

Living Learning Communities in Residence: opportunities to support a culture of inclusion, our academic mission and immersive student experience.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the student experience at StFX, we are considering the concept of Living Learning Communities (LLCs). Living Learning Communities can play a crucial role in fostering a supportive and enriching environment for our students. The planned Capital Campaign renovations to Cameron and MacKinnon Hall offers the opportunity to thoughtfully consider the ways in which we can leverage residence spaces to better support our academic mission and immersive student experience.

We are in the initial stages of our exploration of LLCs but have produced four themes based on the consultations so far through the Senate Forum on Student Life, PACAR and the Residence Leadership Team. We are concurrently seeking input via a student survey on this topic. We are open to more ideas, of course!

Four emerging themes¹ include:

- **LLC Concept 1: The IDEAs Room (working title)** envisions a socially innovative makerspace that fosters creativity and exploration. It is a space equipped with cutting-edge technology, tools, screens, and crafting supplies, serving as a project launch pad for a range of experiential learning opportunities.
- **LLC Concept 2: Community Conversations LLC (working title):** Centered around a communal living room and kitchen and the principles of civil discourse, students will take the lead in planning menus, scheduling topics, inviting faculty, staff, and community members to share their expertise and lead discussions on selected themes over family-style meals.
- **LLC Concept 3: EcoActive Living: Outdoor Enthusiasts' Residence LLC (working title)** Leveraging the natural assets of the Keppoch mountain facilities, the proximity of lakes and ocean, and the local environment of Eastern Nova Scotia, this community will attract students who seek adventure, who want to explore their surroundings and who, when ready (qualified), will help organize and lead activities.
- **LLC Concept 4: Youth Leadership:** would offer a specialized and immersive Living Learning Community that provides year-round accommodation encompassing built-in leadership training and work experience that extends into the summer months, potentially supporting summer initiatives such as youth camps.

LLC Descriptions with examples:

LLC Concept 1: The IDEAs Room (working title)

This LLC concept envisions a socially innovative makerspace that fosters creativity and exploration. Anchored in principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, this dynamic space will be a focal point for students, faculty, and even classes to engage with experiential and active learning. Central to this concept is a space equipped with cutting-edge technology, tools, screens, and crafting supplies, serving as a project launch pad. This curated environment will inspire projects and collaborations using high tech, low tech, and

traditional materials. For example, students can communicate and market their ideas using state-of-the-art video editing equipment or explore their culture through textile arts. The intention for this space is to be multi-purpose with tools and resources to support creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship across a broad range of academic areas from science, engineering, and technology, to business, the arts, and social sciences and beyond. The space can also leverage the interests and expertise of StFX communities such as Kiknu, the Centre for Black Student Success, or partner to support and collaborate with existing campus innovation/experiential learning spaces or programs.

LLC Concept 2: Community Conversations LLC (working title):

The Community Conversations LLC fosters engaging discussions and shared experiences in a warm, inclusive environment. Centered around a communal living room and kitchen, and the concept of civil discourse, students collaborate regularly (i.e., once per month or once per week depending on the time of year and the capacity of the group) to plan discussions over family-style meals, normally prepared together or on a rotation. Students will take the lead in planning menus, scheduling topics, inviting faculty, staff, and community members to share their expertise and lead discussions on selected themes. Foodies welcome! Participation involves a commitment to fostering the skills of civil discourse, agenda shaping, fostering camaraderie and respectful engagement. The LLC welcomes diverse backgrounds and perspectives, potentially linking discussions with related meals. For example, a culturally relevant menu or food selection that complements the discussion topic e.g. a discussion topic that revolves around environmental sustainability and the impact of food choices on the planet could be paired with a communal meal centered around plant-based cuisine and locally sourced ingredients. The LLC prioritizes civil discourse, collaboration, and mutual respect, inviting students, faculty and staff who share these values to join in creating an inclusive learning community in which every voice is valued.

LLC Concept 3: EcoActive Living: Outdoor Enthusiasts' Residence LLC (working title) -

envisions an active and dynamic Living Learning Community at StFX that harnesses the energetic ethos of our students. Leveraging the natural assets of the Keppoch mountain facilities, the proximity of lakes and ocean, and the local environment of Eastern Nova Scotia, this community will attract students who seek adventure, who want to explore their surroundings and who, when ready (qualified), will help organize and lead activities. The LLC will promote community engagement in diverse activities, ranging from cultural activities to other pursuits like ropes courses, water sports, winter sports, and other outdoor or active indoor experiences. With StFX's growing connection to health initiatives and sustainable projects, this LLC will seek to engage academic programs related to health, wellness, and environmental sustainability, such as Health, Human Kinetics, Human Nutrition, Nursing, Climate and the Environment, and any student who is interested in an active lifestyle living option and contributing to an active and engaged community outdoors.

LLC Concept 4: Youth Leadership cultivates and empowers young leaders. It would offer limited spaces for a specialized and immersive Living Learning Community that provides year-round accommodation encompassing built-in leadership training and work experience that extends into the summer months, potentially supporting summer initiatives such as youth camps. The program will integrate students into progressively more responsible leadership

roles within the residence community as they advance through their years of study. This LLC would welcome students from all areas of academic study. Collaboration with residence professionals and a dedicated Faculty lead would be required to guide the development of essential leadership skills. Students within this community engage in a dynamic combination of activities and work, fostering continuous personal and professional growth. With a focus on mentorship, students would be guided through a structured journey, preparing them to take on advanced leadership responsibilities. This LLC could offer a rare opportunity for a select group of students to embark on a transformative residential leadership development experience throughout their academic years.