

## Learning Communities / Participant Agreement

Teaching a course in a learning community provides an opportunity for professional development as well as an opportunity to improve the learning of our students. Faculty engage students and track student progress in a more intense manner in these courses. When they choose to be part of a Learning Community at Saint Paul College, participants agree to:

1. Schedule and attend at least 3 scheduled meetings or working groups with their approved Learning Community (LCOM) instructors to complete the following:
  - a) **Participant Agreement.** This document will be submitted by each instructor electronically to their Learning Community Mentor no later than *3 weeks prior to the start of the semester.*
  - b) **Planning Report.** This document will be submitted as *one electronic copy for the LCOM* to their Learning Community Mentor on no later than *3 weeks prior to the start of the semester.*
  - c) **Mid-Semester Meeting.** This meeting will include the Learning Community Coordinator, and participants will have the opportunity to check in with one another on progress and student issues, ask questions, make changes, and/or implement new ideas for the second half of the semester.
  - d) **Post Semester Report.** This document will be submitted as *one electronic copy for the LCOM* to their Learning Community Mentor no later than *3 weeks following the end of the semester.*
2. Attend two large group meeting of all LCOM instructors, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end of the semester. At the end-of-semester meeting, participants will present a short oral report pertaining to curriculum integration and best practices for their LCOM

*Sample reports will be available on the S: drive.*

Time commitment will vary, but it is expected that each participant will commit to a minimum of 20 hours of individual and group work to improve the teaching and learning at Saint Paul College through participation in learning communities. Throughout this process, the Learning Community Mentor will be available for questions, ideas, and issues that may arise.

I agree to complete the required activities listed above.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Program/Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Course/Section No. \_\_\_\_\_

**LC: Saint Paul College**

**Instructor Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

## LEARNING COMMUNITY PROPOSAL

### Proposal Process

Teaching in a Learning Community provides an opportunity for professional development as well as an opportunity to improve the learning of our students. Teaching in Learning Communities takes a lot of advanced preparation upon the part of the instructors. This proposal will help guide the initial steps to the development of new learning communities.

Should the proposal be accepted and a new Learning Community be developed, each instructor will be required to sign a Participant Agreement and complete a series of activities that will aid in the development of quality Learning Communities.

To complete the proposal process, please complete the following:

- 1) Pre-Planning Questionnaire – each faculty member
- 2) Planning Report – one report per team

When these forms are completed, please submit them to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences for review and approval.

**LC: Saint Paul College**

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## PRE-PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

### Getting on the Same Page

1. How do you prefer to communicate? (e.g. work/personal e-mail, office/home phone, face-to-face?)

---

---

2. How much time can you commit each week, before the semester begins, to plan the LC? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

3. What are your meeting preferences during the semester (frequency, location, time of day, over breakfast or lunch)? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

4. What teaching approaches (e.g. lecture, group work, discussions, presentations, etc.) do you use?  
Would you consider adding some group work, some short free-writing, and/or more active student participation?

---

---

5. How flexible are you concerning the sequence of course topics? Are you comfortable with a change?

---

---

6. What is your attendance policy? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

7. How do you assess student learning? (e.g. writing assignments, exams, presentations?) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

8. Quantify the amount of reading and writing do you require of your students?

---

---

---

---

---

9. What do you see as the specific challenges of working with students in your course? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

**LC: Saint Paul College**

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

<h2>PLANNING REPORT</h2>
--------------------------

**Aligning Goals and Curricula**

1. Courses: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Print the Course Learning Outcome(s) (CLOs):

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Identify one or two shared SLOs for your LC that reflect some individual course CLOs. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

4. Discuss current or social issues or common themes of direct relevance to your students' lives that also connect to the courses in your LC. Select one of these on which to focus integration throughout the semester.

---

---

---

5. Brainstorm about some specific readings, films, web sites, local resources, etc. that can be shared among your courses to help connect them around your issue or theme.

---

---

---

---

---

Note: As you plan your LC examine your course outlines side-by-side and look for areas where you might synchronize topics in order to maximize connections among your courses.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Consider the logistics of grading your integrative assignment.**

2. What degree of revision will you accept/require of your students? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. How and when will you grade the assignment (e.g. as a team, individually, cumulatively, etc.) and what criteria will you use? Attach rubric(s).

---

---

---

---

## Part 2 – Design Scaffolding for Integrative Assignments

1. Consider your integrative assignment. What skills and/or knowledge would your students require to successfully complete this assignment? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Break down the skill set and knowledge base needed to complete the integrative assignment. Design two or three class activities and smaller assignments to help students acquire these building blocks (This is especially helpful for students requiring developmental and ESL support.) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. How can these activities and smaller assignments be cumulatively sequenced, or scaffolded, so that students ultimately will be able to complete the integrative assignment? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Collaborative learning** is a signature of LCs. When students work collaboratively, they strengthen bonds with each other, participate in the social construction of knowledge, and actively engage and process.

4. Are the activities and smaller assignments you identified collaborative? If not, try to modify them to build in opportunities for students to collaborate, and list the modifications here.

---

---

---

---

---

Offering opportunities for informal, **low-stakes writing and presenting** within and among courses of your LC allows students to grapple with complex concepts. These need not be graded, but should count in some way toward the final grade. Some possibilities for low-stakes writing and presenting are:

- ✓ Short, informal writing assignments and small-group presentations
- ✓ In-class summaries (written and spoken) of significant concepts or processes
- ✓ 1-minute or 2-minute papers or recap talks on key ideas or positions
- ✓ Journals in which students respond personally (as well as analytically) to course material (textbooks, novels, observations, etc.)
- ✓ Reading log questions which accompany textbook reading assignments
- ✓ In-class responses to lessons, which provide contexts for reflecting on learning
- ✓ Short writing questions on exams

5. What low-stakes writing or presenting assignments might support the work of your LC?

---

---

---

---

---

LC: Saint Paul College Fall 2011

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## MID-SEMESTER MEETING

### Sustaining Learning Communities

During this meeting the LC instructors and LC Coordinator can talk over issues and ideas that have come up during the first half of the semester, and make change and/or plans for the second half. To prepare for the meeting, you can complete the following checklist and write questions or ideas

#### Mid-Semester Checklist

We've done this and it works well for us!	We've done this, but it needs some development.	We haven't done this yet.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Check-in</b> with your linking partners about what is happening in their courses: "What is being covered last/this/next week?"
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discuss <b>student progress and problems</b> at weekly meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When appropriate, report learners in EARS, make <b>referrals</b> to other college services for students with special needs, e.g. tutoring, testing, or counseling.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit <b>each other's classrooms</b> to reinforce the link in the student's minds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If possible, <b>plan out-of-class experiences</b> to support integration and support building stronger bonds between your team and your students.



**LC: Saint Paul College Fall 2011**

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

**POST-SEMESTER REPORT**

**Reflecting on the Collaboration**

1. What aspects of your LC do you feel were the most successful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What aspects of your LC do you feel were least successful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In what ways do you think your team communication can be strengthened? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Assessing Student Work and Revising Assignments

Review samples of student work (both more and less successful) submitted in response to your integrative assignment. Consider specific examples in answering the following questions.

1. What evidence of *focused disciplinary thinking* for each course of your LC do you notice in your students' work? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. In light of the previous question, how can you revise your integrative assignment *prompt* so that student work reflects more focused disciplinary thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. What evidence of *purposeful integration* do you notice in your students' work? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

