College of Health LEAP, 1 was Health Sciences LEAP (first year of a four-year program), and the fourth was Pre-Law LEAP (first year of a three-year program).
- Spring Semester 2007. LEAP offered 18 sections of 1100, 2 sections of 2004 (the second semester of College of Health and Health Sciences LEAP), 1 section of 1101 (the second semester of Fine Arts LEAP), 1 section of Architecture 1611 (Architecture LEAP), and 1 section of 1150 (the second semester of Pre-Law LEAP). 488 students were enrolled in total in these courses.

In addition, LEAP offered the following courses:

- LEAP 1050: Major Selection, a course taught in the spring by Martina Stewart from University College Advising, for 14 students.
- LEAP 2002: Peer Advisor Seminar elected for credit by 10 of our 24 Peer Advisors.
- LEAP 2003: service learning for Peer Advisors (spring semester only) for 5 students.
- LEAP 1300 for 22 students: service learning add-ons (spring semester only).
- Writing 1060-01: library research add-on for 169 students.
- LEAP 2600: second year of E-LEAP Plus for 5 students in the Fall. (LEAP 2601 was cancelled in the spring because the instructor, Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta, was on leave.)
- LEAP 2700 and Philosophy 1250: second year of Pre-law LEAP for 10 students in the Fall and 6 in the spring.
- LEAP 3700-001 (fall) for 9 students and 3701-001 (spring) for 7 students; third year for Pre-Law LEAP
- UUHSC 2500-001: second year of Health Sciences LEAP (fall semester) for 26 students.
- UUHSC 2500-001: Health Science Transfer course (spring semester) for 9 students.

- UUHSC 3000-001 (fall) for 17 students and 3001-001 (spring) for 15 students: third year for Health Sciences LEAP.
- UUHSC 4000-001 (fall) for 9 students and 4001-001 (spring) for 8 students: fourth year for Health Sciences LEAP.



These enrollments are very comparable to last year's. Current LEAP syllabi are available through the class schedule. Click on the course title to download individual syllabi. Syllabi for the Peer Advisor classes (LEAP 2002 and 2003) can be found in the Peer Advisor Handbook, available on the LEAP website: www.leap.utah.edu

For next year, 2009-2010, we planned to add 1 section of Fine Arts LEAP, 1 section of College of Health LEAP, and 1 section of a new course, Education LEAP, offered by Dr. Jeff Webb, with corresponding reductions in Explorations LEAP courses. This would have represented an overall increase of 2 sections over this year's offerings, for a total of 25 sections. However, huge enrollment pressure during the summer orientations of 2009 resulted in additions of a third Business LEAP section and a new Explorations section. So our total offerings for 2009-10 will be 27 sections.

Changes in LEAP

1. New Faculty/New Staff

Liz Taylor began as the new LEAP Program Executive Assistant this year. Liz comes to us from her previous position in the Business School. Becky Larsen, Ph.D, joined the LEAP faculty in the fall to teach in E-LEAP.

2. Departures

Leo Leckie, who had served as LEAP Program Executive Assistant for most of the 2007-8 school year, left LEAP in July 2008 for a position in the Division of Diversity Access and Equity at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

3. New Teaching and Administrative Assignments

There will be a number of changes for the coming year. Dr. Kris Koford will be replacing two of his Engineering sections with Residence Halls LEAP and his third with an Explorations LEAP section. Dr. Jeff Webb will be replacing his two Residence Halls LEAP sections with a second section of College of Health LEAP and a new course, Education LEAP. Dr. Becky Larsen will be teaching a third section of ELEAP. Dr. Meg Harper will be teaching a second section of Business LEAP.

4. New Programs and Partnerships

The ALLY Program: The ALLY program was piloted in the spring semester of 2008 with 11 ALLIES and 10 students. (See the 2007-8 Annual Report for a description of the ALLY Program.) The size of the program grew dramatically in the fall with 31 students and 11 ALLIES (one of whom, incidentally, was Dr. Carolyn Ownby, who served as an ALLY for a non-traditional student, Angie Holland, a single mother of four who was returning to school. Angie went on to be selected as a PA for Education LEAP.) Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, the program will be put on hold for the time being. When funds become available, the ALLY Program will probably be offered only to LEAP Plus (i.e. multiyear) students, since it seemed that the mentoring relationship worked best when both the ALLY and the student were from the same program.



College of Education LEAP. LEAP formed a new college partnership with the College of Education at the urging of Bobbi Davis, an advisor with the College. Dr. Jeff Webb will be teaching a new Education LEAP course for prospective Education majors. The course conforms to the

existing LEAP model: Social Science requirements satisfied in the fall, Humanities and Diversity in the spring. Dr. Webb has worked this past year with Bobbi and professors Peggy Macintosh and Mary Burbank from the College of Education to design this course.

LEAP Solutions Seminar. An exciting sophomore year extension of LEAP was proposed and accepted this year, only to be postponed at the last moment because of budget cuts. LEAP plans to offer this course when funds again become available. See Appendix for the proposal for the Solutions Seminar.

Ongoing Partnerships. LEAP maintained its partnerships with the Horizonte ESL Program, Guuleysi, Highland High ESL Program, West High School, Crossroads Urban Center, University Neighborhood Partners, Jackson Elementary and Mountain View Schools, and Neighborhood House, as well as various departments and entities across campus. Planning for a new partnership with Bryant Middle School was initiated.

SRI. The Student Readiness Inventory is an instrument designed by ACT to measure student readiness for college and to gauge, on that basis, individual students' strengths and weaknesses. Dr. Jeff Webb and Dr. Carolyn Bliss will be piloting the



SRI in their classes this coming year as a way of structuring students' campus engagement. Until now students have been rewarded—principally with extra credit points—for finding and engaging in campus activities; the SRI will be used as a means of helping students to get engaged in ways that most benefit them. Additionally the SRI will help us identify those students most at risk of dropping out in order to offer them

additional support. At the end of the year a decision will be made as to whether the SRI should be administered to all LEAP students. See Appendix for a copy of the SRI.

Eportfolios. The university is piloting a new method for assessing whether students successfully achieve the Essential Learning Outcomes in General Education courses. (See Appendix for a copy of these outcomes.) The essential component of the eportfolio is the "Signature Assignment"—an assignment that promotes at least three of the Essential Learning Outcomes. Professors participating in the pilot select the best assignments for inclusion in the course eportfolio, along with a reflection on the student work. Dr. Jeff Webb is participating in the pilot and will be using the final assignment in his bioethics class (College of Health LEAP 2004)—a debate and a short paper—for the signature assignment. LEAP



will most likely discontinue its own portfolio study (piloted this year in E-LEAP) and begin participating in the university's eportfolio assessment scheme.

Health Sciences LEAP for Transfer Students. This program, modeled after the very successful Health Sciences multi-year LEAP program, seeks to offer a cohort experience for transfer students majoring in the Health Sciences. The class was taught for the first time in Spring 2009 by Dr. Kris Koford. The second year of this program will be taken over by Dr. Carolyn Bliss starting in Fall 2009.

5. Program Assessment

We continued to implement the assessment plan put in place in 2005. Here are the current components of LEAP Program assessment.

- *Online Fall and Spring Surveys*, administered by the online assessment company, StudentVoice (for the results of this year's surveys see Appendix). The Spring Survey asks a variety of questions about the year-long LEAP experience including questions about educational outcomes that we borrowed from the Survey of Graduating Seniors. A total of 480 students responded to this year's Fall Survey as compared with only 215 respondents the year before. 330 students responded to the Spring Survey this year as compared to 314 last year.
- *Analysis of the Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis (OBIA) Survey of Graduating Seniors, or Senior Survey*, includes a question asking whether or not students participated in LEAP, which allows us to compare LEAP and non-LEAP students in their answers to the 80 odd questions on this survey. The questions we are particularly interested in are the 17 that concern educational outcomes. Unfortunately the 2009 data is not yet available at the time of this writing and so the running average of responses cannot be made current. See the 2007-8 Annual Report for discussion of the 2005-2008 survey responses.
- *The Portfolio Study of student writing* is designed to measure the direct effect of LEAP on student learning. A pilot of this study was conducted in E-LEAP during Summer 2008. See the discussion of this study below under "Program Assessment Analysis." The University will be adopting an electronic portfolio system for assessing general education outcomes. (This system is in its pilot phase right now; LEAP Professor Jeff Webb is representing LEAP in this pilot.) For this reason, LEAP will most likely abandon its planned portfolio study and instead join the University's eportfolio effort.



- *Analysis of Fall-to-Fall retention and time to graduation of LEAP students* compared to non-LEAP students. The latest retention and graduation figures are not yet available. However, in June 2008 we added gender to our analysis. See below under “Program Assessment Analysis” for discussion of the gender data from OBIA.
- *Statistical matching study* comparing LEAP and non-LEAP students on GPA, retention, and time-to-graduation. The study, initially completed in 2008 but substantially refined this year, is discussed below under “Program Assessment Analysis.” Dr. Carolyn Bliss, Dr. Jeff Webb and Mark St. Andre are currently preparing a journal article discussing the study results.

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)

The Peer Advisor program had another fantastic year under Dr. Carolan Ownby’s leadership. This year’s cohort of Peer Advisors numbered 24: one per LEAP section plus a Senior Peer Advisor. They met twice a month as a group and had the following committee responsibilities:

Senior PA - Jake Zimmerli. The Senior PA is the designated leader of the Peer Advisor cohort. S/he has already served one full year as a PA, and is therefore in a strong position to mentor the group. This PA is charged with strengthening the sense of team and collaboration among all PAs, and defining the vision for the year. S/he is in charge of organizing and carrying out a retreat between fall and spring semesters. S/he will draw up the agenda for and help conduct the monthly meetings. This PA will also represent us at occasions such as recruitment events and campus meetings, where LEAP is asked to send a representative.



Service: See You at the U – Michelle Mueller, Claudia Tetelpa, Gisela Figueroa, Jen McGill. In the spring of 2005, the LEAP Peer Advisors adopted a service activity which has become a Peer Advisor tradition. Through University Neighborhood Partners, Peer Advisors sponsor a fall *See You at the U* activity, where approximately eighty to one hundred students from Northwest Middle School come to the University campus for a full morning of activities. People on this committee are

responsible to make all arrangements for the campus tour in the fall [including planning with Ellie Brady at Northwest, contacting University departments for tours, making sure transportation is arranged, collecting items for 'goodie bags' which the students take with them when they leave] and a follow-up in the spring [soliciting community donations for tee-shirts for the students, having the shirts made, arranging to have certificates made, and arranging a visit to Northwest Middle School towards the end of the school year to present these to the students]. These responsibilities may shift, according to the needs and desired outcomes that Ellie Brady identifies. Previous Peer Advisors who have carried out this project strongly recommend that new Peer Advisors actually start on this project at the first of August. They argue that the three weeks before school begins can make a big difference.

Service: Food Drive – Elyse Timothy, Mark Sedlacek, Thomas Maughan. This committee is in charge of our food drive. In the past, the food drive was concentrated in February. This food drive complements the reading that many of the classes are doing on problems of poverty. This year, because several sections



have shifted the Social Science class to the first semester, the focus will last all year long. The Glenn Bailey workshop will be in mid-September. The committee will probably want to tie this to a Trick or Can activity to benefit Crossroads Urban Center. Glenn Bailey has said that Crossroads needs the food that LEAP collects in February, however, so the committee will also need to continue the food drive then.

The committee members

decide where to place barrels for collection of food around campus, skillfully publicize the food drive in advance, collect donations on a regular basis, deliver the food to Crossroads Urban Center, return the barrels, and write a summary of the year's drive. The summary discusses how the committee proceeded, how much food we collected, how much cash was donated, what problems were encountered, what should be done differently, etc. In the past, committees have had spectacular success collecting coins after a basketball game, and also collecting gently used clothing from the Jewish Community Center. The Food Drive Committee is responsible to continue to think of innovative ways to make the food drive a year long success.

Service: LEAP to the U – *Chelsey Alberico*. This person works with the L2TU Service LEAP section, which has a partnership with students at West High School. This person attends all meetings at WHS, networks with the LEAP student leaders at WHS, takes full responsibility for the LEAP/WHS bowling activity, helps organize the campus tour, Shadow Day, and assists the *LEAP to the U* Intern to make the program run smoothly.

Service: Fine Arts Community Liaison – *Jamie Bowen*. The LEAP Fine Arts sections give a major production at the end of spring semester. This Peer Advisor helps make any necessary contacts during the fall, and is responsible for production details during the spring, as directed by Dr. Bauman.

Service: Campus Spelling Bee for Adult Literacy – *Stessie Dort, Tiana Larsen*. For the first time this year, we partnered with the Literacy Action Center to sponsor a Campus Spelling Bee. This was to be a fundraising event which would raise awareness. When it was cancelled due to the inability of participating groups to pay an entrance fee, Stessie and Tiana organized a week of activities in the Union centering on Adult Literacy awareness. A highlight was a spontaneous spelling bee.



Administrative Assistant – *Caroline Czernichowski*. This person was responsible to help Dr. O keep all necessary records, and to email reminders to Peer Advisors to hand in monthly time sheets. Other responsibilities included:

- Keeping a running record of all monthly time sheets on Excel
- Handing in a summary of the PA time sheets to Dr. O at the beginning of each month
- Taking notes at our bi-monthly PA meetings, and emailing a copy to all Peer Advisors and professors



LEAP House Staffing – Garrett Sweeney. It's important that LEAP students have access to the LEAP House. However, we need Peer Advisors to staff the LEAP House so that the LEAP students can gain that access. A list of the Peer Advisors' names is kept at the desk in the Heritage Center, and Peer Advisors can pick up a key to the LEAP House there. When finished, the PA must securely lock up the LEAP House and return the key to the HC desk. Time spent staffing the LEAP House counts toward PA's required ten hours per week. The PA in charge of staffing compiles a full schedule for both fall and spring semesters by the third week of each semester. The LEAP House is staffed from 5-9 pm, Monday through Thursday.

Activity: Opening and Closing Events – Gretchen Snyder, Andrea Umphenour. The opening and closing picnics have traditionally been well attended by LEAP students. They are a physical manifestation of the community we study and strive to build in the curriculum. The students on this committee plan both. They are in charge of publicity, activities at the picnics, arranging for food, etc. These students also help with the planning of informal events [see below].

Budget – Kristina Rodriguez. The person who takes this responsibility serves as a liaison between LEAP and ASUU. Peer Advisors constitute the leadership of the LEAP Club, and are entitled to apply for money from ASUU. The person in charge of the budget has at least five responsibilities:

- Contact ASUU immediately, and find out how we access the money we are allotted for the current year, how we make line-item changes, etc.
- Communicate frequently with Dr. O, evaluating how money was spent or might have been spent for LEAP that month. These communications result in recommendations on what money we will apply for, for next year.
- Attend the meeting [which usually happens in February or March] sponsored by ASUU where one learns how to submit a budget, and then actually submit the budget on behalf of LEAP.
- Write a short summary of budget procedures at the end of the school year, which will be used to help next year's PA in charge of budget.
- Be available to attend the PA Workshop in August to orient the new PA in charge of budget.
- Be ready to petition ASUU for additional funds in September, based on the response to last spring's budget request.

First Year Focus Liaison – Ali Vance. Gateway Heights, one of the Residence Halls, has been designated a building for first year students, including LEAP students. Because the activities and



programs supported there tend to mirror the activities and programs we sponsor in LEAP, we assign a Peer Advisor to act as liaison. We try to coordinate as closely as possible with the RAs to avoid duplication and encourage a growing partnership. The PA in this position needs to think of innovative ways to make this partnership stronger. It is also preferable that the PA holding this position be someone living in the Residence Halls during the school year.

Publicity – Chris Bair, Shukaria Rajabali. Committee members have the following responsibilities:

- Committee members are responsible for updating information contained in the student resources section of the online Peer Advisor handbook. This update is due to Dr. O by mid-October.
- Committee members are responsible to fully document activities and service projects organized and carried out by the Peer Advisors for the academic year. Documentation includes pictures, as well as information like how many people attended, who the service projects benefitted, how much food and money was collected in the case of the food drive, etc. One copy of this report is handed to Dr. O at the end of the year. A second is handed to Jeff Webb for inclusion in the annual report which he compiles for John Francis.
- In connection with the written report, committee members are responsible to produce a power point presentation [due at the end of the school year] which documents the year, and which can be used in the next Peer Advisor workshop.
- Maintain the Peer Advisor MySpace page for high school students.
- Contact the *Chrony* with any noteworthy news items.
- Solicit noteworthy news about LEAP students for inclusion on the LEAP web page.
- Update outreach material when needed.

Sweatshirt Design - Claire Gorton. For the past several years Peer Advisors have opted to have a sweatshirt identifying them as PAs in the LEAP program. The person in charge of this designs the shirt, helps the budget person lobby ASUU to partially fund the shirts, collects any necessary money from interested Peer Advisors, and arranges to have the shirts made. Sweatshirts are delivered by November, so that PAs can wear them for *See You at the U*.

Peer Advisor Workshop Series – Aaron McKinstry-Luepke. This idea originated with a Peer Advisor. It is a series of informal meetings held at the LEAP House, where Peer Advisors talk to LEAP students about things they feel they have expertise in. We have had workshops in public speaking, time management, where to go for fun in SLC and how to get there, etc. as well as study skills, oral presentation skills, and health maintenance. The person in charge of this finds out from all PAs what they could give a workshop on, draws up a schedule, makes sure that the LEAP House is free, and advertises [probably

through Liz Taylor's giant LEAP distribution list]. This PA has a rough schedule for the first semester drawn up by mid-September.

LEAP LAN - *Paul Chap*. This comes from a summer discussion last year about the appeal of a LAN party to a significant part of the LEAP student body [primarily E-LEAP students]. The first LEAP LAN was held in spring semester of 2008 in the LEAP House. The person in charge of this explores the possibilities and puts together a short feasibility study on how or where such an activity might successfully happen, and hosts the party some time during spring semester.

7. Program Activities

LEAP sponsored the following activities in 2008-9:

- *LEAP Convocation*, Sept. 22, 2008; Keynote Speaker: Neil Ashdown, Chief of Staff for then Governor Huntsman. A reception at the LEAP House followed. The Convocation is sponsored by a generous gift from the Ruth Eleanor Bamberger and John Ernest Bamberger Memorial Foundation. See Appendix for this year's program.
- *Opening Picnic*, Sept. 18, 2008.
- *Closing Picnic*, April 15, 2009.
- *Fall and winter food drive* for Crossroads Urban Center, October 2008 and February 2009. This year's food drive produced 1409.3 pounds of food for the Crossroads food pantry.
- *Child Poverty Awareness Week*, October 19-24, 2008, organized by Dr. Bauman and her LEAP students. This event received press coverage from Channel 2 News, *The Daily Utah Chronicle*, and Newsbreak. \$600 was raised for Neighborhood House.
- *Two parties for students participating in the ALLY Program.*
- *Pre-Law LEAP luncheon*, April 22, 2009.
- *Closing reception for Health Sciences LEAP students*, April 9, 2009.
- *Fine Arts LEAP Theater production* with the students of Neighborhood House. *Not So Scary Harry* premiered on April 30, 2009, and received press coverage on the U of U Homepage, as well as money and support from the College of Fine Arts, ASUU, Home Depot, Costco, Einstein's Bagels, the U of U Bookstore and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts.



- *Peer Advisor Luncheon* on April 7, 2009. This occasion involves campus-wide and community partners in honoring our Peer Advisors and celebrating their accomplishments. Peer Advisor Scholarships and the Frost Award for Outstanding Peer Advisor of the Year are presented. See Appendix for this year's program.
- *LEAP Scholarship winner's Reception*, April 14, 2009.

8. Service

Formal service learning opportunities in the LEAP program for which first-year students can get academic credit through LEAP are Dr. Carolan Ownby's sections of Explorations LEAP and, beginning in Fall of 2009, Dr. Jeff Webb's section of Education LEAP. 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 service projects, as mentioned above, with West High ("LEAP to the U"), the Horizonte ESL Program, Guuleysi, and the Highland High ESL program. Here are details on Guuleysi and "LEAP to the U":

- *Guuleysi Project*. From the Utah Federation for Youth Website: "Project Guuleysi serves youth ages 6-18. Refugee boys and girls from Africa and newcomers from other countries are the focus of this customized after school and in school initiative. These youth are at high risk for school dropout, recruitment to gangs, and other high risk behaviors. Named after the Somali verb for success, Project Guuleysi is about preventing these high-risk youth from finding their way to high-risk behaviors. Keeping these young men and young women engaged in structured, positive activities, addressing their academic needs, and working to strengthen their families is Guuleysi's vision—a way to prevent trouble from finding these young people, and a way to help these young people find success—in school and life." Peer Advisors tutored Guuleysi students and hosted 17 students for a tour of the University campus. The tour included a visit to the Natural History Museum, a visit with the University soccer team, and lunch in the school cafeteria. See the UFY blog for pictures and description: <http://ufyi.blogspot.com/2008/04/u-of-u-tour.html>.
- *LEAP to the U!* LEAP students met with West High students six times throughout the year for bowling, campus tour, "shadow day," service day, and final banquet at WHS.

In addition, Jennifer Bauman's sections of LEAP worked extensively with Neighborhood House, and Dr. Bliss's Health Science students worked with students from Jackson and Mountain View Elementary Schools. In the coming year, they will also work with Bryant Middle School students.

The Peer Advisors also do a great of service, which is detailed above: LEAP to the U, See you at the U, and the annual LEAP food drive.

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. This year advising became mandatory at four points throughout a student's career; the advisor visit to LEAP classes satisfies the first point for LEAP students. This visit also has guaranteed and 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 on the process of major selection, was offered again this Spring for LEAP students and will be offered next year in the fall as well.
- Advisor John Nilsson will be visiting College of Health and Health Science LEAP sections next year to advise students on admissions requirements for various professional schools in Health Sciences.
- Two LEAP teachers, Dr. Carolyn Bliss and Dr. Jeff Webb, will be incorporating the SRI (Student Readiness Inventory) in their classes in order to give structure to student engagement activities. See above for a more detailed discussion of the SRI.
- Other pre-Professional LEAPs, such as Engineering, Business, and Education, also incorporate visits by college advisors.



10. LEAP Advisory Boards

The LEAP Community Advisory Board met twice this year on October 28, 2008, and April 1, 2009. The Internal Advisory Board met once on October 8, 2008. See Appendix for minutes from this year's meetings.

11. Student Recruitment and Program Outreach

The following is a list of initiatives undertaken this year to improve LEAP publicity and enrollment.

- *The LEAP website: www.leap.utah.edu.* The existing website was moved to the HUMIS system and updated by Liz Taylor in preparation for summer orientations starting in June 2009.
- *Revised Orientation PowerPoint Presentation.* Two new presentations were created by Dr. Jeff Webb: a shorter one for the general LEAP presentation (5 minutes) and a longer one for the LEAP breakout session (30 minutes). See Appendix 12 for a copy of these presentations.
- *PAs assisting with Orientation.* Jamie Bowen, Caroline Czernichowski, and Michelle Tyler assisted with Summer Orientations this year, helping students sign up for LEAP during registration. Partially as a result of their efforts, LEAP enrollment jumped more than 45% as compared to last year, to a total of nearly 900.
- *LEAP Scholarship winner's Reception, April 14, 2009.* This is an evening for LEAP scholarship recipients and their parents to celebrate their awards.
- *News Articles.* Informative news articles on LEAP appeared in various publications this year. See Appendix 12 for a selection of them.
- *Marketing.* LEAP will be a project for Terry Pavia's graduate and undergraduate marketing classes next year. These students will help revise LEAP's strategy for explaining the program to prospective students.

Milestones and Awards

1. A Sampling of Student Achievements

Jennifer McGill, a recent Peer Advisor in Explorations LEAP, is the recipient of a \$3000 Alumni Association Campus Involvement Scholarship.

Shontol Burkhalter, a Health Science LEAP graduate, has won a \$4000 Honors Baccalaureate Scholarship.

Annie Jamison, a former Peer Advisor in Business LEAP, has been accepted to the Master's Program for Occupational Therapy.

Michelle Mueller, a recent Peer Advisor in Pre-Law LEAP, has been awarded a \$5000 Alumni Association, Ira and Mary Fuller Scholarship.



Sally Tran, Health Science LEAP student, has been accepted to the U of U School of Medicine.

Laura Chukanov, a former LEAP student and orientation leader, has been chosen as Miss Utah 2009, and finished third runner up in the recent Miss USA pageant.

Bobbi Blood, a former LEAP Student, has won the VSA Arts International Young Soloists Award, which includes \$5,000 and the chance to play at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Mary Brooks, a former Peer Advisor, has been honored as a Young Alumni Graduate Scholar.

Alison Vance, a recent Peer Advisor, has been honored as an Alumni Association Achievement Scholar.

Stanley Lloyd, a Pre-Law Leap student, has been honored as an Alumni Association Campus Involvement Scholar.

Kristina Rodriquez, a recent Peer Advisor, has been chosen as a Presidential Intern.

Courtney Gwinn, a new Peer Advisor, has been chosen as a Presidential Ambassador for next year.

Bryan Franco won the Williams Award for the outstanding Health Sciences LEAP student (\$250).

Yen Cao, Brittany Garza, and Carla Suarez shared the 4th year Health Sciences LEAP Award, receiving \$200 each.

LEAP 2009 Freshman Scholarship Recipients: \$2000 each

Marianne Schmidt, Deqa Osman, Angela Holland, Jessica Paletta, Amber Twitchell, Anh Luong, and Erin Adcock.

LEAP 2009 LEAP Plus Scholarship Recipient: \$2000

Naima Mohamed

Peer Advisor 2009 Scholarship Recipients: \$2000

Andrea Umphenour, Alison Vance, Claire Gorton, James Bowen, Jennifer McGill, and Jake Zimmerli.

Frost Award 2009 Recipient: \$500

Stessie Dort, who has also been chosen as a Resident Advisor for next year.

2. Faculty Achievements

Dr. Carolan Ownby (Service LEAP) received the ASUU 2009 Student Choice Award! She also gave the keynote address at the University's Service Learning Scholar's Banquet in April 2009, and continues to serve as advisor for the freshman honor society, Phi Eta Sigma.

Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta received the Distinguished Teacher Award from the Sigma Chi Fraternity.

Dr. Carolyn Bliss made the top five of 116 nominees for the national Outstanding First Year Student Advocate Award in 2008. She also chaired a session at the annual conference of the American Association of Australian Literary Studies, completed her term as Chair of the Editorial Board of the journal *Antipodes*,



served on the dissertation committee of a Ph.D. student at Melbourne University, published three reviews of Australian or New Zealand fiction in *World Literature Today* (one of which was marked as a "featured review"), and wrote a review of a book in Australian literary criticism that is forthcoming in *Interventions: the International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*.

Dr. Jennifer Bauman was elected to the Board of Trustees of Neighborhood House Investment Committee and continues on that Board's Children's Daycare Committee. Dr. Bauman was also elected to the Peace and Justice Commission for the Episcopal Diocese of Utah, and she received personal congratulations from the University's President Michael Young for her work with Neighborhood House.

Dr. Ann Engar completed her service as chair to the MLA's International Bibliography committee. (She continues to work as Senior Bibliographer.)

Dr. Kris Koford published articles on kidney transplants.

Dr. Mike White last year had poems published and accepted in 13 different journals.

Dr. Jeff Webb served as a manuscript referee for the *African American Review*.

In addition, the following faculty taught classes outside of LEAP:

- Dr. Carolyn Bliss and Dr. Carolan Ownby offered an Honors class, Honors 3060, spring semester for 15 students.
- Dr. Ed Barbanell taught classes in the Philosophy Department.
- Dr. Mike White taught classes in the English Department.
- Dr. Ann Engar taught classes in Honors.
- Dr. Becky Larsen taught Political Science classes at BYU.
- Dr. Kris Koford taught for the University Writing Program.
- Dr. Jennifer Bauman taught for the Venture Program.

3. Conference Presentations on LEAP by LEAP Faculty

Dr. Carolyn Bliss and Dr. Carolyn Ownby presented “Peer Mentoring: Making a Good Idea Better through Innovation and Assessment” at the 27th International Conference on the First Year Experience in Dublin, Ireland, on June 25, 2008. See Appendix for the PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Jeff Webb and Mark St. Andre presented “Assessing the LEAP Program: the Evolution of an Approach” at the 27th International Conference on the first Year Experience in Dublin, Ireland, on June 24, 2008. See Appendix for the PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Jeff Webb and Dr. Carolan Ownby presented on the LEAP program to the First Year Consortium at Westminster College on September 26, 2008.

Dr. Carolyn Bliss presented “Addressing the Whole First-Year Student: The University of Utah’s LEAP Program,” at the Annual Conference of the Association for General and Liberal Studies in Asheville, N. C., Sept 27, 2008. See Appendix for the PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Carolyn Bliss and Dr. Jeff Webb presented data on LEAP’s effect on women students, to the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women at the University in December 2008.



See Appendix for the PowerPoint presentation.

4. Publications on LEAP by LEAP Faculty

Although LEAP faculty publish regularly in their individual academic disciplines, they also publish on the LEAP program. During 2008-9, the following were accepted for publication:

Dr. Carolyn Bliss published a short article on assessment initiatives in LEAP in the winter 2008 edition of the *AGLS News*.

5. Continuing Education for LEAP Faculty

Dr. Carolyn Bliss attended a Harvard workshop on assessment, the Educated Persons Conference, and the Reinvention Center Conference.

Dr. Jennifer Bauman attended the College Art Association Conference in Los Angeles.

6. University Service by LEAP Faculty

LEAP was represented on many campus committees, among them: Undergraduate Council, Safe Passages, UAAC, the Undergraduate Scholar Designation Committee, Monson Prize Selection Committee, the Together We Reach Scholarship Campaign Internal Committee, the Virtual Doorway Committee, the UGS Student Initiatives Scholarship Recipient Selection Committee, the Bennion Center Faculty Advisory Board, and the Freshman Advising Committee.

Dr. Carolan Ownby continued her role as the University's advisor for Phi Eta Sigma.

Dr. Ann Engar was Library Liaison for LEAP during 2008-9.



Dr. Meg Harper served as the liaison from LEAP to the University Writing Program during the 2008-9 year.

Dr. Jennifer Bauman headed the committee to redecorate the Sill Center and to create an ongoing, rotating student art exhibit in the Sill Center.

7. Program Achievements and financial support

All LEAP 1100 courses were re-approved to carry diversity credit.

LEAP 2004 was reapproved for Humanities General Education credit.

The second semester of the new Education LEAP will carry optional service learning credit.

LEAP 3700 Pre-Law Service Learning LEAP was approved for Service learning credit and LEAP 3701 was approved for upper-division writing credit.

Support for LEAP Scholarships and for the LEAP Opening Convocation was renewed for next year by the Ruth Eleanor Bamberger and John Ernest Bamberger Memorial Foundation, for a total gift of \$8500.

A gift of \$1000 was donated to LEAP by Cecilia Foxley, and other individual gifts to the program were donated by James Bowen, Sally Cannon, Nichole Gile, Bryan Sage and Jenny Zwick.

LEAP has begun to establish contact with LEAP alums who have graduated from the university.

The University Administration has announced its intention to encourage the growth of LEAP so that it enrolls one third of incoming students. It currently enrolls roughly one-fourth of the incoming class.

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).

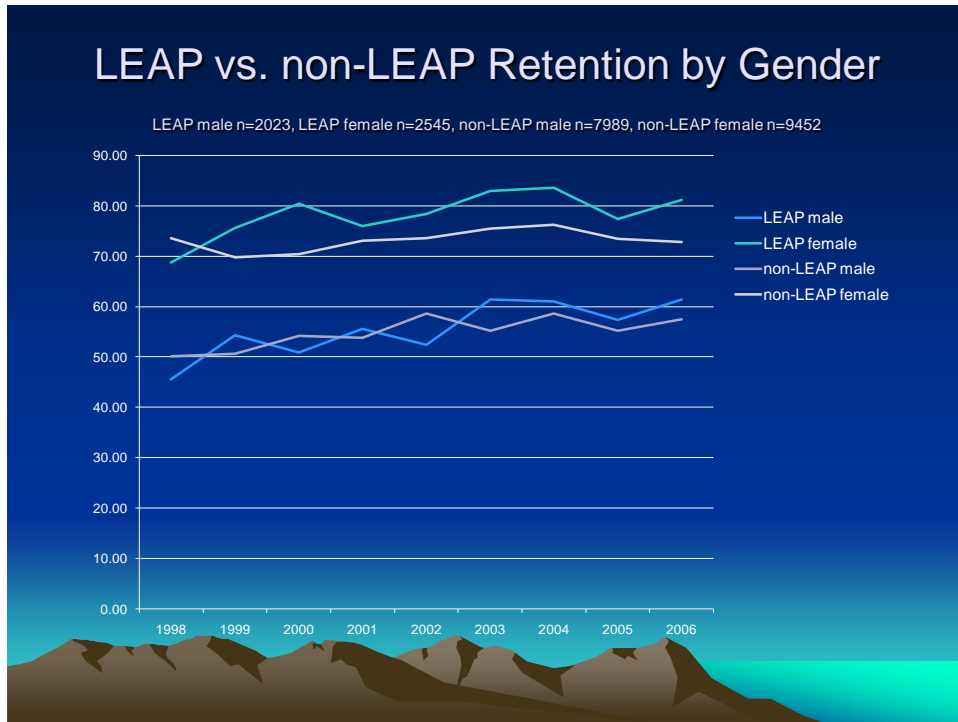
The most important development in assessment during the 2008-9 academic year was the further analysis and refinement of the statistical matching study, which showed that LEAP students significantly outperform their non-LEAP peers in retention, GPA and time to graduation. We reported the results of this study at the International First Year Experience Conference in Dublin in June

2008. (See last year's Annual Report under "Program Assessment Analysis" for a detailed explanation and discussion of this study.) This year we continued to refine this study, learning a lot about our program in the process. The big story this year turned out to involve gender. Analyzing the matching data by gender reveals that women are responsible for almost all of the differences between LEAP and non-LEAP students in retention, GPA and time to graduation. LEAP men do as well as, or slightly better than, their non-LEAP peers, while LEAP women do a whole lot better than their non-LEAP peers. We've developed a rather complicated interpretation of this discovery, which is the subject of an article we are currently writing. The argument of this article will be summarized below.

In addition to discussing the matching study, we will report here the results of the E-LEAP Portfolio Study, which was completed this summer. Note that the results of the 2009 OBIA Survey of Graduating Students are not available at this time, so the ongoing study that compares the attitudes of LEAP and non-LEAP students to their education upon graduation cannot be updated in this report.

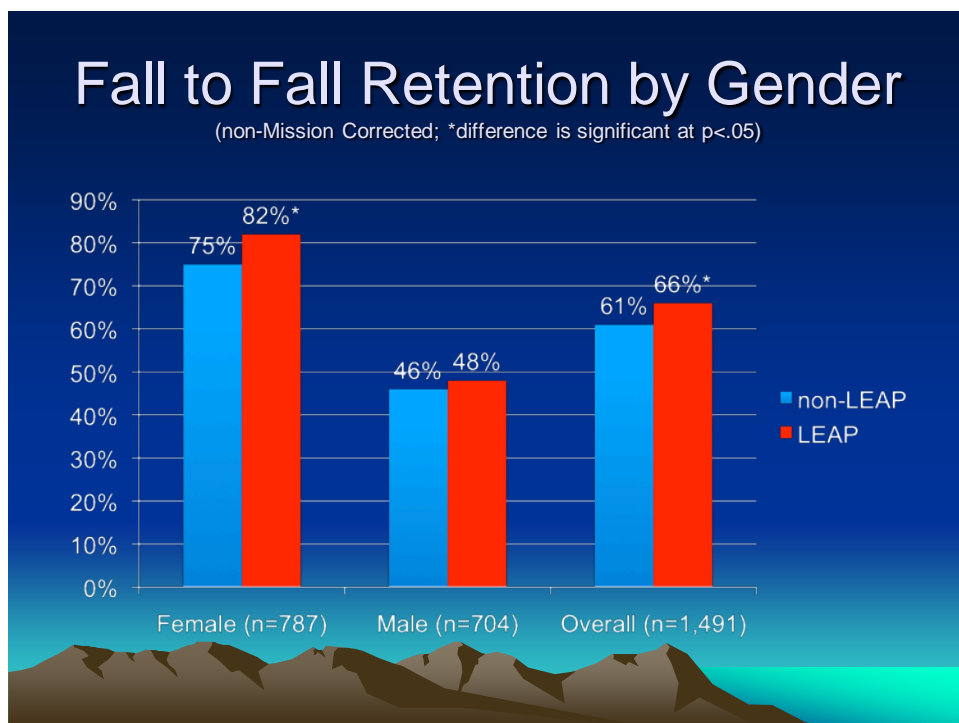
1. Matching Study: the Gender Angle

In summer 2008, it came to our attention that there were some significant differences between the performance of male and female LEAP students in comparison to their non-LEAP peers. The difference first became apparent in the OBIA retention data when organized by gender. LEAP women outperformed non-LEAP women in the 1999-2006 period under study, but LEAP men did not outperform non-LEAP men. This can be seen in the relationship between the two sets of lines in the following slide:

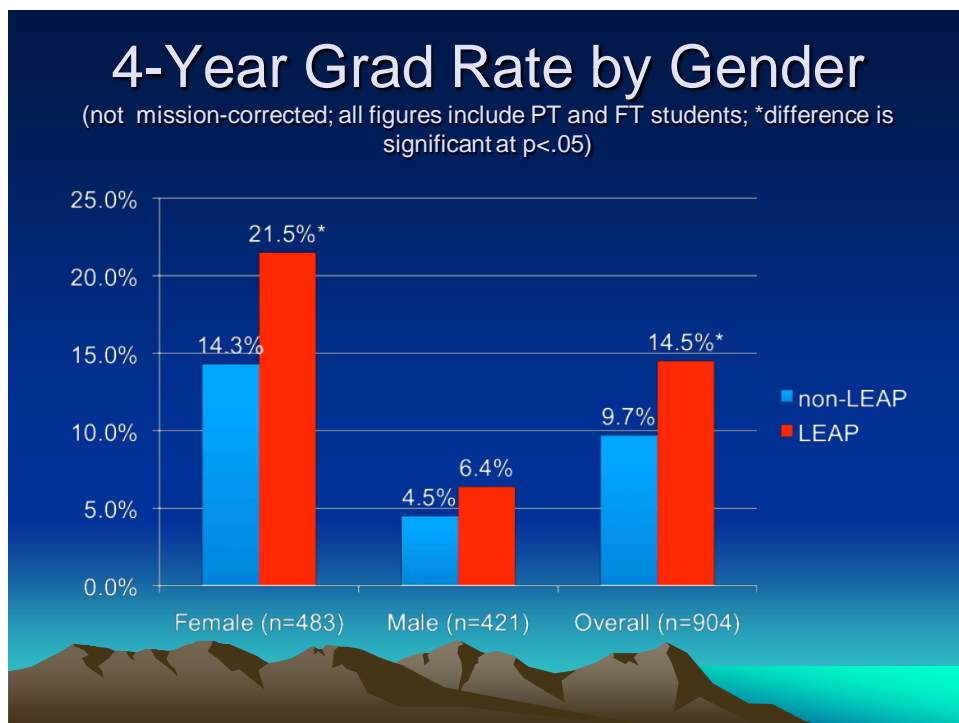


LEAP and non-LEAP women (the two top lines) are clearly distinguishable in terms of retention—LEAP women are consistently retained at higher rates—while LEAP and non-LEAP men (the two bottom lines) are less distinguishable.

We asked whether the matching study confirmed this finding, and found that it does, strikingly. Mark St. Andre organized the retention data from the study by gender:

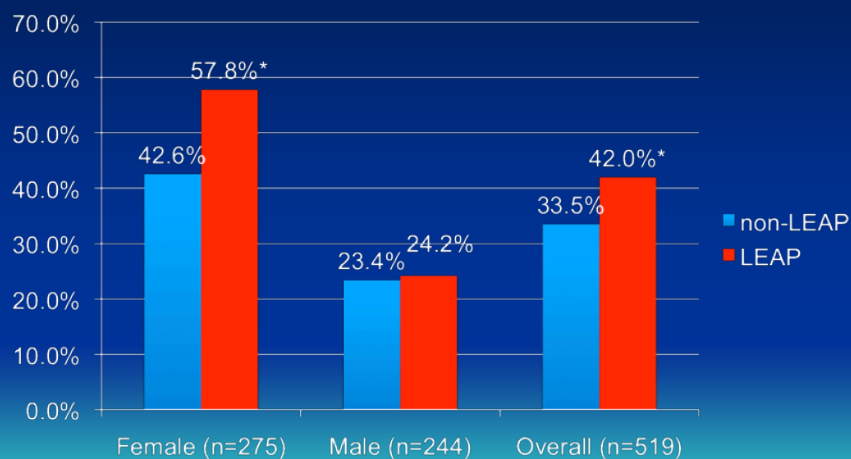


Here we see that while LEAP men outperform non-LEAP men, the difference is not significant. The difference for women is significant and—this is the key point—the overall LEAP vs. non-LEAP difference in retention appears to be almost entirely a function of the difference between LEAP and non-LEAP women. When we look at the other measures of student performance, the story is the same:



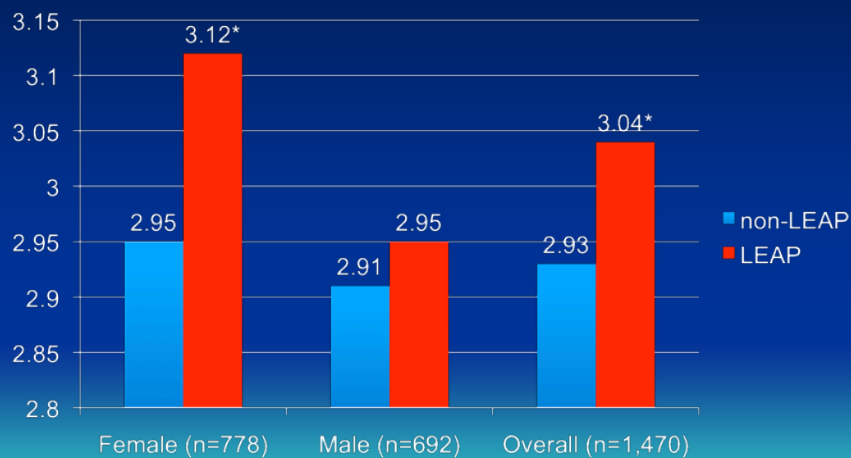
6-Year Grad Rate by Gender

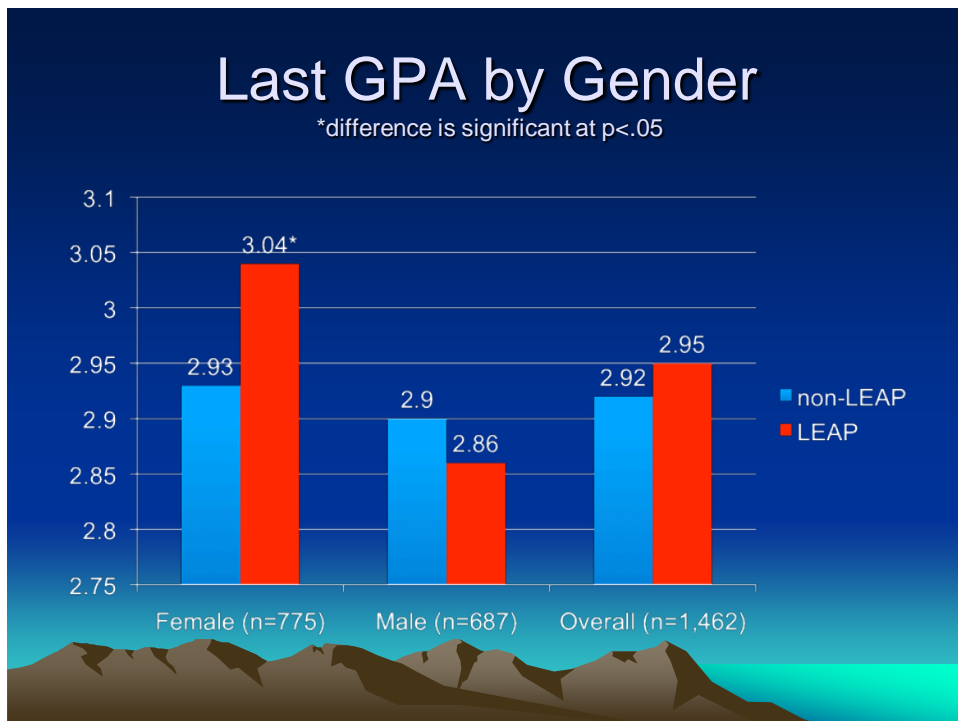
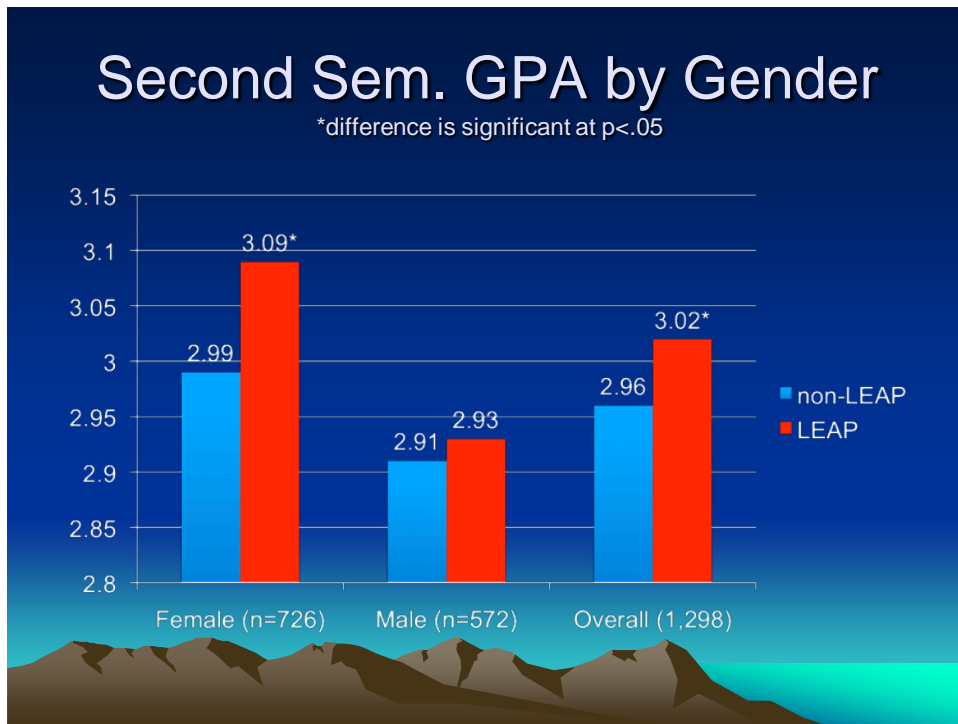
(not mission-corrected; all figures include PT and FT students; *difference is significant at $p < .05$)



First Semester GPA by Gender

*difference is significant at $p < .05$





Is LEAP, then, a program that benefits only women? No. The point should be emphasized that LEAP men are not doing poorly; in fact they outperform their non-LEAP counterparts on nearly every measure of college achievement, but just

barely. LEAP is a program that benefits all students, but which seems to impact women more than it does than men.

Let us complicate the picture even further. We know that there are gender differences in choices of major at the university: women tend to choose majors in the humanities and social sciences at greater frequency than men do; men tend to major in science and engineering more often than women do. Could gender differences in selection of major be impacting our matching study results? Perhaps what we are seeing in the above slides is merely the result of women majoring in fields in which students traditionally earn higher grades. As a result, perhaps, they drop out less frequently, have higher GPAs, and graduate more quickly.

2. Matching Study: Major Effect?

It should be remembered, though, that when we compare men's and women's performance in LEAP in the matching study we are comparing their performance against non-LEAP men and women. Gender differences in major selection should have no impact on the comparison between two groups of women—that is, unless we suppose that LEAP and non-LEAP women exhibit different patterns of major selection. This seemed to us unlikely, but we decided to investigate the possibility nevertheless. As expected, there turned out to be little difference. LEAP and non-LEAP women have basically the same major selection profile as can be seen from this comparison:

FEMALE DATA				MAJOR	MALE DATA			
Non LEAP		LEAP			Non LEAP		LEAP	
1	1%	1	1%	Environmental Science	0	0	1	1%
0	0%	1	1%	Architecture	0	0%	1	1%
0	0%	1	1%	Ethnic Studies	1	1%	0	0%
18	13%	28	14%	Comm/Journalism	6	8%	3	4%
0	0%	0	0%	Computer/Information Science	1	1%	3	4%
7	5%	12	6%	Education	0	0%	0	0%
3	2%	3	2%	Engineering	9	12%	3	4%
0	0%	0	0%	English	2	3%	0	0%
2	1%	1	1%	Languages & Literature	4	5%	0	0%
23	17%	32	16%	FCS	1	1%	0	0%
2	1%	1	1%	Biological Life Sciences	2	3%	1	1%
3	2%	1	1%	Interdis. Studies	0	0%	3	4%
0	0%	0	0%	Math	0	0%	3	4%
9	6%	10	5%	Parks and Rec	0	0%	5	7%
0	0%	0	0%	Philosophy/Religious Studies	3	4%	1	1%
2	1%	0	0%	Physical Sciences	0	0%	1	1%

7	5%	16	8%	Psychology	1	1%	5	7%
1	1%	2	1%	Public Administration	0	0%	0	0%
17	12%	34	18%	Social Sciences	22	29%	19	26%
20	14%	9	5%	Visual/Performing Arts	7	9%	1	1%
12	9%	16	8%	Health	0	0%	1	1%
10	7%	24	12%	Business/Marketing	13	17%	18	24%
2	1%	2	1%	History	3	4%	5	7%
139		194		TOTAL:	75		74	

(The columns displaying a percentage translate the raw number to the left into a percentage of the total number of LEAP or non-LEAP students profiled, enabling easy comparison between the two groups.) There are some small differences, but it seems unlikely that they have much of an impact, or, at least, that they could explain the large performance differences between LEAP and non-LEAP women displayed in the charts above. Mark St. Andre also calculated a “difficulty” index of majors (by informally polling the interns in the Sill Center) to get a sense of whether LEAP students choose “easier” majors. They don’t. The differences there, too, are negligible, though the subjectivity of the procedure makes it hard to draw much of a conclusion. The main differences for women lie in Business/Marketing and Social Sciences, in which more LEAP women major, and Visual/Performing Arts, in which more non-LEAP women major. It is not at all clear that there are relevant differences in the rigorousness of these majors that would account for the performance differences between LEAP and non-LEAP women in the original study. See the Appendix for this spreadsheet.

Another way of performing the same study, of course, is simply to add major to the original matching criteria. That way we remove major altogether as a possible factor in performance differences between LEAP and non-LEAP students. It should be noted, though, that adding major to the match formula creates different kinds of matches from those created by the demographic criteria used in the original study, since students declare a major only several years into their college career. Thus, matching on major requires, in effect, going into the future to find out which students will pick the same major, then returning to the first year to match those students on all the demographic criteria from the original study (gender, age, high school attended, race or ethnicity and admission index, which combines high school GPA and ACT score). One of the worries we had about our original study was that our matching criteria, being admittedly somewhat imperfect, may have created misleading matches. Matching on major would seem not only to address the worry about whether major is influencing LEAP student performance, but also to ensure that our matches are very good indeed. The students in the pairs thus identified would be similar enough to have chosen the same major and, having done so, go on to take the same courses in the same sequence.

3. Matching Study: Matching on Major

Matching on major had a surprising impact on the results: it removed nearly all of the performance differences between LEAP and non-LEAP women, and showed non-LEAP men slightly outperforming LEAP men.

Here are the details of the major matching study:

LEAP Matching Study by College Major (n=234: 117 matched pairs)

Results: LEAP women have higher 1st and 2nd semester attempted credits in their first year, and 2nd semester completed credits than their non-LEAP counterparts. LEAP men are less likely than non-LEAP men to have graduated.

LEAP Matching Study by Department Major (n=102: 51 matched pairs)

Results: No differences for women. Non-LEAP men outperform LEAP men on GPA the first semester.

So, all of the significant differences between LEAP and non-LEAP women that accounted for most of the differences between LEAP and non-LEAP generally have disappeared in the major match, the more restrictive of the two studies. Why?

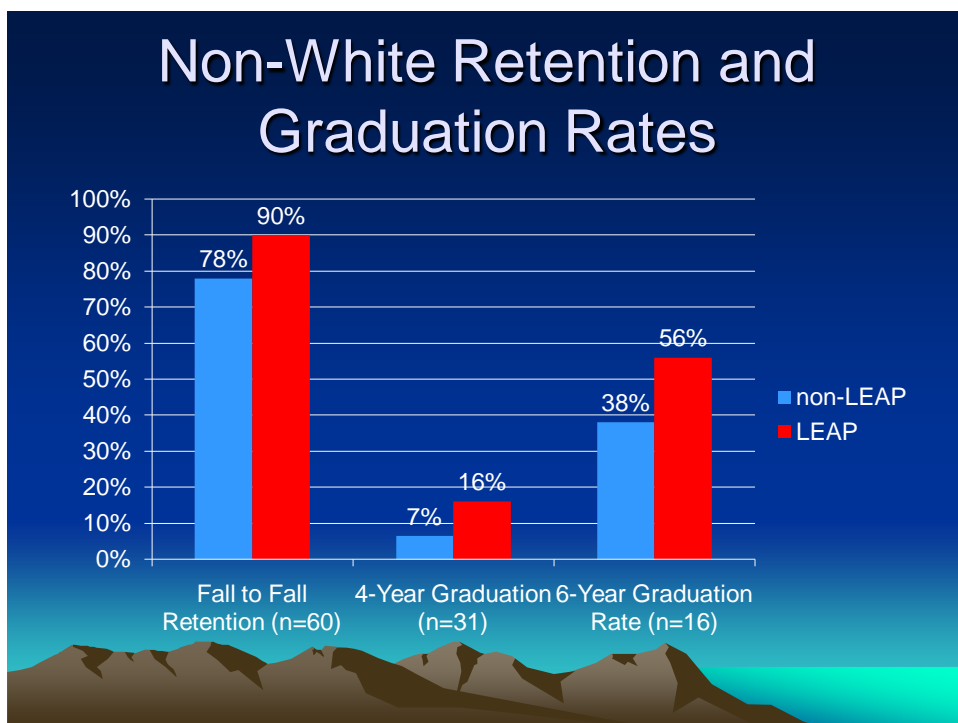
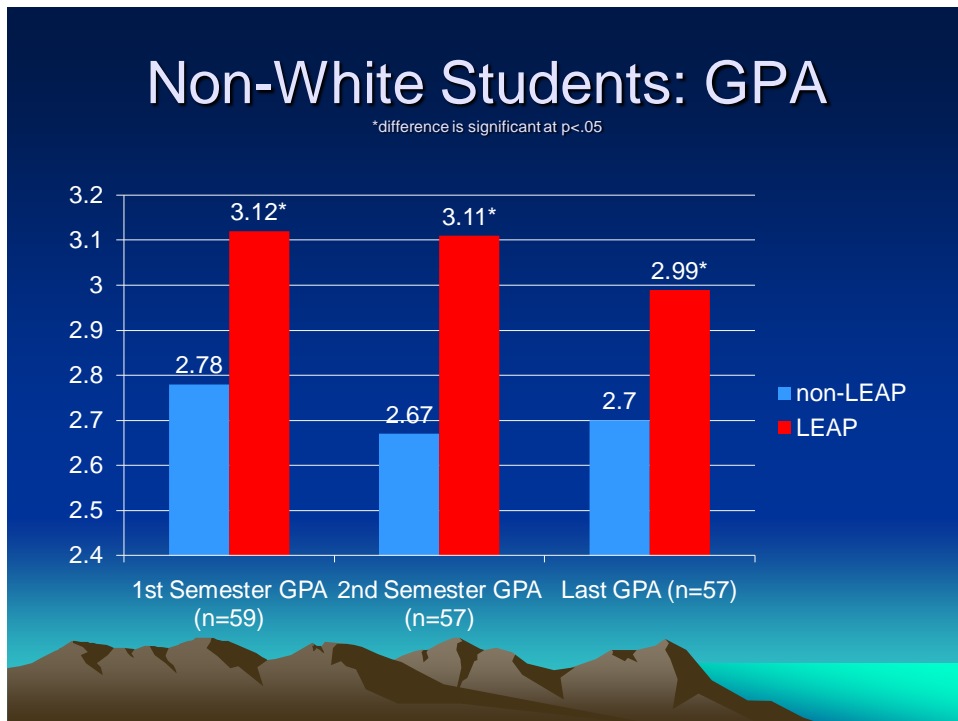
4. Matching Study: Discussion

Here is our current thinking, to be developed, as mentioned above, in a published article. Choice of major itself is probably not the decisive factor in explaining why LEAP women outperform non-LEAP women in the original study. LEAP women, as we've seen, are not taking demonstrably easier classes in easier majors. Rather, the major match study more likely reveals that the matches in the original matching study were imperfect, despite our best efforts. When we use all the original demographic criteria (age, gender, high school attended, high school cohort, race or ethnicity, and admissions index, which combines high school GPA with ACT or SAT scores) and then add major three or so years later, we've perfected those original matches. The major matching study matches students who are so alike that they even wind up deciding to major in the same subject. And, having decided on the same major, they also necessarily take the same courses in a similar sequence. The differences we were seeing in the original study, then, were probably an effect of some difference in unrealized potential that was invisible to our original matching formula but that subtly advantaged the LEAP student, particularly the female LEAP student. That is, our original matching formula managed to *mismatch* LEAP and non-LEAP female students by systematically placing LEAP students of greater but undemonstrated ability with non-LEAP students of lesser ability (or whose abilities had been fully demonstrated in high school), but who nevertheless shared the same demographic profile as first year students.

The major matching study thus reveals that for some reason LEAP attracts a group of female students who are in a sense underperforming given their Admissions Indexes, whose potential is not well captured by prior school performance or test scores. When we match them as incoming freshmen they are in fact stronger than they look on paper--that's why the original study makes it look as if they are outperforming their matches as a result of their LEAP experience, whereas they are actually just slightly mismatched (though we can't, of course, know that at the outset). Matching on major allows us to correct that mismatch three or so years later, and go back and create more perfect matches in the first year, which is why the performance difference disappears. The key point that emerges from interpreting these two studies together is that LEAP attracts in statistically significant numbers a group of female students who are motivated and able, but for some reason not performing at their potential when they arrive at college. LEAP apparently helps unlock their potential, allowing them to perform at levels that their academic profile upon matriculation would not have predicted.

The obvious remaining questions include why LEAP is able to help this group of female students and why these students are underperforming in the first place. This will be the subject of the paper we are writing. Our analysis emphasizes the somewhat repressive culture in Utah, particularly in regard to gender roles (which explains why some women may enter college performing below their potential), and the open structure of LEAP classrooms that empowers students as thinkers and knowers (which explains why, following Paulo Freire's work on oppression and pedagogy, and Carol Gilligan's work on women's ways of knowing, LEAP might help female students in particular).

Lending credence to the impact of LEAP on this group of female students is the original matching study of the performance of non-white LEAP students compared to non-white non-LEAP students. (This data does not include a match on major.)



These results, while showing obvious differences between the two groups, involve low numbers of students, which may be why the results are not statistically significant at this time (though they may become significant as the n grows). These differences do suggest, however, that, like female LEAP students, non-white students may be underperforming their potential when they enter LEAP, potential that may be

nurtured and developed in LEAP, leading to the performance differences observable in the above slides.

Additional support is lent to this interpretation by the results gleaned from a single year's administration of the Student Readiness Inventory to all incoming freshmen at the University of Utah. The Student Readiness Inventory is an instrument developed by ACT to measure not students' intelligence or academic preparation as they enter college, but rather their sense of their own ability and commitment to succeed. Results from the summer 2008 administration of this test showed, in the words of Professor Paul Gore, who oversaw this process, that "In general, and although the effect sizes are likely to be small, LEAP students have significantly higher scores on [the scales measuring] Social Activity [and] Social Connection, and significantly lower scores on Academic Self-Confidence [as] compared to non-LEAP students." There was also a slightly lower probability of academic success among LEAP students, although this result did not attain statistical significance. In other words, LEAP students entering college in the fall of 2008 had a higher than average comfort level with social interaction, which is encouraged in the LEAP Program, and were more likely to feel connected to the campus than were the non-LEAP students starting classes that year, but at the same time LEAP students had less confidence in their ability to succeed, and might, in fact, have had some reason to question their success. Yet, succeed they did, and this success, we postulate, is at least in part due to their LEAP experiences.

It should be kept in mind, as well, that because of LEAP's higher rates of retention—5-8% higher than the rest of the university—the fact that LEAP and non-LEAP students are basically even in performance after the rigorous major match is itself a noteworthy achievement. Because LEAP retains students who might otherwise have dropped out, presumably because they aren't quite as strong as their non-LEAP counterparts, we would expect LEAP students to be underperforming their non-LEAP peers. But they aren't. So the LEAP Program not only improves retention; it does so without accepting lower performance as a necessary price of that success.

The matching study, which has been nearly a two-year process, has thus yielded an important insight into the LEAP program, and we will continue to use this approach to monitor and demonstrate LEAP's effectiveness. Some of the next projects, as the numbers of students available to the study increase, include studying LEAP's impact on students in particular majors, such as engineering, and from particular backgrounds. We would also like to know how LEAP impacts the performance of minority students when matching on major.

5. The ELEAP Portfolio Study

During August and September of 2008 the LEAP program conducted a study of portfolios of writing from Engineering LEAP students. The portfolios represented written work—student papers—collected during AY 2007-8 from the sections of the two E-LEAP professors that year: Dr. Seetha Veeraghanta and Dr. Kris Koford. Two graduate students from the English Department and University Writing Program—both experienced teachers of writing in multiple contexts (including science and engineering)—spent about a month evaluating and scoring the papers in the portfolios according to rubric designed specifically for this study. The portfolio study was designed as a pilot for a larger portfolio study of the entire program, its purpose being to measure students’ growth in critical thinking (as defined by Bloom’s “Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills”). This point should be emphasized. Since LEAP spans so many different content domains, measuring the success of the program as a whole requires focusing on shared pedagogical aims, such as the teaching of critical thinking. As a pilot for that larger study, then, the E-LEAP portfolio study was not designed to find out whether (for example) E-LEAP satisfies ABET criteria or successfully teaches IEEE ethics. That would be the subject of a different study. Rather, the E-LEAP portfolio study was designed to test an approach for measuring general education outcomes in the entire LEAP Program.

When we started this study we expected to find—since this has been our experience as teachers of student growth in the LEAP Program—that students would make steady gains in cognitive skills throughout the year, which by the end of the year would add up to substantial improvement. This expectation was basically confirmed by the E-LEAP Portfolio Study. We saw positive trends in the student scores for the two cognitive skills we were investigating, Knowledge Construction and Elaborated Written Communication. We can thus conclude with a high degree of confidence that the E-LEAP course is accomplishing, on average, precisely what it is intended to accomplish: helping students acquire the cognitive skills in thinking and arguing that they’ll need to succeed in their college careers. See the Appendix for the report itself, which includes specific recommendation for how to improve the course.

List of Appendices

1. PowerPoint used during the summer 2009 Orientations.
2. Summer Orientation Breakout PowerPoint
3. Proposal for the Solutions Seminar
4. Student Readiness Inventory (SRI)
5. Essential Learning Outcomes
6. LEAP Survey Fall 2008
7. LEAP Survey Spring 2009
8. Program for the Convocation
9. Program for the Peer Advisor Luncheon
10. Advisory Board Minutes
11. Major Difficulty Spreadsheet
12. News articles about LEAP
13. Conference PowerPoint
14. E-LEAP Portfolio Study Report