

Arts Initiative RLC: Fiber Arts & Cultural Patterns

Overview

In the Fiber Arts Program, we will each learn and contribute individual skills in a least one fiber arts area. This includes, but is not limited to knitting, crocheting and sewing. Placed in a close residential setting promotes a comfortable and social atmosphere where members can easily learn from one another while at the same time get to know their neighbors and community members. Since each individual has his or her own styles and practices pertaining to the fiber arts, it will be a constant learning environment for those who are unfamiliar or interested in learning a specific practice. Community development will be a major part of the Fiber Arts Program as well. Holding craft nights where students outside of our program could learn a new skill in a comfortable environment is very important to us, along with sharing our final projects with the outside community, such as charities or those in need. Along with observational and practical skills pertaining to the fiber arts, members will do some outside research relating to the historical or cultural elements of their chosen craft. Sharing knowledge, skill and finished products will enrich our program and give every member a deeper understanding of what they are creating and how it can help the greater community.

All students in the Arts Initiative will enroll in a self-paced, one-credit course designed to help them get the most out of their experiences residing in the Arts building of L/L and the wider Arts community.

Learning Objectives

Each member will learn the basics of knitting, crocheting, or sewing, depending on individual desire. By the end of each semester, members should be able to show one to two finished projects.

Action Steps

- Program members will meet regularly (ideally at least once a week) especially at the beginning of the first semester to learn the basic elements of knitting from the program directors. Then, each week after that, demonstrations can be arranged to accommodate members in other areas of the fiber arts they would like to learn. If the program advisor has any craft ideas he or she would like to share, we would arrange a demonstration for that as well.
- As a group, members will go to a craft store, such as Michael's, to obtain the proper supplies they need to start their first project and have the chance to ask questions about certain products if they are first-time learners.

- Weekly craft nights will be arranged to practice and improve in each of our projects. This provides every member the equal chance of getting assistance if needed, as well as time to check in with each member and plan for upcoming events. For the first few weeks, craft nights will be held in the suites to practice. When everyone is comfortable, we will develop our community craft nights where we offer assistance to all university students who want to learn to knit, crochet and/or sew. These will be weekly meetings held in the Fireplace Lounge.

Each member will be able to contribute at least two handmade crafts to Living/Learning's annual Grab Our Goods event, held in December.

Action Steps

- At one of our early program meetings, we will discuss possible ideas and plan for the Grab Our Goods Event.
- At our biweekly meetings, members can discuss their progress and ask for help if needed.

Each member will be able to share knowledge about a different culture that utilizes and richly incorporates the fiber arts into their society to the Fiber Arts Program.

Action Steps

- Members will find a country, specific fiber art, or time period (where a certain fiber art may have been prominent, such as pre-Industry) they would be interested in researching. This project will be discussed at an early program meeting during the second academic semester. Topics and examples will be discussed to ensure the understanding of the project.
- Members should be able to use the university resources, such as the Bailey/Howe Library, the Fleming Museum, as well as other members of the group to learn about their topic.
- A short presentation will be completed by each program member and shared with the Program. A visual component is important, either internet images, or an attempted craft that reflects the subject of the presentation would be very interesting. This should be due mid-semester, around March or April.

Community Service

Being able to physically create useful products gives the Fiber Arts and Cultural Patterns Program a great opportunity to help a variety of people. Giving back to the community will be a major focus of this program. Firstly, we would like to host bi-weekly community craft nights, held in the Fireplace Lounge of the Living/Learning Center. These meetings would require all members to attend and share any experiences or skills they have with students who are interested in learning a new craft, such as knitting or crocheting. Secondly, we would like to donate our crafts to a local charity or shelter that could utilize them. In these blustery Vermont winters, blankets, mittens and scarves are essential items for everyone. We would also be very interested in donating baby hats, blankets and booties to the Maternity Ward at Fletcher Allen Hospital here at UVM.

Plans for Interactions with Other L/L Programs

We would like to have several collaborations with the Jewelry Program. I think a mixing of fiber arts with the beading and metal components of the Jewelry Making program would be very interesting and would like to see the kind of projects we could come up with. We could swap ideas and techniques that could translate into many different artistic fields. (ex. Knitting bracelets containing beads would be a good combination) We could also organize craft nights where members of both programs bring all their supplies for individual projects or group activities. With that, the Fiber Arts Program would get to build a relationship with at least ten more people in the Living/Learning community, and possibly create unique crafts not found anywhere else.

We would also be interested in having a social event with programs outside of the Arts Initiative, such as with the Ecological World Cuisines Program. If that program would be willing to put together a small tea party or snack party, the Fiber Arts Program would gladly create little keepsakes for them, such as coasters or other objects pertaining to healthy eating.

Finally, we would like to arrange a meeting with the LIVE program and make equality bracelets with them. This would give us another chance to meet people outside of the Arts Initiative Program that we may not see everyday in our particular Living/Learning Building.

About the Arts Initiative RLC

This program is a part of the Arts Initiative Residential Learning Community. The Arts Initiative RLC was formed, in part, due to ongoing feedback and requests from students within the arts-related programs in L/L for more interaction and enhanced opportunities for cross-programming efforts between the arts. The Arts Initiative enhances the ability for students and staff members involved in the RLC to create opportunities for exploration and outreach involving the arts across disciplines.

The primary goals for the Arts Initiative are:

1. To develop cross-program involvement. Allowing students in one branch of the arts to interact with, learn from and engage with students in another Arts area. The “Artist to Artist: Expanding Your Medium” program is one opportunity for students to pair with each other in order to facilitate strong community connections. This is designed to facilitate students’ involvement in the Arts through one-on-one interactions with a member from a different program.

2. To enhance access to and interaction with arts-related communities within L/L, at UVM, in Burlington and in Vermont in order to support our creative and conceptual practices.
3. To support the creative growth of all members through informal and formal discussions, community events, performances and program designed activities.

All students in the Arts Initiative will enroll in a self-paced, one-credit course designed to help them get the most out of their experiences residing in the Arts building of L/L and the wider Arts community.

Examples of course requirements include attending arts-related events at UVM and in the Burlington area, interactions with other student artists and reflective writing based on your overall experience. Students are expected to enroll in the self-paced, one-credit course in the fall semester.

More information about the Arts Initiative RLC can be found at <http://www.uvm.edu/rlc>