World Learning Proposal

The mission of the World Leaning Community (WLC) is to promote scholarship, leadership and responsible citizenship among students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney by fostering an environment by which domestic and international students can explore different views on world issues, become aware of an array of cultural traditions, and develop a more in-depth level of global awareness.

WLC Vision Statement

The WLC will assist its residents in becoming citizens of the world by providing a vibrant living community in which students are empowered to broaden global awareness by embracing diversity and sharing in the exchange of cultural values through intercultural awareness, music, art, language, faculty-led discussions, and an introduction to a variety of campus, community, and global resources.

WLC Mission Commitments

- It must contribute to cross-cultural knowledge base of students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK).
- It should be closely tied with the academic Global Awareness Program (GAP) offered at UNK.
- It must meet students’ educational and personal or career growth needs.
- It must contain components of outreach and activity development on the UNK campus and in the Kearney community.
- Its programmatic parameters will encompass regional, national and world environments.
- It must be accountable for program quality and for good stewardship of its resources.

Sponsored by the Offices of Residential & Greek Life and Department of International Education, this unique community strives to educate leaders for a global community. The WLC would create a community for students to explore, develop, exchange and experience world views, issues, cultures. It would offer exciting experiences where a more in-depth understanding of global events and issues, cultures and beliefs could be developed. The WLC would be geared toward students who are enrolled in the academic GAP and those who are creative, energetic, and enthusiastic about living in a residential community where the study of foreign languages, global society and cultural diversity are an important element of future goals.
The goal is to develop globally competent leaders who:

- Exhibit awareness of one's own cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, biases and stereotypes and the impact of these on others.
- Demonstrate knowledge about world history, current events and global economics and sustainability.
- Acknowledge and respect the existence of different cultural values, beliefs and attitudes.
- Recognize that people are interconnected and globally interdependent.
- Communicate and collaborate effectively in a cross-cultural environment.
- Accept responsibility for active world citizenship.
- Come with an open mind and are tolerant and respectful of the views of community members and guest speakers.
- Assist in WLC evaluation efforts in collaboration with Office of Residence Life and the Department of International Education.
- Respect and abide by University of Nebraska-Kearney policies and regulations.

Each semester the WLC would host a wide range of events to stimulate intellectual discussion and debate on critical global issues. Many of the activities and events will be open to UNK staff, faculty and Kearney community at large (marked with an asterix below). They are geared to help forge networks among those interested in global issues.

**Events:**

- **International Film Series** * - The WLC sponsors a series of international films for the UNK campus in the lounge of CTE. An international film is shown free of charge every month highlighting different cultural groups.

- **Culture Nights** * – Three times per semester, the WLC floor residents organize an evening of food, art, and music to highlight the culture of one ethnic group or region of the world.

- **International Reviews** *-* Each month, a member of UNK’s faculty is invited to share dinner and conversation with the community about current international issues. International Reviews broaden knowledge of international affairs and provide an opportunity to interact with faculty outside the classroom setting.

- **Pumpkin Carving Contest** – Domestic students will share the American tradition of carving pumpkins. Making pumpkin pie and roasted pumpkin seeds are an option at the end of the activity.

- **International Education Week** – Students from each region of the world will be responsible for representing their country at a table highlighting study abroad opportunities in their home country where they will interact with domestic students in answering questions about their home land and culture.
- **Fall Retreat** - The WLC will begin the year with a Saturday retreat to Camp Comeca. Members get to know one another through team building games, cross-cultural awareness, cultural exercises, and outdoor activities, as well as plan for community events and activities throughout the year.

- **Spring Retreat** – At the beginning of February, the WLC gathers for a Saturday retreat in the International Center to reflect on their experiences thus far and plan for events in the spring semester.

- **International Food Festival**— Students will have the opportunity to work closely with the International Student Association in coordinating an annually held event highlighting food, dress, and entertainment from each student’s home culture.

- **International Holiday Celebration**— Students will plan to introduce international holidays and manners in which they are celebrated throughout the year.

- **Anything but your Native Language** – Event in which students match-up to try conversations in any language other than their primary tongue.

- **Hot Topics over Coffee**— energetic networking and meaty discussions about critical world issues are served up with steaming espresso.

- **International Radio Broadcast** – Work with campus and local radio broadcasts to initiate a radio show highlighting music from different regions.

**Obligations**

WLC Members must commit themselves to uphold the spirit of this internationally focused community. Students are the foundation of the program and its success depends upon their ability and willingness to interact and function as a community, initiate and attend activities, and serve on the WLC steering committee. In particular, a WLC member would agree to...

- Attend at least five organized activities and three WLC community planning meetings per term.
- Adhere to the WLC Student Agreement Statement *(yet to be created)*
- Assist in program promotional events
- Maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA

Participation in the WLC is a large component in fulfilling the Global Awareness Program (GAP) requirements leading to becoming a “Global Specialist”. Program completion will not only be recorded on the UNK Transcript but will also receive special distinction upon graduation by wearing an international cord on graduation gown.

**WLC Selection Criteria:**

- G.P.A. (minimum of 2.5)
- Statement of Purpose
- Letter of Recommendation
- WLC Committee Review
Timeline:

November 2008
- Faculty Senate presentation
- Design WLC Pamphlet

December 2008
- Create advert post cards /posters
- Write article for Antelope

January 2009
- Distribute postcards, posters, brochures, antelope advert

August 2009
- Implementation of World Learning Community on 7th Floor of CTE

Recognition of the importance of expanding the international and cultural perspectives of our graduates to enhance their ability to live and work in the decades ahead has never been greater. There are numerous ways to bring international dimensions to a curriculum. Informal learning experiences and the opportunity to interact with people in other countries are probably as important in expanding the international perspectives of our students as what they learn in classes or the formal parts of such programs. Study abroad is one way to gain a more global perspective, but international awareness can also be gained without leaving the University of Nebraska-Kearney campus.