

University of Connecticut
Office of First Year Programs & Learning Communities

Learning Community Activity Highlights



Fall 2008

RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Community Service

Connecting with the Arts

Fine Arts

Global House

Honors

Leadership, Learning, and Life at UConn

Nursing

Music

Social Justice in a Global Community

(Pre-)Pharmacy

Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (WiMSE)

NON-RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Animal Science

Economics

Engineering

Environmental Science

Exploring Helping Professions

Pathobiology

Pre-Teaching

<http://www.lc.uconn.edu>

Residential Learning Communities

Community Service Residential Learning Community, Ellsworth

Community Directors: Matthew Farley, Associate Director, Community Outreach
Miguel Colon, Program Coordinator, Community Outreach

Fall 2008 Courses: INTD 1820.036 *LC Community Service*, Miguel Colon; Heather Wilhelm, HESA Student
ENGL 1010.031 *Community Service Learning Project*, Rebecca Nisetich, ENGL GA

Spring 2009 Course: INTD 1820.023 *LC Community Service*, Miguel Colon; Heather Wilhelm, HESA Student

Students: 15 + 11 (10 students were enrolled in both courses; 6 additional students were enrolled in one or the other)
11 students enrolled in SP09 INTD course

The Community Service Learning Community (CSLC) engages students in a unique combination of academic, social, and civic related activities. These allow students to experience many aspects of our campus and local communities, challenge their individual and collective knowledge and values, and integrate their academic studies with community work.

During the Fall 2008 semester, the group engaged in multiple individual and group activities:

- **Organized and held social activities.** On a regular basis, CSLC members coordinated formal and informal activities including dinners and game nights. Members often cooked meals for others transforming the experience into an on-campus dinner party! CSLC members also hosted ten former members of the LC in Putnam Dining Hall to obtain their perspective on UConn, service work, and living in a LC.
- **Developed teamwork and leadership skills.** In October, CSLC members pushed their individual and group limits through an active day at a local ropes course. The team activities created the opportunity for members to get to know each other on a deeper level and support each other. The low and high ropes course allowed members to push their individual and collective limits by taking risks and overcoming fears. The rush of jumping off a tree 40 feet in the air to a hanging trapeze was awesome!!
- **Served the Community.** The members were each required to participate in a weekly service program in an area they were interested in. Members choose to participate in programs that emphasized youth tutoring and mentoring, literacy development, health, and human services. Together, this small group of students invested over 100 hours in community service during their first semester at UConn!
- **Integrated Service and Academic Learning.** CSLC members took an English 1010 course as well as an INTD seminar together. These two courses intentionally drew upon their community service interest and work and were designed just for them. Students reflected on and shared their personal ideas about their service

work and UConn experience through a number of verbal and written reflections. These courses also explored personal value systems, leadership development, and civic learning concepts. Campus and community experts were often invited as guest speakers and facilitators. Course instructors ensured that information was relevant, up-to-date and meaningful to students. Assignments were intentionally challenging, but also rewarding! CSLC members excelled in the classroom earning an average GPA of 3.55 including 9 students making the Dean's list.

"I really appreciated getting to choose the topic for my essay. It let me pick a subject that I was interested in. After doing the research, I was not only able to write my paper, but apply it to real life."
~CSLC member regarding ENG 1010 Assignment, Fall 2008

The Spring 2009 semester will be a time for CSLC members to continue the great activities on and off campus that are described above. Additionally, CSLC members will be designing and implementing their own large group program in addition to their individual service commitments; traveling to the United Nations in New York, New York to get a broader perspective on social change efforts and human rights on a global scale, and visit with nationally renowned author Paul Loeb. Mr. Loeb's work concentrates on themes of social responsibility and civic engagement.

Connecting with the Arts Residential Learning Community, Buckley

Community Directors: Rodney Rock, Director, Jorgensen Performing Arts
Frank Mack, Manager of Theater Operations, Dramatic Arts Department
Lesla von Munkwitz-Smith, Program Assistant, First Year Programs

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.035 *LC Connecting with the Arts*, Rodney Rock, Frank Mack, Lesla von Munkwitz-Smith

Students: 22

The Connecting with the Arts Learning Community is for students who wish to explore their interest in the arts through attendance to art, theater, and music events on and off campus and participation in discussions with artists, actors, directors, and musicians. This Community is open to all first year students. Students who are interested in the arts, but not enrolled in the School of Fine Arts are especially encouraged to participate.

Programs

- Trip to NYC with the Fine Arts Living and Learning Community to attend a matinee Broadway show (half the group saw *Spring Awakening*, and the other, *Young Frankenstein*, which is scheduled to close on Jan 4, 2009).
- After the performance of *Young Frankenstein* three actors (Matthew LaBanca, a UConn Fine Arts alum; Fred Applegate, and Kevin Ligon) did an exclusive Q&A with the UConn LLCs after the performance. Offered a Fine Arts Living and Learning Community t-shirt, Matt graciously accepted and put it on for a photo op.



- Students received free tickets to multiple events sponsored by the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts and two plays performed by the Connecticut Repertory Theatre.

Community

- Connecting with the Arts Living and Learning Community t-shirts were distributed to students of the community on freshmen move-in day.
- On November 20, several students performed for the rest of the class. Alex Young showed two artworks she had completed: a photo of a guitar with Gampel Pavilion reflected in the body of the guitar, and a digitally manipulated work she calls *Mother Earth*. Kelsea Whittemore and Eliza Smith led the entire class and visitors from ResLife (Steve Kremer, Neil Kaufman, and Logan Trimble) in improvisation. Ben Carlson (lead vocal and guitar), Kyle Horton (piano and backup vocals) and Michael Barnes (bass) performed two alt rock songs.

Coursework

- Behind-the-scenes tours of the Jorgensen Center of Performing Arts by director Rodney Rock, the William Benton Museum of Art by director Tom Bruhn, the Contemporary Art Gallery by director Barry Rosenberg.
- The class returned to the Benton for a docent-guided tour when the monks from Namgyal Monastery were constructing the sand mandala of Enlightenment.
- Frank Mack guided the class in backstage tours of the three Connecticut Repertory Theatre stages: the Harriet S. Jorgensen Theatre, the Nafe Kader Theatre, and the Mobius Studio Theatre.
- After an introduction to Laura Crow, Professor of Costume Design, the group had an informal Q&A session with her about the costumes in *A Man for All Seasons*.
- Dr. John Bell, director of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, brought specimens of puppets from the museum's collection and spoke about the history of puppetry and evolution of puppets into digital characters such as Golum in *Lord of the Rings*.
- Greg Webster, a Visiting Professor of movement, visited and involved the entire class in movement exercises. Through a series of directed reactions, he demonstrated how movement in plays and movies creates tension.
- The Assad Brothers, Sergio and Odair, are World Music musicians with a classical guitar background mixed with Brazilian folk music. They stopped by for a visit with the class, discussed their careers, their music influences, and performed several songs.
- Six students from the UConn Opera program performed songs from three different operas: *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by Wolfgang Mozart, and *Manon* by Jules Massenet.
- Keith Lockhart, conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra, visited and conducted an exclusive Q&A with the class. Fine Arts faculty Peter Bagley and Jeffrey Renshaw, and Dean David Woods accompanied the maestro.
- Kalia Kellogg, member of the Connecticut Opera Chorus and belly dancer, appeared as a guest artist for the last class of the semester and performed dances from four main styles of belly dance, lectured on the history of belly dance in the US, and then engaged the students in belly dance instruction. Steve Jarvi and David Quimette, visitors to the class, enjoyed the instruction immensely.

Class offers array of arts-related experiences for students

UConn Advance, by Carol Davidge, December 1, 2008

When the charismatic Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart visited the Connecting with the Arts class at Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, the students had a lot of questions. How did he become a conductor? What were some of the unusual things he had experienced? What does he like about his job? Is he composing anything right now?

Lockhart's answers were full of surprises. He had an ordinary childhood in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., with parents who had grown up in the Great Depression and were determined to provide for their children the things they had missed. So Lockhart started piano lessons when he was seven. He added clarinet in the high school band. When he went to Furman University, a private liberal arts college in South Carolina, he tried to prepare for "a real job" as a lawyer, but found he really wasn't interested in it and decided to go into music. An instructor observed that Lockhart seemed to enjoy the teaching and interpretation of music more than playing the piano, and advised him to study conducting. And that's how he became a conductor.

Learning to appreciate the arts. This encounter with America's best-known conductor was just one of the many arts-related experiences for students in the class, a First Year Experience course for non-arts majors organized by Jorgensen director Rodney Rock. "The University of Connecticut has an amazing array of options to offer students who want to explore the arts," says Rock. "Once the students realize that they have some outstanding opportunities, they have the knowledge to take advantage of all the performances, productions, and exhibitions during the rest of their years here. We hope that these students will develop a deep appreciation for the arts and become the audience and advocates for the arts in the communities where they live," adds Rock, who invites an array of School of Fine Arts professionals and visiting guest artists to the class and arranges for students to attend events.

"I have been introduced to some unfamiliar styles of performance, and that has broadened my appreciation for the arts as a whole," says Christina Tobitsch, one of the students in the class. In the week before Lockhart's class visit, the students traveled to New York to see either *Spring Awakening* or *Young Frankenstein* on Broadway. Those who attended *Young Frankenstein* met Matt LaBanca, a UConn voice graduate (1998) who understudies the lead role of Dr. Frederick Frankenstein. During opening night, actor Roger Bart injured his back, and LaBanca took over for several nights.

Each class was different. Most of the students had never seen any opera until music professor Constance Rock brought her voice students to the class to perform four opera scenes. They also had the opportunity to watch Tibetan Monks from the Namgyal Monastery creating a sand mandala at The Benton Museum, saw exhibits at the Contemporary Art Galleries and the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, and attended performances at Jorgensen and the Connecticut Repertory Theatre (CRT), all in the School of Fine Arts.

Tameka Geneste, an international business major, says she enjoyed the back-stage tour of CRT and seeing "how the insider puts on a play and all the work that actually goes into making every component work." CRT director Frank Mack says his goal is to help the students better understand the theatre productions they are seeing. The result, he says, is that "they have acquired an exceptional capacity to engage as audience members in new and exciting ways."

Meeting the artists added another dimension. "We don't just learn about the artists, we meet them," says Alexandra Young, a pathology major. In October, virtuoso guitarists Sergio and Odair Assad came to class, in addition to performing at Jorgensen. "It was great to 'hang out' with professional musicians," says Kyle Horton, a chemical engineering major. "The Assad Brothers were normal people, except for the fact that they decided to dedicate all of their efforts to music instead of any other job."

Universal appeal. In answer to questions from the class, Lockhart noted that music truly is universal, that it exists outside cultural boundaries and doesn't rely on language in order to communicate powerful emotions. He said he tries to open people's expectations about what an orchestra does by having the Pops perform many types of music – from the great classics to the contemporary and diverse. Lockhart will be back at UConn with the Pops on Dec. 6 for a winter gala performance at Jorgensen. "Maestro Lockhart mentioned to me that of the many groups he spoke to during his visit to campus, the Connecting with the Arts students had the most thoughtful questions," says David G. Woods, dean of the School of Fine Arts, who invited Lockhart to campus as featured speaker for the Dean Robert H. Gray Memorial Lecture. "We hope these encounters help students gain rare insights that can add to their own life experiences."



Keith Lockhart, conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra, talks with students during a First Year Experience class at Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts.
Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Fine Arts Residential Learning Community, Buckley

Community Directors: Eva Gorbants, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs & Director of Advising, Fine Arts
Kevin Sullivan, Assistant Director, First Year Programs

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.012 *LC Fine Arts*, Eva Gorbants, Kevin Sullivan

Students: 19

The Fine Arts Learning Community is designed to offer a supportive and dynamic environment for first year art, art history, dramatic arts and music majors. Students will have opportunities to connect with faculty across the various disciplines in fine arts. Course topics, programming and special events will be geared towards developing a vibrant, cohesive, and diverse residential community for the arts.

- For the past two years of the Fine Arts Learning Community's five year history, the course theme has been the Heroes Journey, a model describing how the human animal deals with challenges. The centerpiece of the model rests on an understanding of Jungian archetypes, which, most often, can be seen in painting, sculpture, music, literature, and dramatic works. Students were introduced to the archetypes by assessing which ones were most active in their lives at the moment. They also had a semester-long project that demanded that they chart the Heroes Journey in one of the CRT or Broadway productions they were required to attend (*Spring Awakening*, *Young Frankenstein*, *A Man for All Seasons* or *The Skin of Our Teeth*). In addition, they experienced their personality preferences, along with a number of projective techniques designed to help them learn more about themselves. Choice Theory, time management, study skills, relaxation techniques, and the fine points of how to manage their demanding majors were also covered.
- The Fine Arts Learning Community joined their partner community, Connecting with the Arts, on a bus trip to Broadway in November. Half of the students saw *Spring Awakening*, and the other half selected *Young Frankenstein*. After the performance of *Young Frankenstein* three actors (Matthew LaBanca, a UConn Fine Arts alum; Fred Applegate, and Kevin Ligon) did an exclusive Q&A with the UConn LLCs after the performance. Offered a Fine Arts Living and Learning Community t-shirt, Matt graciously accepted and put it on for a photo op.
- Community members participated in, and supported each other in, their dramatic presentations, music and vocal performances, and studio art work.
- Community members in the UConn Marching Band (UCMB) kept the community current on predicting wins and losses for the UConn football team. Some of these same musicians tried out for, and won, spots in the various bands that support UConn's basketball teams.
- Jennifer Barnhart, '98 SFA, one of this year's highlighted 40 Under 40 Alumnus, was a Guest Speaker in class.
- Selected student quotes –
 - “I have become more confident within the college experience.”
 - “I have learned to interact with people I might not have before.”
 - “I'm much more comfortable with myself, who I am, and who I want to be.”
 - “I'm more optimistic and accepting of change.”
 - “I'm more relaxed and not so worried about how well I'm doing academically I know I can handle college courses now.”

Jennifer Barnhart, 36 Puppeteer and Actor

Jennifer Barnhart '98 (SFA) enrolled at UConn to earn a degree in acting. Though she had been fascinated by puppetry since childhood, it was only after she was accepted to the University Scholars program that she discovered the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry. Her experience there would later change her life.

After completing her degree with honors, Barnhart spent five years scuffling in New York. Like most young actors, she took a desk job to support herself while waiting for her big break.

That came in 1999 when she landed the puppeteer role of Cleo in PBS's immensely popular "Between the Lions" children's show. Her work in "Lions" led to roles in "Bear in the Big Blue House," "Book of Pooh" and "Sesame Street." In 2003 she joined the cast of a new Broadway show that is described as "Sesame Street meets South Park." The show, "Avenue Q," won the 2004 Tony Award for Best Musical and has since become one of Broadway's most popular shows.

Even as she continues to perform eight shows a week on stage, she has expanded her work to include the Disney Channel children's show "Johnny and the Sprites," created by her "Avenue Q" co-star John Tartaglia.

She has also recently completed work on a new Connecticut Public Television music education series, "Lomax: The Hound of Music," on which she plays a cat named Delta (see photo). The show will be aired nationally on local PBS stations.

Her training in puppetry, says Barnhart, has made a significant difference in her career. "Without it, I would be just another tall, blonde, deep-voiced actress in New York," she says.



Photo by Peter Morenus

Global House Residential Learning Community, McMahon

Community Directors: Dr. Morty Ortega, Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resource Management and Engineering
Mark Oliver, Graduate Assistant, Doctoral Student

Fall 2008 Courses: INTD 1820.037, 038, 039, 040 *LC Global House*, Isaac ("Morty") Ortega, Mark Oliver

Students: 129

The Global House has been extremely active so far this semester on all ends, as exemplified below. The fall has been very exciting, and there is much to look forward to in the spring as well!!

Programs:

- Cultural trips to Boston, Massachusetts and New York City
- Two cultural nights that invited residents to learn the traditions and values of another nation. The first cultural night was about Australia, and the second one was about the U.S. on election night. Both events were attended by about 100 members of the leaning community. All the Global House floors have been very active in attending these programs and residents have been eager to participate in planning different events and creating their own traditions.
- Programs about nutrition, fire safety, health and wellness, and environmentally friendly actions



Community:

- Residents connected immediately upon moving in and all three floors within the Global House are extremely friendly, open and interactive.
- A large group of residents from the Global House participated extensively in Homecoming activities, and received First Place for the banner competition as well as Lip Sync, both for a non-funded group

Course Work:

- Throughout exams students have been studying together, utilizing the Global House lounge for study space
- Morty and Mark have been teaching several classes including a FYE, an independent study (research), and a mentoring/leadership class. Morty has been advising students in their academics.

GENERAL GOALS FOR THE GLOBAL HOUSE LEARNING COMMUNITY

In their study of college student success, Yazedjian, Toews, Sevin, and Purswell (2008) reported that students' notions of college success were multifaceted and included both academic and non-academic goals. Student achievement, retention, and satisfaction with college experiences may be negatively effected if a large disparity

exists between student goals and those promoted by learning institutions. To maximize the congruency between student and institutional goals, the following guidelines were considered when formulating the general educational goals for the Global House Learning Community:

- inclusive of students' goals for college experience;
- supportive of liberal education goals (e.g., critical thinking); and
- informed by available data (i.e., previous evaluation) and research literature (e.g., developmental theories, etc).

A review of literature concerning student characteristics (section 8, Learner Characteristics) and liberal education (section 2, Introduction) was conducted in combination with an extensive needs analysis (see section 7, Needs Analysis) to determine universal goal sets for students and institutions. The following goals were developed for the Global House Learning Community from this analysis.

Students will develop:

1. intellectual inquiry skills and dispositions;
2. an appreciation for, and knowledge of, different cultures;
3. autonomy and leadership capacities;
4. collaborative skills; and
5. communication competencies.

In addition to the establishment of relevant and perceptible learning goals for the Community, the development of students' self-regulation behaviors is essential for the acquisition of community goals and learning success.

TARGET POPULATION

129 students were admitted as members of the Global House Learning Community for the 2008-2009 Academic Year. The population composition was:

	NATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
Freshman	17	17
Sophomore	34	8
Junior	4	0
Senior	4	0
Exchange	5	32
UCAELI	0	7
Total	65	64

In addition to the 129 students living in the Global House, students who do not live there may also participate in community activities. This includes students not admitted to the Global House for various reasons (e.g., missed the housing deadline), who are interested in joining the community, were previous community members living on campus, or international students not living there.

GLOBAL HOUSE HOME TEAMS

Global House residents are randomly assigned to small groups (Home Teams) during the first week of the semester. The purpose of forming Home Teams is to:

- a. promote social interaction between members;
- b. provide smaller group situations so students do not become anonymous within a larger university;
- c. promote mentorship opportunities between new and previous members; and
- d. facilitate collaboration between members by providing students with team challenges (i.e., cultural, inquiry and service challenges).

Home Team Composition and Leadership

While students are randomly assigned to teams, each team is comprised of international and domestic students of all class status (from freshman to senior) and previous members of the Global House. In the fall semester, one member of the house will be appointed as leader of the Home Team. The Home Team leadership position requires regular interaction with the administrators of the Global House, and coordination of team efforts to complete designated challenges. The Team will also select a co-leader. This student will fulfill the job in case the leader cannot attend the meetings with the administrators of the Global House. For the spring semester, a student with sophomore status may be elected to be leader for the Home Team, however, this will need to be arranged with the Director of the Global House.

Home Team Tasks

Team Challenges:

Each Home Team is required to complete three collaborative challenges during the academic year (i.e., cultural, inquiry, and service challenges). The purpose of these challenges is to:

- a. enhance collaboration, communication and student confidence;
- b. develop student knowledge of, and appreciation for, different cultural customs and practices;
- c. promote the goals of general education, specifically a spirit of inquiry, critical thinking skills, and appreciation for multiple perspectives, and the enhancement of epistemological beliefs; and
- d. facilitate the development of leadership and the principle of preceding service to the community.

Meetings

Home Teams meet regularly to discuss various issues associated with living in the Global House. This may include discussions about adjustment, study strategies, and general issues. Team members also evaluate their team performance, and the opportunities and services provided in the Global House.

Team Leader Responsibilities

Team leaders will be required to:

- a. meet with a member of Global House staff every two weeks;
- b. schedule meetings for the Home Team on a regular basis;
- c. report any concerns to Global House staff; and
- d. may attend the Global House council meetings to suggest ideas for activities.

Honors Residential Learning Community, Wilson Hall*

There are three Honors Communities – First-Year Residential Honors in Shippee, Sophomore Honors Community in Brock Hall and Sophomores/Juniors Honors housing in Wilson Hall.

Community Directors: Missy Korduner, Honors Program Office

Students: @160

CAs Melanie Kucko, Dan Pham and Johnny Schreiber organized the following programs:

- To help promote the *Honors and the Arts* initiative as well as to support one of the residents, the three of us encouraged residents to attend the *Honors and the Arts Exhibition Opening* featuring the artwork of [Rockwell Schrock](#).
- To support students during exams, we ran a program called “Study Tips or Treats.” We compiled a list of favorite study tips, attached them to bags of candy, and distributed them at the entrance to Wilson Hall. We helped residents with some ideas that work for us in terms of studying and added a little treat to brighten their day.
- To promote cultural diversity, we brought residents to the African American Cultural Center’s *Welcome Back Dinner*. The free event featured a talk by Dr. Marc Lamont Hill and a soul food dinner, with fried chicken, mac and cheese, and peach cobbler among other delicious dishes. Dr. Hill’s speech was fabulous and it was fun to sample the different foods.
- To offer some diversion, and in response to residents’ interest in the television program *The Office*, we hosted an *Office Premier Party* in the South game room for the season premier. We watched the episode and provided “office-themed” food, such as coffee, doughnuts, Danish, and bagels and cream cheese.

CA, Johnny Schreiber, developed the following programs:

- **Community Building.** For my floor, I held a fall dessert festival. We had hot apple cider, apple pie, pumpkin pie (both with whipped cream of course), and candied apples. It was a huge hit and a lot of fun to take a break from everything to enjoy some good comfort food.
- **Program.** “Swagger Like Us: Young People, Hip Hop, and Political Engagement” was held in the South Community Room. It featured a pizza dinner along with a lecture by [Dr. Ogbar](#), a popular UConn professor, director of the Institute for African American Studies, and author of the recent book *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap* (which was available for sale for a book signing after the lecture). I advertised the event for the whole campus, so it was not focused exclusively to my community. However, I worked with Missy Korduner from Honors to make it an “honors event.” Therefore, Honors Literature advertised the event, and students could use it towards getting their Sophomore Honors Certificates. It was a huge success; about 150 people attended.
- **Future Program.** We offered another large lecture in the Student Union Theater with physics Professor [Dr. Mallett](#). Again, this event is for the whole campus – but it is also in Honors Literature and can count for honors credit.
- **Bulletin Board.** I also have a special bulletin board entitled “active residents.” A number of residents requested a place where they could post flyers and information for various campus activities so I worked with ResLife to obtain permission for a public posting space. I was impressed that students wanted to do this – this is my third year as a CA, and I have never had students request a place to hang their own event flyers – and they have taken advantage of it to advertise various things that otherwise we might not know about – so it has been great!

Leadership, Learning and Life at UConn Residential LC, Northwest

Community Directors: Dr. Joseph Briody, Associate Director, Student Development and Learning
Marissa Sullivan, Graduate Assistant

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.011, *LC Leadership*, Marissa Sullivan

Spring 2009 Course: INTD 1820.022, *LC Leadership*, Marissa Sullivan

Students: 20 (17 students enrolled in SP09 INTD course)

The fall 2008 semester has been an exciting one for the Leadership, Learning & Life Learning Community! Our twenty-two students learn together each week in our INTD 1820 Leadership Seminar, live together in Goodyear Hall, and experience leadership through floor activities and events.

Leadership, Learning and Life at UConn is in the midst of an exciting year of growth and development for its students and we look forward to the continued success of our program, and most importantly our students.

Course Work:

- One of the primary components for the fall semester is our Leadership Seminar, facilitated by Marisa Sullivan and mentored by Lauren Collin, a former member of the Leadership Learning Community.
- In the classroom, it is our goal to explore and develop students' leadership potential. Topics have included defining leadership, group dynamics, personality inventories, effective communication skills, multicultural understanding and ethical decision making.
- Recently our students put their knowledge to the test as they designed and presented group presentations on their chosen topics which included mentoring, learning styles, motivation, trust, and leadership characteristics!

Residential Life:

- Juan Carmona, the Community Assistant for the Leadership Learning Community, and Stacy Flowers, the Hall Director of Goodyear, have been an integral part of the learning community team.
- Juan facilitated a book club featuring "Shackleton's Way" by Margot Morrell. Students engaged in thought-provoking discussions about the book, focused on applicable lessons that they took from the reading, as well as reflected on their personal lives and journeys as student leaders. In addition to reading "Shackleton's Way," all of the students had the opportunity to attend a lecture by Morrell on October 2nd, as she discussed her leadership journey, how to lead through change and challenges, optimizing the strengths of team members, and instilling optimism. Book Club members were also given the opportunity to meet with Morrell on October 3rd in a less formal setting as she further explored many dimensions of life, leadership and personal success.

Future Plans:

- Looking forward, the learning community students will have the opportunity to take another INTD 1820 course titled *Leadership from a Global Perspective*. This course will center on engaging and elevating our students to the next level of leadership and allowing students the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge from their first semester. Course elements will include collaboration with UNESCO, a trip to the United Nations, and participation in the National Conference on Student Leadership.
- We also look forward to holding another book club, perhaps engaging in community service and providing opportunities for mentoring.

Music Residential Learning Community, South

Community Directors: Marvin McNeill, Assistant Director of Athletic Bands and Lecturer

Students: 28 (no freshmen)

- **Harmony Tutoring:** All music major must take four semesters of Harmony. Volunteers from the floor will make their contact info available to first and second year Harmony students who would like help with homework. This is done in cooperation with the Harmony professors and TA's Service.
- **Representatives and Guides for Music Department Auditions and Open Houses:** Members of the cluster give tours of the department to prospective music students on six occasions throughout the year. The students help facilitate a very positive experience for all.
- In cooperation with Rod Rock, in Jorgensen, the students in the community take an active role in helping to promote the importance of the arts in our community by exposing other non-music students to concert performances they would not normally attend. The focus is on the classical, chamber, and symphonic concert series. Rod Rock provides two tickets, one for the Community member and another for their guest. This program also helps Rod to fill seats at those concerts which typically have lower attendance.
- The students provide guidance and help in recital and jury preparations for the new music majors.
- **Organize and provide a Holiday Convocation performance:** All music majors must take, attend, and perform, at some point, at the convocation. The Music Community provides the Holiday Convo to serve as an end of the semester fun, "stress release" time. Last semester their convocation culminated in the entire Community performing "Feliz Navidad," inspiring the other music majors to clap along.

Nursing Residential Learning Community, Northwest

Community Directors: Cynthia Collins, Associate Professor-in-Residence, School of Nursing
Desiree Diaz, Clinical Instructor, School of Nursing

Fall 2008 Courses: INTD 1820.018 *LC Nursing*, Desiree Diaz
INTD 1820.019 *LC Nursing*, Cynthia Collins

Students: 31 + 35 = 66

The Nursing Learning Community will prepare Nursing majors for the challenges that await them in their program, as well as take advantage of activities and events that promote increased contact with faculty and staff of the College of Nursing. This community is a great support network for first year Nursing majors.

Programming and Class Activities

- On move-in day, Faculty Advisors Cindy Collins and Desiree Diaz came to meet incoming students and their families, and they helped students move belongings into their new rooms.
- The Hall Director and CA developed an interactive Amazing Race around campus that started at Storrs Hall and ended at the Student Union with cake. The class split into two teams, and the Associate Dean and Professors served as road blocks. Turnout was great.
- Students are collecting hats, scarves and gloves for a sponsored soup kitchen at the Co-op, North West Dining Hall and Storrs Hall.
- Students are composing a letter regarding lack of hygiene in the NW area, bathrooms and trash cans as a public health nursing activity.
- The CA's personal interactions with students have made the 3rd floor of Rogers an open environment for Nursing students to learn about what their future may entail.
- Hall Director, Raymond HeBert: "We would like to extend our thanks to the Dean for her commitment to our program, the Advisors for their dedication and passion, and First Year Programs for the support."



The Clue



The Impact of Learning in a Mentorship Community

As Printed in *NSNA Imprint*, November/December 2005, by Stephanie Andrade & Sherry Bassi, EdD, APRN, CS

Through its First Year Learning Community (FYLC), the University of Connecticut School of Nursing, Storrs, Connecticut, offers its incoming freshman class guidance and support, just as we all needed at one time. As a student mentor and faculty associate, respectively, Dr. Bassi and I were able to give back to the university beyond our typical roles as faculty and student mentor. Mentorship through a learning community provides the stepping-stones for those who are beginning a vigorous nursing program. The following details how the University of Connecticut has institutionalized a mentorship program in the form of an FYLC allowing the incoming student to connect with other residents while actively interacting with faculty. This support network is key to the mentor/protégée relationship and vital to helping students succeed in an intense four year program.

Learning Community. The University of Connecticut has developed the FYLC in order to “combine the experience of living together in the residence hall with the frequent interaction of an introductory-first year experience one credit course” (Sears & Arnold, 2004, 1). Students enjoy direct and frequent contact with the student mentor, nursing faculty associate, and residential life staff through the one-credit first year experience course, which is specialized to reflect a community theme, in this case nursing. Course instructors interact weekly in the class and through various programs and events outside the classroom. The role of mentorship is to provide a support system for the student as well as a faculty presence in the nursing community. The student mentor resides on the floor with the residents to provide support in the living environment as well as in the classroom, promoting resident connections, student/faculty connections and a supportive environment (Sears, 2004).

Welcoming. As a student mentor it was my responsibility to make incoming students feel like they were entering a safe and welcoming environment. Upon arrival, each student found a welcome letter from me, the faculty associate, and the resident hall director. At the beginning of the school year I created a bulletin board on the floor entitled “Nursing Times,” which displayed articles from the NSNA’s *Imprint* and *American Journal of Nursing*. Many of the articles were specifically aimed at nursing students and the challenges they faced, while others presented factual information about various diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Guidance with Academics. The student mentor and FYLC faculty associate ensure that students interact with the faculty outside the classroom and experience the university community as a whole. Within that same scope, they are responsible for making sure that a student also feels connected to the School of Nursing. In fact, we followed Temple University’s motto in this instance by striving to “create a small college atmosphere at a large university” (Shapiro, 1999, 3).

As a student mentor for the FYLC nurses, I created an intimate environment representative of the university and particularly, the School of Nursing. I understood when a student struggled with some classes, and was able to advise them on study habits and how to better prepare for exams as well as selecting courses for the following semester. I also made the faculty associate aware of any particular academic challenges so that she could plan programs for skill-building in the areas of studying and test-taking. As the student mentor I was responsible for outlining a schedule for each student to complete and follow prior to their midterms – it outlined their time to study, time for breaks to exercise, stretch and relax, as well as time for eating well-balanced meals. The great thing about our mentorship program and my role is that the student mentor is not only a mentor in the classroom, but also someone who lives with them. This allowed me to observe the interaction between different personalities, assist them in learning to work together, and share their thoughts and ideas, as well as helping them to adjust to the college environment. I would inform the faculty associate of any problems I observed in the resident hall and together we addressed them in class via group discussions.

Networking. An important aspect of the FYLC mentorship program is to put inter-university connections to work for the students. We had a network of individuals who helped us plan for the class. The faculty associate, the resident hall director, and I met at the beginning of the semester to develop the syllabus for the semester and a plan of action for the year. From the beginning we all agreed that an important aspect of the residential community was to make sure that as first year students, our charges not only enjoyed the School of Nursing but also enjoyed all that the university had to offer. The faculty associate always reminded us that nursing students must have fun to compensate for a rigorous course.

Interaction with Peers. A major challenge for new students is interaction with peers. As a nursing student, and as a mentor, I have realized that communication skills are a very important aspect of this career, and it is through conversation that people glean the knowledge and learn the skills that they need in life: “Dialogue creates the potential for developing awareness of and understanding for the different perspectives about the educational experience held by faculty and students” (Schaffer & Juarez, 1996, 43). Our mentorship relationship and our ability to communicate served as a model for the FYLC. In any environment there are many different personalities and as a result certain personalities get along better than others,

especially when there is a connection in the classroom and in the residence hall.

One way I decided to improve communication among all members was to have a scavenger hunt. Each group was designated a name such as "scrubs," "syringe," "stethoscope" or "blood pressure." I gave the groups a week to explore the campus and learn facts about the university and the School of Nursing. I made sure the groups consisted of classmates who normally did not associate with each other. An important aspect of the nursing profession is the ability to work collaboratively with others. Initially, the FYLC students were not excited about separating from their friends. The faculty associate requested that students complete a weekly journal reflecting on their personal experiences. Although she was the only one to read their confidential entries, we were aware that again and again, homesickness and the overwhelming challenges of university life were predominant themes. Upon completion of the scavenger hunt, students reported they had learned new facts about the university and School of Nursing. More importantly, the scavenger hunt helped create a bond and helped the students communicate with each other. Many expressed that it was helpful getting to know other members of the learning community and that it helped them cope with feeling overwhelmed and homesick.

Faculty-Student Relationships. A very important aspect for our mentorship course was to provide faculty/student relationships outside of the classroom. Typically, curriculum is defined as "the interactions that takes place between and among the students, clients, practitioners and teachers with the intent that learning take place and the quality of the curriculum depends on the quality of these interactions" (Smith, 2003, 227). In order to improve that relationship, students need more than the weekly classroom interaction with a professor. The FYLC mentorship course is able to provide that. As the student mentor I was the student-link in the resident hall, mentoring any time of the day or night and as the need arose. I was also the link to the faculty associate when she was not available. As a group, the FYLC planned a trip during the fall semester class to see the play RENT. As the student mentor, I was provided with money from the FYLC budget to fund the trip and invited faculty from the School of Nursing to attend, allowing us all the opportunity to socialize informally outside of the classroom. Prior to our trip, we read an article that I provided addressing AIDS and the role of nurses. This article provided background information to foster in understanding the play as well as facts about rural nurses and their work with AIDS patients. The faculty associate encouraged me to choose the article and she enthusiastically supported my choice. I learned a great deal from the responsibility of planning this event and appreciated the autonomy I had in planning it.

Rewards. "The use of the learning community concept has tremendous potential to make a positive impact on nursing education. If student interaction is increased, students will develop networking skills as pre-professionals that will be useful to them throughout their professional careers" (Churchill, Reno & Batchelor, 1998, 7-8). Bassi and Polifroni (2005) suggest that the use of learning communities in nursing has the potential to increase retention and recruitment of new graduate nurses as well. This is vital today given the looming nurse shortage. As a student mentor, my reward has been to see my guidance have a positive impact on students through their college years, which will hopefully extend to their professional nursing career. As the student mentor, I was the student-link in the residence hall, mentoring at any time of the day and as the need arose. In addition, I have developed a relationship with the faculty associate, and together we will continue to work on projects like this paper that makes students like you, nurses and faculty more aware of the benefits and rewards of mentorship and the learning community.

References

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(Pre-)Pharmacy Residential Learning Community, Towers

Community Director: Sharon Giovenale, Pharmacy Librarian

Fall 2008 Courses: INTD 1820.021 *LC Pre-Pharmacy*, Robert McCarthy, Dean of Pharmacy
INTD 1820.022 *LC Pre-Pharmacy*, Sharon Giovenale, Pharm. Librarian
INTD 1820.023 *LC Pre-Pharmacy*, Andrea Hubbard, Associate Dean

Students: 49 + non-Freshmen in Pre-Pharmacy Cluster

The Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community is designed to support Pre-Pharmacy majors in their challenging program. A great advantage of the community is the opportunity to get to know other Pre-Pharmacy majors, interact with Pharmacy faculty and staff, as well as study and learn together.

Programming

Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community activities focus on Community Development, Academic Success, Life Skills, Personal Wellness, Involvement, etc., to stress the importance of becoming a well-rounded student.

- Prior to the residents' arrival, the CAs (Justine Dickson, Aimee Dietle, Jordon Thomas, and Slav Zenchenko) were diligent about making Pre-Pharmacy door decorations (pills, prescription pads, mortars and pestles, etc.) for them, as well as posting bulletin boards with information and facts regarding academics, careers, and facts related to Pharmacy.
- August 24th: "4th Floor Meet and Greet" – The CAs had the male (4th Trumbull/Sousa) and female (4th Morgan/Lafayette) residents of the Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community make name tags for themselves and "speed meet" in the quad. After a complete cycle of speed meeting was finished, there was time at the end for the 30+ residents who attended to socialize further. (Planned by CAs Aimee Dietle and Jordon Thomas).
- 1st Week of Classes: The CAs and Hall Director attended the three Pre-Pharmacy FYE classes to connect with the resident students, instructors, and mentors.
- September 1st: 4th Trumbull/Sousa vs. 2nd Colt/Jefferson ... Flag Football – CA Jordon Thomas organized his floor to participate in a game of flag football against another floor in Towers. The program was successful in bringing each floor together in a competition, and allowed the residents to learn how to work together. Residents were also able to socialize with each other and new people.
- September 5th – Present: "Involvement Superstars!" – CA Aimee Dietle made an "Involvement" bulletin board to stress the importance of getting involved in the UConn community. For each organization that the residents of 4th Morgan/Lafayette join, they can fill out a short description and the dates of attendance and submit it to her. Aimee has set the goal to have every resident join at least one organization; therefore, they need to earn 37 stars (one for each resident). Since residents have exceeded this goal, they will receive a pizza party.
- September 10th: "Pre-Pharm. Tips & Tricks" – CA Slav Zenchenko organized an information session for residents of the Pre-Pharmacy Academic Cluster. The previous year's Pre-Pharmacy majors spoke to residents about study tips and various helpful resources.

- September 17th: “CHEM 1127 Review Session” – CA Aimee Dietle helped residents with chemistry problems before their CHEM 1127 exam, for some students, their first college exam. Residents brought questions and example problems and they worked through them together.
- September 20th: “The Rxtreme Volleyball Tournament” – The Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community and Academic Cluster had a Volleyball Tournament with a total of 4 teams ranging from 6-10 players. Approximately 40 students participated and it was an excellent opportunity for the two floors to mingle. (Planned by CAs Justine Dickson, Aimee Dietle, Jordon Thomas and Slav Zenchenko and attended by Community Director Sharon Giovenale).



- September 26th: “CHEM 1127 Post-Exam Party” – CAs Aimee Dietle and Jordon Thomas organized a social for the residents in the Towers Game Room. Approximately 35 residents attended to celebrate completion of their Chemistry exam by playing games, watching the football game, and enjoying food and drinks.
- October 3rd: “Safe Medication Disposal Education for CT Environmental Action Day” – This program was for approximately 130 high school students who were attending “Connecticut Environmental Action Day” to get ideas about what environmentally friendly action plans they could bring back to their high schools and communities. The Pre-Pharmacy Academic Cluster had a booth about “Safe Medication Disposal” and the Pre-Pharmacy residents educated attendees about how they should throw away old and unused medication. Only 4-6 students were needed, but eight residents volunteered to help out with this outreach program! (Planned by CA Justine Dickson)
- October 12th: “MCB Mock Exam” – CA Slav Zenchenko organized a “mock exam” for the residents of the Pre-Pharmacy Academic Cluster to help them prepare for an upcoming test in Molecular and Cell Biology. Residents were timed in answering various questions and then reviewed the answers together.
- October 20th: “Dinner with the Deans - Part I” – CA Justine Dickson organized a dinner and chat with the Associate Dean of the School of Pharmacy and some of the residents of the Pre-Pharmacy Academic Cluster.

This allowed the residents to have an informal setting to ask some of their questions and get to know Dr. Hubbard better. Fifteen residents were able to attend!

- October 27th: “Dinner with the Deans - Part II” – CA Justine Dickson invited the Dean of the School of Pharmacy to come to Towers and have a casual dinner with the Pre-Pharmacy Academic Cluster residents in the dining hall. Dean McCarthy discussed the admission process, the profession, their hopes and fears about pharmacy school and other topics to get to know them better. Nineteen residents were able to attend!
- November 12th: “CA Info. Session” – Due to an overwhelming interest from current residents, the CAs and Hall Director will be holding an informational meeting to talk about the responsibilities of being a Community Assistant for the Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community and Academic Cluster. (Planned by HD Nora McGee, and CAs Justine Dickson, Aimee Dietle, Jordon Thomas, and Slav Zenchenko)
- November 13th: “Resume Workshop” – CA Justine Dickson has invited an individual from Career Services to come out and speak about resume writing. There will be a focus on the skills, involvement, and experiences of being a Pre-Pharmacy / Pharmacy major.
- November 16th: “3rd Annual Pre-Pharmacy Spelling Bee” – The Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community and Academic Cluster will be holding a Spelling Bee consisting of words taken from BIOL 1107, CHEM 1127, and common pharmaceuticals. Teams of residents from each of the floors will compete against each other and the CA/HD team. Everyone that participates will receive a prize ranging from cans of alphabet soup to games such as *Scrabble* and *Upwords*. (Planned by HD Nora McGee, CAs Justine Dickson, Aimee Dietle, Jordon Thomas, and Slav Zenchenko with the word list provided by Community Director / Pharmacy Librarian Sharon Giovenale).
- Throughout the semester, the CAs have had “A-Boards” on their floors. They have set a goal of a certain amount of “A’s” that their residents must receive on quizzes, exams, and papers. Residents bring their “A’s” to their CA and the CA puts a star with their name on the bulletin board. Once they have achieved their goal, the community will receive recognition such as certificates, pizza party, candy, etc.

Social Justice in a Global Community Residential LC, Hilltop Halls

Community Directors: Dr. Willena Price, Director, African American Cultural Center

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.010, *LC Social Justice in the Global Community*, Willena Price

Spring 2009 Course: INTD 1820.024, *LC Social Justice in the Global Community*, Willena Price

Students: 7 residents, 13 additional students in class (Social Justice Fellows)
23 students enrolled in SP09 INTD course

Programming:

- Residents attended a Human Rights Week lecture given by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. After the program we debriefed and discussed his presentation.
- The community held a "Global Gourmet" event at Towers Dining Hall on October 29th with international food and entertainment. We asked every diner to write one way they will help alleviate social injustice and during class we debriefed and discussed these issues. See photographs below.

Website:

- The Social Justice learning community has its own website with information on the FYE course, upcoming programming, photographs, and links to other sites.

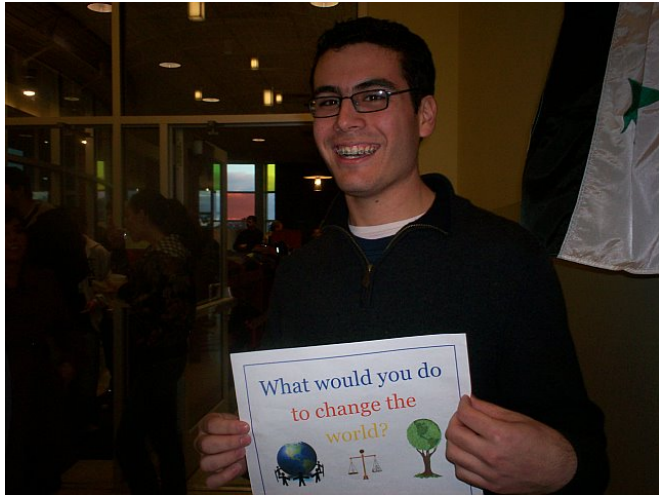
<http://socialjusticelearningcommunity.weebly.com/index.html>

Community Development:

- The overall climate on the residence hall floor as been great. Initially, the residents were shy, but they have come out of their shells. Often times at night they are too loud and talkative because everyone has something to talk about.
- Many of the residents, both males and females, use the lounge on the first floor of our building to study or watch football or television.
- Residents can often be found in the dining hall eating lunch and dinner together.

Future Plans:

- For Spring 2009, our floor is planning the second annual "Dancers for Darfur" (last year we raised over \$1000 for the cause) where we ask dance teams from the New England area to dance and support the fight against the injustices occurring in Darfur.
- Residents will be attending lectures, programs, and events on campus to provide them with more knowledge and give them more ways to help fight social injustices.



Women in Math, Science & Engineering (WiMSE) Residential LC, Hilltop Halls

Community Directors: Helena Silva, Assistant Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Kristen Sellke, Assistant Professor in Residence, Math and Q Center
Martha Morton, Academic Assistant, Chemistry
Sharyn Rusch, Academic Advisor, Molecular and Cell Biology
Christine Cardillo, Laboratory Technician, Chemistry
Brenda Shaw, Associate Professor, Chemistry
Holly Fitch, Associate Professor, Psychology
Heather Read, Assistant Professor, Psychology

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.026, *LC WiMSE*, Helena Silva and Kristen Sellke

Students: 19

Things are going great for WiMSE so far this year, and the community is showing potential for growth and expansion for the 2009-2010 school year!

WiMSE Club Connection:

- A great addition to the community this year has been teaming up with the WiMSE club, which offers more opportunities for the women to venture into the worlds of math, science, and engineering.

Activities:

- The academic success of the learning community has been commendable. For the month of November, WiMSE is having an "A Turkey" program, where residents receiving an 'A' get their name on a turkey's feather. There were 18 A's in just the first week!
- WiMSE residents participated in a scavenger hunt to learn more about campus.

Future Plans:

- Trip to the Museum of Science in Boston next semester
- Continue the tradition of the annual WiMSE Banquet in the spring, which brings together faculty and students for a formal evening event



Non-Residential Learning Communities

Animal Science Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: Steven Zinn, Professor, Animal Science

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1800.042 *LC: Animal Science*, Dr. Steve Zinn
INTD 1800.043 *LC: Animal Science*, Dr. Steve Zinn

Students: 21 + 19 = 40

Economics Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: Marjorie Aston, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Dept of Economics

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1830.046 *LC: Economic Majors*, Margie Aston

Students: 14

Engineering Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: John Bennett, Associate Dean and Associate Professor, School of Engineering

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.034 *LC: Problem Solving in Engineering*, Dr. John Bennett

Students: 14

Being only a learning community and not a living/learning community, our efforts were mostly limited to our efforts during class time.

- We did spend quite a bit of time dialoguing about how to develop a “contract” for each student’s efforts associated with getting a good grade and/or learning the material.
- We also spent a great deal of time talking about time management – consistent with attention to all of one’s needs, not just academics.
- Finally, we dialogued a great deal about self-assessment of one’s progress in learning material, not just depending upon the instructor’s exams / homework grading to tell us.

Environmental Science Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: Timothy Byrne, Professor, Marine Sciences & Geography Departments

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.017 *LC: Environmental Science*, Dr. Tim Byrne
ENGL 1010.021 *Environmental Studies Learning Project*, Christina Wilson, ENGL GA

Students: 15 + 16 (13 students were enrolled in both courses; 5 additional students were enrolled in one or the other)

Exploring Helping Professions Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: Kathryn Brown, HDFS Academic Counselor and Coordinator

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1820.015 *LC: Exploring Helping Professions*, Kathryn Brown

Students: 11

Pathobiology Non-Residential Learning Community

Community Director: Sandra Bushmich, Professor, Pathobiology

Fall 2008 Course: INTD 1800.063 *LC: Veterinary Science*, Sandra Bushmich

Students: 17

Pre-Teaching Non-Residential Learning Community

Fall 2008 Courses: INTD 1800-030 *LC Pre-Teaching*, Kimeta Straker, Assistant Director, ACES
INTD 1820-030 *LC Preparing Teachers for a New Era*, Scott Brown, Professor, Educational Psychology
INTD 1820-042 *I Learn, I Teach, Therefore I Am*, Cynthia Bushey, PhD Student, Cognition & Instruction

Students: 51

The non-residential Pre-Teaching Learning Community offers students an opportunity to learn how teachers are prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of schools today. They learn about admissions requirements for the NEAG School of Education, about educational opportunities at UConn, about teaching as a profession, while also developing university learning skills.

Class Activities

- Students required to interview faculty member
- Pre-Teaching Advisors spoke to class
- Teacher Certificate Program for College Graduates (TCPCG) Faculty spoke to class
- Students learned about admissions requirements for NEAG School of Education
- Visit from Dr. Marjike Kehrhahn, Director, Teacher Education
- Development of concept maps on successful learning and successful teaching
- Experience with a problem-based learning environment, the Jasper Woodbury series
- Reviewed learning theory, pedagogy, creativity, cognitive processes, problem-solving, motivation, and how teachers can creatively use technology to promote student engagement and academic performance in diverse learning environments.
- Critically analyze popular text for teaching and learning opportunities
- Person-centered critical analysis of Teaching and Learning Case