

Residence Life
Strategic Plan 2006-2007: Executive Summary

Mission

Residence Life provides a safe, comfortable, secure and nurturing living-learning environment that is conducive to students' academic pursuits and personal growth while fostering a sense of community, civic responsibility and an appreciation of diversity.

Vision

Residence Life creates the highest quality living-learning environments, programs and services to challenge and support Penn State students as they become active and responsible members within their communities.

Student Affairs Overarching Goals

I. To enhance the student experience by fostering learning both inside and outside the classroom and by providing caring support services.

- A. Continue to enhance Residence Life programs and services at all residential campuses.
 - Collaborate on staff recruitment across the system
 - Continue with regular system-wide meetings and training opportunities
- B. Improve new residents' transition to UP, especially as it pertains to first-year and change-of-assignment students.
 - Expand first year living learning goals to Pollock and South Halls.
 - Collaborate with the Office of Student Engagement on Welcome Week activities
 - Enhance RA training on first year student issues
- C. Address barriers to resident student academic success (e.g. high risk drinking, mental and physical health concerns, sexual assault).
 - Focus staff training and development on these topics
 - Increase collaboration with Office of Health Promotion in order to meet the goals of Healthy Campus 2010.
 - Continue to use Stall Stories to provide students with resources and information on these topics.
- D. Increase individual contacts with all residents.
 - Continue with individual resident interviews and interest surveys.
- E. Promote academic and university partnerships within the residence halls to further student learning and retention.
 - Continue and expand on the faculty recognition reception
 - Create more academic connections in the first year environments
 - Evaluate and enhance our current Special Living Options
- F. Connect resident students to high-quality services and programs across the University community.
 - Collaborate with the Office of Student Engagement to promote student involvement in academic clubs, student organizations and community service

Strategic Indicators

1. Training, information sharing, and communication are increased across all residential campuses as measured by feedback from staff and data regarding training opportunities.
2. New students, both first year and change of assignment, achieve higher levels of social and intellectual integration into the Penn State community as measured by Pulse surveys and other assessment tools.

3. High-risk drinking and alcohol-related incidents are reduced as evidenced by surveys and other data.
4. Academic and community partnerships are increased by 3% after one year.

II. To build a greater sense of community; one that is inclusive, cohesive, and caring.

- A. Implement the strategies outlined in the Division's Framework to Foster Diversity as well as in Residence Life's diversity plan.
 - Increase staff's awareness of the Framework for Diversity and involve all levels of staff in the development of Residence Life's 2007-08 diversity plan
- B. Improve students' multicultural competencies as part of a comprehensive Co-curriculum.
 - Continue with the Prejudice Free Zone initiative
 - Incorporate Residence Life's 2006-2007 diversity theme "We are each a piece of the bigger puzzle" into our programming initiatives and living environments
 - Provide programming that will support Student Affairs' multicultural competency module
- C. Advise and support student leadership and organizations which promote civility.
 - Advise ARHS, area governments, NRHH, and re-create RA/CA advisory board
 - Assess the impact of the RA/CA program
- D. Develop a progressive plan for area cultural lounge programs and other multicultural initiatives.
 - Continue and enhance current programs and initiatives
- E. Support programs and activities that serve specific student populations.
 - Continue co-sponsorship of PRCC and multicultural student organizations' activities and programs
 - Work with Sorority and Fraternity Life to support NPHC recruitment efforts
- F. Celebrate residents' out-of-class achievements and contributions.
 - Create an RA/CA awards/recognition program
 - Recognize individual student contributions to the residence hall environment
- G. Collaborate with residence hall and area government student leaders to create stronger student-centered communities
 - Enhance collaboration with area government by co-sponsoring programs for residents (i.e. football weekend socials and first year programming)

Strategic Indicators

1. Residents' satisfaction with programs and services increases as measured by surveys and assessments.
2. Residents' perception about residence hall civility and climate improves as measured by the Pulse Civility Survey and our Quality of Life Survey.
3. Data will show underrepresented students' satisfaction with residence hall living increases.
4. Residence Life's collaboration with diverse student groups and organizations increases.
5. Student achievements are regularly included and recognized in departmental communications.

III. To prepare students to be effective, ethical leaders and active citizens who can make a positive difference in their communities.

- A. Enhance and strengthen Residence Life's relationship with Greek letter organizations, primarily sororities in residence.
 - Continue monthly Housing, Residence Life and Sorority and Fraternity Life meetings
 - Work collaboratively on long term plan for sorority housing
- B. Engage and consult with student groups and student leaders on strategic decisions as they impact residential communities.

- Continue to involve ARHS on decisions that affect/impact students
- Use student surveys/feedback to improve the Residence Life program
- C. Support the Division's effort to create a formal leadership curriculum and develop strategic partnerships with colleges who currently offer programs and/or courses.
 - Continue the development and assessment of our academically focused Special Living Options
- D. Examine and strengthen RA/CA curriculum as needed to continue to develop effective and ethical peer educators.
- E. Foster increased student involvement in community service and service learning.
 - Increase collaboration with AT& T Center for Service Learning
 - Encourage Faculty Associates to have a service learning component as a requirement to live in our Special Living Options
- F. Assist residents with personal development as active, ethical and responsible citizens within the residence hall community.
 - Educate residents on consequences of inappropriate behavior in the residence halls
 - Create additional involvement and leadership opportunities for incoming students

Strategic Indicators

1. Collaborations with the Greek community increase as measured by data about co-sponsored activities, joint decision-making opportunities, shared training programs, and feedback from Greek members, officers, and staff.
2. Maintain student satisfaction scores with the RA/CA evaluation survey.
3. Residence hall vandalism is decreased as measured by annual damage reports.
4. Eighty-five percent or more of first-year students will have effectively completed a roommate contract.
5. Community service activities within the Special Living Options program and area student government are monitored with an initial increase in participation expected after year one.

Support Services

Provide technological support to enhance student learning, services to students, and enable our work.

- Support ITS and ResCom efforts to educate residents about IT issues.
- Explore the use of WEB-based modules for staff training, programming, recruitment, and communication and information sharing for all residential campuses.
- Increase the use of online chat rooms to discuss student issues.
- Create a WEB-based resource site for Residence Life staff at all locations

Expand our use of assessment and evaluation to measure our effectiveness, improve our services, and extend our ability to serve as experts on Penn State students and the student experience.

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Recruit, retain, and support a highly motivated and diverse staff with the skills and abilities to challenge and support students in their educational pursuits and personal development.

- Provide ongoing staff development that includes diversity training, team building, and specific skills enhancement.

- Maintain active and intentional recruitment strategies, system-wide, for all levels of staff within Residence Life.
- Continue to adjust salaries, as needed, to be more equitable across similar grades/positions.

Obtain external funding and continue to manage our fiscal resources effectively and efficiently to support the mission of Student Affairs.

- Solicit external funds to support a system-wide RA/CA recognition program.
- Seek out external funding sources to support our academically based living-learning programs.
- Review our funding model for each residential location to ensure students are getting a comparable residential experience.

Strategic Indicators for Support Services

1. Residence Life staff at each campus are using WEB-based programming and training modules.
2. Residence Life has a comprehensive assessment plan that is in line with its strategic plan.
3. The percentage of minority hires in Residence Life will support the Student Affairs goal of at least 10% annually.
4. Residence Life staff meet, if not exceed, the minimum standards for staff development as indicated on the Professional Activities Summary report each year.