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Kathleen J. Buell

Eastern Washington University, kbuell@ewu.edu

Vaughn L. Love

St. Edward's University, vlove@stedwards.edu

Christina W. Yao

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, cy9@mailbox.sc.edu

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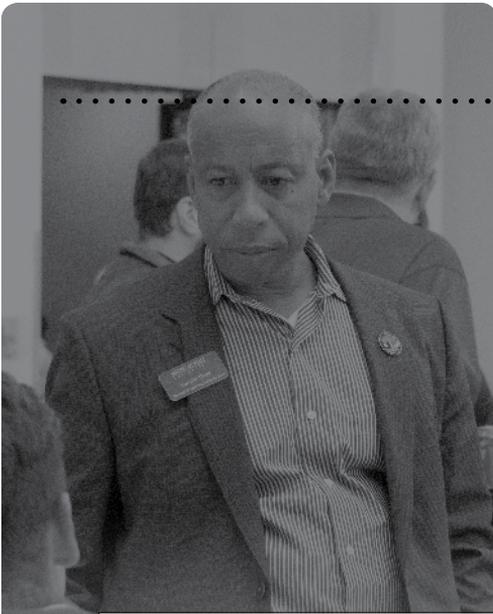


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Living-Learning Programs Through the Years: A Reflection on Partnerships Between Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs



KATHLEEN J. BUELL
Residential Life Coordinator
Eastern Washington University
kbuell@ewu.edu



VAUGHN L. LOVE
Coordinator, Living-Learning Communities
St. Edward's University
vlove@stedwards.edu



CHRISTINA W. YAO
Assistant Professor, Department of
Educational Administration
University of Nebraska
cyao@unl.edu

Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan

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LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS (LLPs), also known as learning communities, offer students a shared academic focus within a residential community; thus, LLPs are considered ideal contexts for student learning. In 1994, Zeller highlighted Washington State University as an example of how learning communities can successfully incorporate faculty, students, and student affairs practitioners/departments into collaborative learning environments. This study provides an overview of changes that have occurred in the creation and implementation of LLPs during the past two decades. Using the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as a case study, this paper illustrates the growth and adaptation of LLPs over the years. Implications and innovations for practice and research are also offered for application to other institutions.

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Learning communities (LCs) have been touted by both student affairs administrators and practitioners alike as ideal contexts for student learning because they create a unique cocurricular environment that focuses on active learning at every stage. Often, LCs use core practices such as linked or co-enrolled courses, engaging programming, faculty or staff involvement, or reflective assessment to engage students in cocurricular pursuits in multiple aspects of their academic experiences (Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, & Gabelnick, 2004). As such, LCs have been identified as a high-impact educational practice, one of several that have been empirically found to result in significant benefits to student success and persistence (Fink & Inkels, 2015).

Learning communities that include a residential component are often called living-learning programs (LLPs), which integrate community and academic work into a student's campus residence and create a fully cocurricular experience (Smith et al., 2004). Partnerships are often formed when residence life departments collaborate with their counterparts in academic affairs to create LLPs that can offer "an opportune avenue for combining the formal,

Learning communities (LCs) have been touted by both student affairs administrators and practitioners alike as ideal contexts for student learning because they create a unique cocurricular environment that focuses on active learning at every stage.

course-oriented learning activities of academic affairs with the programmatic learning activities typical of residential life” (Henry & Schein, 1998, p. 9). LLPs typically include a shared focus centered on an academic discipline or interdisciplinary theme (Shapiro & Levine, 1999) and function as residential communities that emphasize faculty and student interaction. As one of the early pioneers of LLPs, Zeller (1994) highlighted Washington State University (WSU) as an example of how residential learning communities (RLCs) can successfully incorporate faculty, students, and student affairs efforts into collaborative learning environments.

For the purpose of this paper, LLPs refer to residential programs that involve a cohort of students who are typically co-enrolled in one or more courses organized around an academic discipline (e.g., business, engineering) or interdisciplinary theme (e.g., leadership, multiculturalism) (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). As a point of clarification, we use the term LLP throughout this paper; however, when university programs use other terms, we remain consistent with their terminology. This distinction becomes important later on, as we more thoroughly discuss the LLPs at both WSU and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), institutions that respectively refer to their LLPs as either residential learning communities (RLCs) or learning communities (LCs). Also, we want to recognize that many scholars use different terms to describe LLPs, as evidenced in related literature.

In this paper, we examine the changes since Zeller’s (1994) report of successful connections between faculty, students, and student affairs staff in the RLCs at Washington

State. We first provide an overview of Zeller’s (1994) article and continue with a brief review of how LLPs have changed in the past 20 years. We then provide examples of the changes that have influenced how LLPs have been established and developed at UNL. We conclude with recommendations for practice based on this historical review of LLPs.

REWIND: OVERVIEW OF LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

Zeller’s (1994) article “Residential Learning Communities: Creating Connections Between Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs Departments” began with a review of the contemporary literature of the time regarding the relationship between student and academic affairs and described scholars’ increasing calls for “stronger collaboration between the two areas” (p. 37). The author identified a shift in practice, which, while slow and complicated, called for faculty and student affairs staff engagement in student learning. Zeller (1994) argued that despite the literature’s strong endorsement of cooperation between multiple campus partners, in reality, such work was difficult.

The RLCs at Washington State began in 1989 as a part of the Department of Residence Life’s efforts to “refocus the direction of programs and services” (Zeller, 1994, p. 39) to more closely link students’ personal and academic development. Zeller (1994) identified residing on campus as an important feature that positively influenced the personal and academic development of students. In addition, other changes to resources and student learning outcomes (e.g., having established peer advising groups and being a highly residen-

tial campus) were already in progress, which made the implementation of RLCs an easier transition.

Zeller (1994) detailed six RLCs that embodied consistent and significant collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs: “Connections have been developed between Residence Life, Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Departments; Student Advising and Learning Center; Information Technology; and the Campus Committee on Women

Each partner contributed what would best support the initiative, from human capital to specialized technology, resulting in a successful living-learning experience for students.

in Math, Science and Engineering” (p. 40). This program had been proposed by faculty as an effort to address the marginalization and isolation women can experience in these fields. Met with tremendous excitement, the program grew rapidly and filled an entire residence hall. Key features of this RLC included specialized academic support (e.g., tutoring, study groups, and supplemental instruction), leadership opportunities, a computer lab that provided equipment and software specific to the field, and high-quality faculty interactions.

Each partner contributed what would best support the initiative, from human capital to specialized technology, resulting in a successful living-learning experience for students. The other five programs followed a similar structure, which included collaborative programming between faculty members, academic affairs staff, and residence life personnel.

Finally, Zeller (1994) addressed the funding of RLCs, which can often be a barrier to implementation. Costs were low for many of the collaborative features of the RLC initiatives because WSU creatively repurposed or redirected already existing efforts, such as relocating tutoring services in the residence halls. The largest expense was remuneration for the RLCs’ peer advisors who were compensated with housing in exchange for their work. The RLCs also benefited from external funding sources as a result of campus partnerships. Academic departments, corporations, and alumni donations contributed to the resources and opportunities provided through RLCs.

The RLCs at Washington State pulled together multiple parties in support of student learning and established formal and intentional points of contact and cooperation between student affairs staff and faculty members. The RLCs included many of the current hallmarks of LLPs, such as clustered living, common courses, and concentrated faculty involvement. Zeller (1994) cited positive feedback from student and faculty and the “coherent institutional educational opportunities” (p. 42) provided to students as evidence of the RLC initiative’s success. In addition, Zeller (1994) found that faculty were able to recognize the value of RLCs, which increased administrative commitment and support for those programs.

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TRENDS IN LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

In 1927, the University of Wisconsin started what we consider the first iteration of a modern LLP (Smith et al., 2004), which incorporated faculty who acted as professor and adviser, a required curriculum, and a residential living experience. Over the next several decades, LLPs continued to evolve and expand, both in numbers and in structure. By the late 20th century and the early 21st century, critics were again calling for reform in undergraduate education in the United States, describing it as passive, unengaging, and disconnected (Fink & Inkelas, 2015). Several national reports, including one from the National Institute of Education (1984) and a series from the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (2001), cited the need for an increase in student learning and for organizing students into smaller, more engaged communities. As a result, reform and innovation continued within LLPs during this time at institutions across the country.

Over the next 20 years, much of the literature on LLPs focused on several different themes such as student outcomes, social adjustment to college, student support services, targeted student populations, and the role of faculty. In addition, Inkelas, Soldner, Longersbeam, and Leonard (2008) established LLP typologies in an effort to quantify student outcomes. Through their comprehensive empirical analysis, they identified three structural types of living-learning programs: “Small, Limited Resourced, Primarily Residential Life Emphasis”; “Medium, Moderately Resourced, Student Affairs/Academic Affairs Combination”; and “Large, Comprehensively

While conclusions have been mixed as to whether or not LLP participation leads to specific career outcomes, research indicated that student outcomes in LLPs include a sense of belonging and positive relationships with peers and faculty.

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Resourced, Student Affairs/Academic Affairs Collaboration” programs (pp. 502–503). The creation of these structural typologies allowed for intentional planning and benchmarking, particularly when considering the factors of student learning and academic partnerships.

Within the structural typologies, LLPs promote and prioritize student learning. For example, Inkelas and Weisman (2003) found that students across different types of LLPs demonstrated higher levels of academic engagement along with greater academic progress. Moreover, the authors highlighted the differences between LLP models in relation to student learning, demonstrating that thematic focus matters in relation to the outcomes that are produced. Across the three types studied—first-year transition, honors program, and curriculum-based programs—findings indicated that students in first-year and honors LLPs reported more frequent use of critical thinking skills, social interactions with faculty, and more intercultural awareness than those in the curriculum-based programs. In contrast, students in the curriculum-based LLPs were more

likely to engage with peers regarding academics, as their outcomes per the study were not significantly different than those of students in the control group (Inkelas & Wiseman, 2003).

While conclusions have been mixed as to whether or not LLP participation leads to specific career outcomes (Soldner, Rowan-Kenyon, Inkelas, Garvey, & Robbins, 2012; Szelényi & Inkelas, 2011), research indicated that student outcomes in LLPs include a sense of belonging and positive relationships with peers and faculty (Schussler & Fierros, 2008; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Anger, 2010). Schussler and Fierros (2008) focused on four models at one university to examine students' perceptions of the outcomes of being in an LLP. Employing mixed-methods research, the authors found that students across all four types identified their integration into the university, positive relationships with peers and faculty, and a sense of community as benefits of their LLP experiences. Schussler and Fierros grouped these factors into sense of belonging as a unifying concept, a perception that promotes and supports student retention.

Similarly, Wawrzynski and Jessup-Anger's (2010) work on the influence of noncognitive variables and participation in LLPs on students' college experience described the primary student outcomes as academically focused peer interactions and an "enriching educational environment" (p. 201). The authors found that, when compared to non-LLP students, participants reported greater interaction with their peers about academics. They also perceived their residence halls as positively benefiting their educational experiences (Wawrzynski & Jessup-Anger, 2010).

LLPs have also been used to support specific populations of students during their time in college with positive results. Participation in LLPs was beneficial for first-generation students in easing their social and academic transition to college, with the successful transition attributed to strong academic and curricular environments, interactions with faculty and peers, and positive student perceptions of the campus and residence hall climates (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007). Pasque and Murphy (2005) discussed how different social identities affected the success of students in LLPs (such as students of color who identified as lesbian, bisexual, or gay) who reported higher levels of academic achievement. Additionally, women, students whose parents had a lower socioeconomic status, and students identifying as lesbian, bisexual, or gay reported higher levels of intellectual engagement than did their counterparts.

Research has also been conducted concerning the role of LLPs in encouraging students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Though Soldner et al. (2012) found that participation in a STEM-focused living-learning program was not directly related to participants' self-reported likelihood to complete a STEM bachelor's degree, some elements of LLP participation, such as quality peer and faculty interaction as well as students' sense of social support, were found to influence vocational choice. Similarly, Szelényi and Inkelas (2011) indicated that students perceived living in a women-only STEM LLP as both socially and academically supportive. The most significant finding from their study was that participation in a women-only STEM living-learning

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program increased the likelihood of students to attend graduate school in STEM fields by 35.4% (Szelényi & Inkelas, 2011). LLPs are an important practice for supporting student learning, especially for specific student populations and academic disciplines.

STEM-based LLPs are also beneficial for promoting student and faculty interaction. For example, Sriram and Shushok (2010) found that students in an engineering and computer science LLP reported more meaningful faculty and student interaction than did non-LLP students in the same majors. The LLP fostered an intentional environment that promoted increased interactions with affiliated faculty, whose roles ranged from living in the residential facility to participating in programming efforts. Student participants favorably reported the combination of increased faculty interaction and academic peer connections in the LLP. As indicated by Sriram and Shushok, faculty participation in LLPs, which includes having informal conversations and discussing academic issues outside of class, is a critical component to the overall success of an LLP.

Although faculty interaction is often highlighted as a critical component in LLPs, most research emphasizes outcomes for student participants. Thus, research on faculty perspectives was largely missing from the literature until a special theme issue on “Faculty and Housing Academic Partnerships” was published by *The Journal of College and University Student Housing* in 2011. In this issue, Kennedy (2011) illuminated tenured and tenure track faculty motivation for participating in an LLP. Findings revealed the importance of academic department support as well as the realities of time constraints related to participation, all

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of which affect the tenure and promotion process for faculty. As a result, Kennedy offered practical recommendations for student affairs professionals to provide thoughtful strategies for including faculty while remaining considerate of the barriers to their participation.

Similarly, faculty participants in Ellett and Schmidt’s (2011) study of creating communities in residence halls acknowledged the challenges related to time constraints and other academic department responsibilities when trying to build community with residential students. Yet the findings were largely positive, with faculty acknowledging the importance of building community in residence halls. More importantly, faculty who indicated high motivation for involvement were invested in the process to collaboratively build community with both student affairs professionals and, more notably, with resident assistants. As a result, faculty were able to develop stronger relationships with students, which was also related to faculty development as educators (Sriram, Shushok, Perkins, & Scales, 2011).

FORWARD: LEARNING COMMUNITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) is a large public research university with an enrollment of 26,000 students, with the fall 2016 first-time freshman cohort consisting of 5,000 students (University of Nebraska Office of Institutional Research, Analytics, and Decision Support, 2016). The UNL Learning Communities (LC) program for first-year students began in 1997 with three programs and has since expanded to 26 learning communities sponsored by 15 colleges, departments, and offices (University of Nebraska, 2017). UNL's learning community model is guided by three features: co-enrolled courses, shared residential living spaces, and cocurricular experiences focused on academic and career exploration (University of Nebraska, 2017). Similar to the RLCs described by Zeller (1994), UNL's Learning Communities unit is an intentional partnership between the academic affairs and student affairs divisions. The office is made up of four full-time staff: two from the University Housing Residence Life department and two from Undergraduate Education. In addition, upper-level administrators from both academic affairs and student affairs sit on the LC steering committee, ensuring that perspectives and expertise from across the university are represented. Applying Inkelas et al.'s (2008) framework, the UNL learning community program most closely aligns with cluster three, or "Large, Comprehensively Resourced, Student Affairs/Academic Affairs Collaboration" (p. 503). With almost 700 students, a wide range of academic resourc-

es, diverse program offerings, and a large number of required courses and affiliated faculty, cluster three is the most representative of the learning communities at UNL.

Faculty involvement is central to the overall success of LLPs (Sriram & Shushok, 2010). Every UNL learning community has a faculty or staff sponsor from a partnering academic department who organizes programming, mentors residents in their academic or career field, connects students to on- and off-campus resources, and selects courses that students take during their tenure in the LC. Sponsors select the LC theme, identify courses LC students should be co-enrolled in (sometimes designing and instructing a seminar exclusively for the LC), and develop most of the educational programming.

The UNL Learning Communities office continues to build sustainable partnerships across campus, recognizing that faculty experience a number of time constraints and competing responsibilities that often challenge their LC participation (Ellett & Schmidt, 2011). UNL Learning Communities do not provide monetary stipends or tenure and promotion credit to incentivize the role for faculty. Although an LC can serve as a strong recruitment tool for an academic unit, many faculty and staff are intrinsically motivated to sponsor an LC. As reflected in the literature (Ellett & Schmidt, 2011; Sriram & Shushok, 2010), faculty sponsors report positive experiences in interacting with students and building relationships with LC members.

LLPs have long been understood to support the academic and social transition into college for students (Inkelas et al., 2007). To that end, UNL learning community staff have attempted

Consistency in the student experience between different LCs is one common challenge for UNL learning community staff. Ensuring a high-quality experience for LC students depends in large part on the engagement and dedication of the faculty and staff sponsors.

to reduce as many barriers as possible in order to maximize participation. First, cost often serves as an obstacle for student participation. As the costs of tuition, room and board, and miscellaneous fees continue to rise, additional fees to participate in an LLP can seem insurmountable. At UNL, students pay a \$95 fee to participate in an LC, which is one of the lowest yearly fees for an LLP among peer institutions. Excluding specific and narrow circumstances such as regional educational trips involving travel, students are not expected to pay out-of-pocket for any LC experience. The LC staff work closely with faculty and staff sponsors and student mentors to ensure that activities do not place any additional financial burden on students. Student and family feedback, both anecdotally and in assessment, on the low cost of participating in LCs at UNL has been positive. Ensuring that cost does not prohibit student participation, UNL has made strides in broadening student participation in LCs.

UNL's learning community program models many best practices in LLPs; however,

there are also areas of improvement worth noting that may affect many other institutions across the country. As indicated by the literature, participation in LLPs by underrepresented student populations can lead to greater academic and social success (Inkelas et al., 2007; Pasque & Murphy, 2005). Recently, UNL enrolled its most diverse student body in the fall of 2016, with 13.4% of students identifying as students of color (University of Nebraska Office of Institutional Research, Analytics, and Decision Support, 2016). While the LC program at UNL is making gains in this area, its student population does not yet reflect the university's demographic makeup. In order to address this gap, greater focus has been placed on recruitment, particularly by participating in university recruitment events that have a high attendance by students of color, as well as other underrepresented populations on campus. As the university diversifies, the LC office is challenged to recruit more students of color into the program and thereby better reflect the student population on campus.

Consistency in the student experience between different LCs is one common challenge for UNL learning community staff. Ensuring a high-quality experience for LC students depends in large part on the engagement and dedication of the faculty and staff sponsors. Due to variations in sponsor support and student engagement, some LCs have different levels of programmatic consistency than others, especially in terms of frequency of programming and sponsor interaction. Additionally, although most LCs are centered on one particular topic, career, or academic interest, such as psychology or music, other LCs are organized around broader themes, such



as business or leadership, which can involve several different majors and careers. This creates challenges in developing targeted programming and student engagement. One way UNL Learning Communities have met this challenge is through the use of upper-division peers in the role of paraprofessional staff.

At UNL, students serve the LC program in two ways: as an ambassador or as a peer mentor. Ambassadors attend recruitment events and talk with prospective students about LCs and what to expect while participating in one. Ambassadors answer questions about LC participation and attending UNL and encourage students to participate. In sum, they represent the LCs to both potential and incoming students. Peer mentors assist students once they arrive on campus, aiding in their social and academic transition to college. They plan events, engage in meaningful student interactions, have the option to live on the same residence hall floor as their LC, and offer guidance to students in their learning communities. Feedback from LC students suggests that their peer mentors serve an important role, one of friend, counselor, and role model.

The final challenge UNL Learning Communities continue to face, as does every college and university in the country, is competition with other campus programs having a required residential component. In order to be in a UNL learning community, students must live on a designated residence hall floor. This prevents them from participating in other programs that also have a live-in requirement. LCs also compete with campus fraternities because fraternity members are allowed to live in fraternity houses in their first year, which is in direct competition with LC participation.

**FAST FORWARD:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
PRACTICE AND RESEARCH**

We offer several recommendations for practice and research, based on our review of the literature and insights from the LC program at UNL. Our first recommendation for practice calls for LLP staff to be strategic and creative in how they utilize the efforts of faculty partners. We know that faculty involvement in LLPs is critical to the success of students, but there are challenges in gaining faculty involvement (Magolda, 2005; Sriram & Shushok, 2010). Thus, we recommend that university leadership encourage collaboration between residence life and faculty in a way that benefits everyone involved. When considering the expectation for faculty to contribute to research and scholarship, an option could be to recruit faculty involvement in LLPs that include a theme or focus relevant to a particular faculty member’s scholarship. For example, one of the UNL engineering LCs recently shifted from



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a general focus on engineering to a narrower focus on the intersections between engineering and the world of athletics and human performance in order to better suit the interests and scholarship of the faculty sponsor. This shift has increased buy-in and excitement for the sponsor, furthering the strong relationship between LCs and the UNL College of Engineering.

In order to address the needs of faculty and continue to provide quality support to students, LLPs can look to campus partners in other student affairs departments or encourage faculty to collaborate with each other for additional personnel support for a single LLP. Although created 20 years ago, Zeller's (1994) description of WSU's residential learning communities provides some direction in this area. The RLCs Zeller (1994) highlighted were

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projects supported by multiple offices beyond residence life and academic departments, including technology offices and academic advising. LLPs should consider other student affairs offices, like advising, student government, or campus recreation, as partners in service of LLPs and their objectives for students.

One critical component of LLP success is the interest and investment of participating students. Popular culture—the films, novels, television programs, and music that permeate the collective Zeitgeist—can be useful in attracting students to a program, and creating opportunities to connect popular culture with learning may be a successful future direction for LLPs. Because of popular culture's ubiquity, Tisdell (2007) argues that it can be an effective educational tool that provides context and practical applications for otherwise complex theories. For example, zombies have recently permeated movies, television, and other forms of media and have increased societal interest in surviving a zombie apocalypse. LLP staff could capitalize on this interest by offering an interdisciplinary LLP that draws upon the interests of film and media studies, as well as the biology department (biology of epidemics) and sociology or social work (human responses to disasters). By engaging with an academic topic through a popular culture perspective, LLPs could provide an exciting and unique opportunity for involvement for students from multiple academic disciplines and offer an opportunity for innovative collaboration between multiple campus departments including interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty. Encouraging multiple faculty members to work together on an interdisciplinary effort would be a tremendous benefit for students, par-

... technology could be used to allow LLPs to move into virtual and online spaces through coursework and programmatic efforts. By creating online space for LLPs to exist, participation is not limited to those who live on campus.

ticularly as colleges and universities continue to urge them to connect the disparate aspects of their educations into a more cohesive educational narrative to create an integrative learning experience (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2017).

Another innovative practice for LLPs both inside and outside the classroom is the incorporation of modern technology and social media, which are now everyday parts of students' lives. In an article on the importance of LLPs moving into the digital age, Zeller (2008) suggested that, with proper incorporation of new technologies, LLPs "can likely become even more powerful learning environments than they are today" (p. 68). Technology use in cocurricular development can keep LLPs innovative and relevant to today's students. Strayhorn (2012) found that high frequency use of social networking sites correlates with a low sense of belonging on campus. This finding could indicate that students who do not feel connected to their campus turn to social networking sites for a sense of belonging. Technology use in cocurricular, residential settings

would help LLPs stay relevant to modern students. LLPs can utilize social media to connect students with each other, LLP staff, and LLP faculty. While the residential space would continue to be the primary site of an LLP's community, creating space for students to engage online with other LLP participants and associated faculty and staff would further encourage sustained involvement with the community. Additionally, technology could be used to allow LLPs to move into virtual and online spaces through coursework and programmatic efforts. By creating online space for LLPs to exist, participation is not limited to those who live on campus. For example, students who live on campus and participate in an LLP one year could still remain active participants for multiple years through a virtual community, including online and hybrid courses. This fosters sustained involvement for students who may choose to live elsewhere or even for those who take advantage of study abroad opportunities. In doing so, this creates investment that could potentially continue beyond graduation and encourage alumni participation and financial support.

Recruiting and retaining a more diverse population of participants is an increasing priority for living-learning programs. While research has indicated that marginalized populations may see greater benefits from engaging in LLPs, institutions continue to see participation gaps. As colleges and universities become more diverse in a multitude of ways, LLPs need to reflect the wider campus population. As such, it is important to consider if current thematic offerings are sufficient to serve the needs and preferences of underrepresented students. Affinity housing, in which students

connect according to shared salient identities rather than common interests, could represent an interdisciplinary community that attracts underrepresented or marginalized students. Additionally, LLP staff can be strategic in the recruitment and sustained involvement of upper-division underrepresented students who were or are members to provide mentorship and support for new LLP participants. They could serve as teaching assistants for co-enrolled LLP courses or assist in programmatic efforts in a way that promotes the generational involvement of underrepresented students in LLPs.

Our recommendations for future research include conducting a multiple case study of LLPs from various institutional types. In doing so, we can better understand how different types of institutions are able to develop, support, and implement living-learning programs. Contextual factors play a role in student learning, and understanding multiple contexts would contribute to the continued development of living-learning programs.

Another area of research includes examining the role of campus partners (e.g., academic departments, different functional areas) in supporting living-learning programs. The value in LLPs is in the collaborations that span the campus, yet very little research is available on the experiences of campus partners. Thus, understanding campus partners' motivations and experiences in co-facilitating these programs would be a valuable contribution to our current knowledge of LLPs.

CONCLUSION

Living-learning programs have become an integral part of both the reform and the advancement of undergraduate education across the country. In this review, we have highlighted how far LLPs have come in the past 20 years, beginning with Zeller's (1994) account of RLCs at Washington State and ending with recommendations for future practice and research. By using the LC program at UNL as a case study, we have offered many ways that LLPs can innovate in enhancing and expanding their programs. We have also provided a portrait of what LLPs look like today by examining their evolution over the past 20 years. Through the practices we suggest, such as the incorporation of technology and strong collaboration with campus partners, modern LLPs can meet their goals of student engagement and success in new and innovative ways. Zeller (1994) offered an overview of effective learning communities at WSU, which provided a historical perspective for understanding the importance of LLPs in residential student learning. Looking back since then, however, provides the opportunity to see areas for future growth and how LLPs can continue to develop over the next 20 years.

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Discussion Questions

1. This article provides a thorough overview of the research findings associated with living-learning communities and therefore is a very useful resource. Identify at least three ways this article could be used to support staff efforts around establishing and/or maintaining LLCs.
2. The authors emphasize that faculty involvement in living-learning programs (LLPs) is central to overall success. Create a position description detailing the characteristics of the ideal faculty member participating in an LLP.
3. Academic demands such as the pressure to publish and the lack of value placed upon service in the promotion and tenure process creates challenges in recruiting faculty to participate in LLPs. How might these challenges be mitigated?
4. The authors note the benefits of the participation of diverse populations in LLPs. However, institutions continue to struggle with getting diverse populations to participate. What ideas do you have to reduce gaps in participation by diverse populations in LLPs? What has been your experience with diverse populations and strategies for engagement?
5. In the recommendations section, the authors suggest attracting more diverse student participation by considering a learning community "in which students connect according to shared salient identities rather than common interests." What are your thoughts about this recommendation? If you were to design such an LLP, what would be the primary purpose and desired outcomes?
6. Social media platforms and other online environments have become significant gathering places for people with common interests, resulting in many cases in very strong community ties. How are the outcomes of a residential LLP the same and how are they different from an exclusively online community?
7. Looking forward 20 years, what aspects of today's LLPs do you think will continue, and what do you expect will change?

Discussion questions developed by Diane "Daisy" Waryold, Appalachian State University, and Pam Schreiber, University of Washington.