

BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Learning Communities

The Learning Communities Program

The Learning Communities at Bloomsburg University foster an inclusive environment where students with similar majors, interests and goals are afforded rich and varied student learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom. Through collaboration with faculty, staff, and peer mentors, students are able to experience personal and intellectual growth while building relationships in an engaged and friendly community-centered environment. This year the program encompasses the following *Learning Communities*...

- * College of Business
- * College of Education
- * Compass (Undeclared)
- * Computer Science
- * Frederick Douglass
- * Health Sciences
- * Mi Segunda Casa
- * Quest Outdoor Leadership
- * (Army) ROTC
- * Visual & Performing Arts



Rebranding the Program

Living & Learning Communities to Learning Communities

In order to keep up with the changing needs of our students and institution, we have made the decision to drop “Living” from our name and identify ourselves as just Learning Communities. We hope by making this change, we will eliminate the stigma that students will be “sequestered” in a residence hall with only students who have their same interest/major (we do not do this), as well as make our program more inclusive to commuter students. In addition, while we have traditionally been a first-year student program, we know there is a growing need to provide additional support to our upperclassmen, especially our sophomores. The name change allows us to grow in many ways without confusing anyone as to who is housed and who is not. There will still be a live-in component for our first-year students who select to reside on campus, but our program will be more accessible to non-residents as well. Please join us in our rebranding efforts of our Learning Community Program, which offers greater opportunities for the students at Bloomsburg University.

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Fall 2016 Semester Review

Mentor Training—August 19th to 22nd

Our 37 learning community mentors returned to campus on Friday, August 19th, in great anticipation for their mentees to arrive. In order to prepare for the upcoming semester, mentors took part in a four-day training organized by Laura Grego and Matthew Wagner, LC Graduate Assistants. The training sessions were facilitated by Jennifer Hunsinger, Assistant Director, and other learning community directors.



Welcome Week—August 23rd to 28th

Beginning on Tuesday, August 23rd, the Learning Communities welcomed over 300 first-year students. About 45 different LC programs were held over a period of six days. Some of these events included welcome receptions, ice breaker games, teambuilding sessions, tours of campus and downtown area, goal setting workshops, and much more. Another annual LC-wide event is the Welcome Picnic with food, games, and a chance to meet people from other LCs. To wrap up an exciting Welcome Week, the Chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System, Frank Brogan, helped us kick-off our semester. While all were gathered at an LC program in Carver Hall, he wished students a successful year at Bloomsburg University.



New York City Trip—September 16th

On September 16th, the Learning Communities went on their first trip of the semester. There were 55 students that attended. Those who went had the opportunity to visit Ellis Island. Some of the Health Science students got an opportunity to tour the hospital facility while on the Island. The ferry also took students to see the Statue of Liberty. After departing from the Island, students visited Times Square, toured the Tenement Museum and went back in time as they walked along the Underground Railroad. This was a successful trip filled with new experiences.



Rickett's Glen—September 24th

On September 24th, 30 learning community mentors and mentees visited Ricketts Glen State Park. Students hiked a 5-mile trail and explored a series of wild, free-flowing waterfalls at the National Natural Landmark. Some of our very own Quest LC mentors helped lead the hike (with an experienced guide) as they were working toward their outdoor survival training requirements. Rickett's Glen has become a popular field trip destination as it is one of the most scenic areas in Pennsylvania.



Fall 2016 Semester Review

Dinner with the Dean—September 25th

On September 25th, the Compass Learning Community hosted a College of Liberal Arts Panel which discussed the myriad of majors and minors available within the college. Dean James Brown led the panel with a variety of faculty members from the college joining him.

This program was open to all students and provided them with information regarding their future careers and how

the different disciplines in the liberal arts can fit into them.



Washington D.C. Trip—October 2nd

The Learning Communities visited Washington, D.C. on Sunday, October 2. About 50 students, from multiple learning communities, were able to attend this trip. The first stop was at Ford's Theatre which is a museum and monument. After Abraham Lincoln's tragic death at Ford's Theater, the

museum is now dedicated to understanding his ideals and leadership principles. Students also visited the Frederick Douglass House and learned about the legacy of the man himself and his life as an activist

against slavery. The students were then able to visit the Smithsonian, which consists of 19 museums, and other historic sites within the National Mall area of D.C. This trip provided students many educational opportunities.



COB New York City Trip—October 7th

On October 7th, the College of Business Learning Community took a special trip to New York City. During their visit, they had the opportunity to visit Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. At Ellis Island, one of COB mentees,

Corina Grimm, discovered her Great-Grandmother's name written on the passenger list now kept in the museum.

Students were also able to go on the Wall Street Insider Tour. The tour explored the 400 year history and the events leading up to the formation of Wall Street. To conclude their trip, the students visited Times Square and were able to experience the city and all that it has to offer.



Pumpkin Palooza —October 21st

On October 21st, the Learning Communities hosted the Great Annual LC Race. The idea for this event came from Brian Katzmaier, a Compass Learning Communities mentor. He envisioned competitions with sack races and minute-to-win-it games. It was decided to combine this with our annual Pumpkin Palooza which includes free pumpkin carving, food, candy, festive games, corn hole toss, bear pong, and sand art.

While this event was held inside on a Friday afternoon during the faculty strike, we still had over 100 students participate. Mentees from all learning communities had another opportunity to socialize together.



Fall 2016 Semester Review

Friendsgiving—November 16th

On November 16th, mentors and mentees from different LCs went to the Scranton Commons to participate in their annual Thanksgiving Dinner. This is something the LCs participate in yearly and it's a nice way for everyone to get together and enjoy a delicious meal while de-stressing from their busy day-to-day schedules.



Caving —December 3rd

On December 3rd, Quest hosted a caving trip which took place at Carnegie Cave in Shippensburg, PA. At this site, students had the opportunity to discover beautiful formations, unique environmental issues, and explore the different passages whether crawling through tight spaces or standing in 30ft ballrooms. A total of ten mentors and mentees attended and had a chance to learn the basics and ethics of caving.



Holiday Potluck—December 2nd



As the fall semester drew to a close, the LCs hosted a Holiday Potluck. On December 2nd, mentors, directors and office staff brought in different types of food for all to share.

The attendees got to play bingo, decorate cookies, make pine cone ornaments, and watch holiday films. We even held a contest for the most ugly/festive holiday attire. Fun was had by all!



“The Learning Community trips are awesome, and there is never a dull moment while we are exploring New York, museum hopping in Washington D.C., or even crawling through a cave with the Quest Learning Community!”

— John Caserta, Compass Mentor

Learning Communities Overview



College of Business Learning Community

The College of Business (COB) LC welcomes only freshmen who have declared a business major. This year there was a total of 30 COB LC mentees. At the start of the Fall 2016 semester the COB LC participated in programs such as a team building workshop and a tour of campus. Additionally, the COB LC hosted weekly meetings that included topics such as scheduling tips, Writing Center tutorials, organizational tips and much more. This year, COB LC students also had the opportunity to go to New York City and visit Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty, Wall Street, and Times Square.



College of Education Learning Community

The College of Education (COE) LC welcomes freshmen who are Education majors. This year there was a total of 50 COE LC mentees. Some events hosted by the COE LC mentors included a trip to the Bloomsburg Fair, campus scavenger hunt, and multiple stress relief programs including movie and craft nights. COE mentors also held general meetings and munchin' meetings to discuss the Education Packet, Praxis, PAPA, and how to schedule classes.



Compass Learning Community

The Compass LC welcomed 20 undeclared freshmen to campus this fall. Compass hosted several events this semester such as Meet the Dean and the Major Race which helped the students explore different majors. The mentors also held many other events such as goal setting, scheduling, stress management, tie dying, movies/craft nights and multiple study sessions. This year one of the mentors, Brian Katzmaier, led the planning for the Great Annual LC Race and Pumpkin Palooza which became an LC-wide event.



Computer Science Learning Community

The Computer Science (CS) Learning Community is designed specifically for first-year Computer Science majors only. This year there was a total of 14 CS LC mentees. At the start of the semester, the Computer Science LC hosted a Pokémon-Go event around campus and a LAN party. During the semester the mentors held weekly robot building sessions. Additionally, mentors facilitated a study session to prepare for finals week.

Learning Communities Overview



Frederick Douglass Learning Community

The Frederick Douglass (FD) LC welcomes freshmen who are pursuing any major or who are presently undeclared. This year there was a total of 18 FD LC mentees. The Frederick Douglass mentors started off the semester by hosting workshops on the history of Frederick Douglass as well as team building activities. During the semester the mentors held regular meetings to discuss topics such as racism, culture, LGBTQA issues, and voting. There were also sessions held to assist the mentees with any issues they were experiencing during their first semester in college.



Health Sciences Learning Community

The Health Sciences (HS) LC is open to freshmen who are majoring in the sciences. This year there was a total of 96 HS LC mentees. At the start of the semester, Health Science mentors hosted an ice cream social, meet & greet, and movie night. Once the mentees and mentors had began building their relationships, mentors held weekly study sessions to provide a quiet and engaging environment to study. The HS LC also hosted regular meetings to update the mentees on upcoming events helped them prepare for future semesters as a science major.



Mi Segunda Casa Learning Community

The Mi Segunda Casa (MSC) LC provides a language-immersion environment to foster a language proficiency and increase cultural awareness. This was the first semester for the MSC LC and 13 students participated. The mentors hosted multiple team building events, tie dying activities, a spa day, and a spooky social event. Mi Segunda Casa also hosted a family dinner which included different foods based on the Spanish culture. Throughout the semester students had many opportunities to learn about the artistic contributions of Spanish-speaking people in history.



Quest Outdoor Leadership Learning Community

The Quest Outdoor Leadership LC welcomes first-year students focused on developing leadership through teambuilding, small group communication and decision making. This year there was a total of 27 Quest LC mentees. This semester the Quest LC participated in programs including the Giant's Ladder, rappelling, rock climbing, night Frisbee, caving, hiking and backpacking. Mentors also held monthly meetings to continue building relationships with their mentees and help them acclimate to the college environment.

Learning Communities Overview



(Army) ROTC Learning Community

The primary focus of the ROTC LC is leadership and citizenship. This semester 18 ROTC members participated in many events and sessions that taught them about ROTC in general and about the requirements they must fulfill. ROTC members also had to regularly participate in morning drill practice before class. Mentors also hosted a military movie night and a program educating the mentees on how to be safe off campus. ROTC members also went to the GORUCK Challenge in Schwenksville, PA.



Visual & Performing Arts Learning Community

The Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) LC is a community of students who share a common passion for the arts. This year there was a total of 15 VPA LC mentees. At the start of the semester, VPA mentors hosted ice breaker programs, movie nights and dinners in order to get to know their mentees. Other programs such as informational sessions on scholarships, scheduling tips, yoga, and de-stressing. Mentees and mentors also participated in and attended multiple shows during the semester including the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

“The Learning Communities was the second best choice I have made. The first being coming to Bloomsburg University. Being in a Learning Community I felt as if I was prepared because everyone was a freshman student like me and we became so close that they are another family. Kind of ironic that the name for my Learning Community is Mi Segunda Casa. [...]”

— Steven Lopez, Mi Segunda Casa Mentee



Learning Community Statistics—Fall 2016

115%

Learning community GPAs were 115% higher in comparison to the rest of the freshman class.

2.74

The average GPA for learning community students was 2.74.

301

We had over 300 students enrolled in the learning communities at the beginning of the fall semester.

**Please note these statistics do not include PLP and Honors.*

“I love being a member of the Education LC. We’ve done lots of fun activities together and it has helped me so much with the transition into college. [...]”

— **Maddie Huyler**, College of Education Mentee



“The LC has been fantastic; it has been full of great opportunities for me to take advantage of and help me grow as a person. [...]”

— **Josh Lunger**, College of Business Mentee

Learning Communities Office Staff & Students



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Letter from the Author:



My name is Sarah Bartra and I am the Learning Communities Program Assistant. I am in my final year here at Bloomsburg University as a double major in Biological Allied Health and Communication Studies, and a minor in Spanish. For the past four years of my college career, I have been involved with the Learning Communities program in many different capacities. I am absolutely blessed and honored to have been able to stay with this program as long as I have. This semester, Fall 2016, I was also able to do my Communication Studies internship with the Learning Communities. One of the responsibilities as an intern was to create a Fall semester newsletter. With that being said, I hope this newsletter demonstrates just how fantastic the Learning Communities are and all the excellent opportunities that are available.

— Sarah Bartra, Fall 2016



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