

The Weston Hall Project

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Project Proposal

Our Mission

This project has two specific deliverables:

1. We want to help students better understand their options for living-learning communities while living in the Residence Halls at the University of Illinois. By documenting the alternatives that are available to students in the Residence Halls, we can help match students with a living-learning community that will enhance their overall collegiate experience. We believe that this documentation will benefit prospective transfer students and incoming freshmen to the University of Illinois when they are making their housing decision.
2. By evaluating an existing living-learning community and understanding where it is most effective, the University of Illinois can improve existing programs and implement similar programs throughout its student housing environment.

Our Plan of Action

We plan to analyze the living-learning community currently in use at the Weston Residence Hall called the Weston Exploration program. Weston Exploration is the program that provides the foundation for the living-learning community within this Residence hall. Living-learning communities are established to provide opportunities for students to explore and develop their personal interests, academic abilities, and resources. By analyzing the Weston Exploration program, we will better understand how the students interact with the program and with each other. This in turn will allow us to understand the main benefits that the students derive from the program and where the program can be improved.

In order to understand how the program operates, we plan to analyze the Weston Hall Bylaws. We will also conduct interviews with the Weston Residence Hall program coordinator, a Resident Director, Resident Advisors, and current and past students who have lived in the hall. We will develop a questionnaire that will allow us to document each student's experiences while living in the hall and gather their opinions on what might be done to make the Weston Exploration program more valuable to their collegiate experience. Some of our research will also come from observations of the dormitory life that the project team will make as bystanders. We will use campus libraries and Internet resources to gain a better understanding of the Weston Residence Hall community.

Our Resources

Each member of this project team has experienced life in one of the Residence Halls across campus. We feel that our experiences will help in breaking down the activity system into its six components. However, none of the project team has lived in the Weston Residence Hall and experienced the Weston Exploration learning community. Additionally, Weston has a reputation as being one of the more socially active dormitories on the campus. We chose the Weston Residence Halls to understand how this Activity System affects the Weston residents and the Weston Exploration program. Also, we want to explore the positive and negative aspects that this social interaction has on a student's academic career.

Prior to our study, we knew that the Hall was popular amongst freshmen returning to the dorms for their second year. According to the Weston Residence Hall website, the Weston Exploration program is designed for students entering Liberal Arts and Sciences General Curriculum. As a result, the Weston population consists mostly of freshmen and sophomores.

We plan on relying heavily on our interviews and personal observations during the study. We believe that by diversifying our information gathering we will be able to understand such a complex activity system. The University of Illinois website and library contain information about the residence halls and the community within. Specifically, our resources are:

- Interview with the program coordinator: Claire Brady
- Interview with the resident director: Angie Clark
- Interview with resident advisors: Paul Spilker and Christa Moody
- Interview with past and current students who lived/live in the hall
- Internet websites: “Weston Exploration,” “Housing in UIUC,” and “Living-Learning Communities”.

Our Benefits

We believe that this documentation will be tremendously beneficial for any incoming student who has decided to attend the University of Illinois and to utilize its student housing options. This information will assist prospective students to make an informed decision as to which Residence Hall and living-learning community will best meet their needs. Further, by documenting the advantages and disadvantages of the current Weston Exploration learning community, the University of Illinois can improve the existing program and implement similar programs for other living-learning communities throughout its Residence Hall system. In this manner, the University of Illinois can continue to meet its obligation to its students to deliver an unparalleled collegiate experience.

Our Conclusion

We believe that the Weston Hall activity system will prove to be incredibly complex. However, the documentation that results from this project will help students to better understand their options for living-learning communities while living in the Residence Halls at the University of Illinois. By documenting the alternatives that are available to students in the Residence Halls, we can help match students with a living-learning community that will enhance their overall collegiate experience. We believe that this documentation will benefit prospective transfer students and incoming freshmen to the University of Illinois when they are making their housing decision. By evaluating an existing living-learning community and understanding where it is most effective, the University of Illinois can improve existing programs and implement similar programs throughout its student housing environment.

Team Project Timeline

Week 1 <i>Jocelyn, Neal)</i>	Sat. 4/1	Group Meeting Project Proposal 1 st Draft *	<i>(Drew, Helena,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Wed. 4/5	Group Meeting Conference Report 1 st Draft *	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>

<i>Neal)</i>	Thurs. 4/6	Group Meeting Conference Report Final *	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Fri. 4/7	Group Conferences Conference Report Due *	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
Week 2 <i>Jocelyn, Neal)</i>	Sun. 4/9	Group Meeting Project Proposal Final *	<i>(Drew, Helena,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Mon. 4/10	Project Proposal Due	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Wed. 4/12	Group Meeting Individual Research	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
	Thurs. 4/13	Interviews At Weston Hall	<i>(Drew, Neal)</i>
	Fri. 4/14	Interviews Outside Weston Hall	<i>(Helena, Jocelyn)</i>
Week 3 <i>Jocelyn, Neal)</i>	Sun. 4/16	Group Meeting Formal Report Outline	<i>(Drew, Helena,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Mon. 4/17	Group Meeting Formal Report (Part 1)	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Wed. 4/19	Group Meeting Formal Report (Part 2)	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Fri. 4/21	Formal Report Due	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
Week 4 <i>Jocelyn, Neal)</i>	Sun. 4/23	Group Meeting Conference Report Final	<i>(Drew, Helena,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Mon. 4/24	Group Conferences Conference Report Due	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
<i>Neal)</i>	Wed. 4/26	Group Meeting	<i>(Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,</i>
	Thurs. 4/27	Presentation Outline Presentation Script	<i>(Helena, Jocelyn)</i>
	Fri. 4/28	Presentation PowerPoint	<i>(Drew, Neal)</i>
Week 5 <i>Jocelyn, Neal)</i>	Sun. 4/30	Group Meeting	<i>(Drew, Helena,</i>

Presentation Practice

Neal) **Mon. 5/1** **Presentations** (*Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,*

Neal) Thurs. 5/4 Group Meeting
Formal Report Final (*Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,*

Neal) Sat. 5/6 Group Meeting
Brothers' (*Drew, Helena, Jocelyn,*

Week 6 Sun. 5/7 Team Evaluations (*Individual)*

Mon. 5/8 Formal Project and Team Evaluations Due

* Displays Work Completed