



# The Whole is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

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# What are Living Learning Communities at DU?

- Living-Learning Communities are academic and residential communities dedicated to a specific academic theme. LLC's create purposeful links among academic, residential and social components of the undergraduate experience.
- Students live on the same floor or wing of a residence hall, enroll as a cohort in thematic seminars each quarter, and participate as a group in required co-curricular retreats, speaker series, cultural activities and off-campus projects.

# What are Living Learning Communities at DU?

- The LLCs are exciting, engaged communities of students connected by their passion for learning, doing and making a difference.
- Each program is run by at least one half time staff member and a faculty director.



# Reasons for Creating LLCs

- to attract a diverse group of intellectually curious students to DU
- to recruit students committed to civic outreach and a more engaged campus culture
- to provide an academic experience that is distinctive in itself and complementary to students' majors
- to increase the quality and persistence rates of undergraduates
- to create an undergraduate experience that connects students to DU long after graduation. (PLP Reunion)

# LLC Themes

- Themes are multi-disciplinary, reflecting student and faculty interests and expertise.
- Themes can easily be modified, expanded or changed to respond to student interest and faculty expertise.
- Themes are chosen to appeal to a broad spectrum of students across academic divisions as well as to undecided students.

# Our 6 Current LLCs

## ***Environmental Awareness***

for students who are passionate about our environment.

## ***International***

for students who love to explore a variety of cultures and international issues.

## ***Pioneer Leadership***

for students who want to study and practice leadership in order to create better communities.

## ***Social Justice***

for students interested in the theory and practice of social justice here and abroad.

## ***Wellness***

for students who want to study health and wellness issues, policies and lifestyles.

## ***Creativity & Entrepreneurship***

for students who want to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set and explore their creative talents

# Research Supporting the Development of LLCs

- The student peer group is the single most potent source of influence on academic and personal growth during the undergraduate years.
- The second most potent source is the relationship that exists between faculty and students.
- Significant time dedicated to studying and quality social interaction are potent sources of influence.

*Source: What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited. A. Astin, 1993*

# Research Supporting the Development of LLCs

- “On many campuses students live in separate worlds. One is the **world of ideas**, the other is the **world of social experience**. Residential learning communities provide the opportunity for those worlds to connect.”



*Source: David Schoen. "Making a Difference" Peer Review Sept/Fall 2001.*

# Research Supporting the Development of LLCs

“Residence halls with the strongest impact on cognitive development and persistence are...the result of efforts to **integrate students’ intellectual and social lives** during college. Living learning centers are not only a neat idea – they actually work.”

*P.T. Terenzini, E. Pascarella How College Affects Students, 1991, 1994*

# Research Supporting the Development of LLCs

“Residential learning communities have positive effects on college students in terms of academic achievement, satisfaction, the development of a more acute sense of social consciousness, and retention through graduation.”

*Smith 1993, 1991; Astin 1993; Schroder & Hurst 1996; Buckner 1977.*

# Persistence

- LLC students have consistently higher persistence rates than the overall DU population

Cohort	Overall DU	LLC
2004	87.7%	93.4%
2003	85.6%	88.5%
2002	85.5%	89.9%
2001	85.7%	88.9%
2000	86.8%	91.1%

# Some NSSE Findings

- LLC Students are more likely to:
  - Work with other students on projects outside of class
  - Participate in community based projects as part of a class
  - Work with faculty on activities other than
  - Work on a research project outside a class

# 2004 NSSE

Active and Collaborative Learning	LLC	Non-LLC
Asked Questions in Class	81%	72%
Made Presentation in Class	65%	51%
Discussed class ideas with friends outside of class	58%	18%
Worked outside of class with other students	73%	49%

# 2005 NSSE

Active and Collaborative Learning	LLC	Non-LLC	Difference
Made a presentation in class	2.71	2.53	.177 difference in means significant at $p < .05$
Worked outside class with other students	2.80	2.56	.239 difference in means significant at $p < .01$
Community-based project as part of course	2.42	1.72	.702 difference in means significant at $p < .001$
Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework	2.13	1.63	.505 difference in means significant at $p < .001$

# Whole LLC Experience

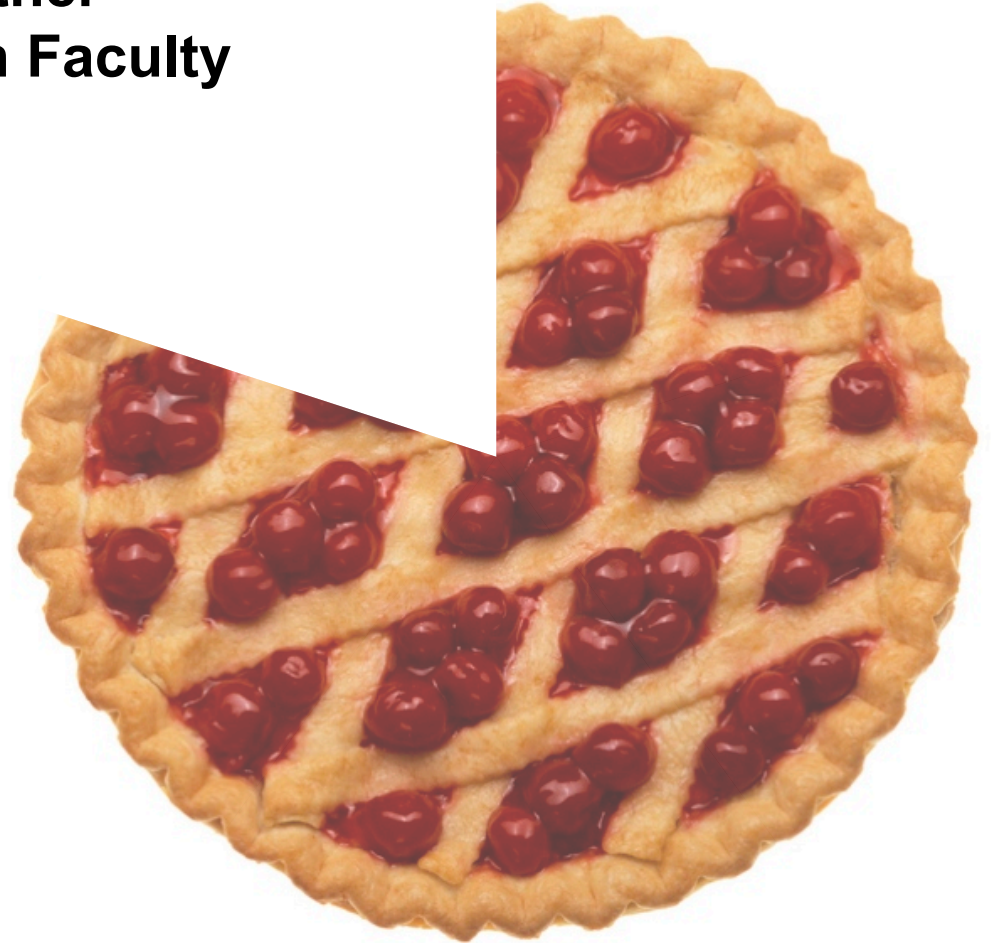
**Academics**

**Physical Space Living Together**

**Mentorship Connection with Faculty**

**Sense of Community**

**Extra Curricular**



# Academics

- **First Year participants take at least one LLC seminar each quarter.**
  - Credits range from 2-4
  - Some utilize first year experience class as fall seminar
  - Most programs offer a special section of first year English which integrates the LLC theme into the English curriculum

# Academics

- **Sample Course Topics**
  - Citizen Leadership
  - Global Social Problems
  - Physical and Mental Wellness
  - Population and the Environment
  - International Film

# Academics

- LLC students are eligible for Community Scholars awards to do research abroad- under the guidance of a faculty member
- LLC faculty are excellent - we hire multi disciplinary faculty who are well respected and consistently receive top evaluations

# Community Scholars Awards

- LLC students are eligible to apply for special summer internships, field-based service / research grants, and international service / research fellowships.
- Several examples of Community Scholars Awards follow...

New York

Italy

Germany

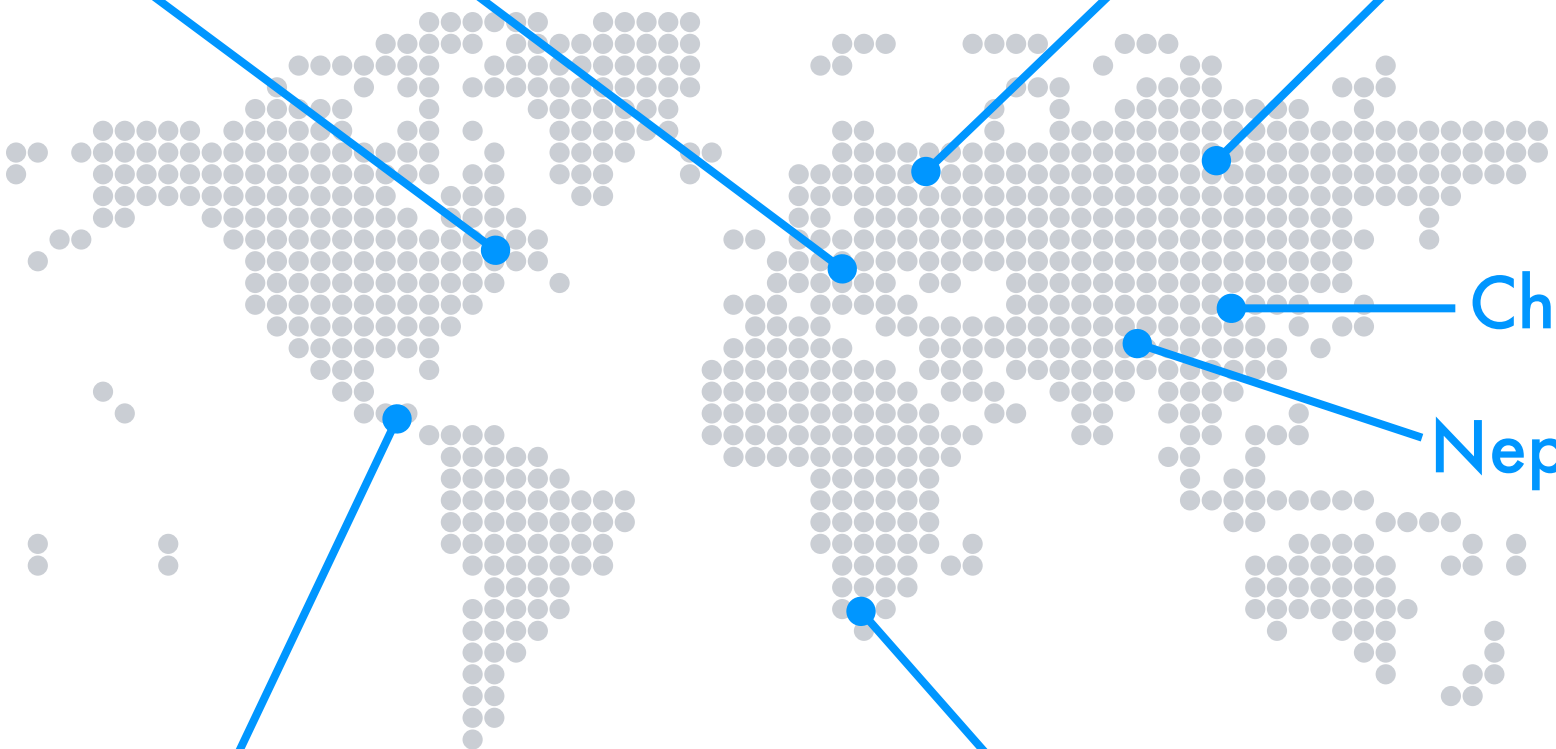
Russia

China

Nepal

Costa Rica

South Africa



LLC Student	ISL Project Location	Project
Sarah Asplin	South Africa	Research on Apartheid
Dacia Dyer	Russia	How Russians view American Culture
Andrea Noel	China	Eastern Medicine in China
Kristin Weaver	Nepal	Katmandu Environmental Education

LLC Student	ISL Project Location	Project
Kara Cochran	Italy	Architectural Research
Coreen McCullough	Costa Rica	Research on Costa Rican Culture
Kirill Bouek	Germany	Public Transit Research
Aaron Davitt	New York City	American Museum of Natural History

# Extra-Curricular Activities

- All LLC events 2-3 times a year
  - Bobby Seale, Black Panthers
  - Mick Davie, National Geographic
  - Jonathan Kozel, Educational Expert
- Each LLC holds at least one overnight retreat for their students
- Fall - Facilitate bonding among students, faculty, and staff

# Extra-Curricular Activities

- Each Individual LLC sponsors programs specific to its theme
- Cultural: Opera, Plays, Concerts etc
- Social: Sharing meals, dancing, hiking, yoga, dinners at faculty homes, athletic events, etc
- Educational: Lectures, Service projects
  - Many faculty try to weave extra-curricular events into their course curriculum
    - ILLC- Oxfam Hunger Banquet, Film- “Born into Brothels”, Panel on Femicides, etc

# Extra-Curricular Activities

- “I really enjoy going to events with people from (my)... Living and Learning Community. I know that after coming from a speech forum, play, or opera they are the best people to get a dual perspective from.”

# Sense of Community

- Community can be seen almost immediately among students. Within the first few weeks, most members know one another well.
- Living together, taking a common course (s), and attending extra-curricular events all help congeal community
- Informal communications about common interests are also important
- Community is consistently rated high in LLC assessment

# Sense of Community

- “I love that we have a community. It makes this floor feel like a home. I think everyone feels comfortable sharing some classes and experiences to help facilitate a sense of family comfort.”
- “Coming in and being a part of the ILLC or any LLC I suppose acclimates you to the university community much quicker than if you started out all alone.”

# Sense of Community

- “This community is unique in feel and people, and this experience has enriched my stay at DU.”
- “The ILLC is like a support group - it helps with adjustment to college.”
- “It is a community, a bond, and a way to gain a connection to the world as a whole.”

# Physical Space

- All LLC students are required to live in special floors of the first year residence halls
- Floors have 22-34 students
- Each floor has a student lounge and some have kitchen spaces to congregate and program in
- LLC Students are given the option of living together in our premier residence hall as sophomores

# Physical Space

- “My feelings about living in the an LLC is that it provides an opportunity for us to live with people who want to create change and have intellectual discussions. When we all live together it creates an environment where we can discuss what is important to us, and reflect upon what we have learned.”
- “I was originally going to live off campus, until I learned about the Social Justice LLC. It has allowed me the opportunity to find other students interested in activism and to become active in social change.”

# Physical Space

- “Living and learning together with the rest of the EALLC group has been an awesome experience. These friendships strengthened throughout the year because I was always interacting with these great people who had the same interests as me, and we could **carry discussions from the classroom back to our residence unit.**”



# Mentorship

- LLC students have access to the faculty director, program coordinator and teaching faculty.
- Faculty attend many extra-curricular events (including overnight retreats) to get to know students outside the classroom
- Faculty regularly have students to their homes for dinners
- Faculty and staff write numerous letters of reference for students
- We are sometimes they only people who know first year students personally
- Faculty & Staff also act as advocates for students who are having difficulties succeeding academically and socially

# The Whole

- Each of these pieces of the pie are important to the success of the Living & Learning Communities. Without all of these things, LLC success may not be as significant.
- Each part may be more important at any given moment
- Differences may exist by program and by student



# The Whole

- Students rarely see the complexity and interconnections among these multiple parts. One student comes close when she said...
- “Had we not lived together, I don’t think the academic component of the program would have been nearly as fun and relaxed, because we wouldn’t have known each other as well as we did. This relaxed atmosphere made learning exciting!”

# CLOSING

Discussion &  
Questions