



The Joy of Learning Communities

Atlantic Center for Learning Communities Curriculum Planning Retreat

October 14-16, 2026

Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center

303 Tunxis Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107

Wednesday, October 14

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> "Unlocking Growth Together: Reflections on the Joy and Impact of Learning Communities" Aurora Bautista , Bunker Hill Community College
8:00 p.m.- 9:30 p.m.	Reception and poster displays of learning community programs and best practices (following keynote presentation)

Thursday, October 15

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Dining Room	Breakfast
9:30-10:15 Main Conference Room	Responses to Keynote Address A discussion inspired by the Keynote address, facilitated by Amy Lorenz , University of North Florida, and Pat Morelli , University of Hartford
10:30-11:30 Main Conference Room	World Café Roundtable sessions 1. Option 1 2. Option 2 3. Option 3 4. Option 4
12:00-1:00 p.m. Dining Room	Lunch

1:30-2:30 p.m. 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.
2:30-3:30	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.
3:30-6:00 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: Reception and Continued Conversations Campfire with Colleagues (weather permitting)

Friday, October 16

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 finding the Joy of Learning Communities work
12:00-12:45 p.m. Dining Room	Lunch, followed by departure

ACLC Curriculum Planning Retreat Session Descriptions

Wednesday, October 14

7:00-8:00 p.m. Keynote Address: “Unlocking Growth Together: Reflections on the Joy and Impact of Learning Communities”

Aurora Bautista, Bunker Hill Community College

Description TBA

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 15

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? Amy Lorenz and Pat Morelli, 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. World Café

The World Café offers the opportunity to engage in discussion regarding key components of successful learning communities. Participants will be able to switch tables after 30 minutes but are also welcome to remain at one table for the duration of this session.

1:30-2:30 p.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!

2:30-3:30 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.

3:30-6:00 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: 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 16

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 finding joy in our work as Learning Community Practitioners. Your voice and support are important: Please join us for this critical discussion!