

Living-Learning Communities Guidelines

Assumptions

All living-learning opportunities at VCU follow a governance model with VCU Residential Life and Housing being either the sole sponsor or a partner with another university entity. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs will determine the appropriate academic home for living-learning programs (LLPs). All academic certificate programs or other academic requirements are reviewed and approved by the Living Learning Program Faculty Advisory Committee (LLP FAC), a group appointed by the Provost, with responsibility for providing guidance and advising on living-learning programs.

Definitions

Living-Learning Program

A living-learning program at VCU is a hybrid residential-academic experience that provides students with an academic transcript distinction such as a certificate of completion or minor concentration upon the successful completion of an integrated program of both curricular and co-curricular requirements. These requirements are developed through ongoing collaboration and shared decision-making between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs personnel. Living-learning programs at VCU are staffed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty members and full-time program staff.

Living-learning programs engage interdisciplinary teams of students, faculty, and staff around programmatic themes and support high levels of student, faculty and staff engagement. Co-curricular requirements are designed purposefully to integrate with and significantly enhance learning that occurs through the program's academic curriculum. Student participants are selected through an application and screening process. Planning for living-learning programs at VCU is initiated with approval from the University's President and Provost. Examples of LLPs include the ASPIRE and VCU Globe communities.

Program-in-Residence

A Program-in-Residence at VCU is a residential experience that offers students who are enrolled in an established academic major, minor, or certificate program the opportunity to live together in a dedicated residential area. Programs in residence support high levels of student interaction, increased interaction with faculty outside of the classroom, and collaboration through the use of strategies such as linked courses, study groups, and programming. Programs-in-Residence at VCU are initiated and coordinated by Residence Life and Housing in cooperation with a sponsoring academic unit and may or may not include a curricular component outside of the usual residence hall programming. An example of a Program-in-Residence is the Artist Colony or the Clinical Corner Residential Villages.

Themed Floor

A themed floor at VCU is a residential experience that offers students who have special interests or life style preferences the opportunity to live and study together. Themed floors provide participating students with co-curricular activities that may be initiated and led by either students

or by Student Affairs staff. Themed floors at VCU are established by Student Affairs or by students in partnership with Student Affairs. At VCU, the terms ‘themed house,’ ‘interest house,’ and ‘interest floor’ are interchangeable terms for ‘themed floor.’ An example of a themed floor is substance free living, wellness living and sustainable life-styles.

VCU Living-Learning Program (LLP) Foundational Principles

A Living-Learning Program (LLP) at VCU is strategically designed to incorporate a unique, multi - year on-campus living placement with a focused academic experience.

The mix of curricular and co-curricular activities will enable students to apply classroom learning in real-world experiences. The very design, combining curriculum and co-curriculum, with the intentional interplay is a unique feature of the pedagogical innovation of LLPs. LLPs have an approved academic component that leads to a unique university certificate or other credential upon the successful completion of the program. While LLP students may be enrolled in other certificates at the same time, the LLP certificate has specific requirements that cannot be satisfied except through the completion of the following core principles:

- 1) LLP participants live in the assigned residence complex for no less than two (2) academic years. The two year sequence allows for structured and developmentally progressive courses and experiences;
- 2) Students enroll in not less than nine but not more than 15 credit hours specifically sequenced for the LLP certificate which may or may not be above and beyond courses required for degrees;
- 3) Students actively engage in community and university service of not less than 10 hours per semester;
- 4) All curricular and co-curricular experiences in the program are required and evaluated/assessed;
- 5) Students will enter and advance through the program as cohorts;
- 6) Students will maintain a folio of their experience as one measure to assess the impact of students’ educational, social and psychological growth;
- 7) LLP’s will track academic progress for each enrolled student. Students who do not meet established benchmarks will be removed from the LLP, and;
- 8) LLPs will provide students with documented evidence of progress through transcripts and evidence of completion through university approved certificates as appropriate to the individual program.

LLC Guidelines Committee

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Approved by the Living Learning Program Faculty Advisory Committee 4-18-14