

Fritz Lieber, Jeremy Karnowski (Indiana University Bloomington)

“A Learning Environment for the Freshman Year: Integration of Classroom Instruction, Field-Based Research and Service Learning in a Freshman Academic Residence”

The poster will describe an experimental living-learning program for freshmen at Indiana University that integrates a year-long topical seminar, field-based research, service learning, and a freshman academic dormitory. The poster will present the set-up, rationale, and preliminary findings of an analysis of this program; provide a formative assessment of it; and offer a model for the enhancement of intellectual, social, and civic experience in the freshman year.

Intensive Freshman Seminars (IFS) is a 14-year old academic community that prepares incoming freshman for living and learning at Indiana University. The summer program consists of small, 3 credit-hour seminars taught by faculty. The core of each summer seminar is grounded in discipline content, discussion, and thoughtful pedagogy supported by extra-curricular programming. To capitalize on the success of the summer program, administrators created an academic residence for freshmen, the IFS Extended-Year Program. Students in this program participate in the three-week summer seminars, continue living together as an academic learning community throughout the year, study with faculty in credit generating inquiry projects, engage in meaningful community service, and enjoy academic, social, and cultural extra-curricular programming. Initial enrollment in the yearlong project is 80 students.

The theme of the 2004-2005 extended year is Individual and Community. Faculty will conduct seminars in four disciplines: political science, English, criminal justice, and counseling and educational psychology. Seminar students engage in discovery projects that investigate the theme. Discovery projects provide students an entrance into basic inquiry methodology, and develop connections between themselves and their learning. Professors help students develop focused questions and design an investigative plan, select appropriate resources, and assess the final product. Seminars meet once weekly in the residence center with the aid of teaching interns. During the spring semester, students connect with the broader community through semester-long community service projects; and local and regional cultural events and excursions. Student leadership in residence hall programming and governance is encouraged to advance the academic and social experience. Data for analysis are drawn from interviews with participating faculty, students, civic community members, program administrators, students' parents and peers, and course evaluations.

A Teaching-Living-Learning Model for the Freshman Year

The poster will present conceptual building blocks, supported by analytic data, for an integrative model that enhances academic, residential, social, cultural, and civic experience of freshmen at a large state university. A brief review of literature and similar projects at other universities will place the model in historical and practical context. Likewise, the model will present an array of possible relationships to scholarship of teaching and learning initiatives in small and large university settings. Questions for future research are included.