

SUNY Potsdam

Administrative Unit Assessment Report and Improvements

Administrative Unit: Residence Life

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Mission Statement: The Department of Residence Life at SUNY Potsdam provides a safe and clean environment, resourceful staff, and learning experiences for the diverse members of our residential community in pursuit of their educational goals.

Vision Statement:

On-campus living is an integral part of SUNY Potsdam's mission and Residence Life plays a vital role in the students' collegiate experience. Our department believes that a residential environment contributes significantly to the transformational education of our students.

The core of our philosophy is the sense of community that our staff intentionally creates throughout the residence halls. The development of meaningful learning opportunities that are uniquely suited to students is central to our work. Residence Life strives to connect students to each other and foster the development of life-skills. Cooperation, commitment, and a sense of responsibility to self and others define our community that develops as a result of students living and learning together.

In addition, we intentionally facilitate community involvement in an environment that is infused with the values of civility, inclusivity, responsibility, and service. Students are encouraged to grow in their self-awareness and are empowered to make significant connections with each other in our community based on these values in order to achieve their goals in our global society.

Learning Outcomes:

Self-Discovery & Development

Students will grow in their understanding of themselves; building upon their strengths and improving their shortcomings.

Community Engagement

Students will learn to form healthy, interdependent, and meaningful connections with others by embracing civility and diversity.

Goals	Desired Outcomes/Objectives	Assessment Methods and Targets	Results	Planned Improvements Based on Assessment Results
<p>1. Provide staff who are caring, dedicated, diverse, professional, and well-trained in order to provide support and guidance to our students.</p>	<p>a. Provide professional and paraprofessional live-in staff consistent with national standards.</p>	<p>a. Compare professional and paraprofessional staff ratios to national averages/standards.</p>	<p>National standards remain difficult to obtain (as was reported in 2017).</p>	<p>Rather than seeking to align with national standards, we will establish benchmarks that are based on institutional history. We will work to remain within those benchmarks.</p>
	<p>b. Provide training for staff prior to and during each semester.</p>	<p>b. Evaluate professional and RA staff training to ensure we are meeting the needs of the staff and preparing them to successfully complete their jobs.</p>	<p>Training has been regularly evaluated. Changes have been made to both professional and RA trainings each semester to best meet the needs of the department and the staff along with the current needs of students each semester.</p>	<p>Training is an area that needs constant assessment due to the regular changing environment of higher education. We will continue to evaluate each semester and make adjustments as needed.</p>
	<p>c. Provide high-quality staff who meet set expectations.</p>	<p>c. Perform semesterly performance evaluations to ensure professional and paraprofessional staff are meeting expectations.</p>	<p>Professionals are evaluated each semester by their RAs and supervisor. RAs are evaluated each semester by their residents, peers, and supervisor. One-on-ones are used throughout the semester to address emergent issues. While we attempt to be educational, job performance may be taken if the individual does not change behavior to meet expectations.</p>	<p>Recent feedback was provided by an RA regarding the method used to collect peer-to-peer feedback. This survey is being reviewed to provide a better framework and to help eliminate bias from the form.</p>
	<p>d. Staff will be available and accessible to residents.</p>	<p>d. 85% of students will report their staff being available and accessible.</p>	<p>RLSS 2018 (*): 91% of students identified RAs as being available when they need them. 91% of students identified professional staff members as being available.</p>	<p>We continue to work to find ways to keep staff available to students, especially given the complications with COVID-19.</p>

			(*) The Residence Life Satisfaction Survey (RLSS) is administered every 2 years. It was last administered in Fall 2018 and will be administered again in Fall 2020. Data reported from RLSS has been pulled from the 2018 assessment.	
	e. Both professional and paraprofessional staff will reflect the diversity of the student population.	e. Review student demographic data to compare with demographics of staff.	The last formal assessment of this was in Spring 2019. During this time, the breakdown was: Latino/a: 17%(student); 20% (RA) American Indian/Alaskan Native: 3% (student); 3% (RA) Asian: 4% (student); 1% (RA) Black or African American: 21% (student); 24% (RA) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0% (student); 0% (RA) White: 65% (student); 49% (RA) Unknown: 4% (student); 3% (RA) Recruiting professional staff members has been more difficult for us as it has been for much of the campus.	We will continue to employ and retain students from a diverse background as RAs. We will continue to focus on this as we work to hire professional staff members.
	f. Recruitment efforts for professional and paraprofessional staff will target a diverse population.		We work with Human Resources to target a diverse population. In addition, we work to outreach to students.	We will continue our efforts in this area.
2. Our facilities will be clean, safe, accessible, and modern and include amenities and furnishings that contribute to student success.	a. Residential students will be satisfied with the overall physical conditions of the residence halls. b. Student will feel safe in the residence halls c. Residence Life will regularly evaluate theme housing options to ensure they meet changing student needs.	a. 80% of students will report satisfaction with the overall physical conditions of the residence halls. b. 90% of students will report feeling safe and secure in their residence halls. c. Gather student input through regular surveys/focus groups. d. 80% of students will	a. RLSS 2018: 79% of students report being satisfied with the overall physical conditions of the residence halls. b. RLSS 2018: 93% of students reported feeling safe and secure in their residence halls. c. Residence Life worked extensively with RAs (who in turn worked with their residents). We have offered	The conditions of our facilities remains one of our highest priorities, but have been complicated by diminishing funds in Residence Life. We will continue to strive to meet these goals through the next assessment period. We are working to find creative solutions to improving revenue and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Provide quality furnishings in the residence halls. e. Maintain adequate supply/stock of residence hall furniture. f. Assess and advocate for continued, major residence hall improvement projects. 	<p>report satisfaction with furnishings in the residence halls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Regularly take inventory and evaluate supply of furniture and allocate funds accordingly to maintain stock. f. Work with campus administration to submit a RFP for a revised Residence Halls master plan. 	<p>a gaming house, which coincided with the addition of the gaming lounge. Prior to COVID-19, we were planning on having a Crane house based on the interest of students. Unfortunately, this needed to be delayed due to the need of suite spaces for quarantine. In addition, 92% of students have reported feeling satisfied with the level of input they have on Residence Life policies/plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. RLSS 2018: 79% of students reported satisfaction with furnishings in the residence halls. e. We have significant inventory of items that are available through state contract (beds, desks, etc). There are several items that we need that have not been available through state contract, which has made it difficult to have these available. Funds are sent to our DASNY funds. f. Given the decreasing funds in DIFR have not allowed us to do a new Residence Hall master plan. 	<p>offering furnishings that best meet students' needs and desires.</p>
<p>3. Programs offered will promote community development and active campus involvement in order to serve the interests and needs of our diverse students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Residential students will attend/participate in at least 1 program/event in the Residence Halls b. Residential students will learn something as a result of participation in a residence life sponsored program/event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 70% of residential students (80% of FYE residents) will attend/participate in at least 1 program/event b. 75% of residential students will learn something as a result of participating in a residence life sponsored program/event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. RLSS 2018: 54% of residential students participated in at least 1 program. b. RLSS 2018: 79% of students reported learning something new about themselves and 88% of students reported learning something new about individuals different from 	<p>3.a & d: After the creation of this assessment plan, we changed our Community Development Model. The purpose of the changes were to focus on developing individual relationships, primarily focusing on intentional conversations. As such, RAs went from offering 10+ programs each</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Residential students who attend programs/events in the residence halls will find them to be beneficial. d. Staff will attain 300 Community Development (CDM) points each semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. 90% of residential students who attend programs/events in the residence halls will find them to be beneficial. d. 95% of staff will attain 300 Community Development (CDM) points each semester. 	<p>themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. RLSS 2018: 91% of students who attended a program in the residence halls found them beneficial. d. N/A—we no longer use a points based community development model. 	<p>semester to a maximum of 3 each semester. We feel that this is directly related to the results in 3a. It also means that we no longer have a points system through which we assess RAs. Moving forward, we will adjust our goals to match our current Community Development Model.</p>
<p>4. We will be a leader in student retention efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Residential student retention will exceed that of the campus b. Residents in the First Year Experience program will be retained at a higher rate than residents living elsewhere on campus. c. Residence Life staff will perform outreach to academically at-risk residential students. d. Residence Life will set financially responsible room rates to keep housing affordable to our students. e. Residence Life will provide programs and services that attract students to live on campus beyond the residency requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Based on campus assessment data, residential student will be retained at a higher rate than that of the rest of campus. b. Based on campus assessment data, residents in the First Year Experience program will be retained at a higher rate than residents living elsewhere on campus. c. Residence Life staff will receive Early Alert data and contact residential students to share academic resources and discuss strategies for academic success; staff will meet with 75% of residential students who have 3 or more early alerts. d. Residence Life staff will assess the rates of comparable housing options including other campus and off-campus. e. Examine number of students (%) who live on campus beyond the residency requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. For the 2019-2020 academic year, residential students were retained at 92% and non-residential at 81% b. For the 2019-2020 academic year, non-FYE students were retained at 83.7% and FYE students were retained at 81%. c. 100% of residential students with 3 or more early alerts were contacted at least 2 times for assistance. d. While we remain in line with SUNY prices, we are examining ways to lower costs for students due to the financial need of some many of our students. e. Residence Life created a program for the 2020-2021 academic year to attract students who had met the residency requirement to remain on campus. Initial results of this campaign were promising; attracting over 50 additional students. However, due to COVID-19 many of these students eventually decided to study virtually. 	<p>3b. We are doing some substantial renovations to FYE and are looking forward to seeing how it will fare in future assessments.</p> <p>In addition to the listed goals, Residence Life created a substantive program and help retain unregistered students in the residence halls. This program received recognition from both the campus and SUNY.</p> <p>We will continue to explore additional ways to retain students within the residence halls and at SUNY Potsdam.</p>

<p>5. Residence Life will play an integral role in the Colleges' efforts towards inclusive excellence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Residential students will live in an environment free from harassment. b. The residence halls will be inclusive. c. The residence halls will be a place accepting of differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 90% of residential students will report a living environment free from harassment b. 90% of residential students will report a living environment that is inclusive. c. 90% of residential students will report a living environment that is accepting of differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. RLSS 2018: 94% of residential students reported a living environment free from harassment b. RLSS 2018: 93% of residential students reported a living environment that is inclusive. c. 95% of residential students reported a living environment that is accepting of differences. 	<p>We will continue to set a high standard of inclusive excellence in the residence halls.</p>
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