Annual Report: 2022-23

LVAIC

Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges

Making Strong Colleges Stronger Through Collaboration

From the Executive Director

The functional purpose of LVAIC seems simple: enabling our members to achieve more together than separately. In practice, fulfilling that purpose often feels like putting together a puzzle—what pieces will go where to complete the picture in the most effective way?

The placement of each piece of the puzzle requires the LVAIC community to be strategic and intentional as they figure out the best way to move the pieces in place together. LVAIC staff provides the scaffolding that allows the required collaborative planning and execution to achieve the desired impact.

The activities discussed in this year's annual report highlight our collaborative successes such as over $11 million in negotiated contracts, the seventh cohort of the Higher Education Leadership Institute, over 60 communities of practices sharing opportunities, and a highly inclusive strategic planning process.

Trust is the glue that allows the pieces to stay together. None of these achievements would be possible without the willingness of faculty, staff, and administrators to work together intentionally and thoughtfully. The trust that supports this willingness was challenged by the pandemic, and the LVAIC community is working to rebuild those trust foundations

Diane R. Dimitroff
LVAIC Executive Director

LVAIC
Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges

The Lehigh Valley Association of Independent College includes:

1,364 Faculty + **5,292** Staff + **19,184** Students

on the campuses of Cedar Crest College, Desales University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian University & Muhlenberg College.

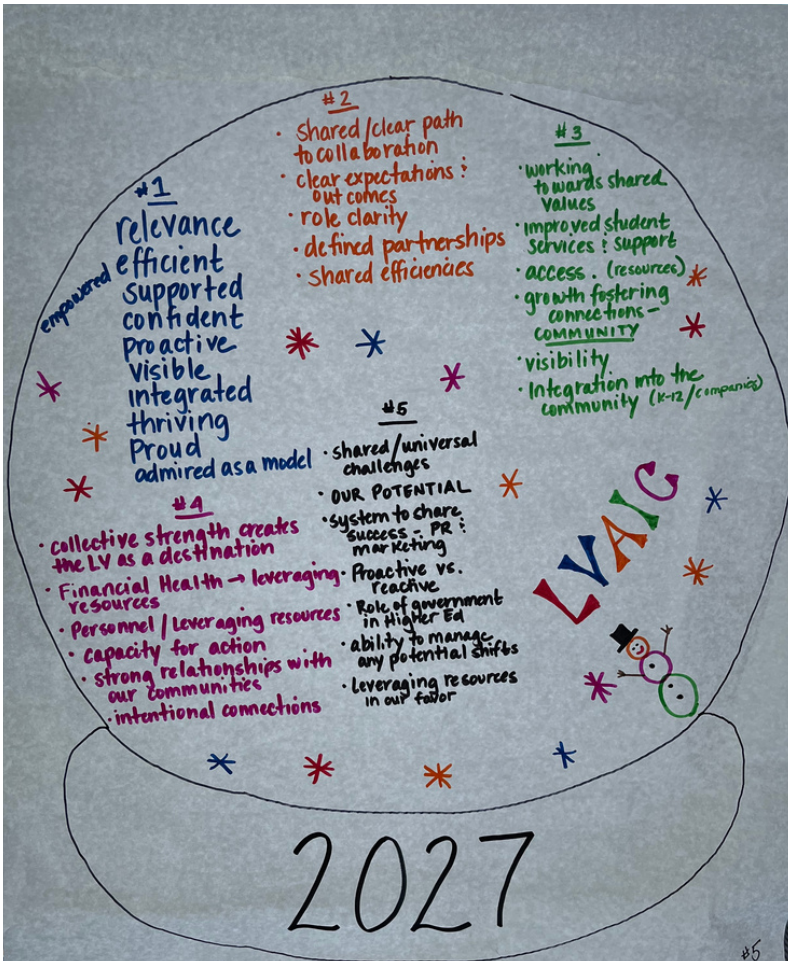
Prioritizing a Culture of Collaboration

Collaboration is at the core of what LVAIC does. Intentional and dynamic opportunities to work together on the puzzle support the success of all programming.

Strategic Planning

In the fall of 2022, LVAIC's Board of Directors initiated the process of developing a new 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The Executive Director began the planning process with an environmental scan capturing the current state and structure of the organization. Next, the Board validated the existing mission statement and appointed a cross-institutional, cross-functional steering committee.

The first task for the steering committee was to create the vision that will support the mission, asking themselves, what will a successful LVAIC look like in 2027? From this query, a new vision statement was developed. Next, the Steering Committee established three strategic priorities: Optimized Resources, People Excellence, and Impactful Presence. In March of 2023, each campus invited about 60 LVAIC staff, campus representatives, and leaders to a generative working session to capture ideas for achieving the vision. Following that working session, the steering committee continued to refine those ideas and establish goals and enabling initiatives.



Through this intentionally inclusive and iterative process, the steering committee is well on its way to having a draft available for the Board of Directors to consider in late fall of 2023. Newly adopted Vision Statement: LVAIC advances a culture of innovative and intentional collaboration that expands academic excellence, educational access, community engagement, and the student experience at each of its distinctive members institutions and positions the Lehigh Valley as a leading destination for higher education

Other Pieces of the Puzzle

- At the end of Spring 2023, LVAIC launched its new website. Developed carefully over the course of the year, the site was reconceived to provide better service to our members while allowing LVAIC staff to share information more efficiently and effectively.
- LVAIC staff provided departmental consulting and facilitation for planning, team-building, communications, and other needs.
- Ongoing enrollment analysis of member campuses to identify opportunities for shared scheduling and teaching.
- LVAIC provided collaborative conference support for gathering faculty and staff in the fields of Information Literacy, Student Affairs, Microbiology, and Teaching & Learning.

Expanding Faculty and Staff Capabilities

Our members' most important resources are the people who make up their faculty, staff, and administration. LVAIC offers a variety of resources for individuals to engage and advance their personal and professional development.

HIgher Education Leadership Institute

The highly successful Higher Education Leadership Institute was developed seven years ago with the idea that individuals who wished to explore leadership in higher education needed to understand in a more holistic fashion how higher education works. Each member campus nominates individuals from their institution to participate in the year-long program that leads employees through the major components of leadership in higher education, letting them explore areas outside of their professional expertise.

This culminates in an end of the year celebration that recognizes the participants' journey and showcases projects proposed from each campus cohort. These projects provide a way for participants to apply their learning into an actionable initiative on their campus.

This past year's cohort of 29 participants was the sixth to pursue this robust curriculum. Alumni from previous years are frequently invited to specific events designed to reinforce the skills and knowledge of the program.

Professional Development Workshops

LVAIC offered a variety of Professional Development workshops, the majority of them virtual, to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and engagement. Among them are:

- Personal Strengths Workshop: Leveraging Your Strengths in Relationships with Others: Using the Clifton Strengths assessment tool, participants determine their top five strengths, learn what that tells them about their work, and strategize methods of using their strengths most effectively. In the past year, two sessions were held with 58 individuals completing.

- Exploring Emotional Intelligence: In this two-hour workshop, participants receive an introduction to emotional intelligence and identify opportunities for developing their own emotional intelligence. Over two sessions, 139 people from our campuses completed this insightful approach to workplace dynamics.

- Community Book Reads: These virtual book groups allow people from the LVAIC community to get together and engage with challenging texts. This year, we had two book groups that met four times to discuss What if I Say the Wrong Thing?: 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People. In total, 53 community members completed these discussions.

- Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue: This virtual workshop leads participants through an intensive examination of the program's "tools for talking when the stakes are high." Each workshop has four mandatory three-hour sessions. In the past year, LVAIC facilitated seven sessions with 145 individuals completing this important workshop on improving effective communication in the workplace.

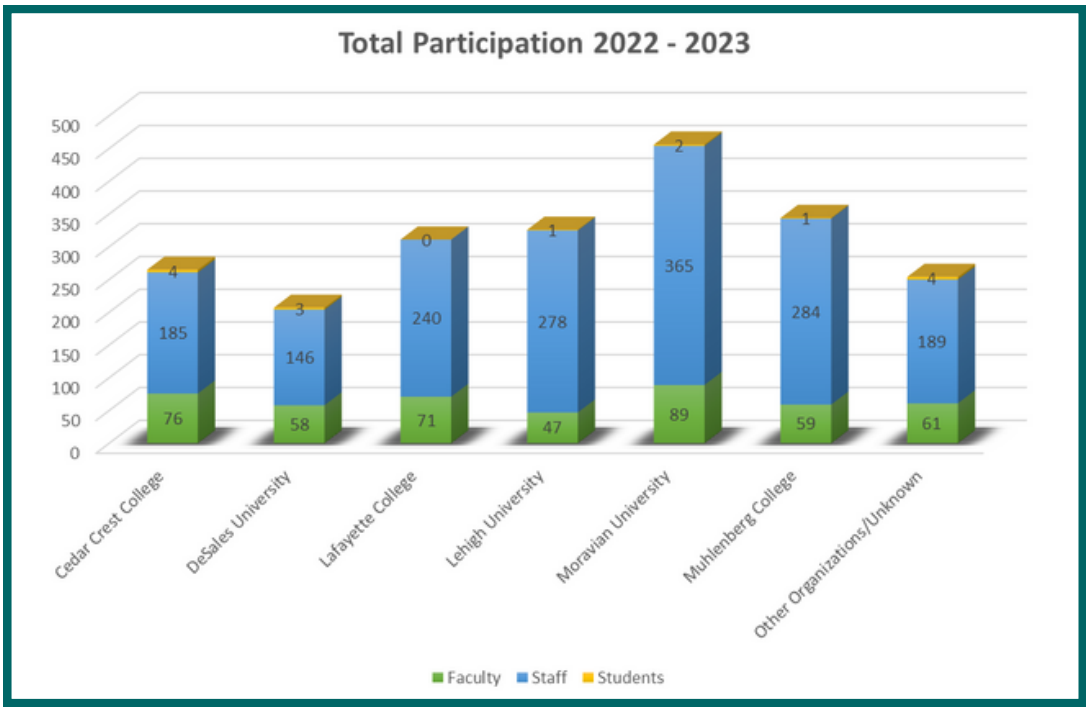
Management Development

Given the high interest in these workshops, LVAIC recognizes the dedication of some of our community to their professional development. If an individual completes these four workshops/seminars, then they will be eligible for a Management Development Certificate. Level 1: Managing Self launched in 2021 with 11 receiving this recognition in its first iteration. Level 2: Managing Others is due for launch in the upcoming year.

Lehigh Valley Research Consortium (LVRC)

The LVRC supports faculty and the community by serving as a facilitator for impactful community-based research. This year, the LVRC focused on strategic planning and promoting community-based research. It hosted two sessions of virtual networking with 46 researchers attending and a Community-Based Research Conference with 54 attendees from community organizations and LVAIC institutions to meet, exchange information, and gain new ideas about promising practices for the Lehigh Valley.

LVAIC-Professional Development Participation



A graph visualizing the 2,163 members of the LVAIC community who participated in LVAIC-sponsored events like book reads, coffee chats, professional development programming, health & wellness offerings, and our bigger cohorts like the Higher Education Leadership Insitute and the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium.

Communities of Practice

The cornerstone of LVAIC is the Community of Practice. In Communities of Practice, individuals from across the member campuses network with their peers, share successful practices, and plan for the future of their individual piece of the educational puzzle.

In 2022-23, 60+ active groups ranging from Chief Information Officers to Faculty Development Professionals to Dance Programs met, engaging over 400 participants. While some groups, like the Faculty Development Professionals and their annual Teaching and Learning Colloquium, chose to develop a conference or colloquium for all their colleagues, other groups, like the Dance Programs, develop a shared schedule for the year. Still others meet with LVAIC staff to pursue strategic initiatives such as sourcing and leveraged contract options.

Other Pieces of the Puzzle

- Throughout the year, faculty and staff of color, library staff, and other groups have met virtually for a one-hour "coffee chat" to connect and network.

- Fifteen virtual programs on financial and retirement wellness have been offered on topics as diverse as "Pre-Retirement Considerations" to "Paying for College" with 237 people participating. Movement Challenges in the fall and the spring had over 350 people joining together across the campuses to get moving for a month to increase health and well-being.

- During the month of October, 146 LVAIC community members joined in four different sessions for Cybersecurity Awareness. Virtual lunch seminars included: "It's the Institution's Data and It Needs to be Protected!," "Don't Get Hooked! Phishing!," "Student Focus: Improving Your Security Posture," and "Reflections of This Year's CSAM Topics with Three Cybersecurity Experts."

- In response to news about ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in the classroom, members of the LVAIC community developed three informational community conversations on the topic: "Introduction and Overview of Generative AI in Higher Education," "Brains Over Bots: Crafting AI-Savvy Assignments for Academic Integrity and Innovative Learning," and "Who Benefits and Who is Excluded?: Equity, Access and Generative Artificial Intelligence." In addition, the Information Literacy Symposium hosted Dr. Kevin L. Smith, Director of Libraries at Colby College and national expert on copyright law, to talk about "Copyright Updates: Is AI the Next Frontier in Copyright's Struggle to Keep Up?" These early summer sessions had more than150 participants.

Maximizing Resources

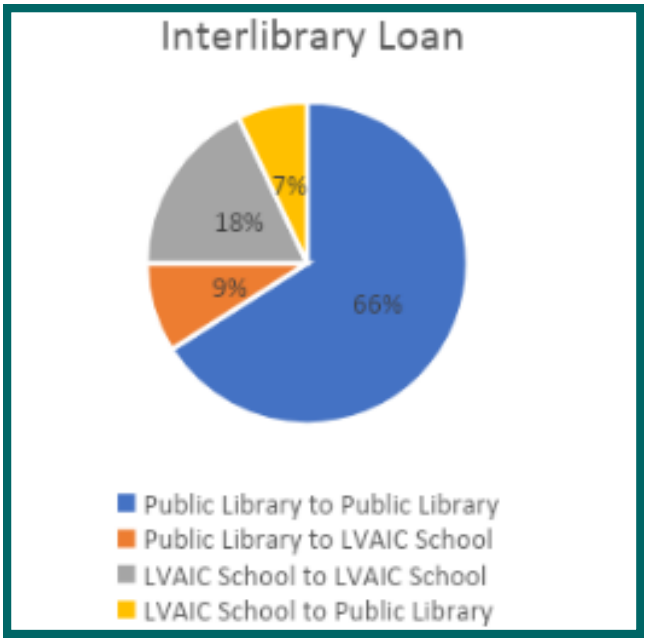
By working together, LVAIC reduces costs for member institutions. Through the work of our campuses and LVAIC staff, these pieces of the higher education puzzle, always challenging, become more manageable.

Interlibrary Loan

As a result of the quinquennial review of the Inter-library loan program LVAIC instituted a change in the number of courier runs offered each week during the fall and spring semesters, reducing the current schedule from five weekly runs to three during the semester and two during the summer.

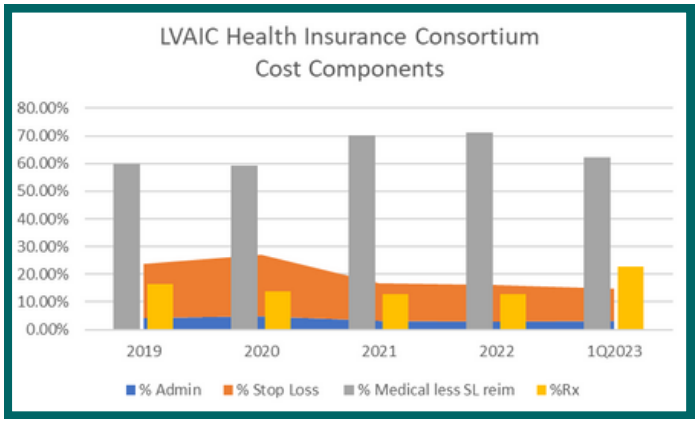
The program averaged 75 texts delivered each week during the summer months and while in the fall, the program averaged 106. In the spring, The Easton Public Library was eliminated at their request leading to a slightly lower average of 80 texts per week.

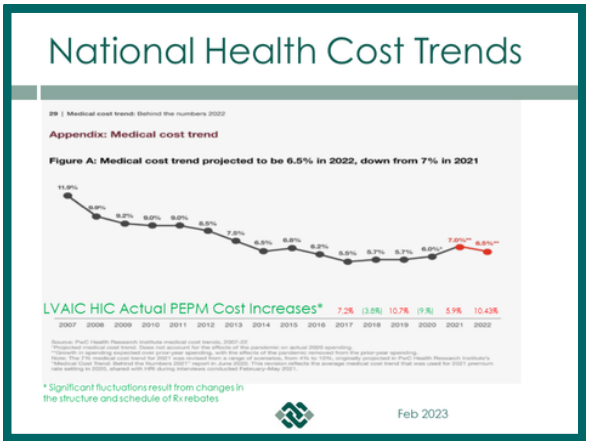
This shared resource moved a total of 3,682 items, an overall average of 89 texts per week, delivered throughout the fiscal year.



Health Insurance Consortium

Four member institutions (1300 employees, 2500 participants included dependents) participate in the LVAIC Health Insurance Consortium (HIC), sponsored and administered by LVAIC. By leveraging the power of group negotiation, the Health Insurance Consortium (HIC) provides the member institutions with annual health care cost increases below the national trend.





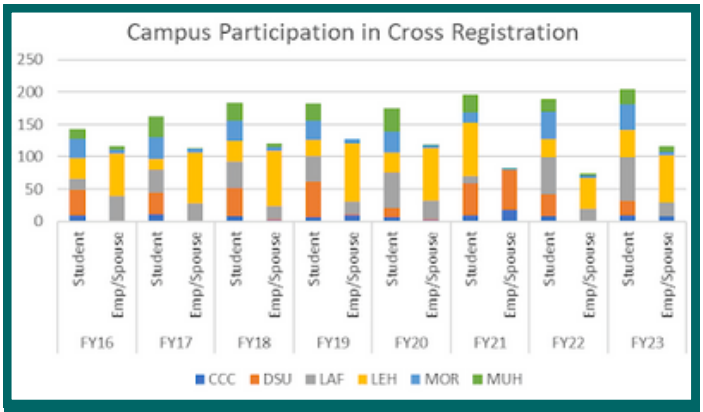
Strategic Sourcing and Purchasing

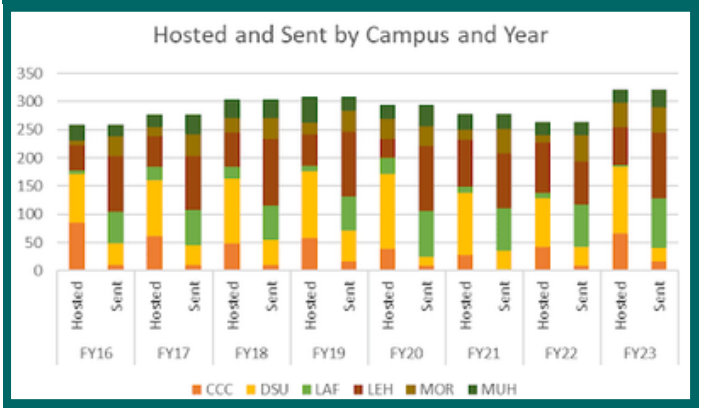
Leveraged sourcing is one of LVAIC's longest-running collaborations. The LVAIC community leveraged its negotiated contracts during the past year for a total of more than $11 million with an overall savings and direct cost avoidance of 9.4% in addition to the avoided costs of increased services. The chart below highlights some of the key FY23 contracts and their savings.

Cross Registration

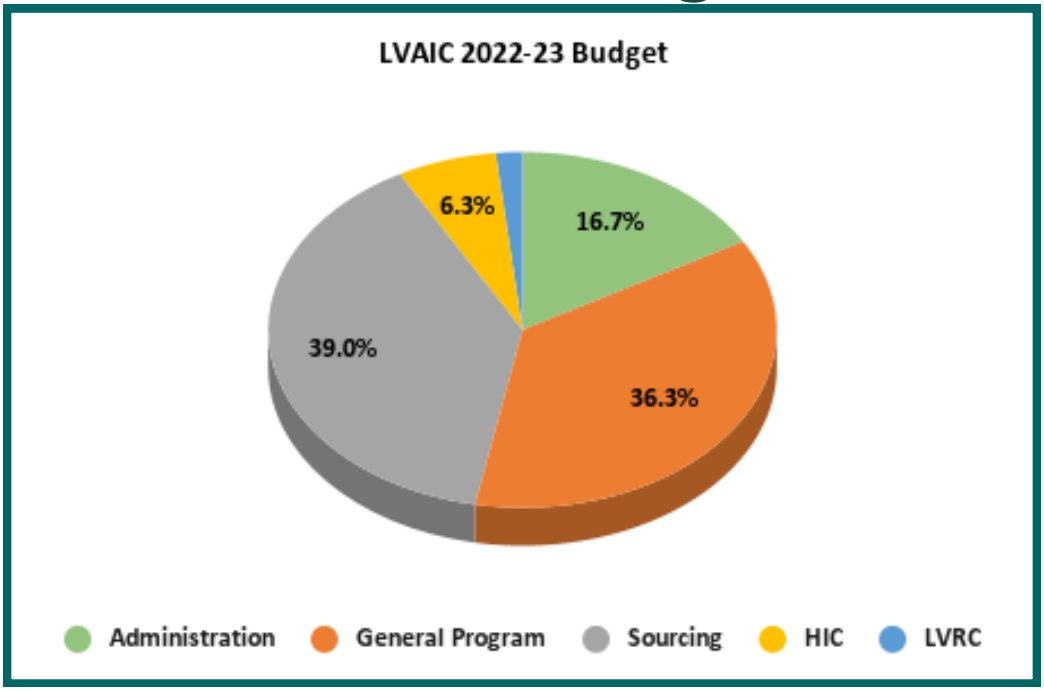
Students across the LVAIC community have the opportunity to take courses on other campuses through Cross Registration. This year saw an increase in the number of Cross Registration requests demonstrating the importance of the program. There were several enhancements to the Cross Registration system to improve functionality for both students and administrators.

Traditional Undergraduate – 132 enrolled in 149 courses
ROTC – 28 enrolled in 56 courses
Employee/Spouse – 67 individuals enrolled in 116 courses
Total Number of Students – 225
Total Number of Seats - 321





LVAIC Budget



The LVAIC annual budget is approximately $1.2 million dollars and reflects on the administrative and operating costs directly incurred. It does not include approximately $30 million dollars of expenses associated with the health insurance program or the campus spending on contracts directly negotiated and/or managed by LVAIC.

Vision

LVAIC advances a culture of innovative and intentional collaboration that expands academic excellence, educational access, community engagement, and the student experience at each of its distinctive members institutions and positions the Lehigh Valley as a leading destination for higher education.

Mission

The Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges is a community of independent colleges and universities growing stronger through collaboration.

Governance

As an independent non-profit organization, LVAIC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the presidents from the six founding colleges and universities and the LVAIC Executive Director. It receives core funding through a formula assessment to the members. The LVAIC Executive Director serves as the consortium's chief executive officer.

Board of Directors 2022-23

Elizabeth M. Meade (Chair) - President, Cedar Crest College
James J. Greenfield (Vice Chair) - President, DeSales University
Nicole Hurd - President, Lafayette College
Joseph J. Helble - President, Lehigh University
Bryon L. Grigsby - President, Moravian University
Kathleen E. Harring - President, Muhlenberg College
Diane R. Dimitroff (Secretary) - Executive Director, LVAIC
Kent A. Dyer (Treasurer) - Chief Business Officer & Treasurer, Muhlenberg College
Mark F. Reed (Assistant Treasurer) - Vice President for Finance & Administration, Moravian University

Audit Committee 2022-23

James J. Greenfield (Chair) - President, DeSales University
Deanne M. Fenstermacher (Vice Chair) - Controller, DeSales University
Audra J. Kahr - Chief Financial Officer, Cedar Crest College
Andrea Bohn - Controller, Lafayette College
Steven Crouch - Controller, Lehigh University

Staff

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Janet L. Baker, Strategic Partnership Director
Charlene D. Bergstresser, Program Director
Carrie Gradin, Former Program Manager
Nicholas Cunningham, Program Manager
Christine Carpino, LVRC Director
Chelsea B. Hill, Controller
James Robb, LVAIC Courier