

# Living-Learning Programs

## 2020 - 21 Annual Report- Executive Summary

### OFFICE OF LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS CREATION

The area of living-learning programs and academic initiatives have been a sub-unit under the umbrella of Housing and Residence Life. This spring, due to program growth and a strategic effort to achieve goals set forth in *Beyond Boundaries*: Virginia Tech's strategic plan, the Office of Living-learning Programs (OLLP) was established. Several current staff were re-aligned under this new office. A national search was conducted for a director and Dr. James Penven was identified as the inaugural director for the Office of Living-learning Programs. Beginning Fall 2021, the office will offer students 20 living-learning communities and Residential Colleges.

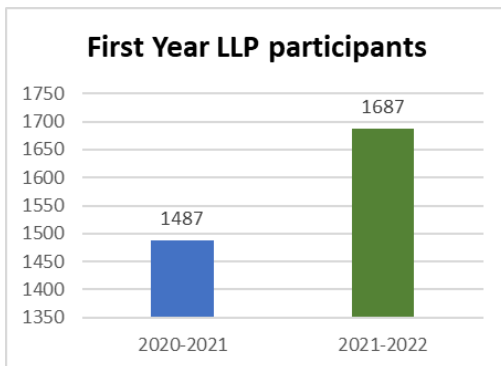
### COVID-19 IMPACT ON LLP INITIATIVES

Similar to many departments across campus during 2020-21, OLLP was presented significant challenges due to COVID-19. Student engagement *in-person* is a critical aspect of living-learning programs and this required LLP program directors, faculty principals, and general LLP staff to adapt engagement in ways that ensured safety but still allowed for students to connect in person as well as virtually.

### RETURNING STUDENT ADMISSION PROCESS SUMMARY

The returner application process for LLPs for the 2021-22 academic year began in the Fall 2020 semester and concluded in early Spring 2021. During this time, current VT students who were part of an LLP or seeking to join an LLP for the first time applied for membership in an LLP for 2021-22. On March 3, 2021, 822 returning students committed to LLPs. This is 140 contracts less than Spring 2020. Due to contract releases and withdrawals, the number of returners under contract decreased to 795. Melt may

### FIRST-YEAR ADMISSIONS PROCESS STATUS



1,687 incoming first-year students committed to an LLP for the 2021-22 academic year. This is an increase of over 200 students from the same time last year. This represents a 13% growth from 2019 to 2020.

### RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN LLPs

Living-Learning Programs (LLPs) continue to be a more diverse population of students than non-LLP residence hall communities on campus. The Fall 2020 census data summarized below reflects this trend.

	Total	% White	% Underrepresented	% Non-Report
LLP Overall	3258	60.2	37.8	2
Non LLP Overall	5140	65.7	32.1	2.3
Total	8402	63.6	34.3	2.1

## NEW LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Four new LLP Steering Committees convened during the 2020-21 academic year:

**Aurora, GenerationOne, Rhizome, and the Creativity and Innovation District LLP.** All

four programs will officially launch in Fall 2021.



**Aurora** is a community of people—religious, non-religious, spiritual, secular, and seekers— who will come together to explore the ways people make meaning and search for purpose, connect to one another, and work for positive action in the world. This interest specific community focuses on engagement with difference, specifically by building bridges between individuals with diverse religious and non-religious identities. Aurora will be located in Pritchard Hall, and will be coordinated by the Assistant Dean for Interfaith Initiatives in the Dean of Students Office.

**Rhizome** is a community for students who want to engage in current local, national, and international challenges using a systems thinking and project -based learning approach. This effort is led by the College of Architecture and Urban Studies Dean's office. Rhizome will be located in CID.



**GenerationOne** is a new identity-based LLP designed for students who identify as first-generation college students. GenerationOne will provide support mechanisms like mentoring programs, academic success workshops, leadership development opportunities, and mental health awareness to help students transition to the university environment. GenerationOne will be located in Pritchard Hall, and is coordinated by the Assistant Dean for First-Generation Student Support in the Dean of Students Office.

Bringing together colleagues from the School of Performing Arts, School of Visual Arts, the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology, and Athletics, the new **Creativity and Innovation District** facility will be home to students in Studio 72, Innovate, Rhizome, and student athletes. Dr. Tim Baird, Associate Professor of Geography, was selected as the inaugural Faculty Principal. The addition of Dr. Baird brings our cohort of live-in faculty members at Virginia Tech to four.



## FUTURE COMMUNITIES

In Spring 2021, new steering committees commenced for Fall 2022 launches. These include an LLC centered around LGBTQ+ Studies, in partnership with the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and an LLC focused on data analytics, in partnership with the College of Science and the Pamplin College of Business.