

## **Learning Community Guidelines (approved by the full faculty 5/8/14)**

Through study abroad, internships, independent research and other learning opportunities, students are integrating classroom learning with experiences beyond our campus. They are also meaningfully engaging with communities near and far as they undertake these experiences. This kind of learning meets the spirit of a Learning Community, and these revised guidelines broaden our definition of what constitutes an LC to incorporate more of these learning experiences.

Learning Communities must incorporate these two foundational ideas:

1. **Interdisciplinarity and Integration:** The original Learning Community (Evergreen) Proposal set out a model for LCs that emphasized interdisciplinarity. The revised LC guidelines (Evergreen II), stated that LCs may be interdisciplinary or they may allow for the integration of two different approaches (e.g., multiple methodologies, theory versus application). The current LC guidelines continue the promotion of both interdisciplinarity or integration for a Learning Community.
2. **Learning in Community:** LCs require sustained engagement with a community, which will be defined by the faculty member in the LC proposal. Students may undertake their LC with or without a cohort of fellow students. This is a change from the former (Evergreen I and II) definitions of LCs. Opportunities for students to reflect on the integrative dimensions (e.g., theory and application) of their LC experiences will be required for LCs in which “community” is not defined a cohort of fellow students.

### **Proposing a Learning Community**

Faculty members proposing new LCs must submit their proposal by Monday of Week 1 of the term before the LC begins. The online proposal form can be found here:

<http://www.augustana.edu/academics/academic-affairs/general-education-studies/learning-community-proposal-form>

Faculty, functioning as instructors or advisors, will address the following questions when proposing a new Learning Community:

1. How will students engage with the community? How is the community defined?
2. How is interdisciplinarity and/or integration of different approaches built into this experience?
3. How will interdisciplinary and/or integrative learning be demonstrated and evaluated?

The Gen Ed Committee welcomes LC structures (in addition to Models A-F listed below) that incorporate the two foundational ideas stated above. LCs entail 4 to 6 credits of student work. Those credits may be taken in the same term or across different terms of the same academic year.

LCs should produce the following learning outcome: Students in an Augustana learning community will engage with and integrate two distinct approaches to learning.

### **Evergreen II Learning Community Models**

The following models for Learning Communities were approved by Faculty Senate in 2009 (Evergreen II) and are viable under the revised LC Guidelines:

- A. Students complete two back-to-back courses in established Augustana class timeframes during a single term.
- B. Students complete two courses during a single term, but the courses do not meet back-to-back in established Augustana class timeframes.
- C. Students complete a specially designed sequence of two courses taught in different terms of the same academic year by two different faculty members.
- D. Students complete a course related to credit-bearing activities such as band, choir and other ensembles. For example, a subset of students participating in Augustana Choir might enroll in a literature course to examine works of literature from the same time period as pieces the choir is performing. All students enrolled in the literature course would be members of the choir, although not all members of the choir would be taking the literature course. To be eligible for this LC option, students would be required to register for participation in Augustana Choir for at least two terms.  $[(0.67 \text{ credits} \times 2 \text{ terms}) + 3 \text{ credits for literature course}] = 4.34 \text{ credits for LC}$ . Additional credit-bearing activities might work in this LC option.
- E. Students complete a course with a connection to a service learning experience. The learning community focuses on themes, questions, or material using the different approaches of theory vs. application. A three-credit course taught by an Augustana faculty member provides the theory to frame the themes, questions, or material, while a community leader guides the practical application of the theory. Students would register for the three-credit course plus a one-credit internship. The faculty member and community leader would be in close contact to determine the need of the community and to facilitate a service learning experience for students. On-campus resources to develop this type of LC are available through the CVR. Needs unique to the Augustana campus could also be addressed using this LC format, in which the greater community would be defined as the Augustana campus.
- F. Successful completion of designated Augustana international terms (10-week and 5-week programs), HONR 220, 221 or 222, or the CEDEI program in Cuenca, Ecuador fulfill the LC requirement.

### **Existing LCs**

Existing LCs do not need to reapply to Gen Ed for approval under the revised guidelines. All previous models for LCs under Evergreen I and II work with the expanded definition. However, instructors of existing LCs should consider how they will provide evidence of the stated learning outcome for the purposes of assessment.