

March 15, 2004

To: Lou Anna K. Simon  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

From: June Pierce Youatt  
Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education

Re: Expanding the University's Successful Living and Learning  
Programs—Creating a New Residential College Program

Residential programs at Michigan State University have a strong legacy, characterized by committed faculty, rigorous programs of study, and motivated, high achieving students. They attract ambitious students locally, nationally, and internationally, who intentionally seek out the residential college experience. Both James Madison College and Lyman Briggs School have reputations of excellence.

Living and learning programs foster integrated, coherent undergraduate programs by bringing together faculty, students and staff in an environment dedicated to specific educational goals. Research studies suggest positive outcomes for students in residential programs, related to retention, achievement, and student-engagement behaviors. Michigan State University should proceed with its goal to increase both the number and types of residential experiences for its students by increasing the number of students currently served in existing residential programs, and by creating a new residential program in liberal and creative arts and sciences.

With specific regard to the *Realizing the Vision* initiative to create a new residential program, and your appointment of Dr. Marcellette Williams as the convener and facilitator of this work, a Planning Committee is now proposed. Given the very positive, initial response to the idea of establishing a new residential program, it will be important that the Planning Committee and its work groups be broadly inclusive, open to those who have expressed interest and enthusiasm in the potential of a new program, including students.

Under the leadership of Dr. Williams, this Planning Committee would be expected to assemble appropriate work groups comprised of faculty and other professionals and to address the tasks to include.

- review of innovative liberal arts residential programs at other institutions
- determination of the types of students we hope to attract to the program, and the potential outcomes for these students
- identification of potential linkages across the campus with the program
- development of a broad programmatic description of the new residential program
- identification of needed resources for the program
- timeline for program development and implementation
- potential connectivity between undergraduate majors and graduate programs
- plans for increasing faculty involvement across campus and criteria for faculty selection into the program

In consultation with Dr. Williams, the following assumptions are set forth to serve as a context for planning the new residential program.

1. The program should be degree focused, but should provide options for students seeking a broad set of related degrees.
2. The program should have a strong international emphasis including at least one study abroad experience.
3. The program should build on the breadth of the liberal arts, including the creative arts.
4. The program should include a breadth and emphasis on science which promotes understanding of complex technical issues in the context of societal good.
5. The program should accommodate various models of teaching and learning, including civic engagement and service learning opportunities.
6. The program should build on the inherently interdisciplinary focus of most residential programs.
7. The program should intentionally build on the proximity of learners in the residential setting.
8. Specific decisions about the curriculum and the faculty who will teach in the program will follow the work of the planning committee.

As we have agreed, the Office of the Provost will provide the usual resources to support the work of Dr. Williams and the Planning Committee. It is my suggestion that work of the Planning Committee be complete and a Report be presented to you by October 15, 2004, with an interim report available for commentary at the beginning of Fall 2004 semester.

c: Dr. Marcellette Williams