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# Development, validity, and reliability of the Campus Residential Experience Survey

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## Development, Validity, and Reliability of the Campus Residential Experience Survey



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**THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING ON CAMPUS** is well established, but extant research that examines administrator perceptions of what comprises the best educational experience for students living on campus is generally unavailable. This study reports the development of a psychometric instrument designed to uncover underlying paradigms and attitudes of administrators toward residential living and learning. With a focus on four areas - the importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom, and the design of facilities - the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* is used to conduct a cultural audit that reveals perceptions of where a campus currently stands and attitudes of ideal campus goals. The purpose of this instrument is to help campuses begin critical conversations around how to best promote student learning.

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Residential educational experiences are known to benefit college students (Schudde, 2011), but little research exists that examines administrator perceptions concerning what comprises the best educational experience for students living on campus. Such research is important because the paradigms administrators hold have powerful effects upon what they see, believe, and do (Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, 2011; Birnbaum, 1988). By shifting these paradigms from implicit thinking to explicit conversation, opportunities arise for deeper reflection and more intentional practice. In other words, scholars write about what student affairs professionals *should* believe about residential life and the college experience, but have yet to explore what student affairs administrators *do* believe in this area. For administrators to know what they believe, mental models must be brought to a level of consciousness (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Jones & Abes, 2011). This study developed and validated an instrument that helps bring understanding to what administrators believe regarding residential education.

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The instrument developed in this study is a mechanism for bringing unconscious assumptions to consciousness, and the discussion that follows. Scholars consistently highlight the educational benefits of residential communities to enhance student learning, but empirical research does not examine to what extent student affairs administrators believe these findings. In fact, there is some evidence that

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student affairs professionals do not actively seek to implement the findings of scholars (Sriram & Oster, 2012). If there is a disconnect between what scholars find as important and what administrators believe is important, then there is little hope to improve practice on campuses (Riker & DeCoster, 2008). A survey instrument may bring awareness of these gaps so that campus leaders will reflect upon how to address them. In residential education, programs, policies, and practices focus primarily on four areas: 1) The importance of students living on campus, especially beyond the first year (Pike, 2002; Schudde, 2011; Stassen, 2003); 2) The role of residence life professionals as educators (Shushok, Henry, Blalock, & Sriram, 2009; Dungy & Gordon,

2011; Keeling, 2006; Quaye, 2011; Schroeder & Mable, 1994); 3) Student-faculty interaction outside the classroom (Fuentes, Alvarado, Berdan, & DeAngelo, 2014; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2004); and 4) The design of facilities (Riker & DeCoster, 2008; Strange & Banning, 2015).

We developed the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* to examine the perspectives of student affairs administrators regarding both the current status and the desired status of the importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, engagement of faculty, and the design of residential facilities in forming the educational experience of on-campus residential environments. We developed items pertaining to current status to gain an assessment of how well (or poorly) administrators believe their campuses perform in these four areas. We also included counterpart items designed to capture desired status of these four areas to examine how close (or far) the status quo is to desired goals. Gaps between current status and desired status may reveal competing visions and paradigms on campus, and addressing those gaps may lead to the emergence of campus dialogue that potentially results in positive change.

Specifically, this research study addressed the following questions:

- 1 Is there evidence of theoretical/content validity and construct validity (leading to the measurement of unique latent variables) for a survey instrument designed to collect data on the perceptions of student affairs administrators on the residential educational experience?
2. Is there evidence of reliability in the measuring of these constructs?

## FOUR AREAS VITAL TO LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

As mentioned above, four areas emerge from the literature as vital to the educational experience of on-campus living environments: the institutional importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, the importance of student-faculty interaction where students live, and the impact of facility design. These four areas formed our conceptual framework.

### ***Importance of students living on campus.***

*Living on campus* refers to students who live in residential environments that are owned and staffed by an higher education institution. Such facilities may include traditional residence halls, apartments, living-learning communities, and residential colleges. Although for decades, scholars have found living on campus to be important for student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), recent literature on this topic more rigorously supports these claims (Schudde, 2011). Prior studies often did not take into account that students who live on campus may differ from students who do not live on campus in terms of prior academic achievement (Blimling, 1989; Huhn, 2006; Thompson, Samiratedu, & Rafter, 1993). Also, research on residential life has not typically accounted for self-selection bias with sophisticated quasi-experimental methods. To address these issues, Schudde (2011) employed propensity score matching and regression analyses to determine the causal effect of campus residency on student retention. Utilizing data from the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), she found a positive and significant impact of living on

campus on retention, even after accounting for student background characteristics. Specifically, first-year students who lived on campus experienced a 3.3 percentage point increase in their persistence to the second year – a statistically significant and meaningful effect (Schudde, 2011).

### ***The role of residence life professionals as educators.***

Student affairs professional is a general term used for all staff members who take primary responsibility for student development and success outside the classroom. Such administrators typically are centralized within their own units (e.g., division of student affairs). Student affairs professionals seek to educate the whole student by promoting student learning and development outside the classroom (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The *residence life professional* is the student affairs professional dealing most directly with on-campus residential environments, although other student affairs professionals may have influence depending on the nature of the institution and the structure of the division of student affairs.

*The role of residence life professionals as educators* refers to the level of physical and psychological involvement student affairs administrators have within a residential community. A low level of engagement may only include maintenance of the physical environment and policy enforcement. A high level of engagement adds responsibilities such as programming, fostering community, and promoting student learning (Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014). There is renewed emphasis by scholars to advocate for student affairs professionals as educators in addition to their administrative functions (Keeling, 2006; Rhatigan, 2009). Student

Although at many institutions student affairs administrators work independently from faculty, there is renewed interest on college campuses to remove barriers between the two groups to better promote student outcomes.

affairs professionals craft co-curricular learning outcomes and thoughtfully plan programs and services around designated student learning outcomes. In their critique of higher education, Arum and Roksa (2011) admonish administrators for a lack of focus upon undergraduate education and a lack of interpersonal contact with undergraduate students, but they note an exception to this criticism with those who work in student affairs. Quaye (2011) writes, “I frequently tell the graduate students I work with to use *student affairs educator* as opposed to *student affairs practitioner* to emphasize the learning-centered focus of the work we do” (p. 281). Student affairs professionals are co-educators who partner with faculty to foster greater synergy between the learning that occurs in and out of the classroom.

**Student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom.** Another constituency with the potential to powerfully shape learning in the residence halls is the faculty (Cook & Lewis, 2007). *Faculty engagement* refers to the level of physical and psychological involvement faculty have in the residential community. Levels of involvement can range from one in-

itation to speak in a residential environment, to a partnership that includes recurring visits throughout the semester or to daily living with students in a formal leadership position (e.g., faculty-in-residence; Davenport & Pasque, 2014; Fitzpatrick, 2011). Faculty members are key agents of integration of the in-class and out-of-class lives of students (Kennedy, 2011). In their study of almost 8,000 undergraduates, Fuentes et al. (2014) found that student contact with faculty during the first year of college led to greater faculty mentorship by the senior year of college. Student-faculty interaction is important to students, and residential environments are possible venues for fostering such interaction. Although at many institutions student affairs administrators work independently from faculty, there is renewed interest on college campuses to remove barriers between the two groups to better promote student outcomes (Sriram, Shushok, Perkins, & Scales, 2011).

**The design of facilities.** *Facility design* concerns attitudes toward the purpose of residential communities. Attitudes can range from viewing residential environments as places that only should provide food and shelter, to thinking that such environments should be state-of-the-art entertainment facilities, to advocating that these environments are extensions of the classroom that facilitate deep learning in more informal ways (see Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, 2011). As Riker and DeCoster (2008) noted, “Within the residential community students experience both a physical environment and an interpersonal or social environment, both of which communicate something to them on a daily basis” (p. 81). Facilities influence student involvement and behavior in many

vital ways and should be considered as important as human and fiscal resources (Strange & Banning, 2015).

In summary, student learning is further facilitated on college campuses by encouraging students to live on campus, engaging residence life professionals as educators, inviting faculty to be out-of-class teachers, and designing facilities to promote learning outside the classroom. The perceptions of student affairs professionals and other administrators regarding residential life have a dramatic influence on what facilities to build, who to place in the residence, and how to conduct day-to-day operations (Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, 2011). The assumptions underlying a particular campus's residence life operations, as well as the whole division of student affairs, affect a variety of important student outcomes (Hirt, 2006). Moreover, these perceptions determine where to place the most emphasis: utilizing student affairs professionals, incorporating faculty, or redesigning facilities to better promote learning. This study discusses the development and validation of an instrument that unearths administrator perceptions in these important areas.

## METHODOLOGY

To address the gap in research literature concerning what administrators believe about the campus residential experience, we attempted to measure administrator perceptions of different facets of residential life in a valid and reliable manner. Utilizing exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, validity and reliability were fundamental considerations in the development of our instrument: the *Campus Residential Experience Survey*. As described below, we used Kane's (1992, 2001) argument-

based approach to validity in which validity is "established by the combined strength of theory and evidence that supports a particular interpretation of a measure, given the context in which it is used" (Porter, 2011, p. 47). Therefore, we examined both theory and statistics in determining the quality of the instrument.

## Participants

The population of interest for this study consisted of residence life professionals – student affairs administrators with a vested interest in the residential experience of college students. For our sample, we used the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I), the largest professional association devoted to the housing experience of college students. We surveyed the membership of ACUHO-I to better understand administrative perspectives of residential education at colleges and universities across the nation. We distributed the survey to 9,753 members and we received 1,486 responses, resulting in a response rate of 15.2%. Our analytic sample has 1,275 participants, reduced to 1,143 participants for the specific research question ad-

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dressed because statistical analyses removed participants with missing data.

Institutions differ in culture, mission, and goals (Hirt, 2006). Therefore, we categorized respondents by five primary types of institution using the Basic Classification Description of the Carnegie Foundation. The five categories are: associate degree, specialized, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and research university. If an institution did not fit into one of these primary categories, it was identified as "other." Table 1 provides basic demographic information on the role of professionals and the type of institutions represented.

### Instrument

**Background of instrument.** To understand perspectives of student affairs administrators, we created a 40-item instrument called the *Campus Residential Experience Survey*. The

purpose in creating this psychometric instrument was to discover perceptions, reflect on practices, and envision establishing an intentional philosophy of residential education on campuses.

Porter (2011) expressed concern regarding issues of validity in higher education quantitative research. Although supporting traditional methods of validity such as criterion, content, and construct validity, he advocates the use of Kane's (1992, 2001) argument-based approach to validity:

We can think of validity as an argument, based on theory and evidence, rather than a simple correlation. Theory can range from descriptions of how measures and constructs should be related, theories about cognitive processes of those filling out surveys, and such varied evidence as expert reviews of content, quantitative descriptions of how

**Table 1**

Job-Level and Institution-Type Demographics of Sample ( $N = 1,275$ )

Demographic	Sample	
	n	%
<i>Job-Level</i>		
Senior Student Affairs Officer	76	6.0
Chief Housing Officer	256	20.0
Residence Life Professional	943	74.0
<i>Institution-Type</i>		
Associate's Degree	22	1.7
Specialized	22	1.7
Baccalaureate Degree	125	9.8
Master's Degree	389	30.5
Research University	585	45.9
Other	132	10.4



measures relate to other constructs on the instrument, and external data. (p. 47)

Although we use evidence such as correlations produced through exploratory factor analysis to validate our instrument, we also incorporate knowledge from the literature, knowledge from professional experts, and theory about survey responses when developing and validating the *Campus Residential Experience Survey*. Literature on the educational potential of residential environments was the basis for creating items for the instrument (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Schroeder & Mable, 1994; Schudde, 2011).

To address content validity, the instrument was distributed to a focus group of campus administrators at a single institution. Participants of the focus group purposely included residence life professionals, student affairs professionals not working in residence life, and administrators who were not in student affairs but were knowledgeable about higher education administration in general. Participants in the focus group provided feedback on their ability to comprehend items and on the extent to which an item clearly conveyed what it attempted to measure (e.g., importance of living on campus). Feedback from the focus group pertained to item readability and clarity, and this information was used to refine items on the instrument.

We based the development of the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* on Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski's (2000) philosophical model originally proposed by Cannell, Miller, and Oksenberg (1981): the Comprehension-Retrieval-Judgment-Response model. This model purports that responders must understand the questions and link them to relevant

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concepts (comprehension), retrieve specific and generic memories (retrieval), draw inferences based on accessibility (judgment), and map the judgment onto the response category (response) (Tourangeau et al., 2000).

**Structure of instrument.** The *Campus Residential Experience Survey* is comprised of eight scales divided into two groups: Four scales measure current status and four scales measure desired status of four unique latent constructs. The scales are 1) Institutional importance of students living on campus, 2) The role of residence life professionals as educators, 3) Faculty engagement in residential environments, and 4) The facility design of residential environments (see Table 2). Each of these scales utilizes Likert-type response categories in a *testlet* format. As Wainer and Kiely (1987) noted, "A testlet is a group of items related to a single content area that is developed as a unit and contains a fixed number of predetermined paths that an examinee may follow" (p. 190). Utilizing testlets, the instrument presents a

**Table 2**Latent Variables and Scales of the Campus Residential Experience Survey (*N* = 1,143)

Scale	Sample Item	# of Items	eigenvalues	% of Variance Explained	Factor Loading Range	$\alpha$
Faculty engagement - current status	Faculty presence in residential communities is part of our campus ethos.	7	6.27	17.61	.809 - .693	.87
Faculty engagement - desired status		7	6.2	16.14	.770 - .627	.85
Residence life educator - current status	There is an explicit "curriculum" (defined pathway toward learning outcomes) that is developed and enacted by professional student affairs staff in campus residential communities.	5	2.77	12.95	.791 - .567	.80
Residence life educator - desired status		5	2.29	11.68	.769 - .602	.78
Living on campus - current status	Juniors live on campus.	4	1.93	11.51	.863 - .587	.80
Living on campus - desired status		4	2.2	10.27	.860 - .616	.80
Facility design - current status	My campus invests financial resources to align residential life facilities (physical spaces)	4	2.36	10.23	.862 - .658	.84
Facility design - desired status		4	1.7	10.02	.803 - .546	.73

statement and asks respondents to rate current status ("the way it is") on a 5-point scale. It then asks respondents to rate desired status ("the way it should be") on a 5-point scale. The complete instrument is included in the appendix.

### Procedure

We established content validity of the instrument by reviewing the literature and utilizing the focus group. To determine construct validity for the initial 40-item instrument, an exploratory factor analysis (principal components analysis) was conducted using SPSS statistical software. A major use of principal

components analysis is in the development of psychological tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This analysis organizes instrument items into categorical factors (components) based upon how well the items correlate to one another. Evidence of construct validity is found if the correlation of items affirms both theory and the original intent for how the items organized into subscales. Listwise deletion was used to analyze complete responses only, reducing the sample from 1,275 responses to 1,143. We selected orthogonal rotation (varimax) based on the theory that the four latent variables would be independent (unrelated). The number of

factors to retain was influenced by analyzing the results of eigenvalues, scree plot analysis, total variance explained, and model fit.

### Limitations

Before sharing results, it is important to note limitations to this research. We took our sample from the membership of ACUHO-I because this association comprises student affairs administrators who are arguably the most invested in the residential experience of colleges. However, ACUHO-I does not represent all student affairs administrators or all residence life professionals. Therefore, some administrators involved in either student affairs or residence life, but not members of ACUHO-I, were excluded from our study. Using the ACUHO-I membership as our sample should be taken into account when generalizing the findings of this study. Participants were primarily from higher education institutions in the United States.

Another limitation is the use of self-reported data. Our instrument measures perceptions of current status and desired status for four latent variables. Self-reporting allows the participant to honestly state a perception, but response bias can influence self-reporting. To address possible bias, all responses were anonymous. We offered no rewards or punishments for responses of any type, and we offered no incentives in an attempt to boost response rates.

### RESULTS

Our first research question sought to determine if there was construct validity (leading to the measurement of unique latent variables) in our survey instrument subscales. To evaluate construct validity, we conducted principal components analysis for our exploratory

factor analysis to determine if items did in fact measure the latent variables of institutional importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement in residential environments, and facility design of residential environments. We conducted this analysis twice – separately for the current status items and the desired status items. Evaluations based on eigenvalues, scree plot analysis, total variance explained, and model fit indicated an eight-factor solution as most appropriate. These eight factors corresponded to the eight latent variables (subscales) of our instrument. Therefore, we determined that all eight of our theoretically-based scales had construct validity. All items loaded onto one of the factors, and we did not need to remove any items from the scale (see Table 2).

Our second research question sought to determine evidence of reliability in the measuring of these constructs. To answer this question, we conducted Cronbach's coefficient alphas as a measure of internal consistency and reliability for the eight scales that demonstrated construct validity ( DeVellis, 2012). These analyses were conducted separately for the current status items and the desired status items, and we intended to modify the scales based on these analyses. For instance, if a particular item on a scale lowered the reliability of the scale significantly, we would remove that item. However, no items needed to be removed due to issues with reliability. Using a threshold of .70 for deeming a scale reliable, all eight scales were deemed to have sufficient reliability. Alphas ranged from .73 to .87. See Table 2 for the number of items in each scale and the scale's corresponding alpha.

## DISCUSSION

Several studies in the current literature demonstrate the positive impact of living on campus. Researchers have not studied, however, the views of housing professionals in four critical areas: the importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement outside of the classroom, and the design of residential facilities. Every campus is different, with its own unique mission and culture. Therefore, an appropriate way to analyze administrator perceptions of the residential experience is to gather information on how they view the current status of their institution in these four areas as well as their desired status for their campus in these areas. The study reports the development of the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* – an instrument that uncovers these underlying paradigms and attitudes in a valid and reliable manner.

Our study pertained to the creation of a robust instrument with evidence of both validity and reliability. Scholars have lamented that a major deficiency in the higher education literature is the lack of attention to measurement issues (Porter, 2011; Smart, 2005). We made efforts to demonstrate evidence of content validity, construct validity, and reliability in our instrument, leading to a 40-item instrument measuring eight latent variables. Results from the principal components analysis indicate that this instrument has construct validity. Results from Cronbach's alpha reliability analyses indicate that the scale is reliable, with each subscale having alphas ranging from .73 to .87. The *Campus Residential Experience Survey* can be used to improve practice and further knowledge through research.

## Implications For Current Practice

Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, (2011) wrote about three implicit paradigms commonly used with regard to on-campus residential environments: the sleep-and-eat model, the market model, and the learning model. These three paradigms illustrate how differing mental models within and among colleges and universities (about which campus administrators and educators often lack awareness) result in profound consequences for how students experience residence life. While one campus embraces an attitude that separates academics and student affairs, isolating the residential experience and minimizing opportunities for student learning, another campus successfully integrates intellectual life into the residential experience. Unearthing these assumptions, which often are unconscious, with the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* may lead college leaders to be more thoughtful in their discussions, planning, and implementation of the residential experience. The *Campus Residential Experience Survey* is a tool that can serve as the basis for meaningful conversation among campus leaders. By eliciting responses to the four areas – the importance of living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement outside of the classroom, and the design of residential facilities – campus leaders can directly discuss their attitudes regarding current and desired status of these important aspects of residential life.

In practice, this instrument can be utilized to conduct a cultural audit, detecting what student affairs administrators at all levels think about residential education on their own campus. The resulting data can be used

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to understand perspectives on the current status of these variables, the desired status of these variables, and the gaps between the two. Although this instrument was validated with student affairs professionals, we also believe it can be used with faculty, other administrators, and students. Further research is needed to confirm that hypothesis, however. For example, if an institution was in a strategic planning phase of residential life, a committee could be formed of various constituents (e.g., faculty, student affairs administrators, other administrators, and student leaders) to guide the development and implementation of the vision of on-campus living. The *Campus Residential Experience Survey* could be administered to everyone on the committee, drawing out their implicit beliefs about the current status and desired goals related to students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement, and facility design. A facilitator could examine the results and determine the amount of harmony (or disagreement) between different committee members, as well as the closeness (or distance) between the current status of residential life in comparison to people's desires. The result

could be a rich, engaging conversation about the four areas measured by the instrument.

Only when paradigms are made explicit can discussion occur that has the potential to shape and change them. For this study, we administered the *Campus Residential Experience Survey* to a nationwide sample of student affairs professionals from multiple campuses. With the results of this study providing evidence to validate the instrument on a national level, the survey can now be used with a small committee, a large group, or an entire campus. This instrument could be administered to a single person to begin a robust conversation. For example, a dean of residence life could ask her or his vice president of student affairs to take the instrument. After reviewing the results, the dean and vice president could then discuss residence life in a manner that includes both depth and breadth. Or perhaps a vice president of student affairs could ask the vice president for finance to take the survey. The questions could help the vice president of finance to think about matters pertaining to residence life that she or he had never thought of before. In other words, this instrument does not need to be administered to large groups of people followed by sophisticated statistical analyses to be helpful.

#### Implications For Future Research

This instrument also may be used in future research to gauge student affairs administrators' current evaluation of and desired hope for the importance of students living on campus, as well as the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement, and residential facility design. Additional quantitative analyses using this new instrument may continue to provide inferential statistics for

understanding if and how administrators at all levels of the organization desire to facilitate learning in the living experiences of students. These future studies can make the transition from exploratory factor analyses to confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling in order to test new theories about perspectives on residential education. Because this instrument was not validated with faculty or students, future research may determine if validity becomes a concern when administering this instrument to different groups.

## CONCLUSION

The decisions administrators make are a result of the paradigms administrators hold. Said differently, sensemaking drives behavior (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). How do administrators make sense of the college residential experience? Is it a necessary evil, a tool for marketing to students, or another type of learning environment? The *Campus Residential Experience Survey* is a valid and reliable instrument that captures and conveys implicit perceptions regarding the importance of students living on campus, the role of residence life professionals as educators, faculty engagement in living environments, and facility design. The instrument serves two purposes by measuring perspectives of the current status of these four areas as well as measuring the desired status. In practice, this instrument can provide valuable information that directs conversations to areas of agreement and disagreement among campus constituents, thereby leading to more reflective and intentional decisions regarding this vital aspect of the college student experience.

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## APPENDIX

### Campus Residential Experience Survey

Below you will find statements concerning how you view aspects of residential life on your campus. It is important that you respond to statements from your perspective only, not from the perception of how others might answer. On the left side, indicate the appropriate number to designate the actual situation on your campus today (as you see it). On the right side, indicate the appropriate number to indicate the way you think it should be, in your opinion.

Information you provide is confidential and will never be attached to you by name or your college or university.

Please use the following key to designate your response:

- 1 "Not at all"
- 2 "Not usually"
- 3 "Somewhat"
- 4 "Usually"
- 5 "Almost Always"

Please remember to indicate both a number to the left and to the right of each statement. In responding to this survey, it is important that you answer all of the items.



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Faculty Engagement Subscale		
The way it is (current status)		The way it should be (desired status)
1 2 3 4 5	Faculty presence in residential communities is part of our campus ethos.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Student mentorship by faculty is nurtured through relationships in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Faculty leadership (providing direction in day-to-day operations) is emphasized in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	There is an explicit "curriculum" (defined pathway toward learning outcomes) that is developed and enacted by faculty in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Faculty live in residence, have offices, or teach classes in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	My institution systematically rewards faculty for participation in residential life activities (e.g. stipends, course reductions, progress in tenure and promotion).	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	My campus emphasizes that residential communities are another type of "classroom" and should be seen by faculty as a tool for facilitating learning.	1 2 3 4 5

Student Affairs Professional Engagement Subscale		
The way it is (current status)		The way it should be (desired status)
1 2 3 4 5	Professional student affairs staff leadership (providing direction in day-to-day operations) is emphasized campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Student mentorship by professional student affairs staff is nurtured through relationships in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Professional student affairs staff live in residence, have offices, or teach classes in campus residential communities.	1 2 3 4 5

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1   2   3   4   5	Professional student affairs staff presence in residential communities is part of our campus ethos.	1   2   3   4   5
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1   2   3   4   5	There is an explicit “curriculum” (defined pathway toward learning outcomes) that is enacted by professional student affairs staff in campus residential communities.	1   2   3   4   5
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Living On Campus Subscale		
The way it is (current status)		The way it should be (desired status)
1   2   3   4   5	First-year students live on campus.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	Sophomores live on campus.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	Juniors live on campus.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	Seniors live on campus.	1   2   3   4   5

Facility Design Subscale		
The way it is (current status)		The way it should be (desired status)
1   2   3   4   5	Residential life facilities (physical spaces) are continuously improved.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	Residential life facilities (physical spaces) are well-maintained.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	Residential life facilities (physical spaces) are aesthetically enriching.	1   2   3   4   5
1   2   3   4   5	My campus invests financial resources to align residential life facilities (physical spaces) to learning objectives of the environment.	1   2   3   4   5

## Discussion Questions

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- This article describes the development of an assessment tool to measure beliefs about a campus' residential life program, focusing on four areas that support student learning. If you were to use this tool on your campus to gather data from faculty, staff, and students, what results would you expect?
- The authors went to great lengths to determine validity and reliability of the tool they developed. Why is this particularly important with this tool? How does this compare to experiences you have had in developing assessment tools?
- Believing it important to gather this feedback, what key points would you make in advocating for using this tool on your campus to the director of residential life? To the chief student affairs officer? In the situation in which the department leadership does not value assessment, how might you influence initiating assessment activities?
- What are some reasons you might not use this tool on your campus?
- Presuming you used the tool and results showed that respondents described the current status quite different from what you perceive to be occurring in your program, what would you do with these results?
- The authors note that there could be "a disconnect between what scholars find as important (to the residential experience) and what administrators believe is important." Discuss your perceptions of this.
- Why is it important to look at the psychometrics of measurement instruments when conducting research and/or assessment?

*Discussion questions developed by Diane "Daisy" Waryold, Appalachian State University, and Pam Schreiber, University of Washington*