

Residential Learning Communities: What We Know (and More Importantly) What We Have Yet to Learn

2019 Residential Learning Communities as a High-Impact Practice

Center for Engaged Learning | Elon University



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A note of gratitude...

A little about me

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 Currently Principal of Hereford Residential College





Outline of remarks

- Current state of residential learning communities (RLCs)
- Impact of RLCs on students
- Recent trends in RLC conceptualization
- Where to next?

Current state of RLCs

- How many RLCs exist?
- Profile of RLCs (using the 2007 NSLLP)

How many RLCs exist? Depends on who you ask!



Profile of RLCs using the 2007 NSLLP



Data source: National Study of Living-Learning Programs (2007)

4 sources of data: **RLC** survey: • Questions regarding general • Baseline survey, 2004 & 2007 information about RLCs Students LLCs Institutions Year 2004 34 297 23.910 • Completed by RLC staff 2007 22,258 46 617 Longitudinal follow-up, 2007 Includes 617 RLCs

- 4 campus case studies, 2008
- RLC survey, 2007

• Note: data is over a decade old

NSLLP 2007 Typology of RLC themes

- Civic & Social Leadership (4 types)
- Disciplinary (12 types)
- Fine & Creative Arts (2 types)
- General Academic
- Honors
- Cultural (3 types)

- Leisure (3 types)
- Political Interest
- Residential College
- Research
- ROTC
- Sophomore

- Transition (4 types)
- Umbrella
- Upper Division
- Wellness/Health (2 types)
- Women's (2 types)

Note: Based on NSLLP data on over 600 LLCs

NSLLP 2007 Size and configuration of RLCs

Size	# of Students
Median size of program	52
Modal size of program	50
Programs with over 1,000 students	11

Configuration	%
Entire residence hall	17%
Portion of 1 residence hall mixed with non-RLC students	53%
Portion of 1 residence hall mixed with students in different RLCs	18%
Across several residence halls	2%
Other (most common answer: sprinkled around res hall)	9%







NSLLP 2007 Is RLC selective?





NSLLP 2007 Top 5 RLCs goals/objectives

1.	Experiencing a smooth academic transition to college	56%
2.	Feeling a sense of belonging to the institution	54%
3.	Demonstrating openness to views different than one's own	52%
4.	Learning about others different than one's self	50%
5.	Experiencing a smooth social transition to college	50%

NSLLP 2007 Faculty involvement in RLCs

- 23% had no faculty involvement at all
- 64% included only 1-3 faculty members
- 52% of RLCs did not offer any academic coursework
- Most common forms of faculty involvement were:
 - Teaching
 - Conducting workshops
 - Mentorship
 - Academic advising

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NSLLP 2007 Residence hall staff involvement in RLCs

- 85% utilized residence hall staff in some way
- Most common forms of staff involvement were:
 - Administrative tasks
 - Living in community
 - Attending social events
 - Supervising student staff
 - Handling community and/or disciplinary tasks

NSLLP 2007 Co-curricular activities in RLCs

Required:



Optional:



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However...

- The NSLLP data is over 10 years old
- How many RLCs exist today, and what do they look like?



Impact of RLCs on students

- Astin I-E-O model
- Student outcomes associated with RLC involvement
- Student environments: RLC vs. comparison sample
- 2 new studies (NSSE & ACREO)



Student *outcomes* associated with RLC involvement

Student outcome	Published work
Academic performance	Stassen (2003); Purdie (2007); Hurtado, et al. (2019)
Retention	Pike, et al. (1997); Purdie (2007)
Intellectual development	Pike (1999); Inkelas, et al. (2006a, 2006b); Kohl (2009); Mayhew, et al. (2018)*; Hurtado, et al. (2019)
Faculty interaction	Garrett & Zabriskie (2003); Inkelas, et al. (2006b); Hurtado, et al. (2019)
Peer interaction	Pike (2009); Inkelas, et al. (2006a); Hurtado, et al. (2019)

Note: Authors in orange text utilized NSLLP data; * mixed positive & negative results

Student *outcomes* associated with RLC involvement

Student outcome	Published work
Transition to college	Inkelas & Associates (2004); Inkelas, et al. (2007)
Residence hall climate	Inkelas & Weisman (2003); Inkelas, et al. (2006a, 2006b); Johnson, et al. (2007); Hurtado, et al. (2019)
Reduced binge drinking	Brower, et al. (2003); Brower (2008); Mayhew, et al. (2018)
Diversity appreciation	Inkelas, et al. (2006a)
Sense of civic engagement	Rowan-Kenyon, et al. (2007); Mayhew, et al. (2018)

Student <u>environments</u>: RLC versus comparison sample (From the NSLLP 2007 data)



Student <u>environments</u>: RLC versus comparison sample (From the NSLLP 2007 data)



However...

- Strongest student outcomes were related to traditional activities most closely associated with being a new college student:
 - ✓ Reducing binge, or excessive, alcohol consumption
 - ✓ Interacting more with fellow peers and faculty
 - \checkmark Establishing a sense of belonging to the institution
- Positive, but low effect sizes, for other outcomes with loftier goals:
 - ✓ Intellectual development
 - ✓ Diversity appreciation
 - ✓ Love of lifelong learning

Study using NSSE data: Hurtado, Gonyea, Graham, & Fosnacht (2019)

- Utilized 2018 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data
- 76 four-year institutions
- Over 21,000 first- and second-year students
 - 17% participated in an RLC
- *Definition of RLC:* took at least 1 class together and participated in common educational and social activities

Hurtado, S. S., Gonyea, R. M., Graham, P. A., & Fosnacht, K. (2019, March). *The relationship between residential learning communities and student engagement.* Paper presented at the ACPA Annual Meeting, Boston, MA.

RLC contributions to student outcomes (Hurtado et al., 2019; NSSE 2018)

Outcome	b	Sig.	R ²	
Reflective & integrative learning	0.14	***	0.05	
Collaborative learning	0.18	***	0.07	
Discussions with diverse others	0.07	**	0.02	
Student-faculty interaction	0.23	***	0.06	**
Quality of interactions	0.09	**	0.02	**
Supportive environment	0.11	***	0.02	
Perceived gains: Co-curricular	0.18	***	0.03	
Perceived gains: Academic	0.14	***	0.04	
Housing impact: Academics	0.25	***	0.02	
Self-reported grades	0.12	***	0.17	

** *p* ≤ .01; ****p* ≤ .001

n=12,104-12,355; Model controlled for several student inputs and environments

Student environments: RLC versus non-RLC sample (Hurtado et al., 2019; NSSE 2018)

Environment	RLC sample	Non-RLC sample
Attended a class	29%	9%
Met with faculty member	26%	10%
Met with academic advisor	18%	7%
Used academic support services	21%	10%
Studied/worked on project with students	53%	35%
Attended social or co-curricular activities	53%	36%
Attended diversity-related activities	22%	11%
Attended health & wellness activities	24%	14%
Participated in none of the above	18%	43%

All differences *p*<,001; all small to moderate effects

Study using ACREO data Mayhew et al. (2018)

- Utilized 2017 & 2018 Assessment of Collegiate Residential Environments & Outcomes (ACREO) data
- 8 four-year institutions
- Over 13,119 students (22% response rate)
- Study included broad rage of academic programming in residence halls, classified as Academic, General, or Theme LLPs

Mayhew, M., Dahl, L., Hooten, Z., Duran, A., Stipeck, C., & Youngerman, E. (2018). Assessment of Collegiate Residential Environments & Outcomes Annual Report. Retrieved from: <u>https://static1.squarespace.com/static/588b8364579fb3ba0282970e/t/5bbb7073e5e5f0f20c6dedc2/1539010677702/2018+ACREO+Report.pdf</u>

Major findings from ACREO

LLP students overall:

- + Sense of belonging
- + Campus civic engagement
- Binge drinking
- + Intervene in bystander situation

Specific LLP types:

<u>Career self-efficacy:</u> Academic LLP > General or Theme LLPs

<u>Major self-efficacy:</u> Theme LLP > Academic LLP

<u>Self-reported critical thinking:</u> Theme LLP > Academic LLP

Major takeaway from ACREO

Difference between programs and perceptions:

Not enough to provide RLC programing--

RLCs must create a positive climate

Summary of RLC impacts

The good news	The bad news
 RLCs contribute to positive student environments & outcomes 2007 NSLLP, 2018 NSSE, & 2017/2018 	 Most effect sizes small, inferring that RLC impact is not strong
ACREO data RLCs most effective on outcomes related to first-year experience 	 ACREO data suggests that RLC programming not as influential as RLC perceptions created by climate

Recent trends in RLC conceptualization

- Distinguishing different types of RLCs
- Different professional associations attended
- What is an RLC?

Different types of RLCs beginning to distinguish themselves

ACUHO-I Living-Learning Conference ACUHO-I Academic Initiatives Conference

Distinguishes residential academic support, living-learning programs, residential colleges, residential curriculum, tutoring, peer mentoring programs, etc.

Study of Living-Learning Programs (SILLP) → Assessment of Collegiate Residential Environments & Outcomes (ACREO)

Analyzed data by 3 types of programs: Academic, General, and Themed LLPs

Different types of RLCs beginning to distinguish themselves

• Two organizations for Residential Colleges:

Residential College Society	Collegiate Way International
The Residential College Society seeks to transform higher education by providing a learning network for faculty and student affairs educators to share knowledge, build community, and advance scholarship about the residential college experience. (Mostly US	Collegiate Way International (CWI) is a world- wide association of university colleges. It was founded in Durham, UK in 2014. Its mission is to support university colleges around the world and promote the collegiate way of interdisciplinary scholarship, academic
institutions)	integrity, civic awareness and humility.

Those who work in RLCs do not attend the same professional conferences

ACUHO-I Academic initiatives	Collegiate Way International
Primarily	Mostly
student affairs	faculty directors
practitioners	or principals

What is an RLC?





Where to next?

- How many RLCS exist?
- What is considered to be an RLC?
- What are next steps for RLC research and assessment?
- How to continue to pursue research-informed practice?

How many RLCs exist?

• Can we work toward a more comprehensive registry?



• Can we work across professional interest groups more collaboratively?

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But this begs the question: What is considered to be an RLC?

Are RLCs one broad family of different types of residential programs?



Or, are RLCs one distinctive type of residential program?



What is considered to be an RLC? How does the answer affect research and practice?

- How are RLCs defined?
- What distinguishes an RLC from other types of residential programs?
- What objectives/student outcomes characterize RLCs?
- How should RLCs be conceived and run?
- What relationships should be forged or remain separate?
- And, of course, how to bridge the academic & student affairs divide?

What are next steps for RLC research and assessment?

- Is it time for another large-scale research study devoted specifically to RLCs?
 - Work to expand ACREO?
 - If so, what do we want to examine on a national scale?
- How to learn from single- and multi-institutional studies
 - We can start this right here!

How to continue to pursue research-informed practice?





Maslow's hierarchy of needs





LLC Best Practices Model is: <u>RESEARCH</u> to practice

In real life: research to <u>PRACTICE</u>

Persistent challenges and lessons learned

BPM Component	Challenges
Clear goals & objectives	 RLC staff probably cares more about this than the students (e.g., why is the cookie order always wrong?)
Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Housing	 The two areas speak different languages. As a result: HRL has extremely low expectations Academics come off as aloof or extremely uninformed
Adequate resources	 Less about funding (although important!) and more about how to manage expectations based on funding Also, try more inter-RLC programming

Persistent challenges and lessons learned

BPM Component	Challenges
Courses for credit	 Oh, how this vexes me! Motivation for 1-credit course low Students may be interested, but already carrying full course load
Faculty involvement	 Difficult to get faculty—even those who care—physically into the community and getting involved Offering "win-wins" has been somewhat successful: Undergraduate researchers Pots of funds for events
Academically & socially supportive climate	 One place where research and practice align: Single most important component of the model that affects all other activities. Work hard to reinforce values of community.

Persistent challenges and lessons learned

BPM Component	Challenges
Co-curricular activities	 Tough balance between offering activities that will gain student interest and are also educationally enriching Wind up spending most amount of time encouraging, cajoling, pleading with students to participate
Intentional integration	 Very difficult to keep everyone informed, and not everyone reciprocates, especially students (<u>see figure</u>)
Assessment	 Critical not only for continuous improvement, but also for justification for why you did or did not make a certain decision (<u>extra example</u>)

Hereford (HRC) communication networks



Return to presentation

What's (literally) next Looking forward to learning more about:

Residential Learning Communities as a High Impact Practice Conference Sessions

- Development of items to measure student learning
- Assessment of specific types of RLCs (particularly STEM RLCs)

- Student characteristics (including student-athletes) and RLCs
- Student & Academic Affairs collaborations
- RLCs and diversity

Final lessons learned

✓ Students are the biggest source of inspiration and frustration

✓ It's exhausting work, but it's fulfilling work

WELCOME TO HEREFORD COLLEGE

Thank you!



EREFORD

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