

International Ministries Use of Evidence of Student Learning

LoveWorks

The LoveWorks leadership has been gathering data from its team members and teams leaders for approximately 15 years. The data has come in three critical forms:

- Survey data from student team members
- Exit interviews with team leaders
- Debriefing sessions with international hosts which are rooted in ongoing relationships with those hosts that provides opportunities for honest dialog an assessment.

The bulk of this data gathering has been focused on program improvement, particularly in the area of team member training and preparation. Student learning has been measured by the effectiveness of the teams while in the field.

Some recent changes include:

- Summer Ministry Intern debriefing sessions will also include the three new Spiritual Development Dept. leadership questions for evaluation.
- LoveWorks team leaders have a face-to-face debriefing interview with the Director of International Ministries. Interview questions are structured around program student learning outcomes and demonstrated learning/competencies.
- LoveWorks students will be required to complete an online exit survey within 1 month of the completion of their trip. This will be similar to the survey we have used for the last several years with some improvements.
- For the first time LoveWorks students were required to submit a written testimony. We will verify that they have all turned one in. We will read them to determine how many demonstrate an ability to testify to God's love in their lives. We will also be asking them a short answer question on the online exit survey asking them to articulate the main points of their testimony and what they wanted to communicate. This increased emphasis on testimonies is from learning based on earlier assessment efforts. Both student survey data and leader debriefing meetings showed that testimony sharing was a weak point in student performance.
- A substantive LoveWorks training curriculum revision was conducted this spring that implemented several new concepts and teaching methods. Every training session is now written to open with scripture reflection (in response to prior assessment findings). Training was moved to Brown Chapel for greater space flexibility for team breakout discussions. I look forward to seeing if there is any change in the already high reviews of training we receive from students and team leaders.
- To help assist students in developing their cultural competence, the weekend retreat for LoveWorks was moved from a retreat center to the Mid-City Church of the Nazarene. Mid-City is in the most diverse part of San Diego, with refugees from around the globe. Part of the retreat gives students greater exposure to the complications of communicating with people of vastly different cultural backgrounds who may not speak English.

Mexico Ministry Narrative:

In 2008, México Outreach, a student-led ministry group that visited the northwest Baja México area monthly, held the title of longest-lasting student ministry. It began organically through the vision of passionate students and was assumed into the official Spiritual Development structure with the creation of the office of Student Ministries. Changes in passport laws in 2008, however, made access to the Mexican border town much more difficult, as did reports of increasing

violence due to the drug trade. After a two-year hiatus, the ministry was resurrected under the name “Ministry with México” and was reintegrated into the Student Ministries program. Careful analysis was conducted from 2009-2011, as student leaders chaperoned monthly trips under the advisement of the México Programs arm of International Ministries, also in Spiritual Development. Those years yielded several insights:

- Regular contact and coordination with partners/hosts in México was essential to the health and effectiveness of the ministry
- One trip a month was insufficient to serve the high interest in participation.
- A system was needed to track participant interest and communication on trip details
- Student leaders would be aided by a faculty/staff/alumni sponsor to serve as back-up in emergency/complex situations unique to international travel and cross-cultural work
- Transportation costs were much higher than other student ministries
- Though the Student Ministries curriculum was helpful with leadership development, specific training was needed on cross-cultural awareness and communication, trip debrief, safe and thorough trip planning, and social issues relevant to their ministry (immigration, border life, power dynamics within radically different economies, etc.)

In school year 11-12, it was determined that the Ministry with México program, which had expanded to three trips a month partnering with three separate entities, would transition from the Student Ministries office to join International Ministries, under the supervision of Melissa Tucker, Associate Director, who coordinates México and border relations and programming.

The move sparked many changes:

- For one, leaders received specialized training on trip preparation, leadership, and logistics management during PLNU’s Lead Week and then attended 2 hours of training every Monday evening throughout the year.
- Additionally, faculty/staff/alumni sponsors volunteered to attend each trip and received special training for their role.
- An online tracking system was implemented to ensure that all details were covered prior to each trip and that all involved were on the same page, thereby making trip preparation much more efficient and streamlined.
- Lastly, a new system for applying to trips online was created to help manage the interest load and standardized emails announcing trips, verifying placement on trips, and communicating important trip details facilitated the participant process.
- Another benefit to moving the program to International Ministries was that Melissa Tucker is regularly in contact with all trip hosts and partners and so can help monitor host relations and intervene when necessary.

In 11-12 Ministry with México student team leaders were asked to respond to the three new Spiritual Development Dept. leadership questions in their exit interviews. Their answers were recorded and will be evaluated.

As the program prepares for the 12-13 school year, feedback from current leaders has shaped the following plans: make adjustments regarding transportation (creatively find alternatives to cut costs) and collecting trip fees (moving to an online, pre-paid format), as well as make new attempts to engage other San Diego universities for possible collaborations.