

LaRiviere *Living & Learning* Center

PROGRAM & PROCESS INFORMATION GUIDE 2017-2018



LaRiviere Living & Learning Center Overview

LaRiviere Center offers residents one of the most unique opportunities available to them at Western New England University: living and learning in the same building. LaRiviere residents have the opportunity to live with friends as well as educate others on their interests in a productive and collaborative environment. This cooperative experience allows students the ability to develop and flourish as individuals, academic scholars, and student leaders.

By applying to live in the LaRiviere Center, residents are committing to exploring a specific area of interest and to providing educational and social programs, as well as experiential learning of various other topics. You and your suite will be responsible for sharing your insight into a specific theme as well as learning and supporting other suites and residents in various collaborative and interactive efforts. Included below are the components for the LaRiviere Center Program.

- **Completion of monthly blog posts**
 - Suites are to submit a monthly blog post in relation to their community theme and the topic for that month
 - Posts must be submitted on time and regularly
 - Suite members are to respond to blog posts from other suites to have constructive dialogue
- **Completion of 2 educationally AND socially-based community programs**
 - Each program must integrate a significant educational/learning objective about their suite theme and include social, interactive aspects
 - Programs should be thoughtful, well-planned and implemented, and include participation from the entire suite
- **Completion of additional experiential learning that fits the theme of the community**
 - Communication with your suite faculty/staff sponsor on a consistent basis to inform and/or receive guidance
 - Opportunity to use the LaRiviere Program as a Learning Beyond the Classroom credit
- **Support of LaRiviere Center Initiatives & Program**
 - Residents are to actively participate in various initiatives and programs sponsored and/or implemented by Residence Life staff, University and student organizations or departments, and other suites
 - Residents are to actively and consistently support other suites by responding to blog posts and attending suite programs
 - Potential use of the LaRiviere Center program as a Learning Beyond the Classroom experience

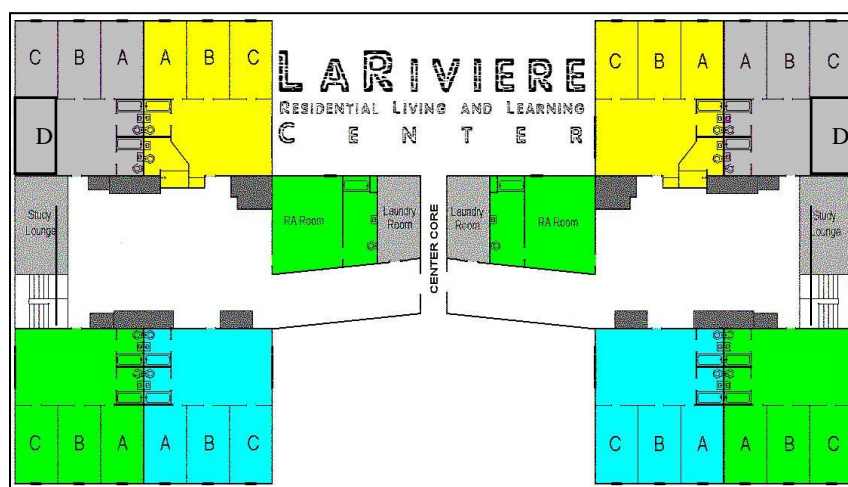
Part I: Pre-Application

CREATE A COMMUNITY

The whole process begins with two decisions: with whom do you want to live and work and what topic does your community want to explore.

Community Size

- Students can apply as groups of 6 or 8.
- Groups of 6 will be given priority consideration in the final ranking process.
- Groups of 8 will also be considered, but space is limited.



Basic Qualifications for Community Members

- As designed, LaRiviere Center is for sophomore students. Therefore, all applicants should have anticipated sophomore standing – that is, they will have completed two semesters of college work. We understand that second semester and summer classes may affect class standing, so in general, for this process we assume that students currently in first-year housing (and equivalent commuter students) will qualify for housing in LaRiviere.
- All applicants to the LaRiviere Center Program must be currently enrolled students at Western New England University. Due to the specific nature of the process, potential transfer students cannot be considered. Students who transferred *into* Western New England after the first semester are eligible for the LaRiviere Center. In these cases (where no WNE GPA or community points have been earned; see Steps 3 and 4), the community will not be penalized.

Community Theme

- Each community is responsible for determining a theme that their community would share with others in the LaRiviere Center. Community members do not need to be experts on this theme but it should be something that they are knowledgeable about and have an interest in. Using this theme, each community will regularly share their insights and thoughts in a blog as well as provide educational and social programming.
- Themes should be general as to offer opportunities for your community to explore the theme in a variety of ways for your community members. However, try not to choose a theme that is too general as this may be too difficult for you to explain in concise and consistent ways in your application.

Part II: Application

COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

The most important part of the LaRiviere Center Program Process is the application – where you describe the community you’ve created and start planning the various programs your community might sponsor. At first glance, it looks like a lot of work – and to be fair, it’s quite different from what you have experienced in first-year housing or what you might experience in other residential areas. But if you take the time to think about the questions being asked and look at the samples provided, you’ll see that the application simply asks about things you want to do.

There are four components of the application:

- **Community Information**
- **Applicant Information**
- **Application Essays**
- **Faculty/Staff Sponsor Recommendation**

Under each component, please ensure that you are completing all information that is asked of you. While typed applications are preferred, if you are completing applications by hand, make sure that the writing is clear and legible.



Community Information

- **Community Name:** You’ll be asked to come up with the name of your community. It can be something simple like “Community Service,” but this is a chance to **be creative**.
- **Community Size:** Indicate whether you have decided to choose a 6 or 8 person suite.
- **Topic Area:** You’ll be asked to choose one of the following general topic areas in which you feel your community theme fits most in. In the rest of your application, you will further explain why your group chose this topic area and how it coincides with your theme. The topic areas are:

Engineering & World of Sciences
Learning Today, Shaping Tomorrow
Social Justice & Advocacy

Next Generation of Leaders
Healthy Choices, Creative Living
Global Exploration & Citizenship

Applicant Information

Please complete this section in its entirety with all information that is asked. Please note, Applicant I will serve as the primary contact person for the suite for additional communication. It is not necessary to indicate who will be roommates at this time.

Application Essays

Utilizing the four essay prompts and their questions, address the following topic areas in correlation to your community theme:

- **Community Theme**
- **Goals of Your Community**
- **Community Education & Exploration**
- **Community Programming**

Please take your time and be thorough when completing your essays. Your essays should thoroughly describe your community members, your theme, as well as your intended interactions and development within the LaRiviere Center community. Please pay attention to content, grammar, and spelling.

Faculty/Staff Sponsor Recommendation

As part of the LaRiviere Center program, you must find a faculty/staff sponsor that will serve in an advisor/mentor role in your community. The faculty/staff sponsor will need to be aware of all your community members, your community theme, and program intentions and actions throughout your time in the LaRiviere Center.

The recommendation form will need to be completed by your intended sponsor and submitted with your application. For additional information regarding the faculty/staff sponsor role, please refer to the “Faculty/Staff Sponsor Brochure.” Please note: it is suggested that your faculty/staff sponsor be a full time faculty or staff member at Western New England University. Should your sponsor leave prior to the end of your stay in the LaRiviere Center, it is the responsibility of your suite to find and confirm a new sponsor for your community.



Part III: Application Review

APPLICATION EVALUATION

- Applications must be turned into the Residence Life Office (on the 2nd floor of the St. Germain Campus Center) **AND** submitted electronically to sean.burke@wne.edu by February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm. Applications received after this time will not be considered.
- Each application is reviewed by members of the Review Committee. The Review Committee is made of Western New England University faculty and staff members and members of the Office of Residence Life.
- The review of applications is blind – that is, the person reading the application will not know the names of applicants. Also, reviewers will not have any information on GPA or BEAR points until after applications have been reviewed.
- Applications are scored on the following numerical scale:

5	Excellent	Strong, thoughtful, and persuasive responses. Only minor possibilities for improvement. Demonstrates major commitment to topic and to purposes of the LaRiviere Center Program
4	Good	Solid work. Many strong responses, but some areas require further exploration. Understands topic and purpose of the LaRiviere C Center Program.
3	Average	Some good ideas, but responses are general and simplistic. Demonstrates only a surface commitment to topic and purpose of LaRiviere Center Program.
2	Below Average	Less than sufficient work. Many concepts are present, but underdeveloped. More time needed to expand on topic and show understanding of LaRiviere Center Program.
1	Inadequate	Grammar mistakes. Most areas display minimal understanding. Failure to develop topic past opening statements. Application shows an extreme lack of commitment to the chosen topic and the purposes of the LaRiviere Center Program.

Each section of the application is evaluated using the scale on page 5. The overall impression of the application is also evaluated. The following are the specific criteria:

Community Theme	
	Demonstrated knowledge of topic
Goals of Your Community	
	Commitment to growth of their community and LaRiviere community
	Commitment to learning process
Community Education & Exploration	
	Variety of program and interactive ideas
	Identification and use of resources
Community Programming	
	Creativity and depth of programming idea
	Coherency: Connectedness of programming ideas to information provided in Information, Exploration, and Education sections
	Probability of implementing programming ideas
General Considerations	
	Thoughtful, persuasive, and complete presentation of ideas
	Mechanics: organization, grammar, spelling, visual presentation

- The points earned in each area will be added together to achieve one final score for the application. The scores will then be averaged with the other reviewers to get a final score.
- The points achieved in Step 3 are worth 50% of the overall score.

GPA CALCULATION

One community GPA will be calculated by adding each community member's first semester grade point average, and then dividing that number by the number of people in the community. Only the Western New England University GPA (not counting transfer work, etc.) will be utilized. Once a community average GPA is created, that GPA will account for 30% of a group's final score.

BEAR POINTS

First-year students who participated in the Building Experiences among Residents (BEAR) program offered in the residence halls earn community points. Students receive 1 point for every BEAR program they received credit for attending.

Any points earned in the program (even 1 point for doing one program) are included in a group's total BEAR points. A group's BEAR points score will account for 20% of their overall score.

Please note: Because the BEAR program is an on-going program, the cut-off date will be March 6, 2017. Any BEAR points accumulated after the cut-off date can be utilized for general housing selection.

JUDICIAL HISTORY

The LaRiviere Center Program is for sophomore students who have excelled in many aspects of college life. As part of this process, each student's judicial history is also taken into account. Please note: students currently suspended from housing or the University are not eligible for inclusion in the LaRiviere Center Program Process. Based on a student's judicial history, points will be added or subtracted from your overall score per community member. Your entire judicial history will be assessed as of March 6, 2017. The points are distributed as follows:

Judicial Action	Points Earned/Deducted
No judicial history	+1
Written warning/ Minimal CV forms	-0.5
Censure	-1
Disciplinary Probation	-2

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The LaRiviere Center Program Process is designed to balance multiple interests: focusing not just on academics, but also on community participation. **Therefore, the University and/or the Office of Residence Life reserve the right to adjust this process as necessary.**

You should also note that the final scores are not absolute. The following issues may be considered before the LaRiviere Program finalists are announced:

- **Gender Balance:** LaRiviere Center is designed to be a co-ed residence hall. During the final selection process, the Office of Residence Life will ensure that gender balance is achieved. That can include choosing communities with differing scores. Additionally, the office of Residence Life may determine suites to be gender-specific.
- **Topical Balance:** As part of the overall LaRiviere Center community, it is important to have a variety of interests and topics represented. In order to ensure that not all communities are focused on the same general topic, during the final selection, the Office of Residence Life will ensure that topical balance is achieved as well.
- **Suite/Suite-Plus Preference:** As noted in *Create a Community*, full suite and suite-plus applications receive priority during the process. The selection of communities may

involve ensuring all available rooms and suites are filled and may involve making adjustments to the final rankings.

- **Coherency:** The Office of Residence Life believes the best indicator of a true interest in the goals of the LaRiviere Center Program is meaningful participation in the BEAR program as well as adequate performance in the classroom. Therefore, during the final selection, the Office will look for coherency between all three areas of evaluation: the proposals in the application, GPA, and community points. Any significant disparity in one area (for example, a six-person community that earned no community points, or a community GPA below 1.5) will be taken into consideration as well.



FINAL DETERMINATION

After the full evaluation process is complete, the scores will be tabulated according to the following table:

Source	Weighted Value
Application Review	50%
GPA Calculation	30%
BEAR Points	20%
Judicial Points	See Judicial History Table

The Review Committee will meet to determine the LaRiviere Center Program finalists. The Office of Residence Life reserves the right to make any final decisions to the process.

All communities will be notified of their status following the completion of the application review process. Communities selected for inclusion in the LaRiviere Center will be notified by Spring Break.



Part IV: Room Selection & Verification

UNIVERSITY PAPERWORK AND HOUSING DEPOSIT

Two items must be completed to continue the LaRiviere Process.

- The initial housing deposit of \$500 for all students is still required and must be paid by Wednesday, March 08, 2017.
 - ***Failure of ALL community members to pay the housing deposit by the deadline will result in removal of the ENTIRE community from the selection process!***
- The HMA Questionnaire is basic roommate compatibility information. It will be used in a situation where a vacancy occurs (for example, if a suitemate withdraws, transfers, etc.) in your community and/or suite. The Office of Residence Life will attempt to match your community and interests with a compatible student. The HMA Questionnaire completed no later than Wednesday, March 8, 2017.
 - ***Failure of ALL community members to complete the questionnaire by the deadline will result in removal of the entire community from the selection process!***
- Finalists will be notified on March 10, 2017 through the contact person's campus mailbox. Acceptance letters will be included in the Finalist package.
- Each member of the community must return their acceptance letter and roommate requests to the Office of Residence Life by March 24, 2017.
 - ***Failure of ALL community members to submit the acceptance letter and roommate requests may result in removal of the entire community from the selection process!***

ROOM PLACEMENT

- Accepted groups will be given a form to fill out indicating which group members will be direct roommates and which rooms in the suite roommate pairs will occupy.
- Groups will be placed into suites according to suite theme and in a manner as to ensure gender balance on wings.
- Students needing particular suite placements due to physical or medical reasons must notify the Residence Director, or their designee, in writing.



Withdrawals and Additions

- It is possible that a student's interest in living and participating in the LaRiviere Center changes before the final room selection. In most cases, students may have decided to transfer, may have been selected as Resident Advisors, or a variety of other reasons. We will allow students to try to maintain their communities with students of their choice up to a certain deadline.

- To withdraw from the LaRiviere Center, a student needs to complete a Withdrawal/ Addition form (available from the LaRiviere Residence Director, or their designee). To add a student to a vacated space, the same form is used. However, every remaining person in the original community must agree and sign the form.
- Students being added to the process must have paid their Housing Verification Payment and completed the HMA questionnaire by the March 8, 2017 deadline.
- There are specific dates associated with withdrawals and additions. Please consult the timetable in this guide for deadlines; withdrawals and/or additions may not be allowed after a certain date.
- Any attempts to undermine the LaRiviere Center Process through withdrawals and additions will be monitored by the LaRiviere Center Residence Director, or their designee. Communities attempting to cheat the process can face removal of the entire community from the process.



Part V: Important Dates

Monday, January 17, 2017	LaRiviere Center Applications Available At: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WNE Residence Life Website• LaRiviere Blog (larivblog.wordpress.com)
Wednesday, January 25, 2017 at 7:00 pm Monday, January 30, 2017 at 8:00 pm Tuesday, February 07, 2017 at 7:00 pm	LaRiviere Center Information Sessions <i>All information sessions will be in LaRiviere Center 210</i>
Friday, February 17, 2017 at 4:00 pm	LaRiviere Center Applications due to the Residence Life Office & via email to sean.burke@wne.edu
Wednesday, March 08, 2017	\$500 Housing Deposit Due to SAS HMA Online Questionnaire Completed
Friday, March 10, 2017	LaRiviere Center Finalists Notified via Campus Mail
Friday, March 24, 2017 at 4:00 pm	LaRiviere Center Acceptance Contacts & Roommate Requests Due
Friday, March 31, 2017	Suite & Roommate Assignment Notification via Email
Friday, May 13, 2017	Withdrawal/Addition Deadline

Contact Information

For additional information or questions about the LaRiviere Center, the LaRiviere Center Program, or the application process, please contact the Associate Director of Residence Life:

Mr. Sean Burke
Sean.burke@wne.edu
413-782-1317
Office of Residence Life, St. Germain Campus Center