



You Belong Here: The Language of Community

Atlantic Center for Learning Communities Curriculum Planning Retreat

October 15-17, 2025

Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center
303 Tunxis Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107

Wednesday, October 15

4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Check-in and poster set-up
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Dining Room	Dinner
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Main Conference Room; First Floor	<u>Keynote and Q & A</u> "Thriving through Community: The ACLC at 25" Terry Novak, Ph.D., Professor of English, Johnson & Wales University; Co-director of the ACLC
8:00 p.m.- 9:30 p.m.	Reception and poster displays of learning community programs and best practices (following keynote presentation)

Thursday, October 16

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Dining Room	Breakfast
9:30-10:15 Main Conference Room	Responses to Keynote Address Join us for a discussion informed by the keynote address and led by Aurora Bautista and Jeff Ellenbird (Bunker Hill Community College)
10:30-11:30 Main Conference Room	Student Panel Join students as they discuss the effect learning communities have had on their successes in all aspects of the college experience. Facilitated by James Hansen (Brooklyn College). Panelists include Carla Fanfan (Bunker Hill Community College), Jamia Jones (Hudson County Community College), Emma Bouchard (University of North Florida), and Olivia Rich (Johnson & Wales University)
12:00-1:00 p.m. Dining Room	Lunch

1:30-3:00 p.m. Main Conference Room	Consultant Corners Members of the ACLC Leadership Team will be available for discussion and to advise you and your team on initiating or refreshing learning communities at your institution. Sign-up sheets for 30-minute slots will be available in advance. You are also free to simply drop in to chat with an available consultant.
3:00-6:00 p.m.	Team Time; Networking
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Dining Room	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Main Conference Room Outdoor Fire Pit	Celebration of Learning Communities and the ACLC at 25: Reception and Continued Conversations Campfire with Colleagues (weather permitting)

Friday, October 17

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Dining Room	Breakfast and Check out of rooms
9:00-11:00 a.m. Main Conference Room	Consultant Corner/Team Time
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Main Conference Room	Moving Forward: Community discussion on facing the challenges of learning communities work in our current higher education climate
12:00-12:45 p.m. Dining Room	Lunch, followed by departure

ACLC Curriculum Planning Retreat Session Descriptions

Wednesday, October 15

7:00-8:00 p.m. Keynote Address—Dr. Terry Novak, Johnson & Wales University

Twenty-five years ago, the fledgling Atlantic Center for Learning Communities, steered by learning communities scholars and practitioners Anne Goodsell Love (now Anne Van Der Karr) and Roberta Matthews, held an afternoon event at Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts that would turn into an annual two-day curriculum planning retreat. Since that time many changes and challenges have visited the landscape of higher education: some borne out of budget trials, some borne out of a

global pandemic, some borne out of the political atmosphere locally as well as globally. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: Community matters. How do we remain grounded through the many layers of our learning communities? How do we use the lessons of our past to inform the challenges of our present? How do we continue our work with courage so as to continue to form students of community and conviction? Join Terry Novak for a lively and passionate discussion at the 2025 ACLC Curriculum Planning Retreat keynote address!

Terry Novak has served on the leadership team of the ACLC for almost 25 years and has co-directed the ACLC for over a decade. An English professor at Johnson & Wales University, Terry has also taught in learning communities for 25 years, directing the program for many of those years. Along with her community of LC practitioners and colleagues, she has presented regularly on learning communities, including the blending of community service into a learning community. In a myriad of ways, community informs Terry's life and work.

8:00-9:30 p.m.

Poster Session and Reception

Join us for a post-keynote reception and poster session. Take some time to peruse displays showcasing learning community efforts at the various institutions represented by this year's retreat participants. This is a great time for conversation and discovery!

Thursday, October 16

9:30-10:15 a.m. Responses to Keynote

What do we do with the challenges and ideas presented through the keynote address? How do we transform the groundwork of the keynote into a significant sense of belonging and community at our home institutions and in our classrooms? Professors Aurora Bautista (Chair, Behavioral Sciences) and Jeff Ellenbird (ESL), members of the ACLC leadership team, will present their responses to the address and will then lead participants in an open discussion.

10:30-11:30 a.m. Student Panel

We all know the power of learning communities, and we all know the sense of belonging that learning communities afford students: Our personal experiences as well as research and data confirm these. What do the students themselves experience as members of learning communities? What do they take from these communities? Join this session to discover personal LC student perspectives!

1:30-3:00 p.m. Consultant Corners

Seasoned members of the Atlantic Center for Learning Communities will be available throughout the main conference room to offer advice on how to begin learning communities at your institution, how to sustain learning communities, how to navigate various levels of administration as you engage in learning communities work, how to cultivate faculty and staff relationships in learning communities work, etc. Sign-up sheets for 30-minute slots will be available at the registration table. Drop-ins are also welcome, as consultants are available. Bringing your partner or your entire team to these sessions will make for an optimal experience.

3:00-6:00 p.m.

Team Time! While some campus teams will carve out time for team meetings throughout the retreat, we offer this specific block of time for team reflection and work away from the distractions of campus. We encourage those who are solo attendees from their campus to engage in deeper discussion and interaction with solo attendees from other campuses. Feeling the need to rejuvenate and reflect on your own? This is a great time for that as well!

7:00-9:00 p.m. Celebration of Learning Communities and the ACLC at 25: Reception and Continued Conversations

Campfire with Colleagues!

Join us for post-dinner conversation and a celebration of our important, continuing learning communities work at the Thursday evening reception in the Main Conference Room and at the traditional Campfire with Colleagues, hosted by George Hill, at the outdoor fire pit. Many great ideas have been shared and many friendships have blossomed at these events over the years.

Friday, October 17

9:00-11:00 a.m. Consultant Corners

Take advantage of another opportunity to confer with one of our longtime learning communities practitioners.

11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Moving Forward

This community discussion provides the opportunity to help us reimagine the future of learning communities and the work and mission of the Atlantic Center for Learning Communities, with a special emphasis this year on facing the challenges in the current climate of higher education. Your voice and support are important: Please join us for this critical discussion!