

## The Compass Community at Longwood University

A Proposal for a Living-Learning Community for Students with an Undeclared Major  
2008-2009

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Often, campuses institute living-learning communities (LLCs) around a theme (sustainability, activism), a disciplinary major (languages, engineering), or Honors programs as a way to assist with student recruitment, retention, and persistence.

Through forging academic links and developing extracurricular programming, we have as our primary goal assisting those students most at risk for leaving Longwood to locate a comfortable, productive direction for the rest of their academic experience and beyond.

### Living-Learning community for 22 first-year students with Undeclared major

- ~ high school GPA of 3.0
- ~ application process reviewed by faculty/staff participants
- ~ no PLUS, honors, or English 150 dual-enrollment students
- ~ willing to stay "undeclared" for academic year

### Housed between two floors in Curry residence hall

- ~ experienced, engaged REC
- ~ allows for continued connection and opportunity to integrate with general first-year population
- ~ classroom space/study/socializing areas available

### Curricular/co-curricular links

Connected student learning is one goal of the academic aspect of The Compass Community. Through faculty collaboration that could include readings or assignments in common or in sequence, students are likely to see connections clearer among their courses. To that end, students in The Compass Community will share several courses that meet General Education requirements while "filling in" their schedule with two or three additional courses of their choice.

In the **Fall 2008 Semester**, students will take

<p><b>ENGL 150:</b> Writing and Research (Goal 2) with Dr. Esther Godfrey (3 credits); <b>GNED 261:</b> Exploring Science in Our World (Goal 6 ) with Dr. Alix Fink (4 credits); <i>This class is often referred to as "The Power of Water"; and</i> <b>LSEM 100/Longwood Seminar:</b> Focus on Career Planning (Goal 1) with Ellen Masters (1 credit)</p>
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**Total: 8 credits in 3 General Education Goal areas**

In the **Spring 2009 Semester**, students will take

<p><b>SOCI 102:</b> Contemporary Social Problems (Goal 8) with Dr. Lee Bidwell (3 credits) <b>ENGL 202:</b> British Literature (Goal 3) with Dr. Chene Heady (3 credits)</p>
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**Total: 6 credits in 2 General Education areas**

- ~ additional special programming (sustainability, field trip/retreat)
- ~ interactions with faculty from variety of disciplines
- ~ dinners with Community partners

**Assessment**

The faculty liaison, consulting with Longwood's Office of Institutional Research, will develop an assessment plan and implement assessment during the academic year, reporting by August 2009 to community partners.

**Resources Required**

- ~stipends for faculty teaching in this community and additional peer mentor
- ~travel to local/regional retreat
- ~operating costs for publicity, printing services
- ~seat buy outs for selected courses
  - ENGL 150/Writing & Research typically caps at 22 students
  - ENGL 202/British Literature typically caps at 25 students
  - GNED 261/Exploring Science in Our World (The Power of Water) typically caps at 24 students
  - SOCI 102 /Contemporary Social Problems typically caps at 40 students

**Coordinators**

This joint initiative is coordinated by a staff and faculty member who each have experience developing, programming, teaching, and assessing LLCs.

**Sarah E. Whitley**, director of Longwood's First-Year Experience, (insert credentials here) has extensive experience working in residence halls for first-year students and has coordinated six theme and disciplined-based communities at James Madison University through the Office of Orientation and First Year Experience. In addition to these communities, she designed and opened a seventh community for pre-professional health majors prior to her departure from JMU.

**Susan L. Booker**, assistant professor of English, has taught linked courses in first-year composition with students in journalism and animal science at Iowa State University and has assessed student and faculty experiences with those learning communities.

## The Compass Community/Tentative Timeline 2008-2009

<b>March 2008:</b>	Initial publicity is mailed with <i>The Answer Book</i> Web-based application process begins
<b>April 2008:</b>	Continual acceptance of applications Discussion of LLC with new students at April Open House
<b>May 2008:</b>	Selection committee reviews applications and selects cohort Applicants notified by mid-May (If community is not filled, applications will be accepted)
<b>May/June 2008:</b>	Selected students meet with LLC faculty/administrators/Peer Mentors during orientation luncheon. Selected students invited to participate in a social networking tools.
<b>July 2008:</b>	Continued communication with students Programming meetings with faculty/campus partners Preparation for Community opening Final community luncheon at July O&R
<b>August 2008:</b>	The Compass Community OPENS! Community Orientation (students, faculty, administrators, Peer Mentors, REC, RAs) Community program with <i>Radical Simplicity</i> author, Jim Merkel
<b>September 2008:</b>	Programming & Check In Meetings Begin Faculty Dinner Series Volunteer & Involvement Fair
<b>October 2008:</b>	LLC Retreat
<b>November 2008:</b>	Continued Programming, Majors Fair? Meet with community members to determine if they will continue
<b>December 2008:</b>	End of semester assessment & celebration! Begin course selections/faculty recruitment for Fall 2009
<b>January 2009:</b>	New LLC courses begin, MLK Service Challenge Continue course selection/faculty recruitment efforts Meet with RCL to determine housing options for Fall 2009
<b>February 2009:</b>	Continued Programming & Check In Meetings Finalize course offerings/faculty/space for Fall 2009 Design publicity for distribution
<b>March 2009:</b>	Potential community ASB trip(s) Begin contacting students and open application
<b>April 2009:</b>	End of year assessments Have current LLC members promote at Open House Continue reading/reviewing applications
<b>May 2008:</b>	Community Cook Out! Begin notification of new members!

*\*All programming will be designed to address the needs and desires of the community members, faculty, and coursework. Additionally, community members will be expected to support/partner with the programming efforts of the RAs associated with the community.*