

## Call for Proposals for First-Year Learning Communities for Fall 2022

**Context:** First-year students entering The University of Baltimore participate in learning communities in which students enroll in two courses that have been planned together to provide students with an interdisciplinary learning experience. The courses have previously been approved as meeting one or more General Education requirements. The two courses include one or more shared assignment(s)/activities with complementary purposes in both courses, or that proceed from an initial stage in one course to a further stage in the other course. The learning community experience can help students learn how to work in teams, come to understand collegiate expectations, and of course get to know a group of peers well. Learning communities help shape students' view of their education, and they are an opportunity to teach students the power of engagement. They are a recognized high-impact practice.

**Request:** For Fall 2022, as a pilot to help make The University of Baltimore bachelor's degree more distinctive, and to connect the learning communities more deeply to The University's commitment to be an anchor institution—The University of Baltimore *for* Baltimore—the **learning communities are asked to connect the learning in the courses in some way to the Baltimore community**. This goal may be achieved in a virtually infinite number of ways, and it in no way means that the entire course is about Baltimore.

Additionally, it is expected that at least one of the two courses in the learning community will explicitly include one or more of the following high-impact teaching practices associated with UBalt course enhancement: collaborative/team-based learning; diversity/global learning; experiential learning; or writing-intensive coursework. That is not to say that the learning communities are pitched as honors courses; they are not. It also does not mean that the courses require more work of students because they are enhanced; they should not. An enhanced course uses one of these practices as part of providing a rich and exciting learning experience. There are learning communities that have already used one or more of these practices. Modest funding will be available from the Office of the Provost (**up to \$1,500 per course pair**) to support enhancement in the learning community. Three course pairs will be guaranteed to run. A fourth pair may be selected for a "wait list" in case enrollment expectations are exceeded.

Any faculty members may make a proposal, but there must be at least two faculty members' names and courses on the application. **Those who have taught in learning communities previously and those who have not may apply.**

The learning communities should be conducted in a face-to-face format. If there will be limited distance education components, that should be described in the proposal narrative.

**Proposals Due Tuesday, February 21, 2022; email proposals to [ccaraco@ubalt.edu](mailto:ccaraco@ubalt.edu). The deadline for proposals will not be extended.** Questions may be directed to Mr. Carey Miller, Dr. Candace Caraco, or Dr. Sally Farley.

Proposals will be reviewed by the academic associate deans of CAS, CPA, MSB, members of the Honors Council, and the Director of Freshmen Programs and Transitions. Decisions will be made in February and will require the requisite deans' approval prior to notification of faculty.

**Application form follows.**

## Application for Learning Community

Title of courses: \_\_\_\_\_ &

Course numbers with section: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Colleges: \_\_\_ CAS \_\_\_ CPA \_\_\_ MSB

Signatures \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

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

The learning communities should incorporate other high-impact practices (HIPs) to provide a rich and exciting learning experience. These learning community courses are not pitched as Honors courses, but students in an enhanced course may use the course as one of those required for Denit Honors graduation. **Please check all of the following high-impact practices that apply to one or both of the classes in your learning community:**

- Collaborative/team-based learning:** courses in which students a significant portion of the students' learning occurs through a team-based project; incorporates two skills: learning to work effectively in a team, and learning to offer constructive feedback in a collaborative and collegial style; typically incorporates a reflective component.
- Diversity/Global learning:** in the learning communities context, through the curriculum of the course, students in these courses explore cultures, worldviews, and perspectives that are different from their own; typically incorporates a reflective component
- Experiential learning:** "hands-on" courses in which a substantial portion of the knowledge is acquired outside of traditional classroom settings; may include service-learning, community-based learning, applied learning, or problem-based learning; typically incorporates a reflective Component
- Writing-intensive coursework:** Courses in which a significant portion of the students' learning is accomplished through various forms of writing; typically relies upon the iterative process wherein students complete a rough draft, obtain feedback, and complete a revised draft

Courses designated as enhanced must satisfy at least one of the Student Learning Outcomes approved for enhanced courses. **Which outcome(s) will be assessed in your proposed course? (check each that apply):**

- Connect a high-impact experience to course content in a reflective essay or presentation (HIPs).
- Demonstrate growth in effective writing by actively participating in a writing process that includes drafting and revising (writing).

- Analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of evidence-based or discipline-specific knowledge or theory (critical thinking).

**Assessment:**

The learning communities' faculty will have an assessment session after the semester ends. This is likely to be in January at a time convenient for participants; it may be virtual. Faculty should be prepared to have student work from one or more assignments that demonstrate the learning community SLOs and a relevant enhancement SLO. The same artifact can be used for more than one SLO, but it is also possible to use more than one assignment. There will also be holistic discussion about the learning communities with an eye to continuous improvement. (The meeting does not include assessment in the discipline, but faculty may optionally wish to comment on that learning as they discuss how well the LCs worked.)

In addition to meeting the disciplinary student learning outcomes for the learning community classes and one or more enhanced SLO(s), by the end of the semester in a learning community, students will be able to:

- Describe strategies for successful learning and self-evaluation
- Apply strategies to prepare for and complete individual and collaborative assignments
- Apply new knowledge from the course in the other learning community course(s)

**Narrative** (maximum 500 words).

Include:

- (a) a description of the two courses,
- (b) a description of how the courses will connect the learning in the courses to Baltimore,
- (c) a description of how your courses will satisfy the high-impact practice selected, and
- (d) a brief description of assignment(s) embedded in the course that will measure the three student learning outcomes (SLO) for learning communities and the SLO(s) for the enhancement.

Optional: Application for Funds

**Budget.** The budget should include a detailed breakdown of expenses associated with the high-impact practice or experiences (such as travel expenses and tickets per student). Please make sure to check for group discounts for all expenses.