

Theme Community Proposal Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in theme communities at St. Lawrence! In this packet you will find proposal guidelines for a theme community. This applies to both current and new groups who are interested in a theme house or a theme floor. We hope this packet will provide the details you need for putting together your proposal. We look forward to reviewing your proposal!

Important Dates

Theme Member Recruitment Fair – to be determined by the Theme Cottage and Greek Council (TCGC). Look for advertisements!

Theme Proposals, Advisor Support Form, Roster, and Orange Housing Cards Due Thursday, March 5th by 4:00 p.m. to Residence Life Office, Student Center 230

Theme Applicants Notified of 2008-09 Theme Status:
Monday, March 23rd (via email to theme coordinator)

Theme Community Proposal Criteria

The Theme Selection and Evaluation Committee will evaluate all theme community proposals by considering the criteria listed below. The following pages serve to further explain the proposal requirements. Your proposal must be typed and clearly articulated. All requested materials must be submitted for your proposal to be complete.

- **Cover Sheet** (attached within these guidelines) with contact information and housing preferences
- **Mission, Purpose, Goals, Strategies, and Resources** of the theme as outlined in the proposal.
 - **Mission statement**--What is your long-term plan? What are the benefits to students, the University, and/or the Canton community? Your mission statement should say who your theme is, what you do, what you stand for and why you do it. Mission statements tend to be 3-4 sentences in length.
 - **Purpose statement**--Why does the campus need this theme? Which students are you targeting? Why is it necessary to live together?
 - **Goals**--What are your short-term goals? What programs do you plan to complete? Please include a tentative schedule of events for fall and spring semester.
 - **Strategies**--How will you achieve your short and long-term goals? How will the theme publicize itself and its programs? How will you fund your programs? How will you meet the needs of students you are targeting? Include resources —A description of identified resources (e.g. specific academic departments, specific student life offices, specific faculty or staff member(s), specific funding resources, specific materials, etc.) to assist the theme in accomplishing its mission, goals and purpose. See programming section.
- **Leadership opportunities** for all members – How will the leadership be organized?
- **Past accomplishments** of existing theme areas – See Progress Evaluation
- **Membership Materials**
 - **Recruitment/Marketing Materials** - How will you make your application process competitive? How will you ensure recruitment and selection of current first-year students?
 - **Theme Member Application**
 - **Interview/Selection Materials** - What questions will you ask in your interviews with potential members? What criteria will you utilize to select members?
 - **Theme Community Contract** – include expectations, requirements, standards, and community policies.
- **Advisor Agreement** – must be signed by the advisor (your advisor must be included in the theme proposal process).

What is Theme Living?

A Theme Community is a recognized group of students living in a university cottage or residence hall with a common interest, vision, or goal that will benefit students, the university, and/or the Canton community. Proposals may center on a particular academic area (e.g. political awareness or foreign language), a specific topic (e.g. low impact living, women's issues), or a project (e.g. to produce a film). We ask that you give us a rationale for your proposed community, its benefits to the university, and firm ideas of how you plan to make the theme a productive part of the St. Lawrence Community.

You will have the support of your advisor and the Residence Life staff in implementing your theme. Theme coordinators will receive an orientation to their position, information on available resources, and expectations from the Residence Life Office. Your Residential Coordinator is also available throughout the year to discuss concerns or questions you might have relating to your theme community.

Membership

As part of the theme proposal, a copy of your membership marketing/recruitment materials, theme application, interview/selection materials, and theme community contract need to be submitted. Selection of theme members should be based upon an application and interview process. The Residence Life Office will give final approval to theme rosters. Please note that theme proposals should include specific information about how members were recruited from the current First-Year class. In order to keep your theme growing, at least 1/3 of your theme's membership should include students from the Class of 2012.

Themes should have members sign a Theme Community Agreement that outlines member expectations, requirements, and other community policies. The expectations you establish for your members to fulfill are largely up to you.

Students with a history of problematic behaviors at St. Lawrence University or who are currently on disciplinary probation will not be considered for theme housing. Students on social probation may reside in theme housing only after gaining approval the Director of Residence Life and Associate Dean.

Membership selection should be completed by the end of February. **At the time that you submit your proposal, it will need to include an orange housing card for each student who will be living in the house. This is to illustrate that there is sufficient interest to make your house successful. New Themes will need to submit at least 15 orange housing cards to demonstrate interest.** All theme proposals will also need to include a list of 3-5 alternates (but not their housing cards) who can be pulled into the house if a member transfers, goes abroad, etc.

Programming

A program is designed to enhance the social, educational and personal development of a theme's residents and/or campus community members. Your theme proposal must include a description/list of proposed programs that will be of benefit to the group members as well as the rest of the campus community. The Residence Life staff will provide training and assistance for program planning as a part of theme coordinator orientation. Program ideas and goals must come from the members of the themes themselves, and a foundation for this planning will be established early in the semester. Also, as funding for programs is sometimes limited, it is helpful to keep budget in mind when planning events.

Programs create a positive and dynamic learning environment outside of the classroom. By promoting a sense of community, informing and educating residents and providing a chance for students to be involved in their

own learning, students develop leadership skills and have fun! Well-planned programs enrich the college experience for the campus community and are a primary way to achieve your theme's goals. Themes are also encouraged to use programs that are also currently offered by Student Life on campus and continue those discussions in their theme community.

Theme Coordinator

Within each theme area there is a leadership position called the Theme Coordinator. The Theme Coordinator is a member of the organization (or members, if 2 coordinators are preferred) who is willing to provide direction and leadership to the group as well as be the liaison between the theme and the Residence Life Office. The Theme Coordinator is a voluntary position and traditionally a full-year, live-in commitment.

The duties of the Coordinator include:

- attending a mandatory orientation workshop facilitated by the Residence Life staff
- attending all theme area meetings
- evaluating member status based on Theme Contract requirements
- coordinating program planning with theme members at theme area meetings
- submitting programming summary forms to the Residence Life staff at Theme Coordinator meetings (TCGC)
- serving as the liaison to Residence Life staff concerning occupancy and room assignments
- meeting monthly with the theme's faculty/staff advisor
- meeting with their Residential Coordinator as needed
- disseminating information to their community members
- submitting an evaluation summary of their theme area every semester (to be implemented next year)
- meet regularly with organization officers (if part of a Thelmo recognized organization)

The theme coordinator should be a self-motivated and energetic individual who knows and can articulate the mission and goals of the theme to others. She/He must be an effective leader who is willing to learn and impart knowledge to the residential community.

Faculty/Staff Advisor

Each group must have a faculty or professional staff advisor.

The duties of the Advisor will include:

- taking an active role in the planning and preparation of the theme proposal.
- helping the group develop a realistic plan of action concerning its goals/mission statement.
- meeting with the coordinator at least once a month to evaluate the goals of the group, to discuss any problems within the group, and to provide any feedback that might be helpful to the house or hall.
- assisting in the planning of at least one campus-wide program per year.

Progress Evaluation

At the end of the fall semester each Theme Coordinator will submit a self-evaluation of the group, which includes the details of programming efforts accomplished in the fall. The Theme Selection and Evaluation Committee will evaluate a theme's fulfillment of the proposal goals and expectations. The Residential Coordinator will prepare an evaluation of each house/hall/suite and review those with the Assistant Director of Residence Life to provide further support of the theme's progress. A letter from your advisor supporting how your theme has fulfilled its goals will also be a part of the fall review

The Residence Life Office will evaluate each theme area at the end of the Fall Semester. Disciplinary and damage problems within a theme, failure to satisfactorily meet the theme's stated goals, or failure to complete required programs may cause all the members of a theme to be rehoused in other university residences, leaving the theme's space free for assignment to new residents. In addition, each theme resident must live according to the principles of their theme proposal. For example, a member who lives within a theme that advocates environmental issues but does not recycle would not be consistent with their theme's mission.

Housing

Theme proposals will rank order their building preferences and number of requested housing spaces on the cover sheet provided for your proposal. Assignment of a house or residence hall space is based upon availability, the recommendation of the Theme Selection and Evaluation Committee, and the needs of all students. Completed rosters and an orange housing assignment card for each resident must be submitted with the proposal by March 2nd. All university-owned theme houses and halls are expected to maintain full occupancy at all times. Themes that do not maintain full occupancy may be relocated to a more appropriately sized area or have members consolidated within the theme to make room for non-members. In addition, any student who has a vacant space in their room must be prepared to have a roommate assigned to the space should the need arise.

Room charges will be handled the same as in other residences. All University rules and regulations found in the *Student Handbook* still apply in theme areas. Residents with repeated disruptive behavior or damages either within the house/hall or anywhere on campus may be removed from their theme area at the discretion of the Director of Residence Life.

What's Next?

1. All components of the proposal, the advisor agreement, a complete housing roster, and an orange housing assignment card for each student are due by 4:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, March 2nd** to the Residence Life Office, Student Center Room 230. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered.
2. The Theme Evaluation and Selection Committee will review applications.
3. Applicants may be asked to attend an interview with the Committee if further explanation of the proposal is needed. The selection committee will then make recommendations to Residence Life Office who will notify groups of the status of theme proposals on Monday, March 23rd.

Theme Community Advisor Agreement

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for indicating an interest in being an advisor to a theme group. Each student-designed theme group is required to have a faculty or professional staff member as an advisor.

Your role as their advisor will involve the following:

1. Active participation in the development of the group's theme proposal. The Residence Life Office asks that you review and provide feedback on the proposal in at least draft form to help them improve and refine their ideas. We will need you to assist the group in developing a realistic strategy or plan of action concerning its mission, goal, and purpose. Please do not simply sign a completed proposal without having been a part of the development process as it is important to have a clear understanding of the groups' plans for the year. **Theme proposals are due Monday, March 2nd.**
2. Completing this Theme Advisor Agreement.
3. Ongoing work with the group for the rest of spring semester and throughout next year. This housing option should be a learning experience for students to develop and implement ideas. We know that ideas change, and most groups propose more than what is possible, so we expect some divergence from the original goals. We do, however, expect an honest effort and feel that students must keep you informed and involved in order to do a good job.
4. Meeting with the coordinator at least once a month to evaluate goals, discuss any problems, and provide any feedback that might be helpful to the group. It is the responsibility of the theme members to keep you involved on an ongoing basis; therefore we recommend this meeting as a way to facilitate discussion.
5. Assist in the planning of one campus-wide program.
6. Provide a letter of evaluation to Residence Life Office towards the end of fall semester.

We feel that theme housing at St. Lawrence is an important dimension in educational programming and residential alternatives because it offers students the opportunity for leadership development in their own living environment. We also believe that faculty/staff advisors are an important part of residential communities and we thank you for helping the students and enhancing our residential program. If you have any questions about the advisor role or the application process, please contact the Residence Life Office at x5250.

Best wishes for the spring semester.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to serve as an advisor for the _____ theme.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Theme Proposal Cover Sheet

Theme

Name: _____

Please rank order your building preferences (#1 being your most desired location; #8 being your least desired location):

*please do not preference housing in buildings that your group is not willing to consider placement

*some housing locations may not be available due to the placement of FYPs

*housing placement will be determined based on the needs of all St. Lawrence students

Cottage _____

Hulett/Jencks

Dean Eaton

Sykes

Dean Eaton Extension

Whitman

Gaines

Priest

Number of Housing Spaces Requesting _____

*may include a range (e.g. 8-10 spaces)

*a committee will finalize the number of housing spaces and location

Coordinator Information

Name: _____ Class Year: _____ CMR: _____ Phone: _____

Current Building & Room #: _____ E-mail: _____

Summer Address: _____ Summer Phone: _____

Advisor Information

Name: _____ Department: _____ Phone: _____

Theme Applicants: Please attach the following documents...

Mission Statement

Purpose Statement

Goals

Strategies

Resources

Marketing/Recruitment Materials

Application & Interview Process Materials

Theme Community Contract

Advisor Agreement

