



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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**TO:** Boston University Faculty

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

**DATE:** March 5, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Living-Learning Programs Review Committee

Living-learning communities are an important part of Boston University's efforts to offer the best possible residential experience to students on our campuses. The hope of the living-learning community movement at large research universities (as seen at BU in programs like WISE@Warren, WISE-Up, the Kilachand Honors College, and our 30 specialty houses/floors) has been that students living in smaller, more manageable communities focused on a common interest gain a richer academic experience that integrates what happens in class and what happens out of class, adapt more readily to college both academically and socially, and graduate on time in greater numbers.

The growth of living-learning programs and their popularity with students suggests that they succeed in a number of ways, with national survey results indicating an easier transition to a college setting, higher overall grades, a stronger sense of belonging, a greater likelihood of attending graduate school, and marked gains in important skills like critical thinking among students taking part. The same survey raises some concerns, however, about whether students in these programs are indeed exposed enough to diversity or to interactions with people who may come from different backgrounds and perspectives.

In an effort to better gauge the effectiveness of BU's living-learning programs and their potential for future growth, Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, has asked a committee of faculty, staff and students to undertake a comprehensive review of BU's Specialty Houses and make recommendations for the development of these programs over the next 5-10 years. We are grateful that Nathan Phillips, Professor of Earth & Environment in the College of Arts & Sciences, has agreed to chair this panel. The Committee is charged with evaluating whether BU is taking full advantage of living-learning communities to:

- Provide an enriched educational experience that is engaging and interesting, promotes student interaction with faculty on substantive matters, actively advances the understanding of diverse experiences and points of view, integrates what happens inside the classroom and out, and matters significantly to students' intellectual development.
- Increase BU's ability to recruit, retain and graduate top students.

- Promote curricular innovations, such as interdisciplinary programming across departments and colleges; or social/community goals, such as civic engagement or community service.
- Help define a distinctive BU residential experience and best leverage BU's extraordinary housing assets.

WISE@Warren and Kilachand Honors College will not be part of this review, but will be considered for purposes of comparison and as part of the suite of living-learning programs BU offers. I have asked the committee to report its recommendations to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs by May 17, 2013. My office looks forward to sharing the results with the broader BU community in the months ahead.

### **Living-Learning Programs Review Committee Members**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Title/Organization</b>
Heather Barrett	Graduate (PhD) Student, CAS English
Linette Decarie	Director, Institutional Research
Karen Jacobs	Clinical Professor, SAR Occupational Therapy
Steven Jarvi	Associate Dean, Student Academic Life, CAS
Nathan Phillips	Professor, CAS Earth & Environment (chair)
Dauida Pines	Associate Professor, CGS Rhetoric
Tyrone Porter	Associate Professor, ENG Mechanical Engineering
Sean Reilly	Undergraduate Student, CAS; RA, Italian House
Bruce Schulman	Professor, CAS History
Kelly Walter	Associate VP and Executive Director, Admissions
David Zamojski	Assistant Dean of Students; Director, Residence Life