Thank you for your interests in creating an Affinity Community at Alvernia University. Student-driven affinity communities provide a unique living and learning experience that enables a group of students to live together while exploring a common area of interest. Student groups ranging from a unit of like-minded individuals to members of the same student organization can apply to live together in a designate area of university housing. Yes, you and your friends are one application away from having your own area next year!

**Application Process**

Please read the entire application packet; it is full of step by step information. Your group must complete and submit the entire application packet by the designated deadline to be considered. All information on the application must be accurate and complete. Application packets are due to the Office of Residence Life by **Friday, March 23, 2012**. In addition all students applying as part of the affinity community must submit their housing deposits and register for 12 or more credits by the housing deadline (April, 3, 2012). If you have questions about the process, please stop by the Office of Residence Life or email: reslife@alvernia.edu

**Selection Process**

Affinity community selection will be based on the strength of your application, the commitment and organization of your community members and the needs of the University community served by your program.

Each affinity community may indicate a housing location preference (within designated residence halls) but final assignments will be made by the Office of Residence Life with consideration of particular group needs.

**Room Selection and Contracts**

Affinity community approval will be sent out via email to the Group Leaders on Friday, March 30, 2012. Affinity Communities will select their housing and sign housing contracts on Friday, April 13, 2012.

**APPLICATION TIMELINE**

**February**
8: General Information Session about the Affinity Community at noon

**March**
23: Applications due by 4 pm to Office of Residence Life, Veronica Hall
30: Affinity Community Leaders notified about status of application via email

**April**
13: Affinity Housing selection
TBA: Meeting with all of the Group Leaders

**September**
TBA: Training/Meeting with Group Leaders
WHO’S WHO?

The Community Members of Affinity Communities (AC) agree to actively participate in the AC’s community life. Members commit to the mission of the Community, attend all mandatory meetings, support the programs of their respective community, contribute to the formulation of the Community Standards Agreement, and assist the Group Leader with responsibilities. Failure to complete these requirements may result in the member’s loss of privilege to live with the Group. Relocation of Group members and/or consolidation is the prerogative of Office of Residence Life.

The Community Members select the Community Leader. One Community Leader is required for each AC. These individuals will serve as the liaisons between your community and the Office of Residence Life. They will meet regularly with staff from Office of Residence Life to share information and report any issues Community Members are experiencing. Community Leaders schedule Community meetings, oversee program planning, distribute information to the residents of the Community, and keep the lines of communication open between the Community and Office of Residence Life.

The Community Advisor is an Alvernia University faculty or staff member who has particular knowledge or expertise about the Group’s theme and can provide guidance and support around Community activities. Each Community is required to have an advisor. It is the responsibility of the Community members to identify an advisor for their Community prior to submitting application materials. The role of the advisor is to assist members in developing their themes by forging a connection with the Affinity Community and the academic community. In addition, advisors provide a link to other University resources. The overall level of responsibility for the advisor varies based on the needs of the Community. Generally an advisor will meet with the Community Leader regularly to discuss the Community, maintain contact with the Resident Director, and attend Group functions and meetings as needed and/or desired. Co-advisors are also welcome.

The Resident Assistant (RA) is a student staff member of the Office of Residence Life. The RA is an administrative presence within the Community and will perform their job responsibilities as specified by Office of Residence Life. Please note: while not all Communities may have an RA living within the Group, each Community will have an RA assigned to it to oversee the health and safety of that community.

The Resident Director (RD) supervises the RAs and oversees all Affinity Communities. The RD, in conjunction with other staff within the department, advises the Community Leaders in their programming efforts and approves fund distributions. The RD will meet weekly with the RA in staff meetings, biweekly with the Community Leader in staff meetings, and once a semester with the Group Advisors.
PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW

Each Affinity Community must complete a minimum of two programs per semester (four for the academic year). These programs must relate to the theme of the Community and should have an educational component or enhance interaction among Community members, faculty, administrators, and the University community. Please note that one of your four programs must be community service oriented and one other must be geared for the entire campus community.

All Community Members should play a role in the planning and execution of the programs. This way the responsibility is shared. Tip: Consider writing each community members’ role/programming expectation into the Community Standards Agreement of your community. Programming is most successful when it is a group effort. Everyone should play a role in the development and implementation of all community programs. Programming is fun and a great way to develop a strong interest community.

Please note that events should be held in or around your housing area. One of the goals of this programming component is to showcase the great ideas and creativity coming from your interest communities, which is why we encourage you to plan programs in and around your interest community as opposed to other University venues. You are also encouraged to work together with the RA in your area to

Funding is also something you will need to consider. Office of Residence Life has limited programming funds. Be mindful of the expenses related to your event.

2012-2013 EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

1. All University/Residence Life policies are in full effect in the Affinity Community. Alcohol use at Group programs is prohibited. Community Standards staff, along with other appropriate University officials, will handle any policy violations.
2. Each Community must have an Advisor. The Advisor and Community Leader will maintain regular contact with the RD.
3. All community members share in any Community responsibilities (attend meetings, help design and participate in community programs, etc.)
4. Maintain open and regular communication with all members of the Community, the RA, your Community Advisor, and the Office of Residence Life. Raise concerns or questions as they arise. Keep an open mind: live, learn, grow and have fun from your Affinity Community housing experience.
5. Two programs must be completed each semester. The Residence Life staff is here to support you in your programming efforts. Please see Programming Overview section for additional details.
6. Affinity Community area must be kept clean and well maintained. Community Members are responsible for keeping all semi-public areas clean. Each Community must create a mechanism by which cleanliness of public lounges, living areas, and the kitchen, are assured—these should be included in your Community Standards Agreement. Any Group rules or policies you establish must be done in compliance with Residence Life and Alvernia rules and regulations.
7. Failure to meet the “Expectations and Guidelines” will be discussed and handled by the Resident Assistant, Community Advisor, RD, and/or Office of Residence Life. If repeated violations occur or expectations are not met then the Community may be in jeopardy of losing their housing.
8. Meeting with the RD. The Community Leader is required to meet bi-weekly with the RD or assigned departmental staff to discuss programming efforts and general Community concerns. Once a semester, the Community Leader, along with the Community Advisor, will have an evaluation meeting (November and March) with the RD to discuss the Community.