
2005-2006 Department and Unit Institutional Effectiveness Report

Housing and Residence Life - Attachment 6

Department Division Goal, Associated Department/Unit Objectives and Outcomes Assessment Information

3A - Implement orientation programs which effectively acquaint students with the resources and opportunities available to them and which encourage their probability of success.

Housing and Residence Life

Objective: To investigate the sophomore residential experience and the potential need for programs and services specific to sophomore students.

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Expected Outcome:

1. To review the theoretical foundation and national best practices on sophomore-specific programs and services.
2. To determine the necessity of sophomore-specific residential programs and services.

Activities Undertaken

1. Committee was formed to investigate what other literature exists and what practices are being engaged in at other institutions.
2. The committee reviewed the quantitative data provided by the 2005 EBI Resident Study for statistical differences in sophomore versus freshman student responses to survey items.

Assessment Plan:

1. To complete a review of current sophomore experience literature and investigation of programs and services offered by comparative institutions.
2. To assess residential sophomore student needs through surveys and student focus groups.

Findings:

1. The National Resource Center on Sophomore Year Programs lists 37 schools nationally that have some type of sophomore program. Programs were housed in academic affairs or in student affairs, typically in Housing, but often in partnership with other SA departments.

An overwhelming number of programs focused on major/career exploration, career skill development, university involvement, and life skill development. Several programs included or focused on academic support. Most programs were a loosely structured series of offerings and many used a kick-off or welcoming social event or workshop to begin the year.

Although scholars have written on the sophomore experience for over 40 years, no comprehensive or in-depth study exists. The national resource center does publish a monograph on the sophomore experience that we will use for further investigation. The literature suggests that the sophomore year is a time of potential disconnect from the university, characterized by feelings of isolation and a lack of energy as students are faced with having made the transition to college, but now uncertain on where to go in life having made that initial leap. Sophomores often feel unsupported by the university as being past freshman support and targeted programs but not yet immersed in (or even having declared) a major.

2. The following EBI survey items that provided the greatest difference in satisfaction rates between freshman and sophomore student responses were: Q080: Comparing cost to quality, rate and overall value of the residence hall experience:

Sophomore data reported a mean of 3.85 versus a freshman mean of 4.19; Q017: residence hall activities – sophomore data reported a

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mean of 5.48 versus a freshman mean of 5.75; Q021: social activities – sophomore data reported a mean of 5.11 versus a freshman mean of 5.36; and Q079: to what extent did residence hall experience fulfill expectations – sophomore data reported a mean of 4.48 versus a freshman mean of 4.84.

Changes Planned:

1. The differences in sophomore versus freshman student satisfaction quantitative data support the value of continuing the investigation into why satisfaction during sophomore residential experience decreases. This goal is continued for further qualitative investigation.
2. HRL will initiate a workshop in partnership with other departments during the Fall Semester as a pilot program to judge sophomore interest in programs specifically focused at their demographic.