



Greetings from the Chair

Hello Commission for Housing and Residential Life! Here’s a quick note from your friendly neighborhood Commission Chair. I am very excited about the upcoming convention in Metro D.C. As I write this letter, I am thinking back to all the wonderful connections I have made through working for the Commission. It truly is a wonderful way to get involved, meet new friends and make lifelong connections. These are people who I look to for advice, support and humor. I hope you find an opportunity to make connections as well, whether through the Commission or in other ways. It is vitally important to your success as a professional as well as your piece of mind.

In this issue of *Life-Line* you will find all the programs and activities of the Commission during the upcoming convention. I invite you to attend our Directorate Board meeting on Sunday, our awards social, our table at the convention showcase and our open meeting. I want to thank On Campus Marketing for sponsoring our awards social again this year. They are a wonderful partner to this commission, and I appreciate all they have done for us over the years. I also invite you to attend the sponsored programs of the Commission. These are programs that were chosen for their quality as well as their connection with the Commission focus areas for this year.

I look forward to seeing you at the Convention in Metro D.C. and hope you are able to join us at some of our events.

Sincerely,

Adrian Gage

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Commission-sponsored Programs

The convention is just a few weeks away!!! As you are beginning to plan your days with all of the educational opportunities, we encourage you to take a look at the five sponsored programs from the Commission of Housing and Residential Life. Program descriptions can be found in the previous *Life-Line* edition and in your program booklet. We can't wait to see you at these fantastic programs!!

The Sexual Stories of Resident Advisors: What Can We Learn?

(Co-sponsored with Commission for Wellness)

Monday, March 30, 2009

8:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake 11 & 12

Cutting too Close: Suicide and Self Injury in Residential Facilities

Monday, March 30, 2009

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Gaylord National, Magnolia 2

Re-Imagining Technology: A New Way to Empower and Educate

Monday, March 30, 2009

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake 4

NACURH Student Award for Leadership Training (SALT)

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake 11 & 12

Power to Revolutionize Diversity Training for Millennial Student Staff

(Co-sponsored with Standing Committee for Multicultural Affairs)

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake 1

Convention 2009 Commission Events

The following are a list of Commission for Housing and Residential Life activities and meetings scheduled to take place at the 2009 Convention. Please note the dates of these important meetings that will take place in Metro D.C. on your calendars, so you can plan to attend.

Commission for Housing and Residential Life New Directorate Board Orientation

Saturday, March 28, 2009

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Gaylord National, National Harbor 7

Commission for Housing and Residential Life Directorate Board Meeting

Sunday, March 29, 2009

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake G, H, & I

Convention Showcase

Monday, March 30, 2009

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Gaylord National, Potomac

Commission Awards/OCM Social

Monday, March 30, 2009

9:00 PM – 10:30 PM

Bobby McKey's, 172 Fleet Street
(across the street from the Gaylord)

Upstairs Level

Commission for Housing and Residential Life Open Meeting

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM

Gaylord National, Chesapeake J & K

 **ACPA 85 YEARS STRONG** *Power to Imagine • Courage to Act*
2009 CONVENTION • METRO DC
POWER TO IMAGINE • COURAGE TO ACT *March 28-April 1, 2009*

The theme of the 2009 ACPA annual convention to be held in metropolitan D.C. March 28-April 1, 2009, challenges us to intentionally explore and tap into individual and collective elements:

POWER TO IMAGINE: Inspires us, sparks our creativity, renews our spirit and refocuses our commitment to our profession.

COURAGE TO ACT: With renewed energy, propels us back to our institutions with a greater sense of strength, motivation and ability to make a difference in the world.

EXPERTISE: Convention participants can build expertise that is based on the best of research in our profession.

Visit <http://convention.myacpa.org> for the Convention schedule and a list of Convention events.

The Power to Imagine • Courage to Act starts now!

Join us at the 2009 convention in metro D.C. to explore the infinite possibilities.



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Look for Andy, Scott, and Angela
at ACPA, Booth 211

Pleased to support the Commission for
Housing & Residence Life Awards Social

Newsletter Feature Focus: Academic Partnerships

Engineering an Academic Partnership

Submitted by: Devin Bucke and Donald Walker, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Hypatia and *Galileo* are theme housing programs offered to first, second, and third-year engineering majors at Virginia Tech. *Hypatia*, the women in engineering community located in Slusher Hall, houses approximately 100 enrolled students and two resident advisors. *Galileo*, the men in engineering community housed in Lee Hall, has more than 200 enrolled students and six resident advisors. The students enrolled in both programs are pursuing various engineering degrees, including but not limited to: civil, chemical, computer, aerospace, ocean, mechanical, industrial and structural. The success of the aforementioned theme programs hinges on the academic partnership between residence life and the College of Engineering.

Through these two theme programs, the College of Engineering has taken a vested interest in the holistic development of each of its students through being visible in the residence halls and monitoring student progress. For example, each *Hypatia* student meets monthly with a woman faculty member of the College of Engineering in which they are enrolled, one-on-one in Slusher Hall, in order to discuss her current development. During these meetings, topics range from strategizing ways to succeed in the classroom to their direct contribution to their floor community, but the focus is always on being a minority in the engineering field. The faculty helps the students understand that they need to work harder in engineering to push past the “glass ceiling,” while still maintaining a traditional college experience. The intimate knowledge the faculty possesses because of this close relationship with the students allows them to directly influence academic performance. Students at Virginia Tech in theme housing communities have overall higher cumulative averages, which could be associated to their interaction with faculty and living among other students that are as equally driven to succeed. As a result of participating in these theme programs, students feel more connected to their faculty members, thus creating more trust in the mentoring relationship, and opening up campus resources to the students. Maria Lang, a resident advisor for *Hypatia*, said about the program, “It is a very good support system, engineering is a lot of work. There are not a lot of women in engineering, and it can be discouraging when you are facing it alone. We tend to work together to get through it. A friend of mine was going to drop out of engineering, but all of the girls encouraged her to stay in and she is still pursuing an engineering degree.” Not only is faculty engaging students in the classroom, but they also show a genuine interest in each student’s life. Students are expected to perform well academically in order to remain in the College of Engineering, and also take advantage of the support they are provided in the halls.

Beyond faculty support, the halls themselves are conducive to support the students’ academic endeavors. The second and third-year students are strategically interspersed on the floors to be optimally accessible to the first-year students. This discourages cliques from

forming, promotes mentorship between the upper and underclassmen, as well as the development of the whole community, rather than divisions based upon academic classification. Upper-class students also advertise tutoring hours outside of their doors for classes that they are proficient in. This is not a requirement but the students understand the benefit this offers to the community and subsequently contribute. This allows community members to receive additional support in any academic area without leaving the residence hall. Group study sessions are spontaneously held in lounges before tests and projects. Resident advisors program specifically for the engineering theme, which has included guest speakers, design challenges, computer programming sessions, internship presentations, liquid nitrogen ice cream, sustainability and engineering, and lab and power plant tours. Students and faculty work hand-in-hand with the residence life staff to regularly support the needs of the community. Phil Maloney, a resident advisor in *Galileo*, states that this is a “worthwhile theme community. The fact that [*Galileo*] is relatively new and how it has grown over the past four years speaks for itself. It is beneficial because [the students] are with people of similar interests and this helps them focus on and achieve their goals. This is great for Virginia Tech because it is [predominantly] an engineering institute.”

The partnership between academics and residence life relies on the dual oversight of the staff and students that reside in the halls. Residents of both communities sign a waiver allowing residence life staff to view grades and other academic records, and the faculty to view judicial records and other non-academic information. The benefit of this type of dual oversight is the reiteration to students that their academic and social lives are synchronous. For example, if a *Hypatia* student has a judicial indiscretion; their faculty member is able to follow-up with them and talk about how that behavior is destructive to the community and their standing within it. Reciprocally, if the faculty member notices destructive behavior, such as potential suicidal ideations or roommate conflicts, they have an immediate and direct connection to a residence life staff member responsible for student’s well-being. In addition, resident advisors submit weekly reports and programming plans to the academic department, their direct supervisor, and the Theme Housing Office. They also meet with the aforementioned stakeholders regularly in order to brainstorm potential programs, discuss student concerns, and to give and receive feedback. The result of this collaboration is the students really have a say in the direction of their respective communities. For example, starting next academic term a third-year option has been added to *Galileo* for students because they advocated for it. Similar to the students’ experience, this also allows the resident advisors to consult with a wide variety of resources before making decisions in the community. This is invaluable. By creating a 360° decision-making proc-

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Engineering, continued . . .

ess, academics are considered, student development is considered, and *engineering*—the best outcome—is always the result!

The academic partnership between the engineering department and residence life at Virginia Tech is a step in the right direction toward a truly holistic approach to student development and education. The consistency provided to students through the relationship between the College of Engineering and residence life creates a living

and working environment that produces well-rounded and satisfied students. We truly value the partnership that we have formed with the College of Engineering and hope to continue to build upon this foundation and invent the future.

About the authors: Devin Bucke and Donald Walker are Complex Directors at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. They can be contacted at bucke@vt.edu and donaldw@vt.edu.

Finding Common Ground in Student Learning by Creating Meaningful Relationships with Faculty Members

Submitted by: Jorg Vianden, University of Arkansas

Just the other day I was following a fascinating thread of arguments in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in response to a statement issued by the National Association of Scholars (NAS). NAS advocated, in frank terms, for faculty to regain control of what students do in their co-curricular lives. The argument was built upon the recent quarrels over residential curricula at the University of Delaware. I admit the report was a tough pill to swallow for someone who has worked in residence life for nearly a decade. However, more shocking than the statement was the mass of posts by those who felt the need to enter the fray, many of whom were either faculty or student affairs professionals. They revealed the distance that still exists between faculty and student affairs administrators (in this case, housing and residence life folks) at our colleges and universities. The comments were polarizing, even paralyzing considering how much effort is exerted every day by well-meaning faculty and student affairs professionals to find common ground, rather than squabble. Despite the issues the thread lay bare, we need to forge ahead and create meaningful and sustainable relationships with faculty for the sake of our students who need holistic development.

This essay is about one of these individual relationships and how it can encourage other members of the university to work in unison rather than in discord. A second purpose is to offer some recommendations for all housing and residence life staff, especially graduate students and entry-level professional staff, as they work towards creating common ground with faculty members at their institution.

Michael, let's call him, and I first met about a year ago. We felt an instant connection and had a lively discussion on all kinds of life's issues. Yes, we also talked about each other's role in what we were there to discuss in the first place. I was the brand new Associate Director for Academic Initiatives for University Housing. Michael had been recruited by us to become one of our Faculty Associates in a new residential facility. As a tenured university professor with

an endowed chair in an Arts and Sciences discipline, he had been asked to design and lead several co-curricular activities around the theme of community engagement. Michael is a nationally renowned scholar on homelessness, has been an expert witness by the Legal Aid Society in New York City and the public defender's office in San Diego, and a long-time consultant for media around the world on issues of violence in schools and urban environments.

Michael and I have created a mutually supportive relationship by staying in frequent contact throughout the year. We connect often over coffee, lunch, or we play golf. As social as our interactions may get, we make it a point to discuss work issues and what we can do on our campus to become champions for collaborative student learning initiatives. Although Michael is easy to get along with, he also takes a very strong stance on the roles of faculty members in relation to students' co-curricular learning. Most importantly, Michael advocates for academic rigor in all student activities. As a result, his faculty associate events were more rigorous than those of other faculty and in turn less popular with the students. He is using this lack of engagement of students to weigh continuing in the program for another year. I want him to continue because students can greatly benefit from his youthful and enthusiastic approach to their learning. However, I had to learn to appreciate his concerns for rigor and appropriately advocate his concerns to my superiors in hopes we can all learn more about faculty demands for academic purpose.

Secondly, Michael is direct about what he expects as a reward for his involvement. More than once he has been candid about wanting to be remunerated financially: "Don't think I will do this for free. I got other things I need to do." This was the first time I had to consider that many faculty would like to be paid for their engagement with students outside of the classroom, a concept very

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Finding Common Ground, continued . . .

unfamiliar to student affairs professionals. We may need to advocate for faculty with those who cannot understand why faculty would want to get paid for something we may love to do.

A third aspect of faculty life we need to learn more about is the orientation to time. Michael and I often talk about what he can commit to because of how limited he asserts his time is. Although some in student affairs may be of the mindset that educating five students is better than none, we have to accept that faculty may call that a waste of valuable time. We have to be keenly aware how much time faculty spend on activities directly rewarded by their department or discipline. At research institutions, most of these activities will relate to research and not to hanging out with a few students at some co-curricular event. When Michael did not attend a non-academic event to which I invited him, it did not indicate a lack of willingness to contribute, just a keen protection of time.

A final aspect of seeking common ground with faculty is to not assume they are not interested in students beyond the classroom. After working with Michael and other faculty I am convinced that many of them love to connect with college students. It allows them insight into the student culture which cannot easily be achieved inside the formalized classroom environment. However, Michael also mentioned that out-of-class interactions with students should be structured and related to his academic discipline. We in Student Affairs have to accept that many faculty members may not want to counsel students on emotional concerns, talk about relationship problems, or discuss financial matters. Faculty are exclusively trained in a specific discipline and may be uncomfortable engaging with students in areas in which they have received no formalized training. Many of them willingly relinquish this role to us.

Over this past year, Michael and I have become advocates for each other's work and roles on campus. I advocate for faculty with other student affairs folks who hold assumptions about faculty productivity or their interest in students. Michael has become a trailblazer for our initiatives with the newly appointed provost and the chancellor. At an institution our size it certainly does not hurt to have a prominent professor advocate for a collaborative partnership with student affairs. Finding faculty advocates for our work may be easier than we think – what's important is to be honest about what we can do for faculty and to ask for guidance in academic matters from those who know best. Rather than continuing to seek legitimization and praise like some of the responses to the NAS statement, we in student affairs ought to be confident about what we can do for faculty and academic administrators in relation to student learning. Most faculty already understand that we can provide a lot.

I for one am happy to call a faculty member like Michael my friend and colleague. I have learned a great amount about faculty values, motivation, and culture and use this to inform my work with all of our academic partners. I hope this account can be an encouragement to readers in their quest to create relationships with faculty members. Creating common ground does not mean giving up who we are or forget what we stand for; it means accepting the others' viewpoints and forging ahead to identify common passions, solve common problems, and realize common missions.

About the author: Jorg Vianden, Ed.D., is the Associate Director for Academic Initiatives in University Housing and Adjunct Assistant Professor in Higher Education Leadership at the University of Arkansas. He can be contacted at jvianden@uark.edu.

Two Heads are Definitely Better than One!

Submitted by: Lisa Israel, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

The old saying “two heads are better than one” is evident in every realm of life, but the one area I have come to learn is the most deserving to the phrase is higher education, and more specifically, student affairs. Having worked in residence life for many years now, I have witnessed the effects that take place when people or departments think they can conquer the world alone. I have also witnessed the misconception on many college campuses that student affairs and academic affairs are two separate entities. As we have experienced, either on our own campuses, or from the words of our colleagues at other institutions, housing and residential life professionals often feel they have the weight of the world on their shoulders, or they are the ones driving the “bus for change” on their campuses. Many of our colleagues work on campuses where the thought of forging relationships with “the other side of campus” is

seen as impossible or unproductive. It is unfortunate that many still feel this way with all of the advances in the areas of living learning communities, linked classes, faculty in residence programs, and residential colleges. Personally, I have been on both sides of the coin and have utilized my past experiences, both good and bad, to create some of the most powerful academic partnerships at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE).

Five years ago when I came to SIUE, I was the typical hall director fresh out of graduate school. I was ready to make change and run my building of 500 freshmen better than anyone before me ever had. Just like many new professionals, I was eager to learn and more importantly, I was ready to make change. I came to SIUE with a goal to create faculty partnerships within Residence Life.

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Two Heads, continued . . .

Working at an institution where ideas are heard and change is welcomed, I was handed the reins to create the partnerships I so willingly wanted to form. Luckily, our campus has a Starbucks because I spent both countless hours and vanilla lattes sitting in there talking to random faculty members about the importance of faculty involvement in our residential communities, the difference between “dorms” and “residence halls,” and how their involvement with University Housing can benefit them both in the classroom and out. Low and behold, one year later University Housing at SIUE had over 40 Faculty Fellows volunteering their time in the program, the support from all of the deans and professional schools, and the backing of the Office of the Provost. The time had come where these partnerships were both valued and understood for supporting and promoting academic success.

Throughout the past five years much has changed at SIUE. We now have 14 living learning communities, some with linked classes and even more on the way, Faculty Fellows in all of our living communities; including our upper class apartment communities and family housing, and a faculty lead movie series. I am happy to report that I am no longer a hall director, but am now the Assistant Director for Residence Life for Residential Education, with the responsibility of creating and maintaining academic partnerships with various offices and departments on our campus.

Our department and central campus have come to realize that the power of partnerships is essential and with that, more and more bridges have been created to foster academic success and seamless learning opportunities for our students. Most recently, we have joined forces with Academic Advising and Counseling at SIUE to create the **Academic Advising/University Housing Liaison Program**. This progressive Liaison Program’s primary goal is to enhance the working relationships between the Academic Advising staff and the University Housing staff while most importantly, providing students with the support needed to achieve academic excellence at SIUE. Through this partnership, both staffs work collaboratively in shared efforts to promote a “students’ first attitude.”

The basic tenet of this partnership goes back to the above mentioned saying, “two heads are better than one.” Each hall/community director within University Housing is paired up with their very own Academic Advisor. The two work together throughout the year to create opportunities to benefit not only the SIUE students, but to enhance the efforts coming out of each area. Having partnered with University Housing, Academic Advising is seeing larger turnouts at their workshops, information is easily disseminated to a wide student population, and communication lines are now open between the two offices. They are getting a chance to *really* learn the culture and the needs of today’s college student. By partnering with us, they are able to see students in their own domain. They are learning that today’s student prefers going to a workshop on academic success in their hall at around 7 p.m., then

trekking across campus to a workshop held at noon on a Friday.

In terms of student benefits, they are endless. Academic Advisors are in their individual buildings periodically throughout the month. They can be seen hanging out at the front desks, holding conversations with students in the lobby, and even providing academic counseling in the staff offices right in the residence hall. Students know that they can come and have their questions answered right where they live. As we know in housing and residence life, the issues we hear in meetings often times look very different than the traditional purpose of the meeting. For example, if a hall director is meeting with a student for a judicial hearing, he/she might learn that a student is struggling in a class, has questions about registering, or is failing a class and needs to know what the options are—withdrawal, change to P/F, take an incomplete. With the Liaison program, the University Housing staff member can pick up the phone and contact their liaison for that specific community. Because the partnership has already been created, this student can be placed on the Advisor’s schedule and the problem will be immediately addressed. The program is overseen by myself and by the Assistant Director in Academic Advising. We meet monthly throughout the semester to discuss what’s working or areas that need to be improved upon. We then relay the information to our individual staffs.

Now for the benefits to a housing and residence life program. . . Although residence life staff members are trained in a variety of areas—counselor, crisis manager, educator, among many others—we are not the experts in all fields. Having this partnership allows many of our staff to learn more about academic advising, provide additional resources to our students, and even alleviate some of the burden of providing programming opportunities for our students. Our Liaisons from Academic Advising provide programs in our facilities dealing with academic success (which in the long run take weight off of the RAs shoulders) and because the relationship is strong and visible, students are coming out in larger numbers. The programs are of high caliber because we have the “experts” facilitating them. Examples of programs include “Calculating your GPA,” time management workshops, “How to Create an Academic MAP,” and “Test Taking/Procrastination.”

It would benefit any housing professional to integrate this liaison program on their campus. What we have seen is that this is a low maintenance program that only reaps benefits. As we move forward with this initiative, it has stirred many ideas in our office; who else can we create formal liaisons with and how else can we share our successes? A couple of weeks ago, this program had its first “dog and pony show” on our campus when we presented it to our Career Development Center. It struck us that this would be the next “partner” that we could form closer ties with. Although we do not see this in our daily work on the housing side of campus, our three offices are closely linked. It was amazing how

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Two Heads, continued . . .

quickly they jumped on board and began thinking of ideas to link our efforts with Academic Advising. Who knows, as we move forward with the Liaison Program the old adage “two heads are better than one” might shift to “why settle with two when you can have a whole group!” The future looks bright for this initiative, and I

highly encourage other institutions to pilot it on their campus!

About the author: Lisa Israel is the Assistant Director for Residential Education at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She can be contacted at lisrael@siue.edu.

From Blueprints and Buildings to Living and Learning: Constructing Academic Partnerships

Submitted by: Jaime L. Russell, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Architects. Blueprints. Suite-style Residence Halls. LEED Certification. Living-Learning Community Amenities. Pennsylvania’s Premier Public Residential University. These are terms we have become familiar with at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania over the past couple of years. In 2004, we began planning a \$111 million residence hall project. In the fall of 2006, we opened three new residential suite buildings, one more in fall 2007, and this fall we will be opening the final two. Two phases, six new buildings (2,600 beds), the demolition of four traditional residence halls, the renovation of two, and our Living-Learning Communities (LLC) are all at the centerpiece of the planning and development of the facilities.

Having a discussion with an architect about student development would have been unheard of ten years ago. Now it isn’t as uncommon as one might think. It was a necessary topic of discussion in order for us to include our Living-Learning Communities in the structural design for our residential suite buildings. Sure, having specialized space for our Living-Learning Communities is a nice amenity to offer our students—a classroom in each building with a dry erase board, computers, a Prometheus and screen (or in one building’s case, a dance studio with a sound system, an art studio, and music practice rooms). But it is more than an amenity. We have intentionally provided a space to be used for classes, programs, study groups, presentations and practice; a community space with a sense of identity; a place for students to call home—a place where living and learning can take place.

After beginning the design of our new residential suites, we intentionally began to further our relationships throughout campus. We began to increase our roster of faculty and staff who were involved in our Living-Learning Communities in addition to educating the campus as a whole about our program. In order to be a premier public residential university, we have to deliver the added value. We have to offer new and inventive ways to enhance student learning. We have to view our residential facilities as living and learning communities. And we have to offer unique experiences within our residence halls.

A partnership with Academic Support Services, the administration, and the faculty is essential in making residential facilities a place for

learning. Having incorporated classroom space (and extra office space) into our structural design presented us with unique opportunities. By working with our FYRST Seminar program and Learning Community Clusters, we have been able to invite faculty members to teach related classes in-hall. For example, our Frederick Douglass Institute faculty member teaches his Learning Community Cluster/FYRST Seminar class in the same residence hall where our Frederick Douglass Leadership Community is housed (the class is actually held on the same floor). Students can walk down the hall and go to class in their own residence hall. The lecture, discussion and learning begin during class, but the process continues well after. The students participate in leadership workshops in that same room. They read and have discussion groups. They take trips off campus to see plays or participate in activities then process their experience upon returning to their home, a place of comfort and familiarity. What was once viewed as a nice amenity has now become an important learning tool.

In addition to classes, the faculty and staff hold office hours and advising sessions in-hall. Structured tutoring takes place. Our librarians, who have research specialties, are involved in communities related to their area of expertise. The Community Assistants (undergraduate staff on each floor) weave the LLC focus throughout everything they do—bulletin boards, highlighted campus events, in-hall programs and community development activities. It all begins with the students and staff in that special space, unfolds within the residence hall, then permeates the campus.

Although it is very easy to get caught up in the “glitz” and “glamour” of new construction projects as a media/marketing tool, we have stayed true to our intentions and have made student learning the centerpiece of our new residential facilities. To the outsider looking in, it may be masked by the fresh paint, new carpet and private bathrooms, but it is there inside, waiting for the next partnership to occur and bring it to life.

About the author: Jaime L. Russell is the Assistant Director of Living-Learning Community Development at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. She can be contacted at jaime.russell@sru.edu.

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Academic Partnerships through Living/Learning Programs: An Interview with Dr. Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas

Submitted by: Sean Gehrke, Whitman College

In August, Commission for Housing and Residential Life Directorate Body member Sean Gehrke had a chance to explore the nature of effective academic partnerships in living-learning programs with Dr. Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas, Associate Professor in the College Student Personnel program at the University of Maryland College Park and the principal investigator for the National Study of Living/Learning Programs (NSLLP). Dr. Inkelas provided this description of the NSLLP:

The NSLLP is a multi-institutional and multiple methods study of living-learning programs. Although the NSLLP has been in existence since 2001 and includes three waves of data collection, the most recent activity occurred in 2007-08 and included: (a) a survey of over 22,000 students at 48 colleges and universities across the United States; (b) a longitudinal follow-up survey of over 1,500 students at 16 institutions who participated in the 2004 NSLLP and were in their fourth-year of college in 2007; (c) a survey of living-learning program staff on the organizational structures of their programs; and (d) case studies of four campuses selected for having exemplary survey responses among its living-learning participants. To find out more information about the NSLLP; visit the study's website at: www.livelearnstudy.net (Inkelas, personal communication, August 15, 2008).

Dr. Inkelas' research and perspectives on effective collaborative academic partnerships provide an interesting viewpoint through which residence life and housing professionals can examine these types of relationships through the lens of living-learning programs. Here is the transcript of their interview:

Gehrke: *How did you become interested in researching living-learning programs?*

Inkelas: I first became interested in studying living-learning (L/L) programs when I was working in University Housing at the University of Michigan, coordinating their research and assessment office. U-M Housing wanted to assess its living-learning programs, so I created a survey. In the process of reviewing the empirical research on living-learning programs, it became surprisingly clear that very little research was being conducted on these programs. So when I decided to change career directions toward the faculty, I turned this scholarly gap into my first research agenda. With a research grant from ACUHO-I in 2001, I began the National Study of Living-Learning Programs with Dr. Aaron Brower at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The rest is history!

Gehrke: *The nature of collaborative academic partnerships is a current primary focus area for the Commission of Housing and Residential Life. What are*

different ways in which these types of partnerships play out within living-learning programs?

Inkelas: There are really more partnerships in living-learning programs than I can describe. Some of the most common types I have seen include incorporating academic coursework into the L/L program, faculty involvement in academic advising, mentoring, and social events, and program advisory boards. Other examples might include service learning and study abroad opportunities.

Gehrke: *Did you notice any key findings from the NSLLP that relate to the area of collaborative academic partnerships? If so, what did you find?*

Inkelas: Well, in order to answer this question, I think we need to break this phrase apart a bit. First, in terms of "academic," the NSLLP data clearly shows that effective living-learning programs include some kind of intentional academic programming. Programs with little-to-no academic components tend to be synonymous with "theme halls," and do not stimulate the same benefits as L/L programs with clear academic content (e.g., courses for academic credit, lecture series). "Partnership" implies residence life/housing working with other units to provide quality living-learning programming. It seems almost a prerequisite for some kind of partnership to exist in order to provide excellent academic programming such as those I listed above (e.g., classes, advising, service learning, advisory boards).

This leaves the final word, "collaborative," and it is here where the NSLLP research has some pretty interesting preliminary findings. As part of our research, we identified four campuses with strong L/L student survey data. We then made site visits to those four campuses to learn more about what makes their programs so effective. What we found, at least preliminarily, runs counter to the mantra we consistently hear in the literature that effective academic/student affairs partnerships must be integrative--that each side must learn about and participate in the activities of the other. Instead, the L/L programs we visited--either by choice or by reality--did partner academic and student affairs services within their L/L programs, but the extent to which they were collaborative could be considered "limited" at best. For now, we are terming what we found to be more of a "parallel partnership," or one in which the academic affairs units executed the functions in the L/L programs that played to their strengths (e.g., teaching classes, providing academic mentoring, giving special lectures), while the residence life/housing units oversaw the areas that played to their strengths (e.g., community building, discipline, practical workshops, social events). However, the two units did not, as a standard practice, cross boundaries and perform functions outside of

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Academic Partnerships through Living/Learning Programs, continued . . .

their strength areas. We are still in the beginning phases of our analysis of the site visit data, and look forward to learning more about this phenomenon that we uncovered.

Gehrke: *Based on your research, are certain types of partnerships between student affairs and academic affairs more beneficial to student learning and the student experience than others within living/learning programs?*

Inkelas: To reiterate a tad from the previous answer, it would appear that any partnership that enhances the academic component of a L/L program is preferred. Moreover, "parallel partnerships," or ones in which each side of the house concentrates on its respective roles and leaves the other aspects to the other side, appear to be effective as well.

Gehrke: *If you were to design a living/learning program, what would your ideal vision be for partnerships between academic and student affairs within the program?*

Inkelas: I think this is a very challenging question, indeed! While I am currently tantalized by the emerging portrait of the "parallel partnership" notion, I think we must also not lose sight of how institutional cultures can play into the design of a L/L program on any particular campus. For example, on some campuses, the divide between student and academic affairs is already fairly transparent; in those places, the starting point for a partnership is further along than on a campus where the divide is still fairly sharply drawn. Similarly, on some campuses, faculty involvement in campus life may be more of an implied expectation, so finding faculty to participate in L/L programming may be easier than on a campus where there is

little-to-no incentive for a faculty member to give her or his time to a L/L program.

In the end, though, I return to what I stated originally: the most effective L/L programs in the NSLLP are those that have a strong and clear academic component. This is most often exemplified through credit-bearing courses as part of the curriculum of the L/L program, frequent faculty contact and interaction, and an intimate residence community in which the peer conversation can seamlessly move from the classroom to the floor lounge.

Gehrke: *What advice would you give to housing professionals who are either attempting to create living/learning programs on their campus or who are simply looking for ways to collaborate more with academic affairs on their campus.*

Inkelas: Consult the NSLLP at www.livelearnstudy.net! No seriously, I think the best advice I can give is to start the process with clear, and articulated learning objectives--preferably those that are observable or measurable. From there, learn about your campus's culture and climate, and how best to work with academic affairs units to achieve your stated objectives. It may seem intuitive, but I have seen a lot of programs developed on a fad or a whim, or even a certain population in mind, and invariably they fail because they lack clear objectives.

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Liaison's and Learning Outcomes: Two Key Practices in Creating Successful Student and Academic Affairs Partnerships through Living and Learning Communities

Submitted by: Megan Larkin and Jimmie Gahagan, University of South Carolina

In the past there have been many barriers and challenges in the creation of successful partnerships between academic and student affairs (Bourass and Kruger). However, intentionally designed living and learning communities foster collaboration between academic and student affairs faculty and staff in order to enhance student learning. At the University of South Carolina living-learning communities allow student and academic affairs faculty and staff to contribute to student learning and the campus climate. Two best practices proven to be successful in sustaining student and academic affairs partnerships on our campus are: establishing learning community liaisons and developing clear learning outcomes.

At the University of South Carolina living learning communities were established in the mid-1990s with the opening of Preston Resi-

dential College in 1994. Currently there are 16 residential learning communities at the University of South Carolina, including communities ranging from Engineering to Music, and Sustainability to the French House. To be created, each of these communities must have a defined academic partner or unit and support institutional goals.

Learning Community Liaisons

Each residential learning community is staffed with a liaison, student staff member or resident advisor, and an academic partner. The learning community liaison position was established in 2005 to better facilitate communication between University Housing and the learning community partner. The liaison advises student

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Liaison's and Learning Outcomes, continued . . .

leaders within specific residential learning communities at the University of South Carolina and provides appropriate follow-up with faculty, staff, and academic partners.

Typically the liaison position is staffed by someone in the student affairs field, while the campus partner is served by someone in academic affairs whether that be a professor or an advisor. Liaisons meet with their academic partners on a regular basis (generally weekly or bi-weekly) to plan events, discuss student needs, and address any behavioral issues that have arisen. The liaison also monitors student spending of allocated housing funds and supports the ongoing assessment of their community. Liaison and partners from all of the communities meet twice a semester for training and development, to celebrate successes, and to discuss common issues they are facing.

The learning community liaison position has helped increase the amount of communication, planning, and assessment occurring in residential learning communities at the University of South Carolina. They have also provided an opportunity for the academic partner to learn about specific housing policies and procedures and feel more connected to the residence life staff. In an age where it is easy to get tunnel vision in working with our own programs and services, the liaison – partner relationship reinvigorates the concept of student-academic affairs partnerships.

Learning Outcomes

In 2006, over-arching learning outcomes were developed to enhance students' experience and strengthen the academic and student affairs partnerships represented in South Carolina's learning communities. These outcomes include:

- Students will identify and participate in initiatives that promote faculty-student interaction
 - Students will discover, participate in, and organize service-learning opportunities locally, nationally, and abroad
 - Students will create and/or participate in active learning experiences on and off campus
 - Students will define, identify, and engage in study abroad opportunities as well as take part in internationally themed programming on campus prior to and after completion of their study abroad experience(s)
 - Students will define and apply sound principles of undergraduate research and participate in undergraduate research initiatives on and off-campus and/or abroad
 - Students will identify and create intentional interactions to support community development
 - Students will acquire more knowledge about diversity issues through reflective and active experiences as outlined by the Core Competencies of Diversity through University Housing
- From these learning outcomes, liaisons and academic partners plan

and encourage student engagement and learning. Defining these learning outcomes also enhanced our assessment efforts as we've been able to ask specific questions on survey instruments and in focus groups to better understand the influence of learning communities on students.

Faculty-Student Interaction: At the University of South Carolina faculty-student interaction ranges from having faculty-in-residence to faculty associates. This interaction can occur informally through students eating a meal with faculty or formally through required courses, peer group interactions, faculty speakers, and research presentations.

Service-Learning: Learning communities are encouraged to participate in programs in coordination with the Office of Community Service Programs. For example, through participation in a service project each semester, students of the Pre-Law Community became aware of their new community in Columbia. A full Saturday of working at the Salvation Army provided community members with an understanding of homelessness. After the community service experience, the group reflected on what they did and what they learned.

Active Learning Experiences: Active learning experiences must be created by the learning community members, the campus partner, and the community liaison. Student leadership in the community is one form of an active learning experience. For example, each community is encouraged to determine what leadership would be needed for the community; which could include positions such as a president, a vice president, a social chair, and an education chair. Students then take responsibility for running the community meetings and actively listening to the thoughts and concerns of their fellow community members. Students are also encouraged to participate in campus activities and hall government.

Study Abroad: The Study Abroad Office matches a study abroad advisor to each learning community to serve as a liaison. These advisors engage students in conversations about going abroad and the opportunities that meet their educational interests and community interest. Specific study abroad programs have been established for several communities facilitated over spring break or during the May semester. Community members are also encouraged to attend the Study Abroad Fair and attend programming that relates to abroad experiences.

Undergraduate Research: By partnering with the Office of Undergraduate Research, undergraduate research is promoted in each learning community by offering \$500 seed grants. Campus partners and liaisons are provided with knowledge and resources that pertain to Undergraduate Research opportunities. The undergraduate research can connect students to faculty research.

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Liaison's and Learning Outcomes, continued . . .

Community Development: Through social programming and peer interaction a learning community is successfully created. Study groups were formed in the Pre-Law Community and a part of its social programming was study break snacks and a movie. Academic success initiatives were also a part of the Pre-Law Community's community development.

Diversity: Through discussing social justice issues, reading current campus, city, state, national, and international news, and attending cultural events, learning communities are exposed to diversity. For example, Pre-Law community members discussed weekly current events and the importance of being an informed citizen. These conversations often led to debates where differing political views. These discussions challenged the members of the community.

Recommendations:

1. **Establish a liaison between academic and student affairs.**
In order to create successful partnerships between academic and student affairs faculty and staff, the roles of each person

involved must be defined. This will enhance communication and provide each person a purpose of engagement in the living learning community. We recommend universities explore creating or defining staff to serve as liaisons between academic and student affairs partners.

2. **Create learning outcomes.** Living-learning communities should facilitate student learning. Learning outcomes should be defined for living-learning communities and annually assessed. Academic success should be the goal of all members involved in the living-learning community. Developing guiding principles that effectively engage students academically will allow for the continuing success of living-learning communities.

About the authors: Megan Larkin is a Graduate Assistant in Resident Student Learning and Jimmie Gahagan serves as the Assistant Vice Provost for Student Engagement at the University of South Carolina. They can be contacted at larkin@mailbox.sc.edu and gahagan@sc.edu.

Collaborative Academic Partnerships in the Liberal Arts

Submitted by: Sean Gehrke and Nancy Tavelli, Whitman College

Liberal arts colleges are often characterized by small classes, residentially based instruction, and classroom learning paired with out-of-classroom experiences (Hirt, Amelink, & Schneiter, 2004). They often achieve the small, interconnected educational experience that many living/learning programs at large, research institutions strive for. Generally ranging in size from 1,000 to 4,000 undergraduate students, these institutions foster a working environment for their student affairs staff that is collaborative, collegial, and professional within an institutional environment that is creative, dynamic, and political. As residence life and housing staff members who work at a liberal arts college (Whitman College), we are often struck by the interconnectedness of our campus across the "divide" between faculty and student affairs staff. This interconnectedness is not always easy to foster but once an individual or department has it, the connections made with the faculty are invaluable to the learning experiences provided for residential staff and students. In this article we will reflect on our experience in the liberal arts and discuss strategies for developing relationships with faculty and forming collaborative partnerships between them and housing and residence life at a liberal arts institution, providing real-life examples of collaborative relationships we have with academic affairs at our institution.

Faculty Culture in the Liberal Arts

The small, private, residential liberal arts college is somewhat unique

in higher education with only 250 private institutions fitting in to the Carnegie classification of Baccalaureate College (Carnegie Foundation, 2008). Since the focus at most liberal arts colleges is on the whole student, faculty are expected and often required to view the teaching of undergraduates as important as their research interests. Successful liberal arts students seek education for its own sake rather than limiting themselves to preparation for a specific job. Faculty members support students in this endeavor and a unique relationship develops between faculty and student. Faculty teach and encourage what is often unconventional and out of the box. Since liberal arts colleges are intentionally small, have a very low student to faculty ratio, and most classes are taught by faculty with a terminal degree the contact between faculty and student is encouraged from the first day a student enters the institution. Liberal arts colleges often have faculty student ratio as low as eight or nine students to each Ph.D. faculty member. Many of the classes enroll fewer than 25 students per course. Students and faculty often engage in research together and receive stipends to pursue this research.

This faculty culture lends itself to involvement by faculty outside of the classroom. At a residential campus such as Whitman, it is not uncommon for faculty to engage with students and support their endeavors outside of their individual classes. Many faculty members have a desire to form relationships with students in order

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to engage them in many different settings. This desire on the part of the faculty makes them prime candidates for collaborative partnerships with residence hall and community programs.

Strategies for Collaborating with Faculty

In our experience, the most important factor in creating partnerships is building relationships. Although we both work in the division of student affairs, we have been fortunate to find ourselves serving on committees with various faculty and staff members of the college. The collaborative nature of a liberal arts college lends itself to the utilization of multiple committees. One of the best ways to form a working relationship with someone is to actually have the chance to work with them. By intentionally engaging with faculty members through committee work, it is easier to form a relationship that will lead to your ability to utilize a faculty member's expertise for your programs. Allies that can help you with this process are your vice presidents for student affairs or deans of students as they often have many connections across the campus and can help to find committees for you to assist on or know of faculty who are suited to the types of partnerships you are seeking.

It is also important to make connections with the academic side through the provost or dean of faculty and find ways to collaborate through such varied venues as coordinating large-scale programs such as Family Weekend, advising, sponsoring speakers jointly and holding social events designed to engage both faculty and staff together with students. Another possible venue for collaborative partnerships is through the teaching and learning center on your campus. This provides student affairs members the chance to present information to faculty on learning styles, learning outcomes or ways in which faculty and student affairs can partner and support each other. Often times faculty members may desire to partner but are unaware of the student affairs programs that lend themselves to such partnering.

Real-life Examples of Academic Partnerships

The following examples do not provide the exhaustive list of partnerships we have formed with academic affairs but they are some key examples of ways we engage with faculty members on our campus.

Opening Week Training and Facilitation. At Whitman, residence life staff members play a large role in educating students about various aspects of college life. Various presentations occur to introduce students to components of college life such as alcohol use, sexual assault, academics, and multiculturalism. Resident assistants help students to reflect on these presentations and make meaning of them. Faculty involvement is integral to two of these programs: first-year book discussions and facilitating follow-up conversations to Voices of Whitman, a session featuring student-presenters focusing

on issues of identity and diversity. Every first-year student reads a book over the summer before coming to Whitman. Before the new students arrive, RAs are trained by a handful of faculty members to facilitate discussions on the key issues raised in the book from multiple perspectives. After attending a panel with the same faculty members, first-year students are guided through a discussion by their RAs. In order to train RAs to facilitate discussions with their sections around issues of identity and diversity following the Voices of Whitman presentation, training is planned and presented by residence life staff members and a faculty member. These two examples provide wonderful opportunities for our department to form partnerships with faculty members on our campus.

Core Coffee Talk. In a similar fashion to other liberal arts college, every first-year student at Whitman takes a common core class, *Antiquities and Modernities*. Once a week, a program series called Core Coffee Talk is organized by the Academic Resources Center and takes place in residence hall lounges. Every week a new professor who is teaching the core class comes and holds a discussion about relevant readings for that week. This provides first-year students a chance to interact with different faculty members that they are not already familiar with and serves the purpose of bringing professors into the students' residence. This endeavor provides invaluable opportunity for students to engage with both the material and faculty members outside of their classes.

Interest House Community Advisors and Native Speakers. The Interest House Community at Whitman is comprised of 11 houses in a residential neighborhood. Each house holds four to ten students including an RA and a native speaker in one of each of the four language/culture houses. The native speakers are employed by the Provost's office and are brought in on a yearly basis to live in a house, attend several classes for the given department associated with the house, and serve as a resource for both residents and non-residents of the houses in their pursuits to learn languages and cultures of the houses. In addition to native speakers, many houses have a faculty advisor who advises the residents of the house for programming, serve as mentors for residents of the house, and plan programs for both the house and the campus community. These partnerships with the academic side of Whitman provide a unique experience for our students to intentionally engage with professors and other academic staff outside of classes within their living experience.

Consultation with Assessment Efforts. We have recently begun seeking out faculty members as expert reviewers for various scales and surveys that we have developed while attempting to assess our learning outcomes. Although we frequently utilize the expertise of our Director of Institutional Research, various faculty members in the social sciences also have extensive experience with both quantitative and qualitative research methods. By forming relationships

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with these professors, we can utilize them to review assessment materials for input on face validity for scales and other measures we may develop.

In Closing

The culture on a small, private liberal arts college campus is very different from the environment found on a large public or public, research-oriented university. If you work on a liberal arts campus, it is important to be active in seeking out these types of partnerships. They can be very rewarding and can help you develop a sense of belonging to the broader campus community through the connections you make with members of the faculty. In the long run, you will find that these partnerships provide more exceptional learning experiences for your student staff and residents and enhance your ability to design or work within a program that contributes to the overall educational mission of your college.

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Join OCM at the Commission for
Housing and Residence Life Awards Program and Social

Monday, March 30
9:00 pm - 10:30 pm

Bobby McKey's
172 Fleet Street

(Across the street from the Gaylord)
Upstairs Level

on campus
marketing



Beer, wine and light appetizers
will be served

We look forward to seeing you!

Each year, the Commission for Housing and Residential Life recognizes the achievements and contributions of individuals and housing departments across the nation.

If you are attending ACPA, please attend this event sponsored by OCM in order to honor this year's recipients!

Convention 2009 Placement Professional Development Snapshots

ACPA Convention placement offers a number of orientations for both candidates and employers. In addition, a variety of professional development snapshots are available to candidates in order to help strengthen their skills in the search process.

Saturday, March 28, 2009

- 11:00 a.m. Interviewing Strategies that “Wow!” Employers
4:00 p.m. Stress LESS: Balancing Your Personal and Professional Life

Sunday, March 29, 2009

- 11:00 a.m. Interviewing Strategies that “Wow!” Employers
1:00 p.m. Closing the Six Degrees of Separation Between You and Your Next Job

Monday, March 30, 2009

- 10:00 a.m. Can I Live and Work Here? The Campus Visit as a Career Decision Making Tool
11:00 a.m. Money Talks: Evaluation the Job Offer and Salary Negotiation
1:00 p.m. Can I Live and Work Here? The Campus Visit as a Career Decision Making Tool
2:00 p.m. Money Talks: Evaluation the Job Offer and Salary Negotiation

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

- 11:00 a.m. “Green” Graduate Student to “Polished” New Professional: Making a Seamless Transition
1:00 p.m. Moving Around and Up Student Affairs: Beyond Your First Professional Position

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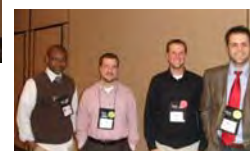
Franklyn Taylor (2011), Northern Arizona University

Greg Thompson (2011), The University of Iowa

Jonathan Todd (2011), University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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For additional contact information for the commission directorate body members, please visit our Web page at www.myacpa.org/comm/housing/.



LIFE-LINE



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To subscribe to the Commission for Housing and Residential Life listserv, please use the following directions:

- Visit <https://members.myacpa.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/person/Listserv.html>.
- Log in with your ACPA username and password
- Find the line for “Commission for Housing and Residential Life,” verify your email address and select an option from the drop-down menu (subscribe single or subscribe digest).
- Select “Submit Changes.”

Commission for Housing and Residential Life Overview

HISTORY

For three decades, the HRL Commission has made numerous and outstanding contributions to ACPA, to the residence life profession and to millions of students who have lived, studied and matured in American residential colleges and universities.

For the past several years, the HRL Commission has been especially productive in five important professional areas: information dissemination, membership involvement, recognition of achievement, liaison relationships and leadership.

PURPOSE

Residence halls are one of the primary settings for student learning at colleges and universities. The Commission for Housing and Residential Life is one of the largest of

ACPA’s commissions and actively involves its members in meeting seven major objectives:

1. To provide leadership with ACPA and the profession in general for student learning in college residence halls.
2. To identify issues of special concern and advise colleagues regarding these concerns through the support of research efforts, survey information, reports, position papers and task force investigations.
3. To communicate innovative ideas, special issues, problem resolution and research information with a broad base of individuals throughout the country who are involved in residence education.
4. To maintain a working relationship with other professional organizations, student associations and other commissions, divisions and agencies within ACPA that maintain similar or overlapping objectives.
5. To cultivate professional development experiences through sponsoring and implementing convention programs and regional workshops.
6. To assist in developing a set of professional standards for staff working in residence halls.
7. To develop a plan and a process for evaluating the work and leadership of the commission.

Get Involved!

There are three primary ways in which you can get involved!

1. Check the Housing and Residential Life Commission box on your ACPA membership application. By doing this, you’ll become a member and receive *Life-Line*, the commission newsletter. This publication will keep you updated on the activities of the commission. If you didn’t do this on your original membership application, you can log into the ACPA site to update your membership information and join the commission.
2. Serve as a member of the directorate body. Visit the commission Web site for more information.
3. Volunteer to assist with the commission’s many services and resources, including: awards (review submissions), sponsored convention programs (evaluate program proposals), newsletter (submit an article for Life-Line), convention showcase (assist in the planning of the showcase for the annual convention), and business meetings (attend the annual business meeting and have your voice heard).

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Some of the content of Life-Line was pulled from the ACPA and HRL Commission Web site at www.myacpa.org.