

Living Learning Community Proposal : Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

The UNCG Global Village: Explorations in Languages and Cultures

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Overview: This living learning community, sponsored by the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, will include 40-50 students, each enrolled in at least one language course offered by LLC as well as the new LLC general education course currently under review (LLC 1xx, “Global Popular Culture.” See attached syllabus.) Five languages will be included in the initial phase: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. Although the number of participants in each language will vary somewhat, we intend to balance the numbers as much as possible, and anticipate 8-10 students per language. Five facilitators (ideally one native-speaker/heritage student for each of the five languages) will be included as participants in the learning community. In exchange for a stipend, they will be expected to assist in organizing conversation groups and cultural events, and to function as a resource for the community. These facilitators will constitute an essential element of the learning community, providing direct personal contact with five very different cultures, assuring representation of cultural diversity within the community, and offering linguistic resources that will complement, enrich, and reinforce the language instruction that participants receive in the classroom.

Faculty: The learning community will be coordinated by a five-member faculty committee from the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, with one member for each language, and with one designated as lead faculty member.

Student Population: This learning community is designed for freshmen and other incoming students who are enrolled in at least one language course offered by LLC. It may include some language majors and heritage speakers, but is open to students of any major at various levels of language study. The admission requirements will be set by faculty responsible for each language, and will vary according to the size of the language program, the range of courses offered, and the number of applicants. For example, in Chinese, with a relatively limited number

of students enrolled in the elementary and intermediate levels of instruction (204 is currently the highest level offered at UNCG), the minimal language proficiency might be set at the 102 level. For Spanish, on the other hand, a large program with well over 100 majors and minors, the minimal language proficiency might be set at 204 level, or even higher, with a language assessment interview included in the application process. As a result of varying entrance levels, the learning community will be constituted from students representing a wide variety of language backgrounds, ranging from novices to students who have benefited from study abroad experience while in high school to heritage speakers.

Academic Linkages: All students will be enrolled in at least one language course offered by LLC and the new LLC general education course currently under review, LLC 1xx, “Global Popular Culture” (see attached syllabus). Various assignments will be carried out in conjunction with both courses. For example, a student taking the LLC intro course and German 204, might be asked to prepare an oral presentation in German for GER 204 (see sample syllabus) involving an aspect of German popular music covered in the LLC course (see, for example, calendar for LLC course: week of Sept. 12, “*Germany meets the US: German Hip Hop.*”) The same linkage could easily be established for other courses in the basic language program (102 and 203) or in major-level courses (300-level). Students taking French 301, for example, could be asked to write a brief essay in French on the cultural and political significance of French music. They could reflect on France’s cultural protectionism in the 1990s and the objective of maintaining an “exception culturelle” implementing some quotas on broadcasting to protect its cultural market from what is perceived as a globalizing domination of English and US cultural imperialism. The essential commonality would involve language-specific assignments. Material presented in English in the LLC course would be complemented by an oral or written exploration in the target language, providing a more immediate cultural contact, while strengthening critical language skills. In the second semester, students would be required to take at least one language course offered by LLC and also FFL 102 (under development). Assignments in FFL 102 would involve relevant elements of co-curricular programming in the learning community, and could also include a service-learning component. (For example, a student might interview and assist an immigrant family in Greensboro, working in the target language, and then use the experience as the basis for a project in FFL 102 and the language course in which the student is currently enrolled.)

Learning Goals and Outcomes: The following goals are proposed for the living learning community:

- Develop the identity of a life-long active learner within the context of a multilingual and multicultural living learning community
- Develop a sense of belonging within the larger UNCG community and introduce the students to the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
- Increase global awareness and sensitivity toward diversity through contact with diverse linguistic and cultural communities on and off campus
- Foster an understanding of the critical importance of research and critical inquiry within a global context

The participants of the living learning community will be expected to attain the following learning outcomes:

(1) Increase their linguistic and cultural proficiency in the studied language in and outside the classroom

Assessed through course work

(2) Compare and contrast linguistic and cultural communities and analyze the impact of differences between and communalities among these communities on campus and beyond

Assessed through course work and co-curricular activities

(3) Integrate curricular and co-curricular learning through activities that link courses and co-curricular events constituting the living learning community

Assessed through course work and reflection (journal writing, group discussion)

(4) Through peer-learning evaluate the importance of continued intellectual engagement within a global context. Students will decide how their future course of study will intersect with their experiences in the living learning community

Assessed through course work and reflection (journal writing, group discussion)

Components of Learning Community to be Integrated with Theme: The living learning community offers opportunities for students to engage in collaborative knowledge construction. The following features of the community are designed to fulfill students' needs (to improve language skills and deepen cultural understanding), to improve their communication as well as leadership skills, and to enhance their global awareness. Through these interactive and curricular coherence activities students become active learners. Co-curricular features will include

1. Study groups by target language

Each language group establishes a study group that fosters effective study habits and positive relationship with peers. Collaboration with the Student Study Program (SSP) provides each group a coordinator to assist in the formal development of study groups. The purpose is to enhance students learning and improve their course grades.

2. Target language discussion groups

Discussions will be topic-oriented and coordinated by faculty members or student facilitators. Groups utilize off-campus resources such as “The Times Talks” (support program offered by The New York Times) or language-specific media available through the Internet (e.g., *Le Monde*) to provide topics of discussion related to relevant cultural and social topics. Participation is open to non-LLC peers. (Non-resident students who are enrolled in LLC-designated sections are especially encouraged to participate.)

3. International Day

Students present their research on target cultures to their peers and faculty (the event is open to all UNCG community). Students might make similar presentations in the UnConference sponsored by Ashby Residential College.

4. International Film Series

Film viewing is followed by facilitated discussions.

5. International Dinners

To be organized by students and student facilitators. May be country-specific or could be broadened to include cuisine from various countries. Faculty will be strongly encouraged to participate. (If the LC decides to claim a patch of the UNCG garden, maybe some of the products could be integrated into various dishes.)

6. Guest Speakers

Invite native-speakers from different fields (business, local community, etc) international students and faculty to give presentations of general interest to the learning community.

7. Excursions

A number of cultural events are held annually throughout the area. For example, the Latin American Coalition hosts a number of events in Charlotte including a festival in honor of the Mexican Day of the Dead tradition, the *Día de los Muertos*, featuring

traditional foods, folkloric arts, dances, and other activities, and attracting over 1,000 participants from the area.

8. Campus Initiatives Related to Internationalization. Students will be encouraged to participate in various campus initiatives that feature a strong international component, such as the Global Leadership Program, the IPC International Festival (April), the Moon Festival (IGS), and various events sponsored by the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

9. Community Service Projects:

Service projects will be organized to promote campus awareness of immigrant-related issues, possibly in conjunction with established agencies involved with refugee resettlement such as the Church World Service (Greensboro office), African Services Coalition, and the Center for New North Carolinians.

Impact on Learning Across the University: The living learning community will provide students with linguistic and cultural proficiency in a variety of languages and with interpersonal and academic skills in order to prepare its members for meaningful lives and careers in an increasingly globally networked world. The UNCG Global Village will also acquaint incoming students with various programs and events that support the part of the University's mission related to internationalization. In particular, it will offer multiple opportunities for learning across UNCG's curriculum and develop a foundation for the education of life-long active learners within a multilingual and multicultural environment:

1. Linguistic and cultural proficiency: We consider proficiency in more than one language to be a critical 21st century skill. The learning community will encourage its participants to think of themselves as users of more than one language and will facilitate the acquisition of linguistic and cultural competencies that reach beyond the disciplinary boundaries of linguistics or the study of one particular language. (Associated with Learning Outcome # 1)

2. Intercultural awareness and diversity: The UNCG Global Village aims to increase intercultural awareness and to open students to the diversity within and beyond their immediate community. Intercultural awareness and diversity are seen as both core values and critical concepts that shape and challenge traditional ways of knowing and knowledge creation. (Associated with Learning Outcome # 2)

3. Interdisciplinarity: The UNCG Global Village represents an interdisciplinary community with an array of languages and cultures represented by related, yet distinct disciplines. In addition, the study of languages, literatures, and cultures provides multiple linkages to other

fields, such as history, Women and Gender Studies, African-American Studies, English, Media Studies, etc. (Associated with Learning Outcome # 3)

4. Research and critical skills: The study of languages, literatures, and cultures is based on a variety of theories and methodologies and hence uniquely suited to help students to develop critical analytical and research skills. Their development combined with the opportunity to develop linguistic and cultural competencies constitute an undergraduate education within the tradition of the liberal arts that prepares students to pursue a wide array of professional interests, to adapt to evolving expectations of the job market, and to further their education at graduate and professional schools. (Associated with Learning Outcome # 4)

Theme Amplified by Shared Experience: The living learning community will complement, enhance, and deepen the students' academic experience in several ways:

- Provide additional cultural contact through facilitators, students, faculty, communities of native-speakers (e.g., immigrant families, cultural festivals), cultural products (e.g., films, food, etc.)
- Develop a sense of solidarity among participants, based on common academic and personal interests
- Promote interest in study abroad
- Promote interest in the various language-related majors and minors offered by UNCG

Residence Hall Preference: Phillips-Hawkins would be an ideal placement for this living learning community since it has already been designated as a residential focus for international activities. The living learning community could benefit from the International House, the proximity of international students, and various events sponsored by Mosaic and I-House, such as the Friday Fest.

Budget:

Stipend for Native-Speaking Student Facilitators	5 @ \$1,500	\$7,500
Faculty Leader Add-Pay	2 sem. @ \$3,500	\$7,000
Excursions	5 @ \$500	\$2,500
Film/Speaker Series		\$2,500
Supplies for Facilitators (dinners, other events) \$2,000	5 @ \$400	
Retreat/Team-Building Event		\$1,000
Marketing/Recruitment		\$1,000
	TOTAL	\$23,500

Marketing/Recruitment: We have already contacted the Admissions Office, and received a very positive response. The Admissions staff will include the learning community in their materials and will publicize it along with the other LCs in their recruiting events. If the proposal has been approved by October 22, it will be included in the Spartan Showcase event. Incoming students who show an interest in languages will be contacted directly, and invited to apply for admission to the learning community. We know of only one similar learning community at peer campuses (the Language and Culture Community at Appalachian State appears to be more loosely structured and lacks the strong academic component featured in the learning community that we are proposing). We believe that this innovative concept will attract considerable interest from students of various backgrounds and academic interests, will strengthen the study of language and culture at UNCG, and will eventually develop into a model community that could be showcased by the University.

