Learning Community Frequently Asked Questions

Incoming First-Years and Transfers

1. What is a learning community?

A learning community is a group of students with similar academic interests who choose to explore them together in common courses and out of classroom activities. Learning community offerings exist for new students in a variety of areas. Explore the different offerings and choose one that best fits your interests. Most learning communities are living-learning communities which allow you the added benefit of being on the same floor with community members. Options exist for commuter students as well.

2. What are the benefits of joining?

Students in learning communities report making friends quicker and connecting with faculty, staff and other students more easily. These programs are created to give you a shared experience around your academics and residential environment. They help you adjust to campus life by facilitating your transition to Rutgers, creating a smaller community within the larger Rutgers environment. This gives you a chance to live and learn with students of similar interests and build a supportive, fun and vibrant community of friends!

3. What are the participation requirements?

Each student enrolled in a learning community contributes to its success through participating in programs which are designed by your residential peer mentor, RA or Residence Life Coordinator/Educator. Students will be asked to participate in monthly learning community programs. For more information on types of programs visit the rulc.rutgers.edu or contact rulc@echo.rutgers.edu for additional information

4. If I am assigned to a learning community can I change my mind?
If you are in a non-residential program, you can drop the course that you are enrolled in. If you are in a living-learning program you have the option of staying in the same residence hall and we can look to make changes in your course schedule if you feel it is necessary. If you want to move out, you submit a change request form to be assigned to a different residence hall.

5. Does being part of a particular learning community mean that I am committing to that field of study as a major or future career?
No! Signing up to be in a particular learning community does not mean that you are committing to major in that topic of interest. The learning community is designed to help you explore that particular area of interest.

6. What if I’m undecided?
If you are undecided, a learning community will help you explore the majors related to a possible career interest. The unique activities and opportunities available only to learning community participants can help you better decide if that is a major/field of study that you would like to pursue.

7. Do I have to live on campus to be part of a learning community?
The majority of our learning communities are residential programs. Students live in a designated suite or house, or on a designated floor. Some communities are open to commuter students, or students with other on- or off-campus living arrangements.

8. Do living-learning community students get to live with other first-year or transfer students?
Yes! Some living-learning communities allow non-community members to live on that floor or in that house. And all communities are in the midst of standard residential options, so you are not isolated from other new students!

9. Is there any extra cost to be in a learning community?
No | There are no additional costs for learning community programs with the exception of the Douglass Residential College.

10. What is the application and selection process?
All learning communities require an online application along with a phone interview.
- For first-year learning communities, online applications via the learning communities’ website open Friday April 4, 2014.
- For transfer specific communities applications open May 1, 2014 (SAS Transfer Knights and Science Success Fast Track.) For all others, applications are open April 1, 2014.

11. When will I find out if I have been accepted?
- First-year communities, you will be notified via e-mail on Monday July 14th.
Transfer communities, your enrollment will be after attendance at your required STAR day.

**Note:** For all living-learning communities you must complete your housing application and contract to finalize placement into the program.

**12. I still have questions, who do I call?**

You can e-mail Ghada Endick, Director of Learning Communities at rulc@echo.rutgers and we can arrange for you to at time for you to speak with a learning community staff member, a current community member or the peer mentor.

**Frequently Asked Questions for First-Year Students only**

**If I choose to be in a learning community that does not relate to the major that I want to pursue, will I be behind?**
No | All classes taken in the learning community count towards graduation credit. First-year students should use their first few semesters to explore their interests and the opportunities at Rutgers, and the learning communities are a great way to do that with students with similar interests!

**What courses are part of the learning community?**
Each community has between one to three courses that students share in common. You can check the website for specifics. These are the courses any student takes to explore that topic; learning community residents just take them together. For the majority of learning communities, it is an introductory course with other students as well. This will allow you to see friendly faces in those large introductory classes.

**How is being in a learning community different than if I came into Rutgers as a regular student?**
All first-year students are involved in all the offerings of our residential first-year experience by living in a traditional first-year residence hall. You will get an added bonus of having an enhanced experience through the learning community program that will contribute to your success at Rutgers.

**Frequently Asked Questions for Transfer Students only**

**What courses are part of the learning community?**
Each community has one common course that the students share in common. It is either a uniquely designed course for that program or a special section of the required Students in Transition Seminar that is exclusively held for the community members. STS courses are a 1
credit requirement by the School of Arts and Sciences; we just give you the added benefit of co-enrolling with learning community members.