

Residence Life

2005-2006 Strategic Plan Update: Executive Summary

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.

- The Harrisburg Campus completed construction of a new residence hall at the end of spring semester. The building will be open Fall 2006 and will house first-year students, who will represent approximately 45% of the resident population.
- University Park hosted two student leadership conferences during the 2005-06 academic year. The Residence Life staff hosted the MACUHO Regional RA conference and the Association of Residence Hall Students hosted the CAACURH Student Leadership Conference. Over 600 para-professional hall staff attended MACUHO and 500 student leaders attended CAACURH.
- East Halls staff honored faculty who were identified by first-year students as critical to their transition to college with a faculty lunch and recognition program with plans to make this an annual event.
- Development of the Special Living Options communities was evident at many campuses.
 - At Altoona, staff focused their efforts on recruitment to their LIFE option.
 - At Berks, staff and faculty began conversation to develop an interest house for students enrolled in the Division of Undergraduate Studies.
 - The SPARC (Students Prospering in Academic and Residential Communities) Program kicked off at Behrend with over 316 students participating this year.
 - At University Park, the Forensic Science Interest House plans were finalized for student participation in Fall 2006.
 - Several of the Special Living Options at University Park partnered with their academic colleges to host tours and socials during campus visit days for prospective students.
- At several campuses, Residence Life staff worked with Housing to improve the physical living environment.
 - At Beaver Campus, student input was solicited to begin the renovations to Harmony Hall.
 - Modifications to existing buildings at Mont Alto included dedicated study and recreation space.
 - At University Park, funding was allotted to put security cameras in some of the entryways in some of the first-year student buildings in East Halls.
- Off-Campus Living worked with Housing and Residence Life to collaborate on workshops for resident students planning to move off-campus.

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

- Beaver Campus sponsored “Cheesecake with the Chancellor/Dessert with the DSA” and attracted over 60% of the residents to each event.
- All first-year students at Behrend participated in conflict resolution training during the first week of classes. This resulted in a 4% increase in the total number of students resolving issues on their own and a 2% reduction in identified roommate conflicts in first-year student communities.
- Expanded funding for the Berks Campus “Lifeline” program allowed the enhancement of crisis response by adding a peer support talk-line planned for Fall 2006.
- Berks Campus sponsored the Bystander Awareness program which made local news as faculty, staff and students learned how to respond in emergency situations.

- During 2005-06, 97% of students at University Park felt that their RA's were accepting of people with different ideas, beliefs, feelings and behaviors different than their own. This is a 2% increase over last year's results.
- University Park sponsored 1,393 community building events during the 2005-06 academic year representing an 11% increase over the 2004-05 academic year. Of particular note is the UPAC co-sponsored programming series in South Halls that attracted more than 1,000 participants.
- Cultural diversity programming was a staple of community building efforts at all campuses.
 - Approximately 500 students participated in "Around the World" at the Altoona Campus. The program gave participants an opportunity to explore different cultures through food, entertainment and activities hosted in each residence hall.
 - Harrisburg Campus sponsored student trips to New York City and Baltimore and enjoyed the local culture.
 - University Park Cultural Lounges co-sponsored a number of successful large-scale programs with the Paul Robeson Cultural Center. A year-long cultural movie series commenced and a spoken-word poetry series continued, both to be repeated in the 2006-07 academic year.
 - Resident Assistants at University Park encouraged their residents to participate in the Prejudice Free Zone Initiatives.
- Off-Campus Living implemented the Off-Campus Living Newswire.

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

- Altoona staff collaborated with Student Life and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team to sponsor an interactive alcohol, domestic violence and date rape educational event.
- Berks staff collaborated with the Caron Foundation and Campus Health and Wellness Committee to assess student health needs and respond with programming and workshops to assist students in developing positive decision-making skills.
- At Hazleton, Residence Life staff worked with Health and Counseling Services to create a health fair in the Fall 2005 semester and with Career Services during Spring 2006 on the SIGI project.
- Mont Alto staff received \$5,000 in CPATODA grant funding for various alcohol prevention activities.
- University Park noted its second consecutive year with an 8% decrease in discipline; with incident reports dropping from 2,097 reports in 2004-05 to 1,934 reports in 2005-06.
- Several campuses were involved in activities to assist in relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina.
- Off-Campus Living continued to build on their relationship with CCSG, OCSU, Property Managers and the Borough Council.

Support Services

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

- Altoona, Beaver and Berks worked to increase the efficiency of routine procedures by creating websites and improving access to online documents and resources for staff.
- Staff at Beaver and Harrisburg worked with their campus technology staff to provide in-house technical support to residential students.
- Building-specific websites at Behrend will increase effectiveness and online opportunities for communication with students.
- Laptops were purchased for student use so that residents at McKeesport could take advantage of wireless connectivity in the residence hall lobby.

- At several campuses efforts were made to inform students about proper usage of online community sites (Facebook and MySpace) and internet security measures to protect themselves.
- University Park developed an online incident report to streamline the judicial process.
- University Park also worked on moving a large portion of the Resident Assistant application process online beginning with Fall 2006.
- Residence Life began working with Housing on a plan to add wireless connectivity to several of the Special Living Options at University Park.
- At University Park, online chat sessions were conducted before both the Summer and the Fall arrival periods to allow new students the opportunity to interact with staff members. University Park students were also given the opportunity to view an online newsletter which introduced them to their specific communities.
- Staff at UNIVERSITY PARK began to collaborate with the campuses and SAIT to create off-campus websites for each campus.

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.

- Residence Life assessment efforts focused on identifying the level of satisfaction among residential students and student staff members. Four projects—the New Student Arrival Survey, the Quality of Life Survey (conducted at 8 residential campuses), the CA Evaluation Survey and the Resident Exit Survey—were administered by Residence Life staff. The ACUHO-I Resident Assistant Satisfaction Survey was conducted externally with benchmark comparison information provided.
- Staff at Beaver collaborated with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to distribute surveys to students. The results will be used to improve health and wellness on campus.
- University Park used hand-held survey technology to conduct real-time assessment of arrival activities for Fall arrival.
- The Association of Residence Hall Students (ARHS) conducted an online television interest survey. The results were used to help determine students' television station preferences at University Park.

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.

- The Altoona Campus hosted a fall retreat for staff from all residential campuses to increase interaction and understanding of our larger residence hall system.
- During the 2005-06 academic year, University Park had 84 paraprofessional staff members from underrepresented groups, representing 34% of the total paraprofessional staff.
- Of the 25 professional live-in staff at University Park, 10 staff members (40%) were from underrepresented groups. This staffing pattern has been consistent for several years.
- At our campuses 25%, or 5 of the 18 professional live-in staff, were from underrepresented groups.
- 32% of the students who took the University Park RA class (CNED 302) were from underrepresented groups.
- System-wide there were 101 professional development opportunities provided for staff during the 2005-06 academic year.
- During 2005-06, \$53,847 was spent on professional development activities and conference registrations for 100 professional staff system-wide.