

Faculty Information on Learning Communities

What are Learning Communities (LCs) at Texas Wesleyan University?

LCs Provide:

- ✓ A sense of community
- ✓ Student-centered education
- ✓ Cross-disciplinary discussion of issues
- ✓ An exploration of diverse perspectives
- ✓ An enriched learning experience
- ✓ Increased student engagement
- ✓ Increased student success
- ✓ Enhanced student retention
- ✓ A platform for implementing active learning pedagogies
- ✓ Improved writing and communication skills



Learning Communities (LCs) are structured groups of students who enroll in the same two to three courses focused on an interdisciplinary theme. This experience fosters more explicit intellectual connections among students, between students and faculty, and among faculty across disciplines.

“Teaching within a learning community has offered me opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in other disciplines in designing educational experiences that are enriching for students and for me personally. This initiative has motivated me to take the next steps in implementing instructional technology and learner-centered strategies in my classes.”

*—Dr. Stacia Neeley,
Assistant Professor of English*



Highlights:

- ✓ LC courses are part of the university's general education requirement and therefore can be used toward degree fulfillment.
- ✓ This new program is piloted through the U.S. Department of Education's Strengthening Institutions Grant (Title III).
- ✓ Target populations of freshman and transfer students are supported in their transition to Texas Wesleyan.

For more information contact: Laurel Mayo, Activity Director/Learning Specialist, Title III, 817-531-6565, lmayo@txwes.edu

LC Constructive Partnerships

The LC Experience:

- ✓ **Student-centered:** focusing on student engagement and development of new knowledge.
- ✓ **Interdisciplinary:** integrating subjects typically taught as individual courses.
- ✓ **Collaborative:** incorporating assignments integrated across different disciplines.
- ✓ **Analytical:** exposing students to multiple and conflicting perspectives through critical thinking processes.
- ✓ **Experiential:** encouraging both academic and social growth through active learning, including group projects, presentations, service-learning, and field research.
- ✓ **Community-oriented:** bonding faculty and students in a closer relationship as they learn together.
- ✓ **Connected:** integrating knowledge across disciplines for application in real-world situations.
- ✓ **Theme-based:** involving rigorous study of complex, contemporary problems and issues.

Faculty Opportunities:

- ✓ Build community among faculty and overcome isolation imposed by discipline-bound structures.
- ✓ Gain support and assistance from peer faculty in collaborative teaching.
- ✓ Promote intellectual vitality and conduct in-depth analysis of various subject areas.
- ✓ Teach innovative courses and themes.
- ✓ Foster dynamic student-centered learning.
- ✓ Increase students' persistence through mentoring.
- ✓ Gain valuable training on new instructional strategies and tools from the Title III Grant staff and the CETL.

Faculty Responsibilities:

- ✓ Interface with fellow faculty to develop and maintain integrated learning experiences.
- ✓ Work with LC Cluster colleagues to discuss common themes, assignments, and issues.
- ✓ Participate in the Faculty Summer Institute and Fall LC Kickoff.
- ✓ Support new and returning LC faculty through participation in various workshops throughout the year.
- ✓ Collaborate with Title III staff to improve Learning Communities at Texas Wesleyan University.

“Learning communities help give our campus profile of commuting students a feeling of an educational ‘family’ that is so important to their sense of belonging and to their retention.”

—Joe Brown,
Professor of Theatre
Dean of Freshmen Success

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