The University of Portland
Academic Theme House Program

Faculty, staff and/or students may apply to have an Academic Theme House through our proposal process. The process does not judge a program on its *academic* merits, but rather on the fundamental structure, as described below. We do this to ensure consistency of structure while maximizing faculty/staff/student freedom in designing the academic components of the program:

While each Academic Theme House writes its own mission and educational outcomes, all Academic Theme Houses share the following goals:

1. To provide an alternative paradigm for residential living that emphasizes academics and faculty interaction.
2. To be an academic resource for you and an academic environment for you to better integrate your education with your outside the classroom life.
3. To provide faculty with a richer experience in their student's lives while continuing to emphasize academics in their area of expertise.
4. To foment a richer intellectual discourse on campus for students and faculty.

Our Academic Theme Houses also share the following:

1. A course of study. An Academic Theme House can be designed by a faculty, staff, or student member of our UP community. There are two options for the course of study aspect of the Theme House.
    a. With option one, the House Designer(s) links the Theme House to a class currently taught (as we do with the Foreign Language House).
    b. With option two, the Designer(s) create a credit bearing course specifically for the Theme House. This course would be a part of the general curriculum and would have to therefore be approved through the appropriate academic channels first before the Theme House can proceed in the proposal process with Residence Life.
2. Academic Theme Houses also can offer independent study, field trips, service work, and other interactions that might be special to a particular theme.
3. Faculty interaction and leadership.
4. Students living in community, in suites at Tyson Hall.

We have found that Academic Theme Houses at UP are beneficial because they:

1. Bring educationally innovative programs into resident's lives.
2. Connect students with faculty and staff.
3. Help students direct their education more.
4. Expose students to intellectual opportunities they would never have otherwise.

5. Create a larger community of scholars in a beautiful residential setting that students can aspire to.

You can write your proposal however you would like. For guidance, an outline follows at the end of this email.

Our housing timeline dictates the timelines for Academic Theme Houses. In order for an Academic Theme house to operate for the 2010-2011 academic year, Residence Life must have a list of your accepted participants by February 12th 2010. Once you give us the selected participants, we will contact them and have them come in to sign their housing contract. They will have to do that on February 15, 16, and 17.

Applications for Academic Themes are distributed through our office – though you can certainly have applications in your area, too. Advertising is very important, as well. This includes paper ads, and word of mouth advertising, especially through classes.

Of course, the Academic Theme House needs to go through our proposal process first before any of this can happen. So, please contact me with your proposal as soon as you can if you're interested in your Academic Theme House starting in Fall of 2010.

To give you an idea of the range of Academic Theme House possibilities, the following are Theme Houses that have worked here or at other institutions:

- Sustainability
- Catholic Social Justice
- Advanced Readings in the Humanities
- Art of Photography
- Engineering and Mathematics
- Future Educators
- International Business
- Imagining Shakespeare
- Women in Science and Technology
- Explorations in Film and Cinema
- International Education and Culture

If the Academic Theme House idea interests you as a faculty member or you as a studentplease feel free to contact me at your convenience. I'm happy to meet with you in person or we can correspond by phone or email.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Walsh
Office of Residence Life

The University of Portland
www.up.edu

UP ACADEMIC THEME HOUSE PROPOSAL GUIDE

Program

- Course of study
- Activities
- Service
- Other

Purpose

- Your goals or educational outcomes

Expected Results

- How will the participants be affected?
- How will campus be affected?
- Other

Mission

- A brief statement of your mission

Rationale

- Any supporting documentation or information that supports your idea.
- Information about the potential size of the Theme House
- Expected number of participants