"From my experience, living with other likeminded individuals made it easier to find a niche and get accustomed to living on campus and doing work in class."  - Stephen Puliafico, Class of 2011
First-Year Connections: A Comprehensive Look

S. Stavros Valenti  
Interim Director, First-Year Programs

First-Year Programs—also known as First-Year Connections—is an office in Hofstra College that promotes academic and social programs to enhance the first-year experience. Terry Godlove, the Director of First-Year Programs, is away on a research leave until September, and I’m taking his place for a few months. You may remember me from the All-State Bass Fishing Expo at Nassau Coliseum. No? My day job is Professor and Director of the B.A. Program in Psychology at Hofstra.

In Fall 1999, the First-Year Program had only 6 clusters—sets of thematically-linked classes. For Fall 2009, First-Year Connections will offer first-year students a menu of 17 clusters and 44 seminars. Seminars are small, discussion-based classes reserved especially for first-year students. They offer a unique opportunity for first-year students to learn in a small setting with an experienced faculty member. The small class size helps students connect with classmates and with a professor who may become their major advisor. Seminars are designed to fit every interest, from history to hip-hop, from drama to dinosaurs. Most seminars are taught by senior faculty, and all fulfill general education requirements. All seminars include field trips in and around New York City as part of your seminar learning experience.

Clusters are groups of 2 or 3 linked classes, centered on a common theme. When students take another 2 or 3 classes, they will have a complete schedule. For example, the cluster ‘Fairy Tale in Literature and Film’ includes courses in film, literature, and writing. Another cluster, ‘Psychology and Philosophy of Everyday Life’ contains psychology, philosophy, and writing. By taking a few courses with the same group of students, students make friends more quickly, form study groups, and come to feel at home on Hofstra’s Campus. And like the seminars, clusters include out-of-class events in and around New York City.

First-Year Connections is all about making connections among students, connections between students and faculty, and connections between students and New York City.

A new initiative for 2009 is the inclusion of registration web pages that promote the connections between particular clusters and associated Living Learning Communities. For example, if students pre-register for the cluster “Democracy and Civic Engagement”, they will see a pop-up window promoting the “CIVIC ENGAGEMENT HOUSE.” If they click on “YES - I would consider living in this House” they will get a second pop-up window with instructions on how to request this housing option. Our goal is to increase the number of students in each LLC that are in the same cluster— that is, “living and learning.”

I’m looking forward to meeting more of the LLC staff during the spring and summer, so please drop in any time - and bring your favorite fishing photo.

Living Learning Communities Newsletter
Dear LLC Friends:

On behalf of the Netherlands staff, I would like to give a hearty “Hello!” to all of our returning and new Living Learning Community members. Our first semester was a great success and there are a lot of exciting things happening in our LLCs this spring. To the wonderful residents of Honors Housing—keep up the great work, we are hearing wonderful things from over there! For all of our Civic Engagement alumni who are living and working together over in Nassau/Suffolk—don’t forget to come back and visit us in the Netherlands! And finally, to all of the current residents of our Netherlands LLCs— we’re excited to have you and we hope that your experience thus far has been as fulfilling as you had hoped!

There are many exciting things occurring in our halls along LLC themes! Our Health Sciences LLC has taken a trip with faculty to the Bodyworks Exhibit in NYC. Our Civic Engagement houses and Presidential Politics house have hosted a plethora of events focusing on current issues and events this year. Presidential Politics students also hosted an Educate ’08 event in the comfort of their own house lounge this year with faculty from our Political Science department. Educate ’08 events also were hosted by the Arts LLC focusing on the film industry and documenting the ’92 debates, while students from our Math, Science, and Engineering house welcomed faculty into their house lounge to enjoy a dinner with residents! Our LLCs have done community service by holding vigils, making cards for children staying at Schneider’s Children’s Hospital, giving blood, and multiple fundraisers.

Still to come include more trips, many home-cooked meals, and more community service events! We are looking forward to giving all of our students the opportunity to get involved in educational events as well as bringing people together for a good cause! Ask your RAs what plans they have ahead and be sure to give input on what you would like to see happen in your hall!

Best of luck as you complete your first year at Hofstra!!!
Christopher Muller
Director of Living Learning Communities

The Living Learning Community Program continues to be successful due to the dedication of the administrators, faculty, para professional staff and most importantly our students. There have been some administrators/faculty in particular that have been incredibly supportive this year that include: Warren Frisina (Dean of Honors College and Professor), Stavros Valenti (Interim Director of First-Year Programs Professor and Director of the B.A. Program in Psychology), Meena Bose (Professor and Peter S. Kalikow Chair in Presidential Studies) and Jayne Brownell (Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs). They truly have been instrumental in helping to shape this program, in addition to the dynamic RDs and RAs within the LLC Area.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Living Learning Community program expanded from 3 to 6 houses in the Netherlands. We continued to have houses in Health Sciences, Civic Engagement and Arts. Due to the popularity of the Civic Engagement house we added a second house in Civic Engagement within the Netherlands for this year’s program. Also, we added 2 houses on the topics of Presidential Politics and Math, Science and Engineering. Finally, we launched our first upperclass living learning community in Civic Engagement on the 6th floor of Nassau Hall.

The Honors LLC within Liberty/Republic has been around for several years and they truly have an engaged and involved community. This LLC was so popular this year that we had approximately 20 women living in the “Honors Annex” in VanderPoel Hall, due to the huge demand of students that wanted to live in Liberty/Republic. Warren Frisina had an idea to create a Dean’s Cup Programming Series in September 2008. The Deans Cup had a week long programming series that included events: Iron Chef Competition, Volleyball Tournament and a “Get Set to Get Wet” contest that included a water and pie eating contest. Finally, the Deans Cup was concluded with a finale and barbeque with 111 people in attendance including the Honors College Mentors and several administrators. This is a wonderful new tradition for the Honors LLC!

The Presidential Politics and Civic Engagement Houses in the Netherlands sponsored 2 excellent joint programs in the Fall Semester. The first program was a Post Debate Discussion on October 16th, where professors Rosanna Perotti, David Greene, Richard Himelfarb and Meena Bose were in attendance in a roundtable discussion facilitated by Mike LaFemina about their reactions to the previous night’s debate. The residents discussed a variety of issues from the economy to immigration. The residents really enjoyed the program and really appeared to benefit from sharing and hearing each other’s reactions.

The Thanksgiving Dinner program was a tradition in Utrecht House for the second consecutive year! The residents gathered in the lounge dressed up for the special occasion of Thanksgiving Dinner. Almost 50 residents attended including numerous students that lived in the Upperclass Civic Engagement LLC that came back to their former home to celebrate this tradition with the first-year students. In addition, Laural Simeon and Alex Bonnin collaborated with Leah Cravenho and Eric Carvalho to make this program a success!

Continued on Page 5
As the fast approaching end of the semester draws near, the students of the upper classmen civic engagement living learning community took the opportunity to spend a night out with their fellow floor mates. The trip, thought up by RAs Leah and Eric, began with a train ride into New York City to see the Upright Citizens Brigade. The students of the LLC filtered into a standing room only basement theatre. The program, led by VH1’s Best Week Ever funny man, Doug Benson, had all sixteen students in attendance holding their sides in laughter. The style of the show was rather unique in that fact that all of the five stand up comics had time to speak, but were frequently interrupted by the MC Benson. The dynamic of the show just added to its hilarity.

The students and Resident Assistants of the Upper Classmen LLC enjoyed performances by lesser known comedians, including a write for ABC’s The Jimmy Kimmel Show and famous stars like Employee of the Month’s Dax Shepard. The comedians poked fun at politics and pop culture and shared several hysterical anecdotes. While the show only lasted a brief hour and a half, it was a fun filled way to spend a Wednesday evening with classmates that began just sharing the same interests to close, lifelong friends.

- Veronica Kennedy
Upper Class Civic Engagement

Programming Initiatives Continued from Page 4

The Upperclass Civic Engagement LLC RAs hosted a outstanding Election Night LLC program. On November 4th, Eric Carvalho and Leah Cravenho thought that the night of the well anticipated election results for the 2008 presidential election was a great opportunity to put on a program in their lounge. Over 100 residents attended this program that engaged in a variety of activities that were somewhat related to the election. They had a “ballot box” that we asked residents to vote for a program they would attend and place their ballot in the concealed box. In addition, they also had a big poster on the wall that had the words “I vote for...” written on the top. They also had a table set up with arts and crafts to “create the scene” and predict the outcome of the election with various craft materials.

While all of this was going on, we had the television on CNN watching the results come in for each individual state. At three different times during commercials on the television, the RAs asked the group trivia questions relating to current political and/or American History knowledge, in hopes to encourage and engage them in another interactive activity. The majority of the residents who came stayed for the whole program and thoroughly enjoyed this amazing program.

- Veronica Kennedy
Upper Class Civic Engagement
LLC Testimonials: Looking back on the semester and into the future!

With the start of 2009, Liberty/Republic Hall Council has been doing just fine! Our first event to ring in the new semester was a Super Bowl Party. At this event, avid football and commercial fans from the complex joined together in Liberty Lounge to eat wings and watch the big game. To keep the party train going, our next event was an Oscar Party; residents from the complex suddenly had a reason to get dressed up and mingle. Located in Republic Lounge everyone was able to enjoy tasty Oscar related foods and predict the big winners for the night!

But now that we have had our fun, everyone's minds are set on one main event, Relay for Life. With April 18th getting closer and closer we as a team, and individually, have been coming up with fundraiser ideas to help support the American Cancer Society. Hopefully with our plans of a late night pancake breakfast, outdoor sporting event, and a few other surprises we can raise a hefty amount of money to assist with cancer research!

Spring semester 2009 may already be half over, but we as a group still have a lot of things we would like to do. Once Mother Nature settles down and gives us some warm weather (fingers crossed that it's soon) we plan on hosting another outdoor concert in the courtyard featuring Hofstra Students. Then as May and finals come around, we will host a day of Hall War festivities signaling the end to yet another great year of Hall Council with an extraordinary executive board and devoted residents members!

-Tam Tran Honors Housing Hall Council President

Science, math and engineering, not normally words that make many people smile. However, for the residents of Rotterdam House in Netherlands North they love it. I am sophomore geology major with an astronomy minor and I love being the resident assistant in this building. However, sometimes it can be a challenge trying to use science in programs and make it fun for everyone while incorporating faculty into these programs. Last semester we hosted a taco night, inviting Professors Dr. Caputi, an engineering professor and Dr. Bennington, a geology professor. The residents were able to talk to these professors in a relaxed environment and it was a great success.

This semester we are hoping to bring back the same and even more professors and tie-dye with them to try and recreate that same relaxed environment. Also, we are planning on taking a field trip to the Cradle of Aviation. Throughout the year the Rotterdam residents have shown a lot of support for their LLC and I hope we keep the trend we have had and get a great turn out at all future programs.

-Stephanie Hesselbarth Math Science and Engineering House

Living Learning Communities Newsletter