

First-Year Learning Community Proposal Form Help

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Academic Focus of the Community: FYLCs can be focused on a major (e.g., Music, Creative Writing), a cluster of majors (e.g., Business, Pre-Health, Education and Human Sciences), or a shared interest (e.g., ROTC, social advocacy).

Populations of Students Who May Be Interested in the Community: Please identify potential groups of students to whom marketing can be targeted for this FYLC. Target groups might be connected to a specific major or degree program (pre-health, business, etc.), to a specific demographic (out-of-state, underrepresented populations, etc.), or to other characteristic (interest in ROTC, past experience in high school speech and debate, etc.). Please note, generally FYLC membership is not limited to a specific declared major.

Sponsoring Department(s)/Program(s): The primary form of support departments/programs offer is the time of their faculty/staff. There is no requirement for a direct financial commitment from a sponsoring department/program. Each FYLC will be allotted a programming budget derived from student fees and is proportional to the size of the community.

Faculty Sponsor(s): The sponsoring individual should be someone who has substantial, meaningful academic contact with students on a regular basis, such as a faculty member or an academic adviser. Ideally (although not required), the faculty sponsor would teach one class in which the FYLC students co-enroll during the fall semester, ranging from a 3-credit course to a zero-credit seminar.

Community Size: Generally, 15 students is the minimum necessary to achieve a cohesive Learning Community experience. For a FYLC's first year, maximum caps are usually set at approx. 25-30 students. Maximums may be set in conjunction with a course cap (e.g., a lab or recitation section size). To ensure quality of student experience and appropriate workload for faculty sponsors, communities that grow beyond 40-50 students require a second dedicated faculty sponsor.

Courses Associated with Community: Please identify at least two fall courses and one spring course for co-enrollment. You may identify more possibilities; list them in order of preference. Potential courses should be either ACE-certified or zero/one-credit "intro to the FYLC focus" seminars. One course in the fall should be offered by the sponsoring department/program, but there is no requirement for all co-enrolled courses to be from one department. In fact, often it is best to branch out and help students gain more than one ACE requirement. Avoid Math and math placement-dependent courses and First-Year Writing courses due to varying placement and high number of students bringing in credit, respectively. The LC staff is happy to help you identify potential courses or develop a minimal credit seminar.

Faculty Sponsor-led Programming: Please identify at least two potential faculty-led programs for the FYLC. We ask each sponsor to lead a minimum of three different events per semester that are exclusive to the FYLC. Frequently, sponsors utilize existing departmental/campus events such as a speaker series or departmental conferences and add an exclusive experience for the FYLC students, such as a “meet and greet” with a visiting speaker. Also, many FYLCs undertake a service project under the sponsor’s leadership. The Learning Communities staff will support the faculty sponsor by coordinating logistical details including space, transportation, food, etc.

Signature Event: As one of the six sponsor-led events in the year, we ask each FYLC to develop a signature event that helps define the community. Please suggest a possible signature event. For example, the Engineering FYLC’s signature event is “Steak and Eggs,” where the FYLC students enjoy a steak dinner with the College of Engineering faculty members and then build egg-protector cases and drop them off the top of Abel hall.

Field Trip: Going beyond the classroom is a significant component of the FYLC experience. Ideally, each FYLC will have an out-of-Lincoln field trip which allows students to experience their academic focus in a “real world” setting, often by touring a relevant business or organization, meeting with alumni, etc. For example, the Pre-Health FYLC will be traveling to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota this year, and other FYLCs are exploring destinations ranging from Western Nebraska to Omaha to Kansas City.

Proposed name(s): Please suggest two or three possible names for your FYLC. The name of the community is an important tool when recruiting prospective students. Names should clearly and directly convey the purpose of the community, any department/college affiliations, and distinguish it from other existing FYLCs. Examples include “Media Smarts: Broadcasting, Journalism, & Sports Communication”; “Ag Futures: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, & Service”; and “EcoLeaders: Environmental Sustainability in Action.”

Questions?: Contact Vaughn Love, vaughn.love@unl.edu or 402-472-7715.