Annual Report: 2023-24

LVAIC

Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges

Making Strong Colleges and Universities Stronger Through Collaboration

Welcome from the LVAIC Executive Director

Dear LVAIC Community,

As I step into the role of Executive Director for the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, I am grateful to be leading an organization with such a deep history of collaboration in service to our member institutions. This report highlights some of the past year's achievements that I am excited to build upon as I begin my leadership role at LVAIC.

This past year has been transformative from many different perspectives.

Organizationally, the team embraced new colleagues, facilitated the move to a new office, and engaged in the search process for new leadership.

Programmatically, we celebrated key accomplishments such as the inaugural Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Colloquium, expanded leadership development collaboration, and a return of the Lehigh Valley Counselor Tour. We continued to support long-standing initiatives such as Cross-Registration and the Inter-library loan program and we continued to enhance and expand our partnerships and contracting.

Strategically, we made great strides to innovate and chart a course to a more collaborative future. This work has led to a new strategic plan being finalized, approved, and announced. We are taking the first steps to implement this plan and are deeply committed to engaging the entire LVAIC community in this process.

As we embark on this journey, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Diane R. Dimitroff whose extraordinary leadership over the past 12 years has shaped LVAIC into the active consortium it is today.

As you read through this year's report, I encourage you to celebrate the milestones that LVAIC as a community achieved together and to envision the possibilities that lie ahead. Each achievement and statistic you'll find in these pages represent the collective strength of our community—and the belief that through collaboration we can make "our strong colleges and universities stronger".

With gratitude and excitement,

Janet L. Baker
Executive Director

LVAIC
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People Excellence

At LVAIC, we believe our achievements are due to the outstanding individuals we collaborate with. We are deeply committed to fostering the recruitment, retention, and development of our community members, understanding that the success of our collaborations relies on nurturing these efforts. Below are some examples of how our focus on people excellence has significantly benefitted the LVAIC community.

Active Communities of Practice

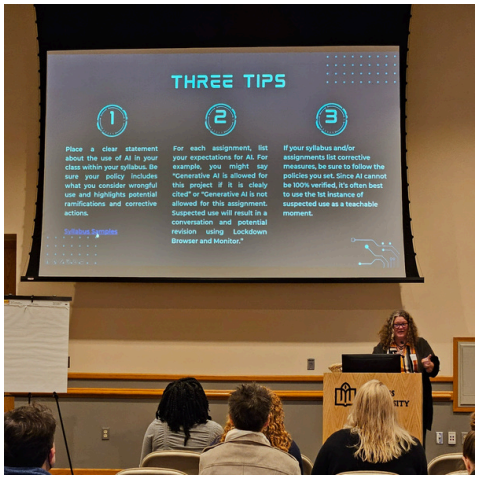
The majority of LVAIC's collaborative work takes place within Communities of Practice (CoPs). These are typically peer groups of faculty or staff who hold similar roles or work in related disciplines. Some of the CoPs that were especially active during the 2023-24 academic year include:

Benefit Managers	Chief Academic Officers/ Provosts	Chief Diversity Officers	Chief Financial Officers
Chief Information Officers	Commencement Organizers	Dance Consortium	Facilities Directors
Faculty Teaching And Learning	Human Resource Directors	Instructional Technologists & Designers	Library Directors
Pre-Health Advisors	Purchasing	Registrars	Social Media

Faculty Development - Teaching & Learning Colloquium

The Teaching and Learning CoP launched the inaugural Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Colloquium (SoTL) in the fall of 2023. This initiative was entirely developed, managed, and executed by the CoP and faculty across campuses.

The colloquium provided an excellent opportunity to highlight and share academic scholarship among LVAIC faculty. 56 faculty members from all six LVAIC institutions participated, with 26 faculty members from five schools contributing to 19 presentations. More detailed information can be found in the SoTL program.

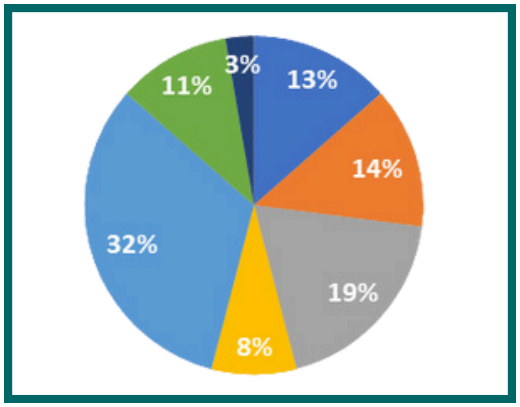


Faculty Development - Teaching & Learning Joint Publication

Three LVAIC faculty members collaborated on a joint publication showcasing the collaborative efforts of VITAL (Visiting, Instructor, TA, Adjunct, Lecturer) faculty. Over the past few years, the Teaching and Learning CoP has offered targeted development opportunities for VITAL faculty and wrote an article highlighting that collaboration.

Addy, T. M., Sciutto, M. J., & Hagan, E. J. (2024). A consortial community for VITAL faculty: fostering community, sense of belonging, & teaching excellence. International Journal for Academic Development, 29(2), 201–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2024.2349032

Professional Development - Management Certification



There continues to be a strong demand for professional development programming. In FY24, 315 individuals participated in the management certificate program, and 37 completed all four components of Track I.

Of those completers, 13% were from Cedar Crest, 14% from DeSales, 19% from Lafayette, 8% from Lehigh, 32% from Moravian, 11% from Muhlenberg, and 3% from LVAIC.

While we had intended to launch Track II this fiscal year, the high demand for Track I and the low number of eligible participants delayed the Track II rollout until FY25.

Program Delivery Impact

LVAIC offered 11 unique programs, totaling 75.5 hours of programming with a combined 2,384.5 impact hours. The 7th cohort of the LVAIC Higher Education Leadership Institute alone delivered 40 hours of in-room sessions, contributing 1,127 impact hours*.

*Impact Hours = Total # Participants in all offerings x Program Time (in hours)

The success of this program delivery is made possible by the support and collaboration of facilitators and contributors across all LVAIC campuses, as well as the entire LVAIC team.

Impactful Presence

LVAIC is committed to enhancing the local, regional, and statewide visibility of Lehigh Valley's higher education institutions and resources, to attract talent and strengthen relationships within the community.

LV Counselor Tour

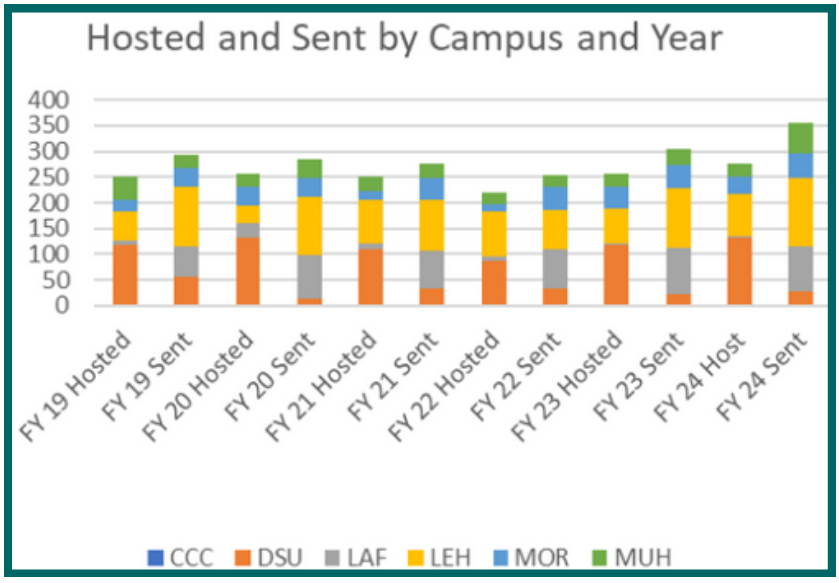
After a nearly five-year hiatus, the 2024 LV Counselor Tour returned to strong reception. Despite delays in promotion due to staffing changes, the tour attracted 40 participants from 15 states—slightly below the target of 50 participants. 31 participants indicated they would recommend the tour to other counselors. We will explore future tour opportunities that include all six institutions as it was notable how much the participants wanted to see all of the LVAIC schools.

Optimized Resources

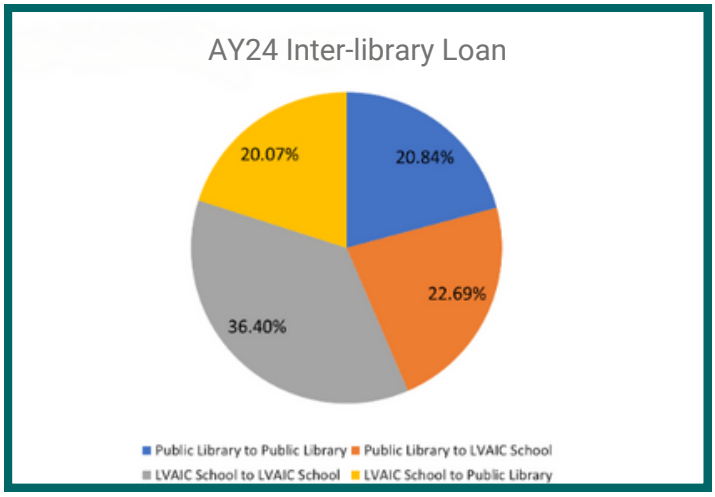
LVAIC continues to focus on optimizing shared resources to achieve cost savings through streamlined processes, improved procurement, and operational redesigns. These initiatives have not only reduced expenses but also created re-deployable resources. In addition, we strive to increase student access to opportunities by sharing both intellectual and physical resources. Below are some key activities from this year that reflect our commitment to resource optimization.

Cross Registration

Cross registration participation within the LVAIC community continues to expand. All three groups—traditional students, ROTC course enrollees, and employees/spouses—experienced growth. Traditional student participation increased by more than 30%, ROTC enrollment more than doubled, and employee/spouse enrollment also doubled. Next year, we will assess student satisfaction with the online system and survey those who began but did not complete the registration process.



LVAIC Inter-library Loan



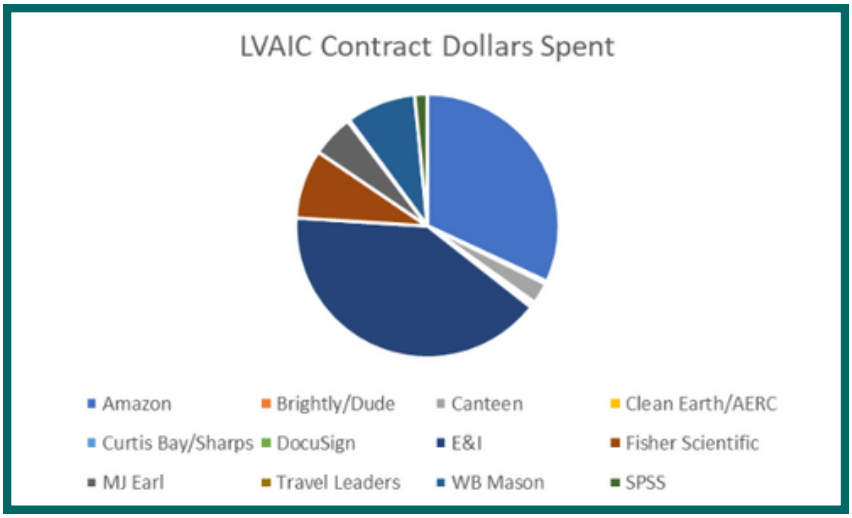
The revised data collection methods we've employed in recent years have provided valuable insights into the courier service needs of our campuses. The LVAIC Inter-library Loan Courier operates three days a week in the fall and spring semesters, and two days a week in the summer. During the summer, the service handled an average of 41 items per week, slightly fewer than the previous year. In the fall of 2023, this number rose to 104 items per week, up from 80 the year prior. Overall, the courier averaged 83 items per week throughout the fiscal year, reaffirming its importance as a shared resource for our community.

Sourcing

Overall, our LVAIC community has leveraged the negotiated contracts during the past year for a total of $13.8 million, an increase of over 21% from the prior year's contracts.

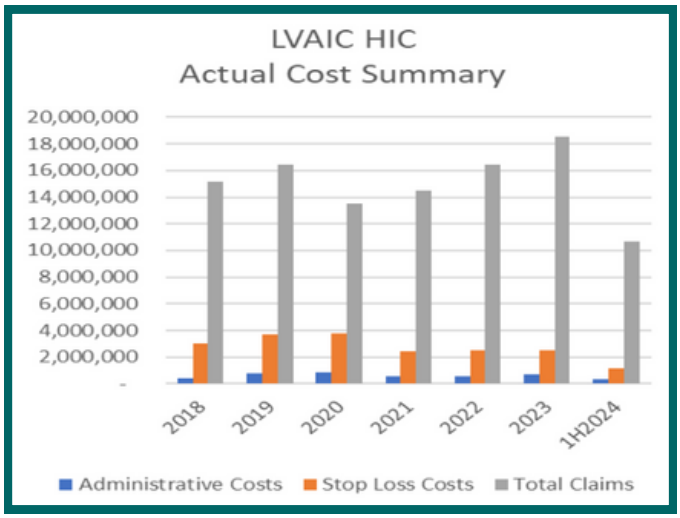
Amazon Business – Our Amazon Business community continues to grow, with over 1,400 individual account holders across five campuses.

By utilizing data and analytics, we secured reduced pricing from our top five vendors, resulting in $47,408 in direct savings.



Office Supplies - Starting January 1, 2024, LVAIC entered into a new three-year contract with WB Mason, offering lower prices, free shipping, and the ability to negotiate additional campus savings. This contract, which will run until December 31, 2026, has an option to extend for two additional years.

Health Insurance Consortium (HIC)



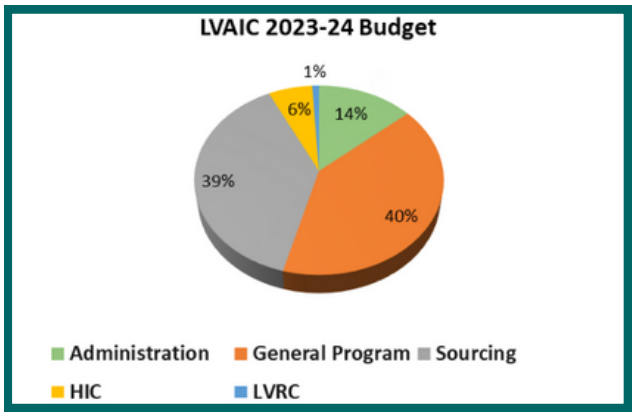
Four member institutions (1320 employees, 2500 participants including dependents) participate in the LVAIC Health Insurance Consortium (HIC), sponsored and administered by LVAIC. Through the power of group negotiations, the Health Insurance Consortium (HIC) provides the four member institutions with annual healthcare cost increases that are below national trends. In the coming year, we plan to bring on board a fifth institution, increasing our power for group negotiations.

LVAIC is responsible for over $21 million in plan assets on behalf of its members, separate from the approved LVAIC budget.

Following national trends, the Health Insurance Consortium (HIC) campuses experienced rising healthcare costs in 2023. The key drivers of these costs included increased healthcare utilization, rising labor costs, and new drug therapies.

LVAIC Budget

Our greatest expense for FY24 comes from general programming, utilizing 40% of the budget. Sourcing claimed 39%, administration costs amounted to 6%, and the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium (LVRC) costs totaled 1%.



2024-2027 Strategic Plan

LVAIC's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board in December 2023. Implementation is already underway for several initiatives while planning for others continues. In May 2024, multiple working groups were launched to coordinate the first two years of the plan's implementation. The LVAIC team would like to offer our sincere thanks for the valuable contributions of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Without their insights, collaborative spirit, and dedication we would not have a plan that is both well informed and also aligned with our shared vision and values.

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 member 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 of the members. The LVAIC Executive Director serves as the consortium's chief executive officer.

Board of Directors 2023-24

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
Mark F. Reed (Treasurer) - Vice President for Finance & Administration, Moravian University
Audra J. Kahr (Assistant Treasurer) - Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration, Lafayette College

Audit Committee 2023-24

James J. Greenfield (Chair) - President, DeSales University
Deanne M. Fenstermacher (Vice Chair) - Controller, DeSales University
Audra J. Kahr - Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration, Lafayette College
Andrea Bohn - Controller, Lafayette College
Steven Crouch - Controller, Lehigh University

Staff 2023-24

Diane R. Dimitroff - Executive Director
Janet L. Baker - Strategic Partnership Director
Charlene D. Bergstresser - Program Director
Nicholas Cunningham - Program Manager
Christine Carpino - LVRC Director
Chelsea B. Hill - Controller
James Robb - LVAIC Courier