

Foundations of Excellence
All Students Dimension

Residence Life Report

This summary report is an attempt to answer the questions of how the residence life staff IDENTIFIES and ADDRESSES academic and social needs of individual first year students. Ninety percent of UNI freshmen live on campus. While much of what is described here relates to all on-campus students, the majority of efforts focus on first-year students.

Introduction

Because of the unique nature of residence life—people actually living together—the educational model for identifying and addressing first-year students’ needs is more similar to how families operate than how classrooms typically operate. Residence life staff, like parents, educate from a highly relational perspective. This means intentionally adjusting to constantly changing psychological and social dynamics within the social and academic arenas of students’ lives. The broad areas of education are articulated in the Residence Education Mission: “Build communities of outstanding citizens and scholars through example, challenge and support.”

So, identifying and addressing students’ developmental needs is an on-going enterprise in the residence system at UNI.

Diagram Explanation

The diagram below is a quick visual key to the following:

- The educational arena is the outside square. It represents the backdrop of knowledge used to provide broad frameworks to identify student needs. There are four elements:
 - Professional Staff Academic Preparation (Residence life coordinators either have or are earning a masters degree in some area related to college student affairs, which prepares them to address students’ developmental needs.)
 - Professional Staff Experiential Preparation (Residence life coordinators are also required to have significant work experience in residence life, giving them insights regarding students’ real needs.)
 - Surveys (Our residence life staff, including central staff, employ annual assessment instruments: Educational Benchmarking, Inc. survey; house surveys; Peer Advisor In Residence survey; First-Year Immersion Program survey; Springboard (firs-year houses) Dive In Days survey).
 - Mission Statement Priorities (University, divisional, departmental and residence education missions are used to focus efforts that reflect institutional strategic priorities).
- The largest circle represents departmental priorities that translate into efforts made by in-hall staff to address needs throughout the residence halls. This includes programming, bulletin boards and relational contacts with residents.
- The next largest circle represents the plans each coordinator develops each semester to address hall-specific needs of the residents in their respective communities. These plans reflect the best combination of needs to be met, talents and skills of staff and campus/community resources available.
- The central circle represents the on-going rolling assessment model used by residence life coordinators and resident assistants within their communities to adjust to evolving needs of residents throughout the year. The phrase “Read the Need. Feed the Need.” Is at the heart of identifying and addressing residents’ developmental needs. The eight areas of needs fall within two broad categories:

Citizenship

Health

Diversity

Management

Service

Keep mind, body and spirit as healthy as possible

Understand and communicate well with different kinds of people

Manage money, time and other resources well

Contribute to house, campus, city, and the world

Scholarship

Academics

Uniqueness

Major/Minor

Deadlines

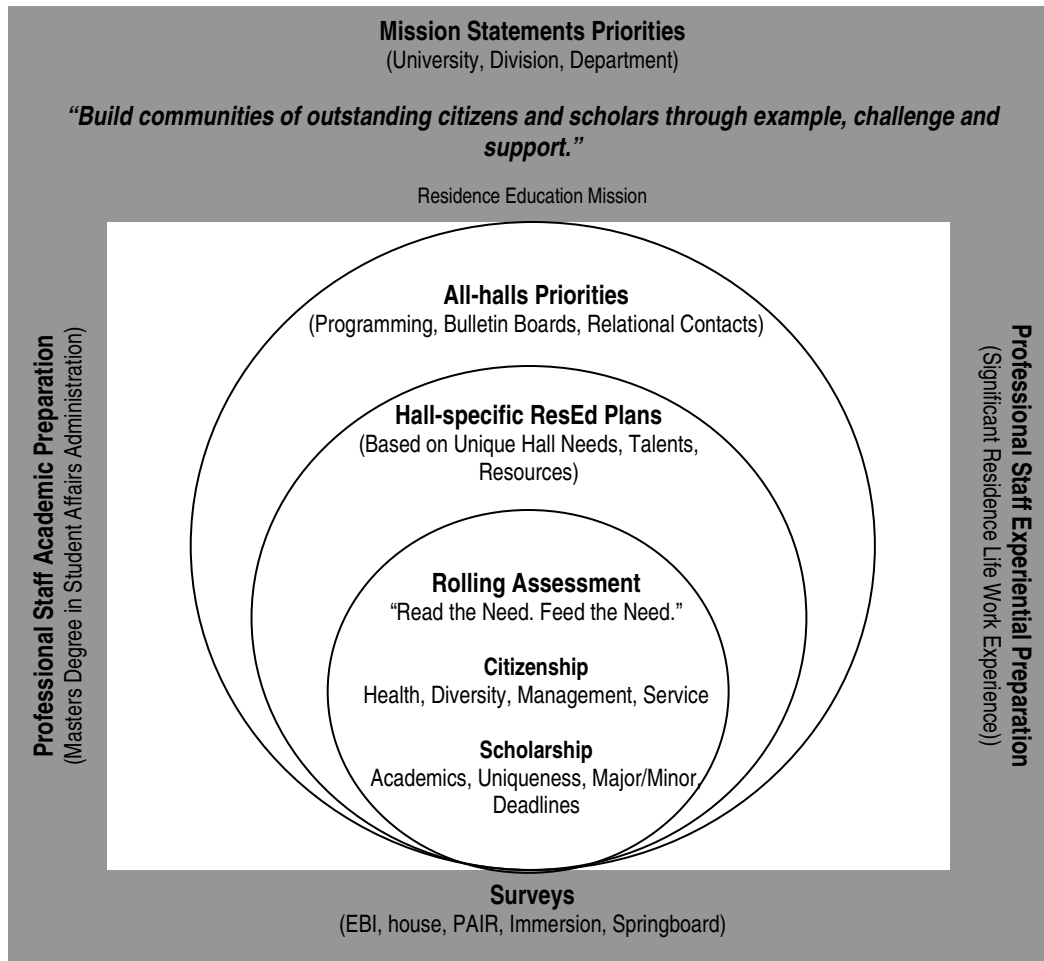
Acquire successful academic skills and attitudes

Explore what makes them unique

Find the major, minor and programs that match unique talents, interests and backgrounds

Meet degree deadlines and requirements





Response to other FOE questions:

1. Initiatives that respond to needs of specific populations:
 - Academically Unprepared: PAIR programs; D/F and January letters to residents; house contests for best grades; immersion programming focus
 - Students with Disabilities: Noehren Hall Ground floor housing; special rooms in Dancer Hall
 - Racial and Ethnic Minorities: Jump Start room assignments collaboration; RA cultural literacy training; programming by RAs; Inclusive Communities Team programming for student leaders; professional and RA recruitment strategies; CME programming collaboration
 - GLBTQ: Safe Zone co-sponsorship with UNI Pride; RA cultural literacy training; programming by RAs; Inclusive Communities Team programming for student leaders
 - 1st Gen. Low Income: Jump Start room assignments collaboration
 - Non-traditional: Single housing in Shull Hall
2. Patterns and trends we track/document: Just on-going use of surveys, interactions with residents, keeping up with cultural shifts (e.g. Facebook and its implications for student success)
3. Organizations and Departments we work with: Academic Advising, Career Services, Wellness and Recreation Services, Center for Multicultural Education; Admissions; Financial Aid; GB-PAC; athletic department
4. Information provided for students to act on their own: Panther Planner (policies and daily calendar); PAIR self-assessment of academic tasks to perform; “I Protect” personal safety door hangers; Fire Safety brochures that accompany fire drills