

MLI Summer 2024 Project Document

Make Morven Sustainability Lab an integral part of the UVA Student Experience



“This new vision for Morven aligns with the sustainability goals in the 2030 Plan and underpins the tremendously positive work already underway at Morven.”

— Ian Baucom, UVA Provost

How can UVA integrate Morven Sustainability Lab fully into a UVA student experience?

For this year’s MLI Summer 2024 program, we invite you to propose ideas for how Morven, an expansive property, 25 min. south of Grounds, that was gifted to UVA by John Kluge, can offer significant, meaningful, and, possibly, cumulative UVA experiences for first-year through fourth-year students.

The Morven Sustainability Lab’s (MSL) central goal is the specific importance of sustaining *student emotional and physical well-being* as a means to foster student resilience in the face of the multiple environmental and cultural changes taking place. We ask for your input on how MSL and UVA can create a fundamentally new—or first—understanding of Morven Sustainability Lab in the student imagination. How might Morven Sustainability Lab support students’ well-being and provide opportunities for community? How can we reshape Morven Sustainability Lab’s story, and the use of the Morven grounds, with a focus on Sustainability, Wellness, and respect for the history of the land?

Over the next four weeks, you’ll meet with Morven Sustainability Lab directors and University administrators who will provide you with initial context about the Morven Sustainability Lab and its current connection with UVA.

During MLI’s first two weeks, you’ll generate ideas, research those ideas by benchmarking similar spaces at other universities, meet with UVA administrators who have deep knowledge and decision-making power relative to your developing ideas, and work to refine your ideas for an initial pitch on June 10th, 2024. You’ll receive feedback from, and brainstorm ideas with MLI staff, alumni, and peers at the time of the initial pitch.

During the second two weeks of the program, you’ll narrow down your ideas, focus your research, and develop your ideas into a full and final proposal about how to move forward with your ideas. Your proposal will be in two parts: a proposal deck and a follow-up presentation to an invited audience of interested Morven & UVA administrators. [We’ll provide you with information on designing decks & presentations during our class sessions.]

As you generate ideas, please keep in mind 3 Morven Sustainability Lab goals:

As you develop your ideas, it’s important to keep in mind the three pillars Morven currently uses to help define its new goals. To pursue its new Sustainability role, Morven thinks about the:

- *future* use of Morven as a space for sustainable innovation and model for sustainable use.
- *present* use of Morven as a place to foster the pursuit of mental health and wellness through one's immersion in nature—one's feeling of connection to the land; and
- *past* use of Morven by learning about, *and from*, its earliest stewardship by indigenous Nations, to single family ownership, to its "gift to UVA" status in the UVA Foundation real estate portfolio, and up to its present-day governance as a non-profit and a vital piece of UVA's overarching focus on sustainability.

Perhaps the most important element for your MLI projects is the second; how might you envision nature centered experiences that foster relationships among students and students' relationship with nature? You'll be assigned to project groups of 4-5 students with whom you'll work to grapple with this summer's MLI project challenge. All ideas are welcome.

MSL is a large canvas for your many ideas, so we provide questions to help you start:

Ideally, student engagement with Morven Sustainability Labs will create a positive connection & impact on the experience of inclusive community on Grounds. To that end, we provide a few questions to start your thinking.

- What are ***meaningful student engagement experiences with MSL*** for each year of students' tenure at UVA?
 - How might Morven **provide events** that eventually become UVA **traditions**?
 - How might Morven events gain **"on the bucket list" popularity** with students?
 - How might we **sequence** Morven events to create returning communities of students? Might those returning/repeating events link to residential elements of UVA?
 - How might Morven play an increasing role in the message of environmental sustainability on Grounds and in the world? What does it already do that you might build on?
- What can/should Morven do to **advertise** itself, its mission, its role within UVA, and, most importantly, the **new events you propose for how students can interact with Morven** in meaningful ways?
- How can the ideas you propose **provide resources** for students that they can take back with them from their Morven experience and use to contribute to their ideal "flourishing within UVA culture" on Grounds? How can physical experiences on the land connect to students' own metaphysical growth?
- How can MSL experiences honor a multiplicity of perspectives and organic experiences to again provide natural, contemplative, connection among students?

You'll find more detailed information about the Morven Sustainability Lab, its history, its use, and its future potential, as well as supplemental readings provided by Faculty Director Beth Meyer and Program Director Rebecca Deeds posted in our MLI Canvas site.

