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Building Student Leaders Through Peer Advising

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1

Introduction

- **Peer advising** is an educational program where students are assisting other students in the learning process.
- **Peer Advisors** (PA's) assist students through the year with their academic needs, and serve as leaders and roles models within their academic programs.
- **The Liberal Studies for Early and Elementary Education** (LSEE) peer advising program at Virginia Commonwealth University helps incoming and current students by providing them with an informed peer advisor to offer resources, support and information in a timely manner.
- The LSEE program at VCU has 12 PA's who have completed the majority of their program requirements and have met the required GPA and testing benchmarks. Peer Advisors served 306 undergrad students for the fall 2013 semester.

2

Purpose/Method

The purpose of evaluating the LSEE Peer Advising program is to provide a student perspective on the benefits of peer advising.

- Collected data from the fall 2013 semester
- Collected personal statements from current LSEE peer advisors
- Researched existing programs and testimonials from other peer advising programs

3

Results

Peer advisors gain valuable leadership skills by:

- **Building relationships** with peers, staff, faculty, and professors
- Utilizing their **past successes** in the program to grow as leaders

As leaders peer advisors:

- **Gain knowledge** about the program, school, and community
- **Become self-aware and empathetic** towards themselves and their peers
- **Have the ability to create a sense of community** through peer interactions, advising, and implementing social and academic programs

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4

Reflection/ Discussion

When I first decided to be a peer advisor, I was focused on learning the in's and out's of the program. After a year of serving as a peer mentor, I have the knowledge and confidence to be a student leader.

-Spring 2014 LSEE peer Advisor

Leadership is a process that encourages development and matures students.

Peer advising is an opportunity for students to build their leadership skills.

5

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