

THE ANNUAL ACUHO-I SAC LLC COLLOQUIUM 2018

In September 2018 Stellenbosch University (SU) facilitated its first annual Living Learning Communities (LLC) colloquium in collaboration with Association of College and Housing Officers International South African Chapter (ACUHO-I SAC). This colloquium aimed to reflect on practices that regard the living and learning communities on campus, to share the latest body of knowledge such as current affairs, climates and topics of discussion on campuses, to create a platform for campus delegates (bodies who represent students and student affairs) to challenge and support one another, and to take actions and innovations for intentional programs, research and services that promote student development.

The colloquium was hosted by the Centre for Student Communities (CSC) at SU's Division Student Affairs (DSAf). It took place in the amaMaties Hub, as a symbol to emphasise the idea of a cluster as a home open to all students and larger community that forms part of SU and not only to students in residences. The venue of the colloquium was purposeful because one of the goals is to improve, prove and encourage the creation of living learning communities. In this colloquium topics of discussion arose aiming to share practices related to LLC environments as extensions of teaching and learning projects of universities in South Africa and the wider African continent. Among proving and improving student access to LLC and discussing curricular approaches in LLC's, the educational sessions during the seminar included approaching research and publication in Student Affairs and balancing gender, sexuality, religion and culture.

In total there were sixty delegates from eighteen different institutions across three countries- Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. A panel of staff representatives of DSAf included the director of the CSC Mr Pieters Kloppers, ResEd Manager of the amaMaties Cluster, Ms Benita van Zyl, Mentor co-ordinator Ms Joy Petersen and LLC co-ordinators Mss Tarina Nel and Gcobisa Yani, and other staff members who helped out. There were three student delegates of whom two were part of the transformative discussion panel facilitated by Bantubonke Louw of Stellenbosch University International office. Topics of conversation from this panel included conversations on decolonialisation of the curriculum, what living and learning looks like in future and valuing conversations that take place on and around campus.

There was also an international student panel that included a student from University of Botswana, who was head of the house in her block, and a Student Representative Council member of Zimbabwe Open University. The international student panel created a good engagement space to see the differences between distance learning students and on campus students. The engagement between the staff and students were an important element in the process where students could see that transformation is in the happening, and university staff could see that students want to engage and work together in this process of creating a beneficial living and learning experience and space.

“The possibilities of virtual communication created such an amazing opportunity for international voices who do a lot of work in LLC spaces and programmes to share and engage from across the world. This just illustrated the virtual educational and curricular possibilities- and the older people were fascinated!” shared the organiser of this colloquium, Ms Delecia Davids, Co-curriculum coordinator at the CSC. It was also the first time ever that there was virtual communication at such a colloquium. The voices included Paul Gordon Brown, part of the Roompact team as Director of Curriculum, Training and Research, specialising in the curriculum environment. Dr Dee Fink, author of *Creating Significant Learning Experiences for College classrooms*, who spoke about learning beyond mere cognitive learning, emphasising care about specific things and topics such as lifelong learning, values and changes. Dr Virginia Koch of Auburn University, who is active in the ACUHO-I SAC body and gave a practical application of examples on Fink’s books within residences. The virtual education has not yet been implemented at any of the previous LLC colloquiums and the organisers were delighted that it worked. This international panel emphasises the worldwide standards these LLC seminars hold.

The colloquium creates an opportunity for engagement, facilitates discussions and addresses actions that are put into place and encouraged by campus delegates, staff of student affairs and living learning community advocates. It creates a space for conversation and engagement between staff and students and it is in such seminars where the production of larger living and learning communities on campuses are emphasised. All members of the ACUHO-I SAC body, and non-members involved in LLC are welcome at these colloquiums, however special fees are charged for non-members. For more information on ACUHO-I SAC and LLC colloquiums visit <http://www.acuhoisac.co.za/home/>.