ANNUAL REPORT
2024 - 2025

COURTESY OF DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY®

LVAIC

Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges

MAKING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES 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

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President, DeSales University
Kathleen E. Harring (Vice Chair)
President, Muhlenberg College
Janet L. Baker (Secretary)
Executive Director, LVAIC
Mark F. Reed (Treasurer)
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Nicole Hurd
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Deanne Fenstermacher
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Assistant Vice President, Lafayette College
Steven Crouch
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LVAIC Staff

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

Dear Colleagues,

This past year has reminded us that higher education does not exist apart from the world's uncertainties but within them. Shifts in enrollment patterns, economic pressures, and rapidly changing expectations continue to reshape our work. In the face of these challenges, one constant has guided our path forward: collaboration.

Together, our campuses have demonstrated the power of collective effort. By sharing knowledge, resources, and innovative ideas, we have been able not only to respond to immediate challenges but also to build stronger foundations for the future. Collaboration has enabled us to adapt more quickly, to support one another in moments of difficulty, and to imagine new possibilities for optimizing resources, professional development, and creating an impactful presence.

This annual report highlights the many ways in which our community has come together during uncertain times—through joint initiatives, shared programs, and the dedicated work of countless faculty, staff, and leaders. These stories reflect the belief that while no institution can solve today's challenges alone, our combined efforts can create pathways to resilience and renewal.

As you read through this report, I hope you see not only the accomplishments of the past year, but also the collective spirit that makes them possible. Higher education thrives when it embraces partnership, and our commitment to collaboration remains stronger than ever.

With gratitude and resolve,

Janet L. Baker
Executive Director

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

The LVAIC Community

Members

Cedar Crest College

Lafayette College

Moravian University

DeSales University

Lehigh University

Muhlenberg College

Associate Members

Lehigh Carbon Community College

Northampton Community College

Purchasing Partners

Alvernia University

Delaware Valley University

Neumann University

RACC Reading Area Community College

Changes in the LVAIC Team

There were some changes to the LVAIC team at the start of the year. Former LVAIC Executive Director Diane Dimitroff stepped down from her role and moved on to new endeavors outside of the LVAIC community. Janet Baker, who has been a pivotal force as LVAIC's Strategic Partnership Director, officially stepped into her new role as Executive Director on September 1. She has been hard at work this past year guiding us toward new heights of collaboration and innovation. Lisa Fiore then joined the team as LVAIC's new Strategic Partnership Director. Despite personnel changes, the LVAIC team remains committed to fostering intentional, innovative collaboration and elevating the Lehigh Valley as a premier hub for higher education.

COURTESY OF DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY®

LVAIC Campus Visits

LVAIC makes it a priority to visit our campuses and stay in touch with our community. Thank you to DeSales, Lafayette, Lehigh, and Moravian for inviting us to your wellness fairs. Additionally, LVAIC was also invited to attend Lafayette's Administrative Council breakfast in May to share what the organization does and how we engage with our community. If you would like LVAIC to attend one of your events, please contact info@lvaic.org

Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are the foundation of LVAIC's collaboration and innovation across the member campuses. Nearly 70 groups of LVAIC faculty and administrators gather formally or informally for professional development, sharing best practices, advancing initiatives, and developing programs. LVAIC tries to connect positions with similar titles/goals to promote sharing ideas, developing shared events, and being in community with each other. We work closely with our campus partners to ensure we have the most up-to-date contact information. Please contact info@lvaic.org if you are searching for your particular community of practice. LVAIC is working on a communities of practice evaluation form to gauge how we can better support this type of collaboration.

Personal Development Relaunch

One of the initiatives from the 2024 - 2027 strategic plan is designed to develop programming for ongoing development for employees throughout their employment life cycle, including but not limited to such things as skills development, health and wellness, and personal financial wellness. LVAIC relaunched its Personal Development program with two educational programs centered around learning more about personal healthcare and one program covering the importance of retirement. LVAIC plans to expand personal development by offering educational programs in other critical topics, beginning with housing, finance, and mental health.

Strategic Engagement Council Formation

LVAIC adopted a new strategic plan in December 2023. In response, the LVAIC Strategic Engagement Council was created to guide the implementation of the 2024-2027 strategic plan. This group is comprised of leadership from all six member campuses and will work to align consortial initiatives with campus priorities. The Council has met twice in FY25 and plans to meet quarterly to assess progress and guide/advocate as necessary.

New Campus Benefit Announcement

Employees of LVAIC member institutions, and their spouses, are eligible to take advantage of discounted graduate tuition for some of the graduate programs at other LVAIC institutions. LVAIC is proud to have helped facilitate the collaboration of participating campuses' chief financial officers, human resource departments, continuing education program directors and related admissions staff, and other partners. This initiative could not have happened without all involved. Please visit LVAIC's Graduate Program Discounts webpage for more information.

LEHIGH VALLEY RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

After nearly two decades of contributions to collaborative community-based research in the Lehigh Valley, the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium's Executive Committee, in consultation with LVAIC Executive Director Janet Baker and staff, has made the difficult decision to dissolve as a formal organization.

Since its founding, the LVRC has built a well-respected reputation within the broader community and has contributed to both specific projects and served as a thought partner for collective impact and social justice efforts in the Valley. The LVRC's annual State of the Lehigh Valley Report, produced from 2008-2021, highlighted key areas of interest for the region, such as the state of education, the quality of health, and the status of access for those with disabilities, all with the goal of starting community conversations.

The LVRC and LVRC-based projects have included faculty and student researchers from every LVAIC campus, providing a unique opportunity for experiential learning and cross-campus collaborations.

As outgoing Director, I would like to thank our campus leadership for supporting the LVRC and valuing community-based research. I am deeply grateful to our community partners for their collaboration and expertise. I would like to thank LVAIC staff, particularly Diane Dimitroff and Janet Baker, for their support and advocacy. I extend deep gratitude to former Director Dr. Hannah Stewart-Gambino and founding Director Dr. Michele Moser Deegan for their vision and dedication. And finally, I would like to especially thank all the faculty and Executive Committee members who have worked tirelessly in their contributions to projects, reports, and conferences. Without you, there would be no LVRC.

We are incredibly proud of the work we have accomplished and the partnerships we have developed over the last twenty years, and our individual commitment as faculty researchers to collaborative community-based research will continue.

Christine Carpino
LVRC Director

Professional Development

General Programming

16 unique program offerings

714 total participants

1,958 total impact hours*

Higher Education Leadership Institute

31 participants

26 presenters

40 session hours

1,258 Total impact hours*

***Total Impact Hours = ∑ (Program's # Participants x Program's Time (in hours))**

New Professional Development Offering

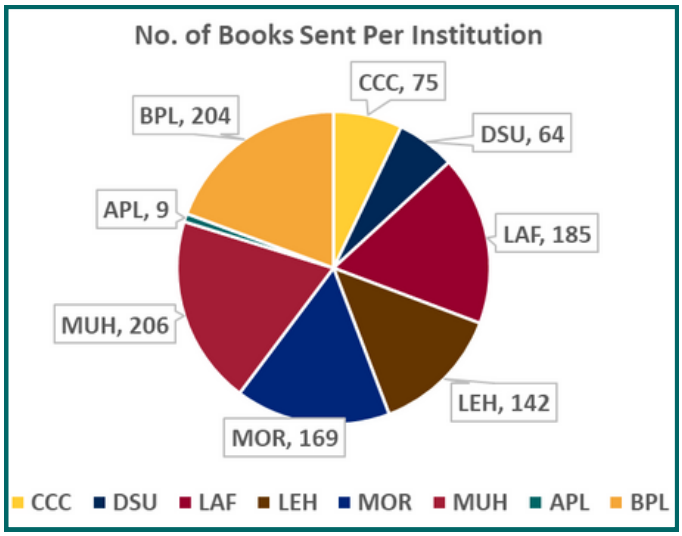
LVAIC debuts its latest professional development offering, "Crucial Conversations for Accountability", the second in the Crucial Conversations series. Participants learn skills necessary to confront, discuss, and resolve problems of poor performance, bad behavior, and violated expectations. The initial pilot was held virtual in July 2024 and held in-person for the first time in June 2025. Crucial Conversations for Accountability is open to everyone who has completed Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue.

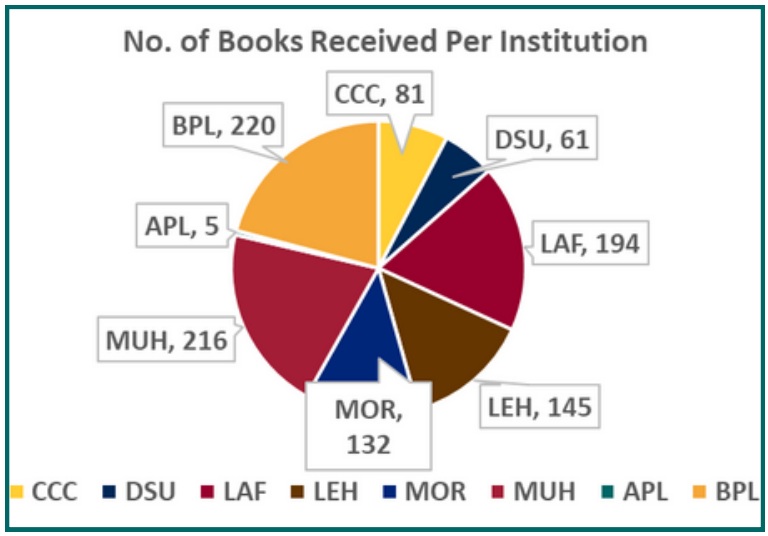
4 offerings

52 total participants

312 total impact hours*

Library Courier



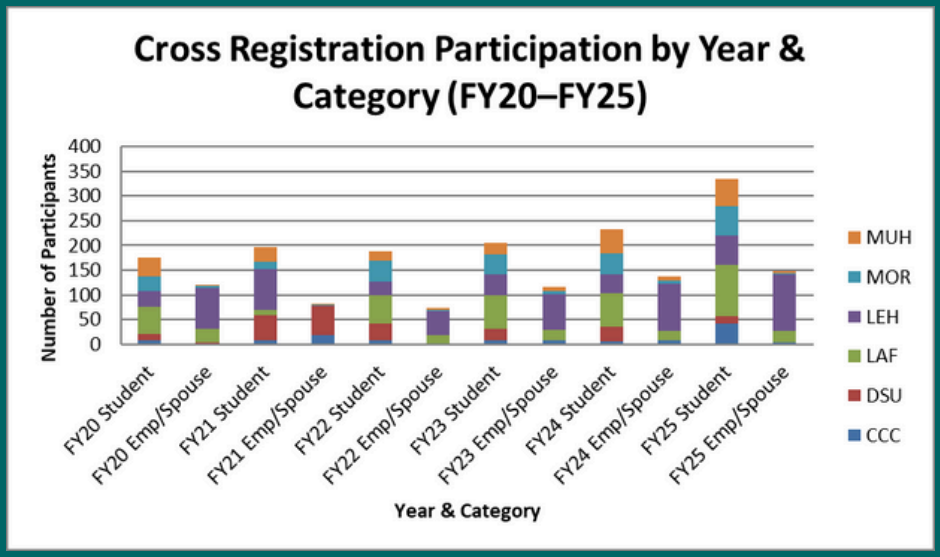


Cedar Crest (CCC) | DeSales (DSU) | Lafayette (LAF) Lehigh (LEH) | Moravian (MOR) | Muhlenberg (MUH)
Allentown Public Library (APL) | Bethlehem Area Public Library (BPL)

Allentown Public Library (APL) left the courier group in August 2024. 80% of books were moved between LVAIC institutions, while 20% of books were provided by the Bethlehem Area Public Library (BPL). There has been a decline in books moved by the courier over the past three years, and this requires further analysis.

Cross Registration

Since its launch the Cross Registration program has provided students and employees across the LVAIC community with expanded learning and professional development opportunities. In 2024–25, the program saw significant participation, highlighting its continued relevance and value. Students benefited from exploring new courses and campuses, while employees and spouses embraced the chance to broaden their skills. The program's steady enrollment underscores its importance as a cornerstone of shared academic collaboration across the Lehigh Valley.

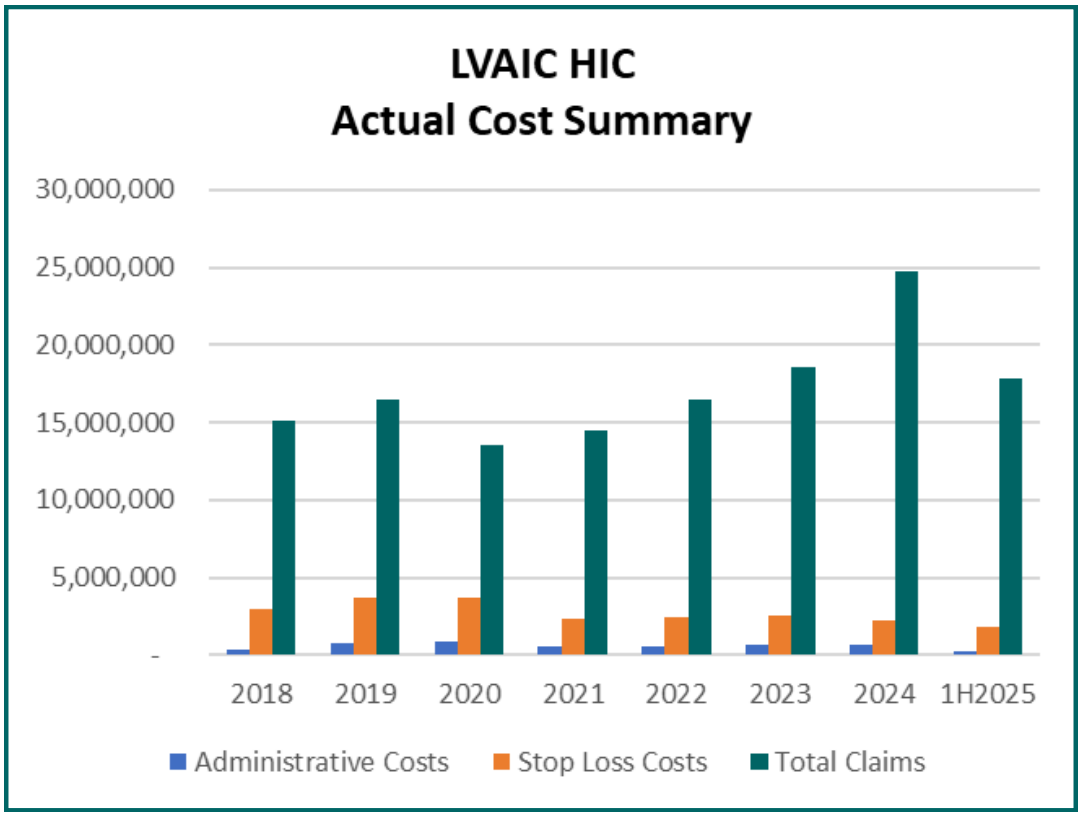


This year, nearly 367 participants enrolled in 481 course seats across the consortium. Undergraduate students remained the largest group of participants, while strong involvement from ROTC and employee/spouse categories reinforced the program's broad impact. Cross Registration continues to thrive as a model of inter-institutional cooperation, meeting the needs of diverse learners while strengthening the bonds among LVAIC campuses.

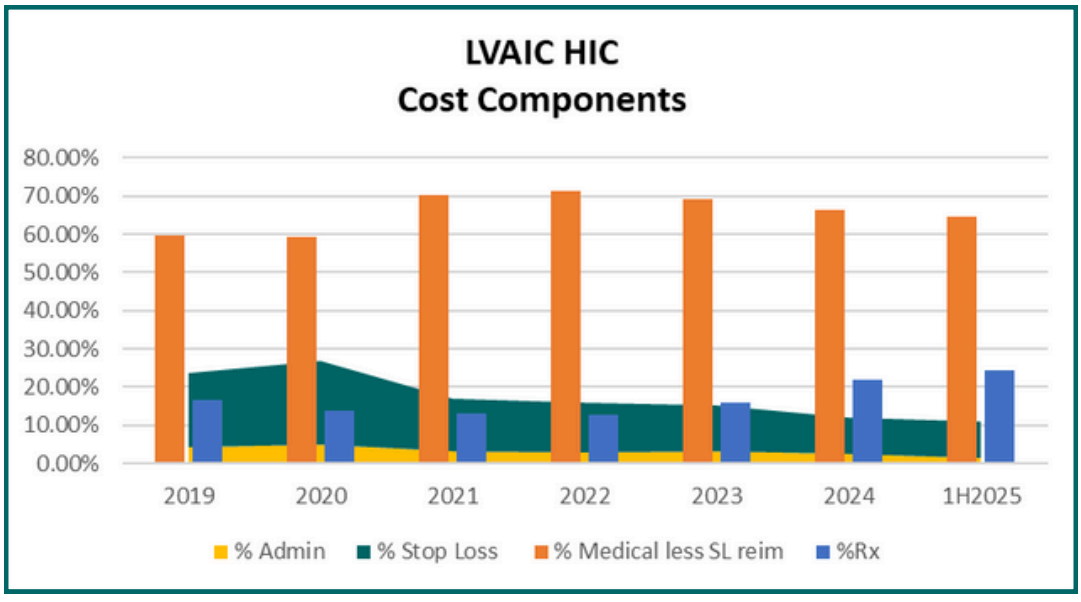
Health Insurance Consortium

Some exciting changes for the LVAIC HIC this past year. The HIC members welcomed our fifth campus, Lafayette College, into the health insurance consortium on January 1, 2025. This has increased the healthcare buying power of our campuses, and in this time of rising healthcare costs, purchasing as a consortium will benefit all our members.

The budget for the HIC that is managed by LVAIC was approximately $30 million last fiscal year. That budget has grown to approximately $40 million this fiscal year.



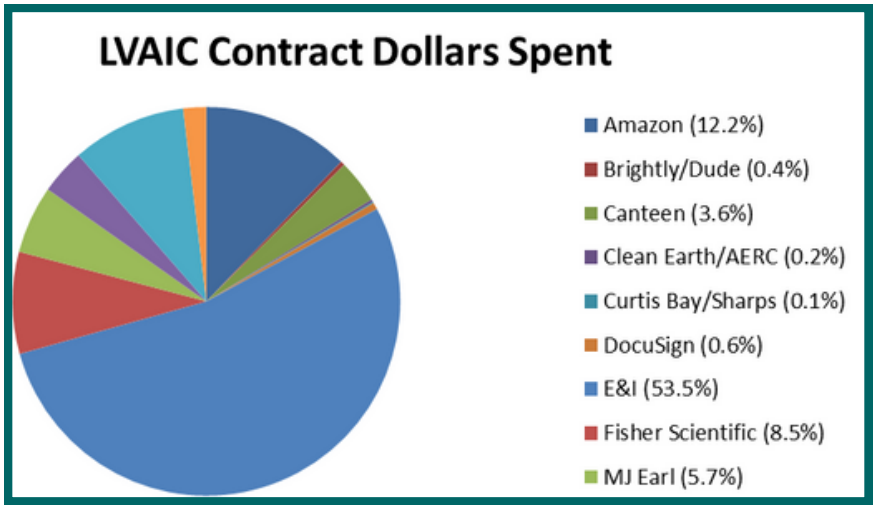
1H2025 indicates data from the first half of calendar year 2025



Sourcing

The LVAIC community leveraged our collaborative contracts for a total spend exceeding $11 million across member campuses. Despite rising costs nationwide, LVAIC successfully renegotiated several contracts with only minimal increases, ensuring continued access to critical research and academic tools at competitive rates.

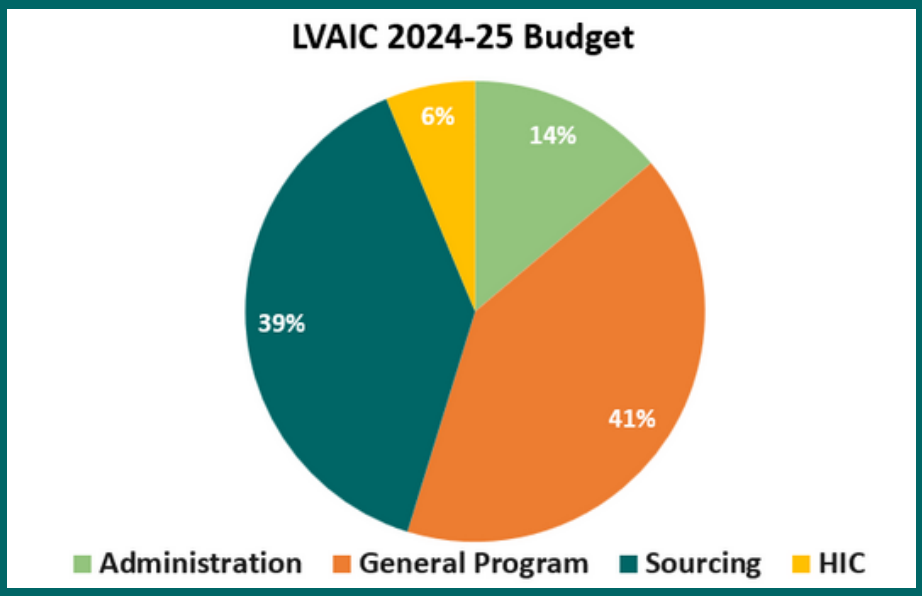
This year, LVAIC reached its first-tier rebate goal of our Amazon Business program, generating a direct financial return for LVAIC members. We are collaborating with purchasing partners and associate members to expand participation in the program, intending to achieve higher rebate levels in the future.



Across our key contracts, participating institutions realized savings of nearly 8% on average compared to standard pricing. This included double-digit percentage savings with suppliers such as Fisher Scientific and WB Mason, while maintaining favorable rates with large-scale vendors like Amazon and E&I.

By leveraging the consortium's collective voice, LVAIC has strengthened vendor partnerships, minimized cost increases, and protected campus budgets. Moving into 2025–26, LVAIC will focus on optimizing current sourcing contracts while also exploring opportunities to expand the sourcing portfolio to meet evolving institutional needs.

2024 - 2025 LVAIC Budget



The LVAIC budget is financed solely from our campus dues. We do not seek grants or separate funds external to our campus community. The LVAIC Board approves the budget based on financial estimates of the coming fiscal year. Our greatest expense for FY25 comes from general programming, utilizing 41% of the budget. Sourcing claimed 39%, administration costs comprised 14%, and HIC costs amounted to 6%

Annual Report: 2024-25

LVAIC

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Making Strong Colleges Stronger Through Collaboration