

# Living Learning Communities

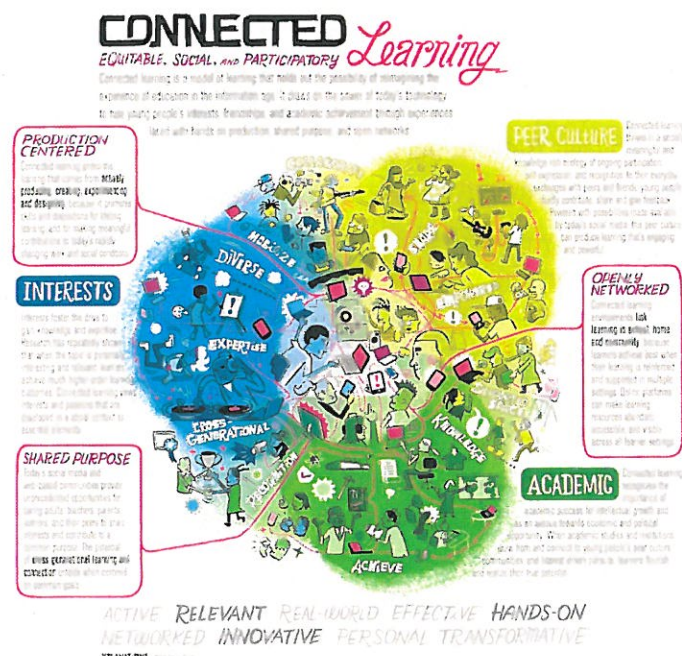
## AND THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE



### Connected Learning

Residence Life strives to provide a space that encourages tactile learning, shared experiences, and community networking in order to seamlessly fuse the resident's interests and relationships with academic and career opportunities.

The infographic below represents a model for connected learning, which will be used for our First Year Experience Program in the fall.



Credit: Connected Learning Research Network and Digital Media & Learning Research Hub

### Living Learning Communities

Living Learning Communities (LLCs) are groups of students who share common interests. LLCs can be academic, career, leadership, or interest based. LLC members live in a designated residence hall, enroll in community-specific courses, and participate in group activities designed to enhance learning. These programs connect experiences for students inside and outside the classroom. Students who choose to live in an LLC have a direct connection to their classroom experience, access to intentional events and programs, and dedicated staff members who work to make the community a success.

### Benefits of an LLC

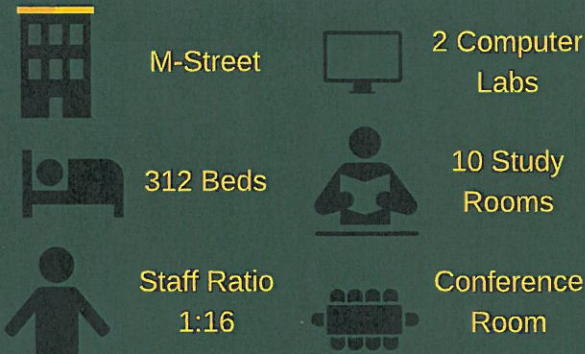
Mach, et al. (2018) found higher first-year to second-year retention rates from LLC participants versus their non-LLC counterparts.

According to data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (Gonyea, et al. 2018), LLC participants were more engaged and articulated higher student-faculty interactions. LLC participants also reported higher levels of support in their environment as well as greater collaborative learning.

Stassen (2003) found a significant positive effect on first-semester GPA.

"It [Being in an LLC] was an experience that I am glad to have had because I was able to get to know other students in my major even before we've had classes together. I feel as though the LLC is so important because of the community that we already have in the department. I believe that the LLC improves our drive to attend classes and stick with the program because we are able to understand that we are not in this alone and we can all help each other out."

*Alyssa, former LLC Participant*

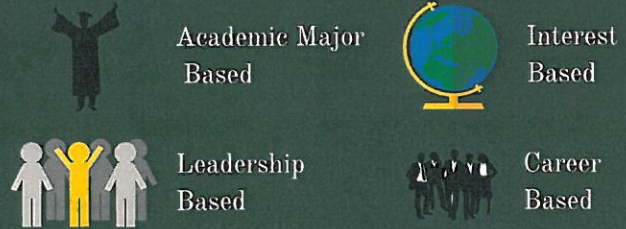




## Every LLC is Unique

- Create a unique approach for each Living Learning Community.
- Establish learning outcomes to connect the outside of the class learning with the classroom curriculum.
- Map events, programs, one on one conversations, and other strategies to the learning outcomes.

## LLC Options



## Collaboration Timeline

- July 1, 2019 - Student applications open for 2020-2021 Living Learning Communities
- December 1, 2019 - Living Learning Community Faculty/Staff Application Request submissions due
- January 15, 2020 - Priority Deadline for Living Learning Community student applications
- February 15, 2020 - Living Learning Community final course selections due
- March 1, 2020 - Living Learning Community participants selected and notified

## Curricular Approach

- Directly connect our LLC programs to the mission of the institution and sponsoring department.
- Refocus our efforts on student learning by designing and implementing a curricular approach to our LLCs.
- Write goals, descriptives, and outcomes to articulate what we want our students to learn as a part of the LLC.
- Develop educational plans based on theory.
- Develop unique strategies that go beyond programmed events.
- Utilize student staff in roles appropriate to their skill development.

## Faculty Involvement

Ellett and Schmidt (2011) found "eight themes emerged that define key contributions to building community in the residence hall" (p. 31). These eight themes are:

- Community as a Shared Experience
- Sustained Interactions
- Time Commitment
- Marketing and Communications
- Role of RA in Building Community
- Creating Faculty-Resident Dialogue
- Shared Reflections and Experiences
- Classroom and Residence Hall Communities

One faculty described their experience, "Our first [living-learning community] program is a group walk [to a historical landmark] and dinner at a famous pizza restaurant. We spend most of the time just getting to know one another. This really helps to set a friendly tone, but we simultaneously provide an entire semester plan of events at that time so [students] know we are serious about attending events" (p. 32)

A "residential curriculum" is a particular approach to designing and delivering intentional learning opportunities for college and university students.

*Dr. Paul Gordon Brown*

## Contact Information

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