



CONSORTIUM FOR ILLINOIS LEARNING COMMUNITIES

## 2021 Best Practices Symposium Presentation Descriptions

### **Plenary Session I (9:15 – 10:00 AM):**

#### ***Grounding Learning Communities with Care and Compassion During COVID,***

Dr. Deborah Adelman, Dr. Shamili Ajgaonkar, and Lauren Morgan [College of DuPage]

Teaching a learning community during COVID has unique challenges, especially for creating community in the virtual environment. Yet, grounding teaching with caring and compassionate practices can surmount the limitations of the virtual environment and foster community building in unique and gratifying ways. Join Shamili Ajgaonkar, Deborah Adelman and Lauren Morgan as they share their experiences utilizing mindfulness practices, challenge assignments and service learning to developing caring, compassionate, and civically engaged students in two different learning communities.

### **Breakout Session I (10:15 – 11:00 AM):**

#### ***Responding to Grand Challenges Through Acts of Recentering: Building Identity and Community in a Pandemic***

Dr. Scott Pool and Chimene Burnett [Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi]

This session features the efforts of one LC faculty team--a Music Professor and a First Year Seminar Professor--to manage ongoing "grand challenges" presented by the pandemic. Attendees will learn how we maintained and adapted our student-centered approach to build identity and community in learning environment altered by Covid-19.

Tools for engagement and learning environments included--

- Student Identity Project: Building community by encouraging students to take part in the co-curriculum.
- Song of the Week: Analysis of songs chosen by students to show how they are [or are not] culturally reflective and worthy of artistic depth.
- Inclusion: Working to include virtual students during hybrid classroom-synchronous sessions.
- Group Projects: Adapted for synchronous/asynchronous learning, while retaining inclusive teamwork elements.

The ideas presented and discussed should encourage attendees to take bold steps in managing their own unique grand challenges.

**(Winner, Best Revised Learning Community Award—2020)**

***The Literary History of Chicago*** (SRC 2000B)  
Tim Henningsen and Sam Mitrani [College of DuPage]

When COVID-19 took root last winter, we were in the midst of teaching a face-to-face honors learning communities seminar at College of DuPage called, "The Literary History of Chicago." The class was based around fictional texts set in and about Chicago, and we approached these readings through a historical lens. Quite frankly, it was going great. However, the abrupt campus closure and the switch to remote learning hindered our ability to deliver the class in the face-to-face, discussion-based settings in which we had originally designed. While our students remained present and steadfast in a virtual environment, this session will focus upon how our contingency planning was successful in some areas, and lacking in others, and will address how we plan to take what we've learned back to the classroom when we re-run the class next year.

### **Lunch (11:15 AM – 12:15 PM)**

#### **Collaborative Roundtable Discussion Rooms**

Bring your lunch to one of our Discussion Rooms to share your views and experiences on different issues pertinent to learning communities.

### **Plenary Session II (12:15 – 1:00 PM)**

***A Transformational Institutional Partnership: How Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Took a Learning Community Initiative to Scale by Making it a Distinctive Feature of the First-Year Experience.***

Dr. Tracey D. Tedder and Dr. Susan L. Freeman [Florida Southern College]

This session will explore an innovative curricular design within learning communities at a liberal arts college that fostered high impact student engagement techniques and experiences cultivated through a unique partnership between the Offices of Academic Affairs and Students Affairs. This partnership has resulted in increased retention rates for first-year students. The session will provide data related to the high impact strategies delivered through learning community courses that resulted in a positive and consequential impact upon society. The inclusion of community partnerships, co-curricular experiences, and coordination of an integrated assignment in each learning community course were significant factors contributing to student success. Effective communication and collaboration between the Offices of Academic Affairs and Students Affairs continues to be integral for high quality outcomes and student success.

As a result of the session, participants will understand the curricular design including program goals and pedagogical emphases. The conceptual framework of the initiative will be shared including the unique partnership between academics and student life; the positive and consequential impact on society through co-curricular elements; and quality assurance measures. Other contributing factors beyond the fundamental features of the learning community program will be outlined: community partnerships, integrated assignments, and peer mentoring. This proposal will include a detailed summary of how learning communities have become a strategic priority related to the first-year experience, successful retention and graduation rates.

## **Breakout Sessions II (1:15 – 2:00 PM):**

### ***Integrating a Learning Community with Human Resource Management Content & Employer Relationships to Build HR Careers and Inspire Student Success* (SRC 2000A)**

Jane Murtaugh, Professor of HR Management and Coordinator of HRM Certificate Program [College of DuPage]

Learn how integrating a learning community methodology with HRM content and employer relationships has inspired student success and career development. Steps take to create and implement a HRM certificate program and outcomes achieved will also be presented. Presentation will engage and interact with audience through a step-by-step overview of the development of our HRM Certificate Program through our use of an integrated learning community format connecting academics with HR professionals to meet employer needs.

### ***Teaching Science in the Age of Social Media,***

Laura Burt-Nicholas and Beth Shaffer-McCarthy [College of DuPage]

This session will focus on a learning community between a non-majors biology course and an information literacy course, both targeted to a general education audience. Co-presenters describe their approach to teaching scientific reasoning and information literacy in their learning community through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic illustrated many public misconceptions about the process of science as it related to an emerging infectious disease. Equally destructive was the rampant spread of misinformation and disinformation. We will describe the scaffolded research assignments created to help dissect and evaluate these co-pandemics. Students culminated their research efforts with social-media-sharable content that addressed a major public misconception and supplied accurate information on the topic.

## **Symposium Wrap-up (2:00 – 2:15 PM)**

Attendees will gather for some final thoughts and observations on the symposium.