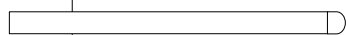
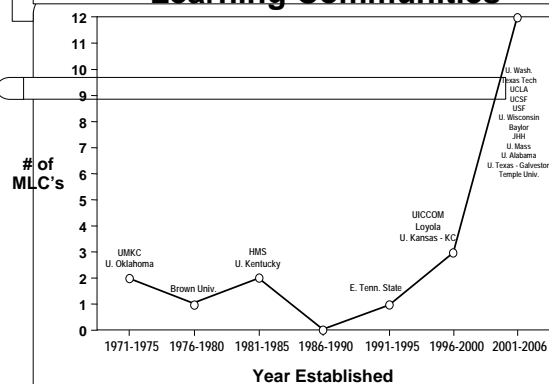


## Learning Communities Characteristics



## Proliferation of Medical Learning Communities



## Study team

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- Kristi Ferguson, University of Iowa
- Ed Krupat, Harvard University
- Ellen Wolter, University of Iowa
- Don Yarbrough, University of Iowa

## Study design

- Sent email to Associate Deans, with link to online survey
- Sent follow-up email three weeks later
- Have done follow-up phone calls to get maximum response

## Purposes of the study

- to determine how many schools currently have, or are considering implementing, learning communities
- to determine how learning communities are structured in different schools

## Preliminary Results

**“Broadly defined, a learning community is an INTENTIONALLY DEVELOPED community that aims to maximize learning for students. Does your medical school have one or more intentionally developed communities for students?”**

N=15 schools say they have student communities

N=12 schools say they are considering them

N=29 schools answered no

## Primary goals of student communities

Fostering communication among students and faculty	14
Promoting caring, trust, and teamwork	12
Providing structures that encourage student participation in learning activities	11
Helping students establish social support networks	11
Helping students establish academic support networks	11
Providing structures that encourage student participation in social activities	10

## Primary goals of student communities (cont'd)

Providing structures that encourage student leadership	8
Encouraging integration of the curriculum	8
Providing a setting for community-based delivery of student support programs	7
Providing students with exposure to interdisciplinary learning	7
Focusing faculty and students on learning outcomes	5
Having links with world outside of the medical school	4

### Characteristics of learning communities

Students remain in the same community for all 4 years of medical school	12
Community participants include students from many class years	11
Community is linked to a specific faculty and/or peer advisors	11
Community activities occur outside of regularly scheduled school activities	10
Participation in the community is mandatory	10
A physical space that is reserved specifically for community participants and related activities	7

### Student support activities

Social functions	13
Career planning/advising	11
Personal counseling	11
Group mentoring	11
Wellness promotion	6
Peer tutoring	6

### Curricular functions

Professionalism	10
Leadership development	9
Service learning	9
Humanities emphasis	8
Specific pedagogical instruction such as PBL, collaborative learning, or active learning	7
Cultural competency	7

### Faculty Learning Communities

- More schools report having communities for faculty (N=37)
- There is more consistency in the functions of faculty learning communities than for student learning communities

## Implications for evaluation

- Since structure and function of learning communities varies widely across schools, will be difficult to generalize about learning communities
- Need to determine purpose of own learning communities before determining most appropriate evaluation strategies

