

National Study for Living-Learning Communities 2010

The learning communities program at Minnesota State University, Mankato houses students with the same academic backgrounds or co-curricular interests in support of their transition to the university. The National Study of Living Learning Programs (NSLLP) is an empirical study that compares the experiences of first year students in the Learning Communities and non-Learning Communities. The survey was sent to 263 first-year learning community participants and 262 non-learning community first-year students. 127 learning community students responded (48.3%) and 80 non-learning community students responded (30.5%). The NSLLP data indicated that, as a whole, "living-learning students" were more likely than their counterparts to engage in positive, strengthening activities such as discussing academics and social issues with peers, and showing a better commitment to their education and welfare.

When compared to their peers, Learning Community students at Minnesota State Mankato in the 2010 study reported significantly stronger experiences in the following categories:

- **Residence Hall resources:** Utilized their academic advisors more, had more interactions with their professors and attended more lectures and seminars
- **Comfort and atmosphere in the dorms:** Found the residence hall to be more academically and socially supportive than non-LC students
- **Transition to college:** Found it very easy to transition to college both academically and socially compared to their peers
- **Study Habits:** Studied more often with another person and with a small group
- **Time spent:** Spent more time studying/doing homework
- **Growth:** Showed a significant growth in personal philosophy and demonstrated an application of knowledge abilities
- **Confidence:** Showed more confidence in working as part of a team
- **Diversity and civic engagement:** Showed a better appreciation for diversity and have a better sense of civic engagement
- **Retention:** Less likely to drop out of school and more likely to return to our institution

Regarding drinking habits, more LC students than non-LC students: do not drink alcohol and never have, started drinking less when they got to college, or stopped drinking entirely when they got to college

On factors influencing how much alcohol students consume:

- Less likely to drink just to fit in or to feel more comfortable in social situations
- Less likely to drink just to get away from problems and troubles
- Less likely to drink just to get drunk
- Less likely to drink even if everyone else is drinking
- Less likely to experience a health consequence as a result of alcohol use