

Living Learning Communities at Millersville University

January 21

2016

A complete guide to designing a Housing & Residential
Programs Living and Learning Community.

**Student Success
Strategies in the
Residence Halls**

The Office of Housing and Residential Programs at Millersville University strives to build community and create a seamless interface between the living and learning environment. The active learning, seminars, and assignments included in our Living Learning Communities, ask students to put the theory they studied, inside a classroom into practice, outside a classroom.

The hall staff, together with our faculty and staff partners and student leaders throughout the university, serves as advisors and facilitators for our living learning communities and:

1. ***Generate meaningful social interaction.*** Like all people, students who reside will not necessarily interact, and even students living in the close quarters of residence halls can feel isolated or disconnected. The experiences provided by an LLC, particularly when coupled with academic material, create an entry point for conversation among students, advisors, staff and faculty.
2. ***Provide opportunities for informal reflection.*** Students who interact frequently with other students, advisors, staff or faculty have more opportunities for informal reflection. Reflection is imperative for students to fully assess the impact and meaning of their engaged learning experiences.
3. ***Create emotional supports.*** Students in LLC's gain a means for emotional support that is especially critical in the transition to college. In this context, alliances with peers and HARP staff in our residential environment are helpful sources of encouragement and provide resources for coping.
4. ***Provide a protective shield against pressures to use or overuse alcohol and other drugs.*** This shield effect works in three ways. First, students who are not inclined to drink alcohol increase their likelihood of finding others with the same preferences. Second, the peer group can function as an informal network of caretakers who, although they may not actively discourage substance use, are often aware of changes in drinking patterns or mental health among peers. Third, the oversight by and relationships developed with the HARP staff, provides direct access to university resources and services to support students in need.

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What are Living Learning Communities at Millersville?

Living Learning Communities (LLC) are made up of groups of students housed in defined residence hall units. Students approved to join an LLC share similar values, purpose, interests or other affiliation, which defines each LLC. At Millersville University, we offer three types of LLC's: Affinity Housing, Theme Community or Collaborative Residential Learning Community.

Affinity Housing

Affinity Housing presents the opportunity for MU registered students who share a common interest or experience to live together in common groupings. Affinity groups must have a minimum of 12 participants (maximums based on housing availability). Students within an Affinity group have the opportunity to intentionally program around the affinity as often as they would like.

Examples may include: academic majors, registered student organizations, athletic groups, and academic organizations or classes, gender inclusive, graduate students.

Theme Communities

Theme Communities incorporate exploration of a singular topic or subject, intentional programming and may include intentional student staff placement and training. We believe that a diversity of experiences enrich our halls, and are central to the residential experience and student success. Theme communities strive to provide programming and training designed to help us support the focus of each theme community. Students in theme communities are required to host a campus wide program supporting their theme. Academic courses can be associated with these communities.

Examples may include: Health & wellness, Multiculturalism, Leadership

Collaborative Residential Learning Communities

Collaborative Residential Learning Communities are characterized by intentional co-curricular programming, student staff placement and training, and supportive environment that contributes to the academic success of the students housed therein. These communities work closely with faculty and academic affairs to bring the classroom experience into the residential setting and encourage a supportive environment for students in which to live and study. Students in these communities are required to engage in intentional programming and project completion.

Examples may include: Honors College; freshmen seminar (UNIV 103); Social Justice (UNIV 104).

HARP is enthusiastic about providing each resident a living learning community experience while space and resources permit. Assignment into a Living Learning Community occurs in three different ways. When an LLC is designed it will be designated as a Self-Select, Automatic Assignment, or Endorsed Assignment community.

1. **Automatic Assignments (AA):** Students matching the criteria for these LLC's will be automatically identified and assigned into these communities while space lasts. These communities are usually reserved for students new to Millersville University.
2. **Self-Select Assignments (SS):** Students interested in participating in these communities simply indicate their interest on the housing application and will be assigned into the LLC while space lasts.
3. **Endorsed Assignment (EA):** Students interested in participating in these communities will be required to meet a preset criteria or application process requiring some form of registration or application review. Once that is complete, the assignment will be automatically made while availability lasts.

What's included in each LLC option?

LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY MATRIX

The below matrix notes elements that are included in each type of LLC.

| | Affinity | Theme | Collaborative Learning |
|--|----------|-------|------------------------|
| Learning Outcomes* | | | |
| Students Engaging With Other Students | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Comfort Level In Interacting With Faculty/Staff | no | no | ✓ |
| Academic Achievement And Persistence* | no | no | ✓ |
| Sense Of Community | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Assist Students In Transition To Millersville* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Social Integration Of Students | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Academic Integration Of Students | no | no | ✓ |
| Critical Thinking* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Leadership Development | no | ✓ | no |
| Acquisition Of Self-Assessment Skills Necessary To Understand One's Interest, Values, And Passions | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Enhance Their Learning And Overall Experience | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Expand And Apply Concepts Taught In The Classroom | no | no | ✓ |
| Problem Solving Abilities* | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop An Environment Of Collegial Participation Between Students/Staff/Faculty | no | ✓ | ✓ |

*Outcomes developed using standards established by the Council for the advancement of standards in Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities Five High-Impact Practices.

Logistics

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Who Can Propose? | Students/staff/ Faculty | Students/staff/ Faculty | Faculty/Staff Only |
| Who Is The Advisor/Coordinator/Leader | Proposer | Proposer | Partnership |
| Deadline For Proposal For Fall Term | Jan 30 | Jan 30 | Jan 30 |
| Number Of Spaces | Limited to availability | Limited to availability | Limited to minimum class size |
| Responsibility To Fill Spaces | Shared | Shared | Proposer |
| Deadline To Fill Spaces | 1-July | 1-July | 1-July |

Community Design And Expectations

| | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Attendance At Community Meetings | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Class Enrollment | no | no | ✓ |
| Community Engagement, Applied Learning, And Active Inquiry | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Culminating Projects | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Engagement In Related Social/Experiential/Developmental Activities Or Programs | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| E-Portfolios | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| High-Impact LEAP Practice | no | 1 | 2 |
| Requirement To Plan Programs | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Service Learning Component | no | no | ✓ |
| Target Audience | Varies | Varies | Varies |

HARP Responsibility

| | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Annual Assessment | ✓ | Shared | Shared |
| Application/Agreement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Classroom Space | no | no | ✓ |
| E-Portfolio Management | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Intentional Staff Training | no | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mandatory Class | no | no | no |
| Marketing/Recruiting Participation | Shared | Shared | Shared |
| Programming: Community Building/Social | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Programming: Fiscal Support | Shared | Shared | Shared |
| Programming: Focused/Targeted | no | Shared | Shared |
| Dedicated Staff | no | no | Shared |
| Students Intentionally Assigned | ✓ | ✓ | Shared |

Proposer Responsibility

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------|
| Annual Assessment | no | Shared | Shared |
| Application/Agreement | no | no | no |
| Classroom Space | no | no | ✓ |
| E-Portfolio Management | no | no | no |

| | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Intentional Staff Training | no | no | ✓ |
| Mandatory Class | no | no | ✓ |
| Marketing/Recruiting Participation | Shared | Shared | Shared |
| Programming: Community Building/Social | no | no | no |
| Programming: Fiscal Support | Shared | Shared | Shared |
| Programming: Focused/Targeted | no | Shared | Shared |
| Dedicated Staff | no | no | Shared |
| Students Intentionally Assigned | ✓ | ✓ | Shared |

CURRENT LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Affinity Housing

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Art (AA) | 7. Gender Neutral* (SS) |
| 2. Biology (AA) | 8. International Students (SS) |
| 3. Chemistry (AA) | 9. Math (AA) |
| 4. Communication (AA) | 10. Music (AA) |
| 5. Computer Science (AA) | 11. Physics (AA) |
| 6. Earth Sciences/Meteorology (AA) | 12. Transfer Students (SS) |

Theme Communities

1. Career & Life Skills (EA)

Collaborative Residential Learning Communities

1. Disaster Resilient* (EA or SS)
2. Selected Freshman Seminar -UNIV 103 (AA)
3. Honors College (EA)
4. Millersville Scholars Program (EA)

*These communities are currently being designed and may not yet be available.

How to Propose a Living Learning Community?

Step 1. Initiating Proposal

1. Familiarize yourself with current Living Learning Community (LLC) options at Millersville University (i.e. Affinity, Theme and Collaborative Residential Learning Communities).
2. Determine the option that best suits the focus of your proposed community.
3. Note that all new communities will begin at the start of a fall academic semester.
4. When designing your community incorporate high impact practices as follows.
 - i. Theme Community – at least 1 high impact practices
 - ii. Living Learning communities – 2 or more high impact practices

For information on LEAP's High-Impact Educational Practices see:

http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/HIP_tables.pdf

5. Complete the formal Living Learning Community proposal application available on the Housing website. Check out the housing website – Housing Options - to see available residence halls and room options.
<http://www.millersville.edu/housing/housing-options.php>.

Step 2. Proposal Review

1. A final proposal must be submitted no later than January 30th prior to the fall implementation of the community.
2. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs will contact the originator of the proposal to inform them of their status no later than May 1st prior to the fall start term.
3. Approval by the Department of Housing and Residential Programs will be contingent on alignment with the strategic plan, space availability, and availability of resources to support the proposed community.

Step 3: Recruitment Procedures

1. Marketing
 - a. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs prepares marketing materials (print and web) for all campus residences each year. The timeline for creation of publications specific to LLC's will be coordinated in consideration of the marketing timeline.
 - b. Marketing to new students will be a coordinated effort between the Department of Housing and Residential Programs and the sponsoring department/organization.
2. Student Registration & assignment

Two factors play a role when considering student registration into and LLC and their room assignments. The community type (Affinity, Theme, and Collaborative Residential Learning Community) as well as the assignment type (Automatic, Self-select, or endorsed).

- a. LLC Community Option
 - i. Affinity Housing:
 1. AA affinity housing students are automatically assigned.
 2. Students interested in joining an Affinity group that is SS, must Indicate so in their Housing Application/Agreement in order to be considered for the community while space allows.
 - ii. Theme Communities: Students Interested in joining a Theme Community must:
 1. Indicate so in their Housing Application/Agreement.
 2. Complete a Housing LLC Theme Application & Agreement Form.
 - iii. Collaborative Residential Learning Communities (CRLC): Students Interested in joining a CRLC must:
 1. Indicate so in their Housing Application/Agreement.
 2. Most CRLC's are "endorsed Assignment" communities and as such enrollment/registration into an associated class or program is required. Some CRLC's are AA.
 3. Complete a Housing LLC Collaborative Learning Community Agreement Form.
- b. LLC Community Assignment Types
 - i. Automatic Assignments (AA): Students matching the criteria for these LLC's will be automatically identified and assigned into these communities while space permits. These communities are usually reserved for students new to Millersville University.
 - ii. Self-Select Assignments (SS): Students interested in participating in these communities simply indicate their interest on the housing application and will be assigned into the LLC while space lasts.
 - iii. Endorsed Assignment (EA): Students interested in participating in these communities will be required to meet a preset criteria or application process requiring some form of registration or application review. The LLC Coordinating team may play a role in reviewing applications. The LLC coordinating team will submit a list of eligible students (those meeting the enrollment/registration requirement). Assignments will be made based while space permits.

Step 4: Housing Assignment Procedures

1. Affinity Housing:
 - a. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students automatically, for AA affinity housing based on established criteria such as major.

- b. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assign students, who indicate on their Housing Application/Agreement that they are interested in Affinity Housing, as space permits for SS Affinity housing
 - c. All spaces within the community that are not filled by July 1 will be released back to the Department of Housing and Residential Programs for general assignment.
 - d. Members of the community may be assigned roommates who are not members.
2. Theme Communities:
- a. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students automatically, for AA Theme housing based on established criteria such as major.
 - b. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students, who indicate on their Housing Application/Agreement that they are interested in Affinity Housing, as space permits for SS Theme housing.
 - c. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students, from EV communities in collaboration with LLC Coordinating team.
 - d. All spaces within the community that are not filled by July 1 will be released back to the Department of Housing and Residential Programs for general assignment.
 - e. Members of the community may be assigned roommates who are not members.
3. Collaborative Residential Learning Communities
- a. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students automatically, for AA Theme housing based on established criteria such as major.
 - b. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students, who indicate on their Housing Application/Agreement that they are interested in Affinity Housing, as space permits for SS Theme housing.
 - c. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs assigns students, from EV communities in collaboration with LLC Coordinating team.
 - d. All spaces within the community that are not filled by July 1 will be released back to the Department of Housing and Residential Programs for general assignment.
 - e. Although, members of the community may be assigned roommates who are not members, HARP will do so only in limited occasions.

Step 5: Staffing the Community

- 1. The Department of Housing and Residential Programs will begin the hiring process for hall staff early each spring. As a part of the application and interview process, students will be asked for interest in working within LLC's.

2. Collaborative Residential Learning Communities requests for this staffing must be included in the proposal application.
3. Collaborative Residential Learning Communities are encouraged to recruit staff members for their community and to forward that information to The Department of Housing and Residential Programs for consideration.
4. Prior to the start of each academic year, HARP staff will meet with the assigned leadership for the LLC discuss duties, roles, expectations and collaboration.
5. Regular monthly meetings with HARP staff and the Collaborative Learning Community Leadership will occur during the semester.
6. Regular meetings with the Theme community leadership will occur twice during each semester.

Step 6: Maintaining Community Standards

The viability of Living/Learning Communities will be dependent upon the investment of the individuals and entities involved; Housing and Residential Programs, proposing student(s), staff, or faculty and the students who choose to join the community. It is critical that each entity be dedicated and exercise due diligence by promoting, reviewing, evaluating, and revising the program while being responsive to community needs.

1. Students in a Living Learning Community:
 - a. All students living within a campus residence hall are held accountable to the community standards outlined in the Housing Guide.
 - b. Students living in an LLC are choosing to join a community that is dedicated to a particular interest. Students demonstrating behaviors inconsistent with the goals of an LLC will be removed from the LLC.
 - c. Students will cooperate with Faculty (Collaborative Learning Community) regarding mandatory required activities and projects for the course connected Collaborative Learning Community to be included in classroom assessment.
 - d. Students will meet with Faculty and Housing and Residential Programs to discuss and review the progress and success of the community and collaborate to facilitate success.
 - e. Students will collaborate with HARP staff and learning community members to develop and execute relevant programs and activities to promote and advance the learning community group.
2. Housing and Residential Programs:
 - a. HARP will meet with Faculty and Student LLC Organizers to discuss and review the progress and success of the community and continue to develop processes and procedures to facilitate success.
 - b. HARP will discuss the potential removal of students from a Collaborative Learning Community with that community's academic/administrative leadership.

- c. HARP reserves the right to remove students from an LLC who violates HARP community standards or who fails to meet requirements set forth by the LLC agreement.
- 3. Academic/Administrative LLC Leadership:
 - a. The LLC leadership will meet with Housing and Residential Programs and Student Community organizers to discuss and review the progress and success of the community and collaborate to facilitate success.
 - b. The LLC leadership will discuss the potential removal of students from a Collaborative Learning Community with HARP.

Step 7: Memorandum of Understanding

As part of the approval process for any Living Learning Community option, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be created which articulates expectations of both the sponsoring department/organization and the Department of Housing and Residential Programs. This document will be updated annually.

Step 8: Assessment Procedures

An ongoing assessment will be a part of the LLC; this assessment will evaluate student engagement with the community's activities, impact on student retention at Millersville University, and student learning outcomes. In addition to the Department of Housing and Residential Programs evaluations, which will be administered, such as the ACUHO-I's Skyfactor assessments, the sponsoring department/organization is encouraged to develop assessment models for the community as part of the application process and in continual conversations with the Department of Housing and Residential Programs.

Sample Proposal Application

Instructions: Students, faculty, or staff interested in creating an LLC in partnership with the Millersville Department of Housing and Residential Programs will complete the following proposal application for consideration. The proposal will be used to assess the feasibility of the proposed community and its alignment with HARP and university strategic goals, student success, and retention. All communities will begin in the fall semester and run for a minimum of two semesters.

I. Proposal Application Deadline: January 30

II. Proposer Information

1. Name of Proposer:
2. Check one:
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Student
3. Email Address:
4. Phone:
5. Department (if applicable):

Proposed Community Information

6. Living Learning Community option being considered
 - Affinity Housing
 - Theme community
 - Collaborative learning community
 - Unsure
7. Assignment Type being considered
 - Automatic Assignment
 - Self-Selection
 - Endorsed Assignment
 - Unsure
8. Proposed Community Focus/Topic/Name: _____
9. Anticipated Date of Implementation (check one):
 - Fall 2016
 - Fall 2017
 - Fall 2018
 - Fall 2019
10. Target Audience (check all that apply):
 - Academic Class: (CRN#) _____ (Course Name) _____
 - All Students
 - Common interest subject: _____
 - Common major (specify major) _____

- Academic Year (circle) Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior
 Other (specify) _____

11. How might participants be selected for your proposed community? (Check all that apply):

- Application
 Student Self-Select
 Grade Point Average
 Class Registration
 Essay
 Academic Major
 Other (specify) _____

12. Program Outcomes (check all that apply):

- Students engage with other students
 Academic achievement and persistence
 Sense of community
 Assist students in transition to Millersville
 Social integration of students
 Academic integration of students
 Critical thinking
 Leadership development
 Acquisition of self-assessment skills necessary to understand one's interests, values and passions
 Enhance students' learning and overall experience
 Expand and apply concepts taught in the classroom
 Develop collegial participation between students/staff/faculty

13. What High Impact Educational Practices will your proposed community incorporate? (Check all that apply):

- First year seminars and experiences
 Common intellectual experiences
 Academic Learning communities
 Writing-intensive
 Collaborative assignments and projects
 Undergraduate research
 Diversity/global learning
 Service learning, community-based learning
 Internships
 Capstone Courses and Projects

14. What methods will you use to assess how well your proposed community has achieved its outcomes? (Check all that apply):

- Pre and post testing

- Survey
- Focus groups
- ACUHO-I EBI assessment
- Other (specify): _____

15. Will residents in your proposed community be required to plan and/or attend programs?
- Yes No

Programming:

16. What types of programs are you considering implementing?

Housing Information

17. Total number of spaces that may be required? _____

18. What housing cluster configuration might suit this LLC best?

- An entire building dedicated to this LLC
- A wing
- A floor
- A cluster of rooms together
- Do not cluster these students together
- Other: _____

Recommended Funding Structure

Housing and Residential programs will work together with LLC sponsoring departments to identify funding to establish LLC's.

| Area | Detail | Description | Annual | # of Students | Per Student Cost |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Affinity Housing | | | \$900.00 | 12 | \$75.00 |
| <i>Programming</i> | <i>Community Building Programs</i> | <i>Social events (Movies, snacks, etc)</i> | <i>\$300.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$25.00</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Advertisement/marketing</i> | <i>Printed materials, promotional items</i> | <i>\$500.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$41.67</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Supplies</i> | <i>Office supplies</i> | <i>\$100.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$8.33</i> |
| Theme Housing | | | \$2,150.00 | 12 | \$179.17 |
| <i>Programming</i> | <i>Theme Programming</i> | <i>Speakers brought to campus to give programs to students</i> | <i>\$1,000.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$83.33</i> |
| <i>Programming</i> | <i>Community Building Programs</i> | <i>Social events (Movies, snacks, etc)</i> | <i>\$500.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$41.67</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Advertisement/marketing</i> | <i>Printed materials, promotional items</i> | <i>\$500.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$41.67</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Supplies</i> | <i>Office supplies</i> | <i>\$150.00</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$12.50</i> |
| Collaborative Residential Learning Communities | | | \$6,805.00 | 21 | \$324.05 |
| <i>Programming</i> | <i>Speakers</i> | <i>Speakers brought to campus to give programs to students</i> | <i>\$2,000.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$95.24</i> |
| <i>Programming</i> | <i>Community Building Programs</i> | <i>Social events (Movies, snacks, etc)</i> | <i>\$1,000.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$47.62</i> |
| <i>Staffing</i> | <i>Conference travel</i> | <i>Costs associated with professional staff attending LLC conference</i> | <i>\$1,500.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$71.43</i> |
| <i>Staffing</i> | <i>Peer Mentor stipend</i> | <i>Stipend for 1 peer year round</i> | <i>\$1,000.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$47.62</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Advertisement/marketing</i> | <i>Printed materials, promotional items</i> | <i>\$1,000.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$47.62</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Supplies</i> | <i>Office supplies</i> | <i>\$200.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$9.52</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>Co-curricular Transcript</i> | <i>The Co-Curricular Transcript is a record of a student's involvement in educational experiences taking place outside of the classroom. This transcript serves to accentuate the student's personal journey and provides a holistic view of a student's skills and abilities. (SEE CSIL)</i> | <i>\$105.00</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>\$5.00</i> |