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## I-LEEP Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 4

Marjorie Allen

*La Salle University*, allen@lasalle.edu

Robert Mack

*La Salle University*, mack@lasalle.edu

Joanne Woods

*La Salle University*, woodsj@lasalle.edu

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# I-LEEP

Institute for Lasallian Education & Engaged Pedagogy

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INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

BUSCA

LADDER

THE ESSENTIAL  
QUESTION



## BUSCA (Bilingual Undergraduate Studies for Collegiate Advancement)

Joanne Woods, Director of BUSCA



The Bilingual Undergraduate Studies for Collegiate Advancement (BUSCA) program at La Salle University strives to educate Hispanic students so they can become bicultural leaders in contemporary US society. The program is designed to help Spanish-speaking students who are not ready for mainstream college classes learn the cognitive and language skills they need to be successful. The students improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English in sheltered-immersion classrooms while completing the University's core classes. All sixty credits that BUSCA students take during the five-semester associate's program transfer to the bachelor's degree program if they chose to stay at La Salle once completing their studies in BUSCA.

Since we switched in 1998 to using the Banner database to track students at La Salle, BUSCA has served 827 students. Approximately 150 students have taken classes in BUSCA this year. Our graduation rate (56% or higher for the past five years) is consistently two times the national average for Latino students earning an associate's degree at other private universities and three times the national average for community colleges. For the past two years, 75% of our graduates immediately enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. The graduation rate of BUSCA graduates who stay at La Salle is also above the national average (54% and growing every year). We are in the "What Works for Latinos" database maintained by *Excelencia* in Education and have twice been a national finalist for their *Excelencia* in Education award at the associate's degree level. (continued on page 3)



# LADDER

(La Salle Autism and Developmental Disabilities Education Resources)



LADDER's mission is to positively enhance the quality of life for youngsters and their families who are dealing with issues related to a variety of disabilities. Families are embraced as partners in the process to provide a unique, coordinated and multidisciplinary experience to create positive expectations, actions and solutions in this goal. LADDER staff members work closely with administrators, faculty, families, children and Home & School Associations to develop exemplary programs and services.

Located on La Salle University's campus, the LADDER Family Center is the result of an interdisciplinary team of faculty and staff working collaboratively to provide an array of courses, programs, services, partnerships and relevant research that will lead to superior services for the families of children with special needs while also providing best practices to La Salle students. The center strives to work closely with local schools and community groups to create supports across various environments.

### **LADDER Family Center Programs**

**Parent-to-Parent Workshops:** Our workshops include a variety of topics presented by professionals within the community as well as a chance to network with other families.

**Afterschool Enrichment (LEAP) Program:** Children attend this program Thursday evenings from 4:30 – 6:15pm to interact with others & gain socialization & enrichment skills.

**Resource Directory:** Available in office or on our website, this directory contains various services throughout the community aimed at serving children with special needs.

**Marriage & Family Therapy & Social Work Interns:** Parents, families, and youngsters are encouraged to utilize our available interns to work on certain issues through therapy or by guided support to utilize available resources.

**Technology Training (LTAP) Program:** Our program is held on Tuesday evenings at 4:30pm. Parents learn how to use laptops & how to find community resources on the internet. At the completion of the course, parents are provided with a FREE laptop to use for community connections.

**Annual Community Connections Awards Event:** This year's event was held at La Salle University's Art Museum & included child-centered art activities as well as an awards ceremony acknowledging members who have demonstrated outstanding service to the LADDER Family Center.

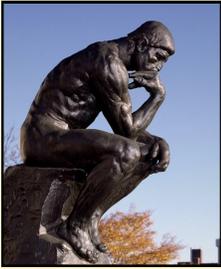
**Annual Autism Walk & Autism Conference:** These two events are aimed at engaging the La Salle students and faculty members as well as the community at large in increasing awareness & knowledge about Autism as well as fund-raise for specific organizations. This year's walk was held on November 2nd and the conference will be held on May 1st.

If you would like to learn more about LADDER visit us on the web: <http://www.lasalle.edu/autismladdercenter/> or contact us by email: [ladder@lasalle.edu](mailto:ladder@lasalle.edu)



# The Essential Question

Marjie Allen, Ph.D., Chair of Integrative Studies



Every two years La Salle faculty and staff select an "essential question" to discuss throughout the University. This past year the question was about the use of technology for the common good. Past questions have included discussions about economic justice, collective responsibility vs individual freedom, and stewardship of the earth. What all of the question topics have in common is that they ask students to wrestle with Catholic Social Teaching and the Lasallian mission. Freshmen are required to read about the topic and write an assigned essay. Upperclassmen may discuss in class. Every year there are programs around that question including a speaker at freshman convocation. The idea of the "essential question" is to introduce students to the relationship between what we study, what we discuss as a community, what we value and how we choose to act in the world. This year's essential question will be selected on May 4. If you have an idea for the topic, please email Marjie Allen: [allen@lasalle.edu](mailto:allen@lasalle.edu).

## BUSCA (continued)

It is our belief that BUSCA is successful several reasons. First, we provide content-rich coursework in a sheltered-immersion environment. All of the students in the program are working on improving their English language skills in context, which is much more effective than taking remedial coursework. Second, we create a sense of community and a network of support. Many times first-generation college students do not have the cultural capital they need to thrive at a university. In addition to a full-time, bilingual Director and Assistant, we also have a part-time, bilingual Academic Advisor and Motivational Counselor as well as a designated representative in Student Financial Services. Our team of staff and faculty explain and model the things students need to do so they can learn the process and be successful. Third, we make sure our tuition is fully covered in federal and state grants for any students with an Expected Family Contribution of zero dollars as determined by their answers on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is our goal to serve this population without creating a debt load they cannot afford. Last, we are incredibly lucky to work at an institution that recognizes the value that these students have in our society and is willing to provide them the support that they need to successfully transition into the professional world.



Since our model has been so effective, we are in the process of looking at expanding regionally and nationally. We have a potential site selected in Allentown, PA to serve the Lehigh Valley and another one in East San Jose, California.

If you would like to learn more about BUSCA you can visit us on the web: <http://www.lasalle.edu/busca/> or contact Joanne Woods: [woods@lasalle.edu](mailto:woods@lasalle.edu).