



CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY  
LIVING LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES

# Curriculum Guide





# Cleveland State University Living Learning Communities Curriculum Guide

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Cleveland State University Living Learning Communities (CSU LLC) will assist students with how to successfully navigate their way to and through higher education as well as facilitate intentional and in-depth communication and understanding among students of diverse backgrounds and identities. Students will experience how to be accountable to their inclusive community. The community engages in strengths-based practices to identify and/or confirm the educational pathway that best suits their abilities. In addition, leadership development, motivation and self-efficacious practices will inform their community and inspire critical thinking about how these values manifest in the residential community, on campus and globally.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cleveland State University's Living Learning Communities offer a unique college experience that addresses opportunity gaps to increase the persistence and retention of students with an emphasis on individual strengths.

## PROGRAM THEME

The CSU LLC will focus on leadership development and career exploration.

CORE VALUES	Engagement Activities	+	Quality of Campus Environment	=	Student Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Academic efforts</li><li>▶ Higher-order thinking skills</li><li>▶ Academic integration</li><li>▶ Active and collaborative learning</li><li>▶ Interaction with faculty members</li><li>▶ Diversity-related experiences</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Quality of mentorship advising experiences (graduation coaches)</li><li>▶ Supportive campus environment (academic and social support, quality of relationships with peers and CSU staff)</li><li>▶ Satisfaction of overall college experience</li></ul>	

## PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES



### **GOAL I: PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Objective — Scholars will:*

1. Meet with their graduation coach once per week via email, text or face to face



### **GOAL II: CURRICULUM AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

*Objective — Scholars will:*

1. Attend all scheduled classes
2. Maintain a minimum of 12 credit hours
3. Maintain at least a 2.5 GPA



### **GOAL III: STRUCTURED OUT OF CLASS ACTIVITIES**

*Objective — Scholars will:*

1. Attend a weekly two-hour co-curricular study session or social activity
  - a. Includes tutoring
  - b. Personal growth activities
  - c. Campus life adaptation



### **GOAL IV: PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS**

*Objective — Scholars will:*

1. Attend all activities scheduled by external partners (i.e., KeyBank)
2. Participate in external partner surveys related to exploring options for careers that follow their interest and projected career needs (e.g., Internships; GetWorkerFit)

## PRIMARY INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

- Scholars will participate in service learning, wellness and professional development opportunities unique to this program
- Scholars will participate in weekly small and large group meetings and activities



## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Upon completion of participation in the two-year CSU LLC program, students will be better prepared to:

1. Identify a professional career pathway
2. Engage in internship, co-op opportunities, hands-on research projects
3. Access personal strengths to inform leadership development
4. Leverage community and leadership network
5. Emerge as a CSU student ambassador and CSU LLC student representative



## CSU LLC MEMBER AGREEMENT

INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WHO FAIL TO MEET PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS, COMMITMENTS AND GUIDELINES WILL BE FORMALLY NOTIFIED BY THE CSU LLC DIRECTOR. APPROPRIATE FOLLOW-UP WILL OCCUR TO ENSURE SUCCESS IN THE CSU LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

### ***Expectations:***

1. Must have a minimum 2.5 GPA
2. Be in good standing within university and college, including social, academic and financial areas
3. Abide by all university and college policies outlined in the student code of conduct policies
4. Returning members must have been an active participant within the CSU LLC the year prior
5. Refrain from use of alcohol

### ***Guidelines:***

1. Attend all classes on time
2. Be prepared
3. Stay ahead of your schedule
4. Contact director and graduation coach in the event of an emergency
5. Manage personal conflicts appropriately with the resident assistants, if necessary
6. Seek out resources when needed
7. Register for classes in a timely manner
8. Reflect on progress consistently
9. Stay in contact with advisors and coaches on a regular basis
10. Be in good standing within university and college, including social, academic and financial areas

### ***Member Commitments:***

1. Participate in fall and spring kick-off event, and any other special programs organized by the CSU LLC team
2. Participate in all activities and satisfy all requirements stated in CSU LLC curriculum
3. Meet with the entire CSU LLC community once a week to reflect, plan and address issues
4. Meet as a group and individually with the CSU LLC team
5. Submit reflective assignments outlining what the individual has learned during group meetings
6. Assist with the planning of the mini-conference
7. Take part in research initiatives to assess program effectiveness

## **CSU LLC Standard Programmatic Features**

### **LIVING LEARNING RESIDENTIAL CURRICULUM**

Living Learning Residential Curriculum is a high impact practice, allowing scholars the ability to build relationships with peers and be provided with supports from faculty who truly care about their success. Scholars will reside, take classes and participate in activities with peers assigned to the same community. This is particularly important for first-year college students who may require additional support to navigate the college environment (Palm & Thomas, 2015). This can be fostered through a sense of belonging a community environment offers, particularly for students of color in higher education (Blake & Moore, 2004). Students participating in Living Learning Communities have been shown to have higher grade point averages and graduation rates than those who do not participate (Palm & Thomas, 2015). The CSU LLC is unique in that it has a strengths-based focus, encouraging scholars to realize their individual strengths and use them to advance in college, leadership opportunities and in their future careers.

### **STRENGTHS-BASED PROGRAMMING**

Scholars will take the Clifton StrengthsFinder to learn about their strengths. When scholars engage in strengths-based programming with success coaches, faculty, residential assistants and their peers, the focus will be on their individual talents and how they can harness these strengths for success in college and beyond. When CSU LLC scholars learn what their strengths are and actively engage in conversations with faculty, advisors and peers, retention and graduation rates have been shown to improve (Soria & Taylor, 2016; Soria & Stubblefield, 2014). Students will regularly reflect on their strengths when considering leadership roles and career development.

### **GRADUATION COACHING MODEL**

Opportunities to engage with a coach in college has been shown to increase persistence for students (Bettinger & Baker, 2011). Scholars participating in the CSU LLC will receive support from a success coach who will provide structured advising, mentorship and assist them with skill development in areas of time management, college readiness wrap-around services, as well as career development with respect to their strengths. First-generation students may have a difficult time navigating services available to them, so having a coach will help mediate against this potential barrier to graduation (Haskins, 2016). In addition, having access to a success coach and faculty mentors can increase persistence and retention (Brooms, 2018; Banks & Dohy, 2019). Scholars will meet with success coaches on a weekly basis their first semester and taper off as this support becomes less necessary.

### **CAREER PATHWAYS**

CSU LLC scholars will engage in a number of activities that will allow them to consider potential career pathways associated with their majors/minors of choice. They will begin with GetWorkerFit, which utilizes an online career assessment and planning tool that equips individuals with self-knowledge of their strengths, and a plan geared toward choosing, preparing for and securing an in-demand career. Scholars will also conduct research and shadow in the field to gain a sense of opportunities available to them upon graduation. Students will reflect on their experiences with respect to their strengths. Retention rates have been shown to improve when students have opportunities for professional development and access to professionals in their field (Munoz, Miller, & Poole, 2016).



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Scholars participating in the CSU LLC will be able to hone their leadership styles with an emphasis on how their strengths will equip them to do so. Students will lead an on-campus project of their own vision, recruiting others to assist them in realizing their ideas. As they progress in the program, they will become student mentors to incoming freshmen during their second year in the CSU LLC.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Students engaged in community service have often been found to have higher retention rates and better understand their ability to effect change (Gruber, 2017). Scholars of the CSU LLC will participate in community service. Opportunities to participate in community service allow students to gain skills and hands-on experience relevant to their career pathways as well as proving the ability to network in the field.

## WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

Access to resources and human capital has been shown to increase retention and graduation rates (Brooms, 2018). Scholars in the CSU LLC will receive necessary support to be successful, addressing individual needs and concerns, including, but not limited to, faculty affiliates, who will meet with students weekly to help scholars cope with transitioning to college and persisting through challenges, weekly meetings with success coaches to focus on individual talents when approaching college, leadership and career pathway research and application projects to realize potential and financial aid support to ensure students know their options for continuing their education following the conclusion of the CSU Living Learning Communities experience.

## CSU LLC Supporting Research

The purpose the CSU Living Learning Communities is to ensure a smooth transition from high school to college through a focus on writing, developing human capital and exploring majors and minors, career pathways and leadership through a strengths-based lens. In order to meet the needs of all students in a comprehensive way, we must consider our scholars' areas of growth and strengths (Banks & Dohy, 2019). This program does not believe that deficits reside with the scholars, but in systems that may have left them underprepared for college. It is our responsibility as an institution to mediate against opportunity gaps that leave students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds behind, to encourage the persistence and retention of all the students we serve (Banks & Dohy, 2019).

According to Dulabaum (2016), students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds do not feel adequately prepared for course work in terms of writing ability, computer literacy, time management and study skills. As a result, the students participating in the CSU LLC will be engaged in weekly activities that mediate against this potential deficit. In addition, to increase motivation and persistence in college, having access to resources and human capital is essential (Brooms, 2018). Scholars in the CSU LLC will be introduced to faculty, mentors and success coaches whom are able to help scholars navigate campus life and successfully integrate their skills to realize leadership skills.

This initiative is further supported by living and learning with a peer group in their Living Learning Community. Scholars may come to college with majors and minors in mind; however, as students take classes and learn more options, they may change their majors. This can increase the amount of time it will take a student to finish their degree and can increase the amount of debt they will be in when they leave. As such, students are provided with the opportunity to explore all of their options here at CSU with consideration to their strengths. When students learn what their strengths are and actively engage in conversations with faculty, advisors and peers, retention and graduation rates have been shown to improve (Soria & Taylor, 2016; Soria & Stubblefield, 2014).

As CSU LLC scholars deepen their understanding of their strengths, they will apply this knowledge for self-advocacy, leadership development and career exploration with special attention to their mental health and motivation. Mental health is an increasing concern for students on college campuses across the United States. As a result, scholars will be introduced to Trauma Informed Care, where they will learn strategies to cope with potential past and present traumas as well as mental illnesses, such as anxiety and depression, to ensure their success in college and beyond. In addition, motivation and self-efficacious practices will be addressed.

All of these topics will come together to promote persistence and retention of students in the CSU LLC. The CSU LLC is rooted heavily in research-based practices that promote persistence, retention and subsequent graduation rates. This is realized through high-quality success coaching, attending to areas of need with a focus on strengths, career exploration and leadership opportunities.



### **QUESTIONS?**

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## CSU LLC CURRICULUM MATRIX

This curriculum matrix demonstrates an alignment between the CSU LLC curriculum, research and Ohio Standards, where the focus on student strengths and socio-emotional wellbeing is harnessed to increase persistence and retention rates at Cleveland State University.

LLC PROGRAMMATIC FEATURES	OHIO STANDARDS ALIGNMENT	PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION RESEARCH
<p><b>Living Learning Residential Curriculum</b></p>	<p>A3. 1.d Utilize support from trusted adults, as well as resources and agencies that provide academic, social, emotional or health-related support</p> <p>A3. 3.d Access community resources and safety networks for self or others</p> <p>B2. 2.d Utilize school, family and community or varied resources that may assist in achieving a goal</p> <p>D1. 1.d Actively engage in positive interactions to make connections with peers, adults and community to support and achieve common goals</p> <p>D2. 1.d Establish and actively participate in a healthy network of personal, school and community relationships</p> <p>E4. 3.d Anticipate and plan for transitions in post-secondary life</p>	<p>(Blake &amp; Moore, 2004); (Palm &amp; Thomas, 2015); (Strayhorn, 2017)</p>
<p><b>Graduation Coaching Model</b></p>	<p>A3. 1.d Utilize support from trusted adults, as well as resources and agencies that provide academic, social, emotional or health-related support</p> <p>A4. 3.d Demonstrate self-advocacy in context-specific situations</p>	<p>(Bettinger &amp; Baker, 2011); (Balemina &amp; Feng, 2013); (Haskin, 2016)</p>
<p><b>Strengths-Based Model</b></p>	<p>A2. 1.d Practice using personal strengths in pursuit of post-secondary goals</p> <p>A2. 2.d Take proactive steps toward implementing a plan for post- secondary goals by building on personal strengths and addressing challenges</p> <p>A3. 1.d Utilize support from trusted adults, as well as resources and agencies that provide academic, social, emotional or health-related support</p> <p>B2. 1.d Develop a plan that demonstrates an understanding of how to set and reach goals that contribute to lifelong success</p> <p>B3. 1.d Demonstrate the ability to persevere through challenges for long-term rewards or success</p>	<p>(Anderson, 2005); (Banks &amp; Dohy, 2019); (Clifton &amp; Harter, 2003); (Louis, 2011); (Soria &amp; Stubblefield, 2014); (Soria, Laumer, Morrow, &amp; Marttinen, 2017)</p>



LLC PROGRAMMATIC FEATURES	OHIO STANDARDS ALIGNMENT	PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION RESEARCH
<b>Career Exploration</b>	<p>A2. 1.d Practice using personal strengths in pursuit of post-secondary goals</p> <p>B2. 1.d Develop a plan that demonstrates an understanding of how to set and reach goals that contribute to lifelong success</p>	<p>(GetWorkerFit); (Munoz, Miller, &amp; Poole, 2016); (Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates, 2006)</p>
<b>Leadership Development</b>	<p>A2. 1.d Practice using personal strengths in pursuit of post-secondary goals</p> <p>B2. 1.d Develop a plan that demonstrates an understanding of how to set and reach goals that contribute to lifelong success</p> <p>C2. 3.d Implement a strategy to address a need in the broader community or world as change agents</p> <p>C2. 4.d Evaluate the impact of personal involvement in an activity to improve school, home, community and world</p> <p>E1. 2.d Implement a decision-making process to solve complex situations including academic and social challenges</p>	<p>(Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates, 2006); (McCall, 2018)</p>
<b>Community Service</b>	<p>A2. 1.d Practice using personal strengths in pursuit of post-secondary goals</p> <p>C1. 3.d Demonstrate empathy through compassion in self and encourage in others</p> <p>C2. 2.d Engage in civic duties and opportunities within the broader community</p> <p>E3. 3.d Seek and engage in civic-minded activities that contribute to the larger community</p>	<p>(Gruber, 2017)</p>
<b>Wrap-Around Services</b>	<p>A3. 1.d Utilize support from trusted adults, as well as resources and agencies that provide academic, social, emotional or health-related support</p> <p>B1. 3.d Apply productive self-monitoring strategies to process emotions and reframe thoughts and behaviors</p> <p>C3. 1.d Examine and address explicit or implicit personal biases toward an individual or group</p> <p>C4. 1.d Evaluate how societal and cultural norms influence personal interactions</p>	<p>(Duranczyk, Higbee, &amp; Lundell, 2004); (Moragne-Patterson &amp; Barnett, 2017); (Stern, 2014); (Strayhorn, 2017)</p>



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