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QEP Executive Summary

Living and Learning: Teaming Up in Jaguar Village

University of Houston-Victoria

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*Living and Learning: Teaming Up in Jaguar Village* creates residential learning communities for first year students at the University of Houston-Victoria. Students enroll in a core curriculum class that is paired with a specific section of the First Year Seminar. Students in each set of paired or linked classes also live in proximity to each other in Jaguar Village in order to create a specific residential learning environment. Each community is limited to 20-25 students so that students can build meaningful relationships with each other and with faculty. Faculty members teaching the linked courses plan together, creating several assignments that span the content of both courses. These assignments focus on the students' development of teamwork skills. Students are also required to participate in at least one community engagement activity with faculty and classmates in their linked classes. A Living and Learning Support Team supports each Living and Learning community. This team consists of the First Year Seminar instructor, the Core Curriculum instructor, a librarian, a Student Success Coach, and a Student Life advisor. The goal of the Support Team is to provide intrusive advising and proactive coaching for students on issues ranging from class attendance and grades to co-curricular engagement and residence hall life.

Meetings of the Living and Learning Support Teams and of students engaged in teamwork assignments occur in the Living and Learning Commons, a designated high-technology space designed for small group work. In the Living and Learning Commons, students have access to a smart board, a lap top or tablet collaboration station, a telephone for conference calls, a meeting table with LCD projector, and a large screen for internet or video viewing by a small group. Living and Learning faculty also utilize the Commons periodically for the faculty development activities that are a key component of the program. Topics for professional development include: facilitating teamwork, at risk college students, assessment, e-portfolios, and encouraging student reflection. The anticipated outcomes for Living and Learning include:

- Enhanced academic outcomes
- Better teamwork skills
- Increased student and faculty engagement resulting in higher rates of student retention