

EVOLUTION OF IMMERSIVE LEARNING AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY:

From the Home Economics Home Management House to the Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab

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**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Immersive Learning Projects seek to meet the following criteria:

- carry academic credit
- engage participants in an active-learning process that is student-driven but guided by a faculty mentor
- produce a tangible outcome/product such as a business plan, policy recommendation, book, play, DVD
- involve at least one team of students, often working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature
- include community partners and create an impact on the larger community as well as on the students
- focus on student learning outcomes
- help students define a career path or make connections to a profession/industry

(Direct all questions about this project to Dr. Carla Earhart at cearthart@bsu.edu)

HOME ECONOMICS HOME MANAGEMENT HOUSES

The State of Indiana required Home Economics students to live together in a Home Management House and put theories learned in the classroom to use. From 1930-1987 Ball State University offered HHF 440 *Home Management 2*. The course objectives were:

- Develop an appreciation for managerial ability in homemaking
- Gain experience in evaluating and utilizing resources
- Gain experience in executing decisions related to the home
- Develop skills in each of the aspects of homemaking
- Gain experience in the use of various types of equipment
- Develop a professional attitude toward homemaking

In 1930, the Department of Home Economics opened the Home Management House for seven Home Economics students enrolled at Ball State University. The first house was owned by Harry Howick, Ball State's Dean of Men, and was rented by the department. Over the years, there were nine different houses.

The Home Management House students lived in the houses for an entire quarter, where they cooked, cleaned, adhered to a weekly budget, shopped for groceries, participated in child-rearing, and entertained local and administrative guests. The women rotated their responsibilities weekly, allowing each student to experience a variety of household duties. In addition to the students, each house included an advisor.

The purpose of the Home Management House program was to teach these women to apply skills learned in the classroom before becoming home economists or home economics teachers.

Home Management House program was phased out during the winter quarter of 1987.



Credit is extended to Bracken Library Archives and former students and faculty of the Department of Home Economics/Family & Consumer Sciences for information and photos

MAPLEWOOD MANSION LEARNING LAB

Maplewood Mansion is one of the original Ball Family homes, located in the Minnetrista Boulevard Historic District of Muncie, Indiana, less than two miles from the Ball State University campus. Through a partnership established in 2017 between Ball State University, Ball Brothers Foundation, and Indiana University School of Medicine, Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab was established with these goals in mind:

- To provide short-term housing for medical students completing their educational requirements at Ball Memorial Hospital;
- To provide these medical students with an exceptional Muncie experience that encourages them to return to the area after graduation to live and work;
- To provide immersive learning experiences for Ball State University students.



To provide faculty with resources related to this project, an online site was created as a repository of information. Information included the history of Maplewood Mansion, links to educational resources, and space for faculty to share their involvement in teaching, research, and service activities related to the Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab.

The Residential Property Management Program (formerly in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, but moved to the Department of Management in 2017) used Maplewood as an immersive learning project site for two advanced RPM courses: *RPM Project* in Fall 2017 and *RPM Simulation* in Spring 2018. Specific accomplishments of these advanced RPM classes included identification, research, development, and/or implementation of these activities to meet the goals of Maplewood Mansion:

- Mission/Vision/Values statement
- Social media sites
- Logo
- Career apparel for student staff
- Resident handbook
- Forms and procedures
- Updates to common spaces
- Welcome gifts for residents
- Inventory of furnishings
- Bike share program
- Rotating student leadership roles
- Responding to fictitious “on call” situations

In addition to the work accomplished by the advanced RPM students, other Ball State University students have been involved in Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab. Introductory RPM students use the site for job shadowing experiences, students in the RPM maintenance class use the site for property-related field experiences, and a capstone class in the Management Department used the site for a SWOT analysis. Both RPM students and Hospitality/Food Management students use Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab as an internship site, and students in the HFM Catering class assist with special events held at Maplewood Mansion.

Although a great deal has been accomplished in a very short time through Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab, a variety of challenges exist:

- Teaching that incorporates this “applied” methodology rather than traditional lecture and assessment is time-consuming and requires faculty to be more responsive to the educational needs of the students and the day-to-day needs of the site; some faculty have been reluctant to shift to this mode of teaching.
- The distance from campus, resulting in the need for both students and faculty to often drive to Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab, has been a scheduling challenge and a transportation challenge.
- Another challenge has been the need to provide learning opportunities for students without interrupting the daily activities of Maplewood residents.
- And an ongoing challenge of Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab is the cost of operations and upkeep, especially for a historic building.

For more information about Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab...

- Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/maplewoodmansionlearninglab/>

Credit is extended to a variety of supporters for their assistance with projects at Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab: Ball State University, Ball Brothers Foundation, Indiana University School of Medicine, Miller College of Business Immersive Learning Grants, Rodewald Immersive Learning Fund, Minnetrista, and the RPM Advisory Board.