



A National Portrait of Today's Living-Learning Programs



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FOUND AT DOZENS, if not hundreds, of colleges and universities across the United States, living-learning programs have emerged as one of many institutional responses to calls for strengthening the undergraduate educational experience, delivering supportive services targeted to particular populations, and recruiting high-talent students (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Until recently, however, scholars had conducted little systematic research into these programs, and what was known came largely from single-program or single-institution evaluation efforts (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). Further complicating our understanding, neither theoretical nor empirical efforts have employed a consistent definition of the practices or structures that define living-learning programs (Blimling, 1993; Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

The National Study of Living Learning Programs (NSLLP), a multiyear, multi-institutional study begun in 2004, has the potential to remedy both shortfalls (Inkelas, Brower, & Associates, 2004). To account for a wide range of living-learning arrangements found at U.S. colleges and universities, the NSLLP opened participation in its study to any postsecondary institution that defined its programs through the following liberal definition: Programs in which undergraduate students live together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall) and participate in academic and/or extracurricular programming designed especially for them. While a generous definition of living-learning programs works well when practitioners or researchers wish to identify the entirety of the possible "population" for further study, Inkelas, Soldner, Longerbeam, and Brown Leonard (in press) have suggested that it may be less helpful when we wish to ask specific questions about a particular type of intervention's efficacy. Similarly, Inkelas et al. (in press) have argued that more specific definitions for what constitutes a living-learning program may be helpful to practitioners seeking to design

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new or refine existing programmatic efforts. Similarly, understanding which elements of living-learning programming appear to be most effective in facilitating student outcomes can be beneficial for practitioners seeking to advocate for additional or augmented resources.

With this in mind, in the pages that follow, we offer an investigation of the programmatic and structural characteristics of today's living-learning programs and conclude by suggesting an important question to be answered by future research: What constitutes a living-learning program? Or, more specifically, do particular facets of residential education efforts exist that are necessary for a program to be termed "living-learning"?

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THE NSLLP

Concerned about a dearth of information about the effectiveness of living-learning programs despite their seemingly widespread popularity, principal investigator Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas at the University of Maryland and co-principal investigator Aaron Brower at the University of Wisconsin began the NSLLP in the fall of 2001 with funding from the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) (Inkelas et al., 2004). In 2004, 34 institutions participated in the NSLLP, each selecting a full or random sample of students participating in living-learning programs and a demographically matched comparison sample

of students living in traditional residence halls. By the study's completion, almost 24,000 students had responded, and institutions had provided information on nearly 300 programs.

Each respondent completed a 275-question instrument known as the Residence Environment Survey (RES). Besides gathering basic demographic data, the RES asked respondents to provide information about their precollege expectations, their collegiate experiences, and their perceived growth on a number of important learning outcomes. Simultaneously, administrators at the same institutions were completing the Living-Learning Programs Survey (LLPS), an instrument consisting of 30 items. The LLPS sought information about programs' goals and objectives, their organizational characteristics and staffing patterns, and their academic and cocurricular offerings. Both student and staff respondents completed their instruments via the Web.

In 2005, the NSLLP again received support from ACUHO-I, as well as the National Science Foundation, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and College Student Educators International (ACPA) to conduct a longitudinal follow-up with first-year respondents from 2004 and to collect baseline data on a new cohort of students. In 2007, more than 1,500 fourth-year students at 16 institutions participated in the longitudinal study, along with a new group of more than 22,000 students of all class levels at 46 institutions. Five additional institutions provided LLPS data, but were unable to complete student data collection, bringing the number of participating colleges and universities to 51. As in 2004, students completed the RES, and institutional contacts completed the

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LLPS, both of which had undergone revisions before being deployed via the Web.

Given the focus of this article on the programmatic and structural characteristics of living-learning programs, the analyses in this study rely on data from the 613 living-learning programs included in the 2007 LLPS. Readers interested in learning more about findings

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from the 2004 study are encouraged to review the work of Inkelas et al. (in press) or visit the study Web site, <http://www.livelearnstudy.net>. We begin by cataloging the diversity of living-learning programs nationwide, examining such features as programs' administrative and organizational characteristics and programmatic approaches to promoting student learning. Then, we turn our attention to identifying trends within contemporary living-learning program design and implementation.

The Growth of Living-Learning Programs

The institutions that participated in the 2007 NSLLP offered more than 600 living-learning programs, collectively. All institutions were predominantly White, and all but one, publicly controlled. Shapiro and Levine (1999) have suggested that a common purpose of living-learning programs is to reduce large institutions to a more human scale and, given the characteristics of our participating colleges and universities, this may indeed be the case. The majority of institutions in our study (23) were Carnegie "research-very high" institutions, 15 were "research-high" institutions, and 4 institutions were "research" institutions. Finally, 9 schools were either master's or baccalaureate institutions. In addition, irrespective of their location, most of the living-learning programs were relatively new to their campuses. Almost 17% of programs surveyed were in their first year of operation, and 38% of programs had been in existence for two to four years. Almost 29% of programs were between 5 and 9 years old, with the remaining 16% of programs marking their 10th (or later) year.

Might the youth of the living-learning programs in the 2007 NSLLP suggest that they are simply the latest "fad" to hit higher education, especially at large, public institutions? Indeed, there is reason to believe that the pace of program development may actually be quickening: External pressures for improving undergraduate education continue to rise (National Leadership Council, 2007; The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, 2006), the practitioner literature has touted the benefits of learning communities for more than a decade (Laufgraben, Shapiro, & Associates, 2004;

Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999), and the popular press has begun to feature living-learning programs as "best practices" in undergraduate education (Bonisteel, 2006; Foderaro, 2005; Thomson Peterson's, 2006). It is important to remember, however, that several long-standing examples of living-learning programs do exist, including those at institutions such as Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

If so many programs are at larger institutions, how have they fared in creating the smaller, more intimate learning spaces for which living-learning scholars have advocated (Inkelas et al., 2004; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999)? The median living-learning enrollment in the 2007 NSLLP was 52 students, with 50 students being the modal response. The 25th and 75th percentile saw enrollments of 29 and 150, respectively, with 11 programs evidencing enrollments of more than 1,000 students.

With most programs housing approximately 50 students, it appears the majority of living-learning programs can be contained by one traditional residence hall floor of the double-loaded corridor design. Indeed, approximately 71% of programs were housed within a discrete, reserved portion of one residence hall. Typically, these halls had living-learning and non-living-learning floors (53%), although some programs were housed within all-living-learning buildings (18%). A smaller number of programs, approximately 17%, filled an

Table 1

Basic Characteristics of Living-Learning Programs

Description	% reporting
<i>Reporting structure</i>	
Residential life only	47%
Residential life + academic department	13%
Residential life + academic affairs	11%
Academic department only	8%
Academic affairs unit only	7%
Residential life + student affairs unit	7%
Other arrangement	6%
Student affairs unit only	1%
<i>Professional affiliation of directors</i>	
One or more residential life directors	43%
One or more academic departments	21%
Residential life + academic department	13%
Multiperson board	8%
One or more academic affairs units	7%
One or more student affairs units	5%
Residential life + academic affairs	3%
Residential life + student affairs	2%
<i>Sources of institutional funding</i>	
Student affairs (or housing) only	51%
Student affairs > academic affairs	16%
Student affairs = academic affairs	13%
Academic affairs > student affairs	8%
Academic affairs only	7%
<i>Fees charged</i>	
Less than \$100	33%
\$100 to \$199	41%
\$200 to \$299	7%
\$300 to \$399	7%
\$400 to \$499	0%
\$500 to \$599	4%
\$600 to \$699	0%
\$700 or more	7%

entire residence hall. Other residence arrangements are comparatively infrequent, with 8% of programs reporting a unique arrangement, 2% of programs filling two or more residence halls, and 1% of programs housing students on campus but not within the same community.

Because, by definition, campus residence halls house living-learning programs, default "ownership" of living-learning programs may appear to fall naturally on divisions of student affairs. However, such may not always be the case. Indeed, collaborations and resources shared between student affairs and academic affairs units are often considered among the most important factors in their success (Inkelas et al., in press; Laufgraben et al., 2004; Schoem, 2004; Schroeder, Minor, & Tarkow, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). The 2007 NSLLP suggests institutions have placed their living-learning programs in a variety of locations on their campus organizational charts.

As noted in Table 1, the overwhelming majority of programs reported to just one office on campus. For 47% of programs, that office was residential life. Only 8% of programs reported solely to an academic department (e.g., history), 7% solely to an academic affairs unit (e.g., the provost's office), and 1% solely to a student affairs unit. The remaining 37% of programs reported to multiple offices, with the most frequently occurring combinations being residential life and an academic department (13%) and residential life and an academic affairs unit (11%). The most unique reporting arrangements were to a Reserve Officer's Training Corps office ($n=1$) and international education/studies offices ($n=3$).

In most cases, responsibility for day-to-day program direction was left to a single staff

person (58% of the time). Although directors came from multiple offices across campus, given the findings above, it is not surprising that staff from residential life (43%) most frequently led living-learning programs. Staff from academic departments were the second most likely to be responsible for directing living-learning programs (21%), followed by codirector models that used residential life and academic department staff (13%) and multiperson boards (8%). Other less frequent arrangements are outlined in Table 1.

Of course, just the fact that a staff member is assigned program direction responsibilities does not mean that it is a substantial component of his or her portfolio. Among living-learning programs with just one director, only 38% had more than half of directors' time dedicated to the program, and only 7% had program direction as a sole responsibility. For programs with more than one director, the median full-time equivalency (FTE) for the second staff member was 0.10, and only 25% of programs had second directors with FTEs greater than 0.33.

Dedicating staff and programmatic resources (like those described later in this article) to living-learning programs costs money. The amount institutions spent on the operation of their living-learning programs varies widely however. While the average cost per institution was slightly more than \$21,000, the median living-learning budget nationwide was only \$5,000. That 10% of programs had no budget and 25% of programs had budgets of less than \$1,000 may be surprising to some readers: The average room charge of institutions participating in the 2007 NSLLP was nearly \$4,300, suggesting that the gross revenue generated by

housing five resident students supported the typical living-learning program.

Not all living-learning programs are funded directly by student housing monies (see Table 1). While 51% of living-learning programs did report that housing or student affairs monies supported them wholly, cost-sharing arrangements did exist. Twenty-four percent of programs were jointly funded (16% predominantly by housing or student affairs and 8% predominantly by academic affairs), and 13% received half their monies from both divisions. Academic affairs bore sole responsibility for funding only 7% of living-learning programs in our study. Interestingly, seven programs reported that grants funded their efforts, either in whole or in part.

Some living-learning programs have adopted an alternative funding model: charging students additional fees for participation. Almost 23% of programs reported collecting fees from residents, although 33% of those that did so charged their students less than \$100 per year. As noted in Table 1, 25% of programs charged \$200 or more; 18% , \$300 or more; and 11%, \$500 or more. Only seven programs collected more than \$700 from participants, with the highest reported fee set at \$750 per year at one institution.

Besides their funding structures, living-learning programs also showed considerable variation in their criteria for admitting students. More than half of programs (56%) were, in some way, selective. Most selective programs relied on an application (73%), an essay (51%), or having declared a particular major (27%). Precollege measures of academic performance were also sometimes considered, in-

cluding high school GPA (15%), standardized test scores (14%), or high school class standing (8%). Involvement in collegiate extracurricular activities was also used as a factor (13%) in securing admissions to certain living-learning programs.

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Given the costs borne by both institutions and students for offering or participating in living-learning programs and the variety of admission criteria in place, what educational benefits might they hope to accrue? The 2007 NSLLP asked each program to rate the importance of students' attainment of 15 typical collegiate learning outcomes. The following five outcomes were rated by at least 50% of institutions as being "very important" goals of participation: (a) experiencing a smoother academic transition to college (55%); (b) feeling a sense of belonging to the institution (54%); (c) dem-

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onstrating an openness to views different from their own (52%); (d) learning about others different from themselves (50%); and (e) experiencing a smoother social transition to college (50%). The outcomes least commonly reported as "very important" were promoting volunteerism (17%) and alcohol-related wellness (20%).

THE CURRICULAR AND COCURRICULAR FEATURES OF LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

Once admitted to a living-learning program, it is the unique educational activities in which students engage that are believed to help promote learning. How a program fuses students' curricular and cocurricular activities is of particular importance and involves a number of program features including course offerings; the use of faculty, staff, and peer leadership; required or optional activities; and the provision of special residence hall resources (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Laufgraben, Shapiro, & Associates, 2004; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Each of these is described below.

How programs integrate curricular components into the larger living-learning experience can vary widely. First, it should be noted that more than half of all programs – 52% – did not include any form of academic coursework. The remainder employed a variety of strategies that mixed four types of courses: (a) courses designed just for the living-learning curriculum; (b) sections of introductory-level courses reserved for living-learning participants; (c) general university courses open to all; and (d) noncredit seminars. Most common was the use of specially designed living-learning courses (11%) or a combination of the three

credit-bearing options (9%). Reliance on just noncredit options was rare (1%). The majority of programs that did provide courses offered fewer than three: 28% provided one; 14% offered two; and 12% offered three. However, 6% offered more than 15 courses, and 1% offered more than 20.

There was also substantial diversity in how faculty, student affairs staff members, and graduate and undergraduate students participated in the fulfillment of program tasks (see Table 2). Twenty-three percent of programs had no faculty involvement of any kind, while 64% reported working with one to three faculty members. Besides teaching, uses of faculty time throughout the year included putting on workshops for students (in 94% of programs using faculty), faculty mentorship (92%), attendance at social events (90%), serving on advisory boards (71%), and academic advising (62%). In comparison, student affairs staff members

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were heavily involved in the functioning of the living-learning programs in our study. Eighty-five percent of programs used student affairs staff in some manner, most frequently to conduct traditional residence education functions. Specifically, 90% of student affairs staff associated with living-learning programs had live-in roles and 73% supervised resident assistants. Other frequent uses of student affairs staff included handling program administrative tasks (in 94% of programs using student affairs staff), attending social events (78%), mentorship (76%), serving on advisory boards

and putting on workshops (both 73%), and eating with students (72%).

Slightly more than a third (39%) of living-learning programs in our study employed graduate students in some capacity. Almost 94% of programs with graduate student staff used graduate students as mentors, followed by tasks such as dining with residents (87%) and socializing with residents (85%). Graduate students were also responsible for handling administrative tasks (86%), leading workshops (79%), or offering service-learning activities (69%). Finally, the overwhelming majority of

Table 2
Roles of Program Staff (When Staff Exist)

Category	% using faculty	% using student affairs staff	% using graduate students	% using undergraduate students
Involvement				
0	23%	15%	61%	16%
1	35%			
2 - 3	29%			
4 - 5	5%	85%	39%	84%
6 - 10	4%			
> 11	5%			
Activities				
On advisory board?	71%	73%	51%	56%
Live in community?	12%	90%	55%	94%
Supervise RAs?	10%	73%	61%	6%
Academic advising?	62%	38%	53%	37%
Mentors?	92%	76%	94%	97%
Attend social events?	90%	78%	85%	95%
Eat with students?	75%	72%	87%	95%
Put on workshops?	94%	73%	79%	73%
Lead service learning?	70%	56%	69%	67%
Tutor?	44%	30%	37%	43%
Have administrative tasks?	54%	94%	86%	75%

Table 3**Cocurricular Activities Commonly Associated With Living-Learning Programs**

Activity	% offered	% made required	% made optional
Academic advising	57.5	11.6	46.0
Arts programs	68.3	4.1	64.1
Capstone experience	16.6	3.0	13.6
Career workshops	74.3	3.8	70.5
Cultural outings	87.7	8.5	79.2
Foreign language	27.9	2.0	25.9
Group projects	60.2	13.9	46.3
International programs	55.0	5.9	49.0
Internships	30.9	5.1	25.7
Intramural sports	62.2	0.3	62.0
Multicultural programs	85.7	8.9	76.8
Noncredit community service	78.1	8.3	69.8
Orientation	71.8	22.8	49.1
Outdoor recreation	65.8	2.3	63.5
Research projects	26.6	3.3	23.4
Service learning	41.8	10.6	31.2
Study abroad	28.6	0.5	28.1
Study groups	81.1	6.2	74.9
Team-building activities	79.1	11.7	67.5
Tutoring	55.5	1.2	54.3

programs – 84% – reported having identified leadership roles for undergraduate students. Ninety-four percent of undergraduate involvement was related to live-in responsibilities, suggesting most programs relied on these students to serve as resident assistants. Indeed, peer mentorship was the most frequently identified undergraduate role in living-learning programs (in 97% of programs using undergraduate staff). Other tasks involved eating with or socializing with students (both 95%), administrative responsibilities (75%), and leading workshops (73%). Finally, 56% of programs using undergraduate staff reported having them serve on their advisory boards.

As can be seen above, faculty, staff, and student leaders associated with living-learning programs fulfill a wide range of responsibilities, including providing curricular and cocurricular activities. The 2007 NSLLP asked programs to indicate which of 20 activities common to living-learning programs they offered, and whether student participation in those activities was optional or required. These are summarized in Table 3. The most frequently offered activity across all programs was attendance at cultural outings (offered by 87.7%), which was required by almost 9% of programs and optional at 79%. Other activities that were frequently made available to living-

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learning participants were (a) multicultural programs (offered by 86%); (b) study groups (81%); (c) team-building activities (79%); (d) noncredit service learning (78%); and (e) career workshops (74%). The least frequently offered activities were research projects (27%) or capstone experiences (17%). Attendance at program orientation was the most frequently required activity of all participants (23%), while participation in intramural sports was the least frequently required (0.3%).

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An important question, given these differences in living-learning programming, is whether the variation in program structures is random or systematic.

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SEEKING COMMON GROUND IN THE DIFFERENCES:

Do Living-Learning Program Characteristics Show Systematic Variation?

Our findings thus far point to ample variety in the characteristics of living-learning programs: Some offer coursework to their participants, while others do not; some report to offices of residence life, while others are supervised by academic or student affairs units. Some work with generous budgets of more than \$30,000, while others have no funding at all. An important question, given these differences in living-learning programming, is whether the

variation in program structures is random or systematic. Is, for example, the level of available funding related to the number of courses offered, or does a relationship exist between reporting structures and the involvement of faculty members in living-learning programs? While the list of questions querying these relationships is extensive, we have chosen to focus on a selection of program characteristics, including number and type of courses offered, faculty involvement, goals for participants, age of program, available funding, and reporting structures.

Course Offerings

Table 4 highlights the availability of four types of courses offered by living-learning programs in light of funding patterns, age of program, and reporting structures. Not surprisingly, the level of program funding appeared to play a key role in the availability of some types of courses. This was especially true in the case of those taught by living-learning programs, special introductory classes, and general university courses. In a notable example, only 14.9% of living-learning programs with no budgets offered their own living-learning courses, compared to 69.3% of programs with funding of more than \$30,000. The corresponding percentages for special introductory courses were 6.8% and 51.2% and for general university classes, 4.7% and 50.6%. Interestingly, however, increased levels of funding were not always related to the availability of these three types of courses when considering the intermediate funding categories. Among programs with budgets of \$1,001 to \$5,000, for example, only 13.3% offered their own courses and 11.4% made available special introductory courses, both percentages being lower than in

Table 4

Living-Learning Course Offerings by Program Characteristics (in percentages)

	Courses taught by living-learning program	Special introductory courses	General university courses	Noncredit courses
<i>Funding patterns</i>				
No budget	14.9	6.8	4.7	2.3
\$1 to \$1,000	26.7	24.4	12.1	15.9
\$1,001 to \$5,000	13.3	11.4	28.4	1.9
\$5,001 to \$30,000	40.8	17.1	30.7	7.9
Over \$30,000	69.3	51.2	50.6	9.1
<i>Age of program</i>				
1 year or less	23.2	15.7	22.9	5.8
2 to 4 years	33.1	19.7	22.2	7.1
5 to 9 years	41.6	28.2	25.2	3.8
10 to 14 years	61.8	52.9	50.0	3.1
Over 15 years	56.7	60.0	63.3	27.6
<i>Reporting structures</i>				
Residence life only	16.4	13.5	14.5	3.6
Department only	87.5	50.0	56.3	6.3
Academic affairs only	80.0	64.5	70.0	10.0
Residence life and department	27.6	27.6	21.1	7.0
Residence life and academic affairs	44.7	34.0	36.2	8.5

programs with budgets of \$1 to \$1,000 (26.7% and 24.4%, respectively). In addition, noncredit courses were not tied to the level of funding in any systematic manner, with programs budgeting between \$1,001 and \$5,000 the most likely to offer these classes (15.9%). It is important to underscore, however, that noncredit courses were the least popular curricular offerings in the 2007 NSLLP.

In general, living-learning programs in existence for more than 15 years were more likely to offer courses of all four types than the newest programs. This is far from surpris-

ing since the implementation of curricula undoubtedly warrants lengthy preparation. In the case of courses taught by living-learning programs and special introductory courses, we see a steady increase in the availability of courses as we move from the newest to the oldest programs. When it came to general university courses, however, we found little difference among new and middle-aged programs, with the availability of these courses ranging from 22.2% to 25.2% in the first three age categories. Only in programs in existence for at least 10 years did we see a jump in general university

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course offerings, with 50% percent of 10- to 14-year-old programs and 63.3% of programs older than 15 years listing these courses. And finally, the oldest programs were significantly more likely than any of the newer programs to make noncredit courses available to their students.

Living-learning programs reporting to individual academic departments or academic affairs offices were the most likely to offer their own courses, special introductory courses, and general university courses. In two important examples, as many as 87.5% of programs supervised by individual departments and 80% of those under the direction of academic affairs offices had designed and taught their own courses. By contrast, when residence life offices were supervising living-learning programs, only 16.4% had developed their own courses. However, when residence life offices partnered with either academic departments or academic affairs offices in administering living-learning programs, 27.6% and 44.7%, respectively, taught program-developed classes. Such differences in course offerings by reporting structures are a striking demonstration of the key leadership role played by various organizational units in the programmatic direction of living-learning programs (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996; Schroder, Minor, & Tarkow, 1999). While these findings are not surprising, given that various institutional units have traditionally assumed different roles on campus, it is striking to note the important ways in which partnerships among residence life units and more academically oriented institutional structures bring an enhanced curricular emphasis to living-learning programs.

With the exception of the goal of helping students to develop a greater enjoyment of challenging intellectual pursuits, programs with self-designed and self-taught courses were more likely to emphasize the goals for undergraduates we examined. The most notable example is the goal of helping students to develop growth in their ability to critically analyze ideas ...

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Faculty Involvement

Interestingly, the level of funding available had little systematic relationship with the involvement of faculty members (see Table 5). For example, while 8.2% of programs with no budget had at least six faculty members, no programs with budgets of \$1,001 to \$5,000 and \$5,001 to \$30,000 had six or more faculty. However, of programs with funding of more than \$30,000, 24.1% had six or more faculty members. In general, it appears that budgets of at least \$30,000 are needed to attract the participation of a large number of faculty.

Program age played a more important role in faculty involvement, with older programs, especially those that have been in existence for more than 15 years, more likely to attract six or more faculty members (41.4%) than their

younger counterparts. Of programs developed 10 to 14 years before the administration of the NSLLP, 17.6% boasted the involvement of more than six faculty, compared with 4.3% of the newest programs and just 1.9% of programs in existence for 2 to 4 years. Interestingly, however, lack of faculty involvement was not as strongly linked to program age, with percentages ranging from 19.5% in programs of 2 to 4 years of age to 28.6% in programs in existence for less than 1 year. It is important to note that around three-quarters of all programs, regardless of their age, were successful at recruiting at least one faculty member

to participate. Faculty involvement, however, often remained restricted to that one professor in the two age categories indicating the newest programs (around 45%).

The involvement of six or more faculty members was most commonly found in programs reporting to academic affairs offices (30%), followed by those reporting to an academic department (18.8%). By contrast, only 4.5% of programs supervised by residence life offices had six or more faculty members. These findings are not surprising given the emphasis on course-related learning advanced by academic affairs units and academic de-

Table 5

Living-Learning Course Offerings by Faculty Involvement (in percentages)

	No faculty	One faculty	Two to five faculty	Six or more faculty
<i>Funding patterns</i>				
No budget	34.7	26.5	30.6	8.2
\$1 to \$1,000	31.1	42.2	17.8	8.9
\$1,001 to \$5,000	18.7	56.1	25.2	0.0
\$5,001 to \$30,000	32.9	30.3	36.8	0.0
Over \$30,000	11.5	25.3	39.1	24.1
<i>Age of program</i>				
1 year or less	28.6	45.7	21.4	4.3
2 to 4 years	19.5	44.7	34.0	1.9
5 to 9 years	26.7	26.7	37.1	9.5
10 to 14 years	20.6	29.4	32.4	17.6
Over 15 years	24.1	10.3	24.1	41.4
<i>Reporting structures</i>				
Residence life only	27.0	39.0	29.5	4.5
Department only	12.5	31.3	37.5	18.8
Academic affairs only	6.7	13.3	50.0	30.0
Residence life and department	25.4	45.8	22.0	6.8
Residence life and academic affairs	25.0	22.9	41.7	10.4

partments. It appears that when these offices fulfill a supervisory role, they are able to bring that academic emphasis to the living-learning programs. However, interesting to note is the fact that the likelihood of involving at least six faculty members in programs reporting to residence life was only raised to 6.8% in the presence of a supervisory partnership with an academic department, and 10.4% when an academic affairs office was also involved. These findings thus suggest that living-learning programs reporting – either exclusively or partially – to residence life offices are not well-positioned for attracting the involvement of a larger pool of faculty. While the reasons underlying this trend are not reflected in our data, it is possible that residence life offices simply lack the connections to faculty across the institution or do not employ effective strategies of reaching out to professors.

Program Goals for Undergraduates: Do Courses and Faculty Involvement Matter?

Our final set of analyses examined possible linkages between the availability of living-learning-taught courses and faculty involvement and 10 selected program goals for undergraduates (see Table 6). Our interest here is in whether a stronger focus on academics, as reflected in the development of courses taught by living-learning programs and the number of faculty participants, led to more emphasis on various educational goals for students. Our findings related to courses indicate that living-learning programs' investment in teaching their own classes to students was accompanied by a generally stronger articulation of educational goals. With the exception of the goal of helping students to develop a greater enjoyment of challenging intellectual pursuits, programs with self-designed and self-taught courses

Table 6

Program Goals for Undergraduates by Courses Taught by Living-Learning Program

	Courses taught by living-learning program	
	Not offered	Offered
<i>Goals for Undergraduates (indicated as "very important")</i>		
Volunteer and/or perform community service	12.7	23.7
Apply something learned in one class to another	21.7	30.3
Demonstrate growth in developing values	26.2	42.1
Demonstrate growth in ability to critically analyze ideas	26.6	44.7
Learn about people from diverse backgrounds	46.4	56.6
Demonstrate openness to diverse views	46.8	59.9
Develop greater enjoyment of challenging intellectual pursuits	47.4	34.9
Experience a smoother social transition	49.1	52.0
Experience a smoother academic transition	49.2	66.4
Feel a sense of belonging to the institution	50.2	61.8

Table 7**Program Goals for Undergraduates by Faculty Involvement**

	No faculty	One faculty	Two to five faculty	Six or more faculty
<i>Goals for Undergraduates (indicated as "very important")</i>				
Apply something learned in one class to another	15.5	19.2	31.9	45.7
Volunteer and/or perform community service	17.5	9.6	18.8	31.4
Demonstrate growth in ability to critically analyze ideas	23.7	24.0	41.7	62.9
Demonstrate growth in developing values	35.1	19.2	39.6	45.7
Develop greater enjoyment of challenging intellectual pursuits	36.5	50.0	38.2	51.4
Learn about people from diverse backgrounds	48.5	41.1	55.6	68.6
Demonstrate openness to diverse views	51.5	41.8	57.6	65.7
Develop greater self-awareness	51.5	24.0	43.1	51.4
Experience a smoother social transition	59.8	42.5	47.9	65.7
Experience a smoother academic transition	61.5	43.2	58.3	85.7
Feel a sense of belonging to the institution	64.9	44.5	51.4	80.0

were more likely to emphasize the goals for undergraduates we examined. The most notable example is the goal of helping students to develop growth in their ability to critically analyze ideas: While 26.6% of programs with no self-taught courses espoused this objective as "very important" for their participants, 44.7% of programs offering these courses indicated that this goal was "very important."

With regard to differences in the importance of educational goals by faculty involvement (Table 7), our findings were only consistent when comparing programs with two to five faculty members and those with six or more faculty. The largest differences existed in two goals: helping students (a) to feel a sense of belonging to the institution (80% of programs with six or more faculty indicating this goal as "very important" vs. 51.4% of programs with two to five faculty members) and (b) to experience a smoother academic transition to college (85.7% vs. 58.3%). Perhaps our most interest-

ing finding, however, was that in some cases, programs with no faculty involvement were closely comparable to programs with two to five faculty members. This was true for the goals of helping students to demonstrate growth in developing their values, demonstrate openness to diverse views, volunteer and/or perform community service, experience a smoother academic transition, and develop greater enjoyment of challenging intellectual pursuits. It appears, therefore, that programmatic goals for undergraduate students do not always go hand in hand with the involvement of faculty members.

CONCLUSION

As the findings of this study indicate, living-learning programs are by no means created equal. In fact, while all participating programs in our study self-identified as meeting the criteria in the definition put forward by the 2007 NSLLP, in our sample of 613 living-learning

programs, differentiation appears to be the norm rather than the exception. The large amount of variety we found in program characteristics makes it especially difficult to answer the question of what constitutes a living-learning program. Is a living-learning program one that offers a variety of courses, involves five or more faculty members, and makes career workshops, mentoring opportunities, and participation in research projects available to students? Or is it a program with no course offerings, one faculty member, and no cocurricular activities? Perhaps most importantly, do such questions propose important criteria that should be the basis of differentiating among living-learning programs?

To answer this last question, the need arises to ponder the purposes that a definition of living-learning programs might serve. The 2007 NSLLP included living-learning programs whose only critical characteristic was that undergraduate participants lived together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall) and participated in academic and/or extracurricular programming designed especially for them. This broad definition is essential in surveying the landscape of living-learning programming. However, when the goal is to understand the ways in which the programs shape the undergraduate experience, it may become important to develop narrower definitions. For example, programs that are more likely to offer a rigorous academic experience by making courses and faculty available may shape the student experience in different ways than programs with more emphasis on social interactions, but little academic focus.

The selected program characteristics we examined in the second part of this study

are sometimes arranged in a systematic way, as reflected, for example, in the relationship between faculty involvement and reporting structures or course offerings and a stronger emphasis on educational goals for undergraduates. And while such relationships are not always clearly present, the ones that do exist point to the possibility of developing meaningful narrower definitions by classifying programs beyond the broad definition used by the 2007 NSLLP. A key implication of the present study is thus to continue the work of differentiating among living-learning programs, as in the case of existing work on thematic and structural typologies (Inkelas, Brower, & Associates, 2004; Inkelas et al., in press), with the ultimate goal of creating various classification schemes and examining student outcomes associated with them.

Classification schemes, in turn, may guide practitioners in planning, implementing, and improving their living-learning practices. In all likelihood, not all living-learning programs aspire to emphasize curricular learning in their practices. Instead, their goals might focus on providing an environment where students enjoy increased social interaction around a particular theme in informal settings. The student outcomes associated with such programs might be vastly different from their counterparts emphasizing the curricular learning element of living-learning programs. It is possible, for example, that programs focusing on social interaction might enhance social transition to college, while academically oriented programs might aid in the process of academic transition. Our analyses in this article provide the starting point to our further understanding of living-learning program functioning

by pointing to the variety existing in current practice and calling on researchers to develop a set of narrower definitions of various types of living-learning programs. The future efficacy of living-learning programs may hang in the balance.

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