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**I D E A FUSION**  
**Housing & Residence Life**

*Division of Student Engagement and Enrollment Services*

**Analysis of the Living Learning Communities Feedback  
(Derived from the Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation)  
Fall 2012**

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## **Executive Summary**

The following report provides an analysis of the Housing & Residence Life Living-Learning Communities. This information was obtained from the Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation, an assessment questionnaire sent to residents as an opportunity to provide information regarding their overall living experiences in the hall/apartment communities and direct feedback regarding their respective Resident Assistant/Community Assistant (RA/CA). The contents of this report include: the information collection plan used for this evaluation, the design of the questionnaire, questionnaire findings, and recommendations for future assessment.

The data indicated the major strengths of the living-learning communities as the RA/CA having a positive influence on residents as it relates to the REP ODU model, the ability to meet and develop relationships with other residents living on the floor, the friendly community feel, and having hall/floor mates that share classes and similar majors.

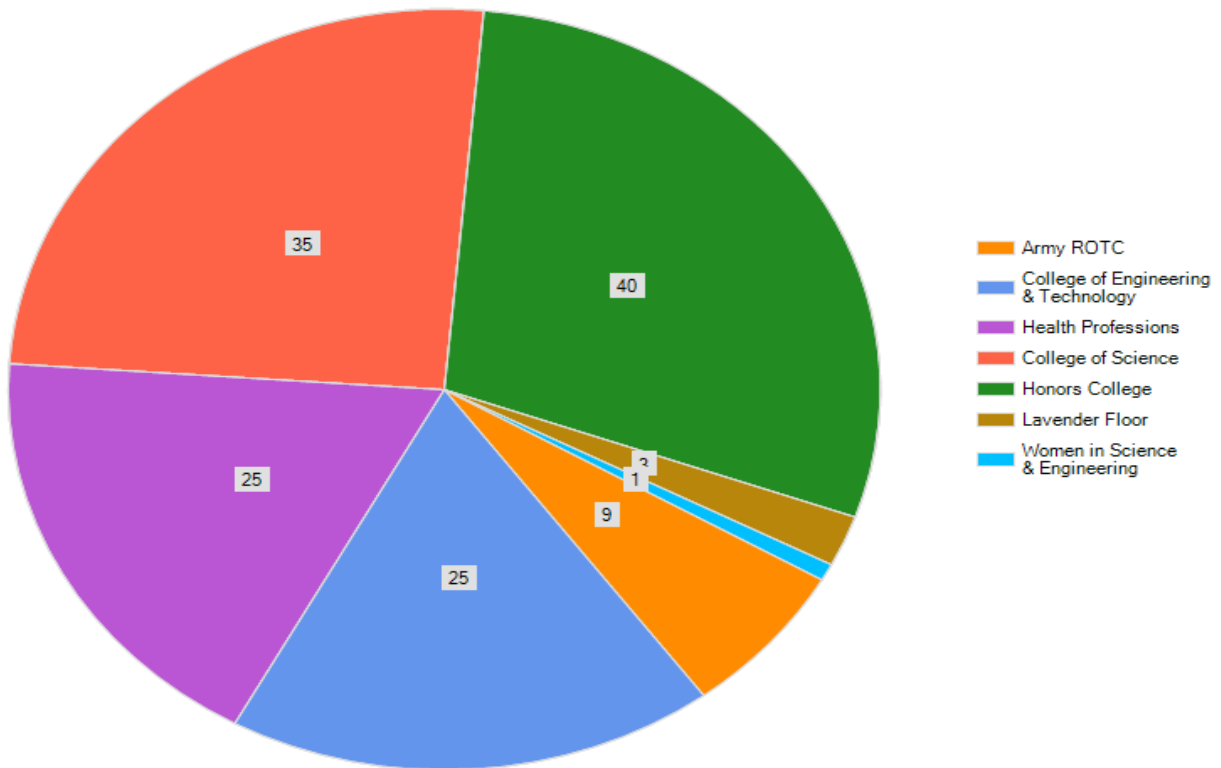
Based on the findings, it is recommended to establish specific, measurable learning outcomes for the living-learning communities. Developing learning outcomes will help to identify and create activities and services related to the respective themes of each living-learning community and serve as a guide for developing future assessment tools. Furthermore, Resident Assistants/Community Assistants selected to serve the living-learning communities should be trained to meet the learning outcomes and promote the overall theme of their respective living-learning community. Residents also noted they would like to have more opportunities to learn about their major, discuss career opportunities, and connect with faculty/staff with similar academic and career interests. Finally, a comprehensive assessment plan should be developed to assist with program evaluation and improvement.

## Information Collection Plan used for this Evaluation

Information used for this report was collected from the Resident Assistant/Community Assistant (RA/CA) Evaluation, a questionnaire sent to all current residents for the purpose of gathering feedback regarding their overall living experiences in the hall/apartment communities and respective Resident Assistant/Community Assistant. Seven living learning communities exist at Old Dominion University: Army ROTC, College of Engineering & Technology, Health Professions, College of Science, Honors College, Lavender Floor, and Women in Science & Engineering. As part of the questionnaire, four questions were specifically related to residing in the living-learning communities. A copy of the complete Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation can be found in Appendix A.

The evaluator was provided the names of all residents living in the residence halls and apartment communities during the fall semester of 2012 was asked to collect data about their experiences with their respective RA/CA and the overall living environment. Assistant Residence Hall Directors, Residence Hall Directors, and Assistant Directors were not asked to participate in the evaluation. A questionnaire was created to collect this data and questions were developed based on the Housing & Residence Life core values (see Appendix A). Four-thousand and seventy-five residents were contacted about the questionnaire via email through Survey Monkey and 931 residents completed the questionnaire, with 138 responding as currently residing in a living-learning community. The questionnaire was initially sent to residents on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and follow-up email notifications were sent on November 26<sup>th</sup>, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The questionnaire was closed on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

**Number of Respondents by Living Learning Community**



## Questionnaire Findings

### Positive Trends

Overall, the RA/CAs assigned to each living-learning community are high-performing, high-achieving student staff members. In each of the questions related to overall job performance, at least 70% of the responses were “strongly agree” and “agree”. RA/CAs were rated highest in displaying a positive attitude (91% rated as “strongly agree” and “agree”), understanding and able to explain university policies and regulations (88% rated as “strongly agree” and “agree”), and being friendly and approachable (88% rated as “strongly agree” and “agree”). 85% of residents believe their RA/CA is doing a good job.

83% of living-learning community residents indicated their RA/CA had a positive influence on them as it relates to one or more tenets of the REP ODU model. This high percentage demonstrates clear communication regarding and purposeful implementation of the REP ODU model through floor activities, one-on-one interactions, and RA/CA role modeling. Open-ended comments regarding the REP ODU model are best exemplified through: “she does programs with the REP model in mind. She's awesome”; “she's encouraging, sweet, helpful, patient, understanding, and always there for all residents no matter what time or how inconvenient it might be for her”; “she has been a wonderful and positive role model to look up to”; “she holds us all accountable for our actions and we know that we need to be responsible”; “my RA has always shown caring to everyone, and always offered a positive attitude, which is what being a Monarch is all about”; “he motivates me to do better in anything I do, he gives wonderful advice. He is like a brother, he don't act like a stranger”.

When asked to name at least two (2) things they enjoy about living in the living-learning community, residents overwhelmingly mentioned developing relationships with other residents living on the floor and the friendly community feel. Residents also mentioned appreciated having hall/floor mates that share the same classes and similar majors, which is conducive to discussing common coursework and studying.

### Areas for Improvement

When asked to rate “my living-learning community has provided me with opportunities and experiences to learn about my major, discuss career opportunities, and connect with faculty/administrators in my college/area of interest”, over 30% of the residents found that their living/learning community has not provided adequate opportunities and experiences related to their major, career opportunities, and a connection with relative faculty and administrators from their college. 32% of the residents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the aforementioned statement.

One expectation of the living-learning communities is that an advising session(s) be offered within each community to learn about the registration process and various resources related to registration and developing academic plans. However, 41% of residents said the advising session was either not helpful or they were not aware that an advising session(s) occurred for the community.

When asked to name at least two (2) things that could be improved with regard to living in the residential community, residents primarily described maintenance and overall facility concerns, such as more/better laundry machines, air conditioning, and water pressure. Although these issues are not specific to living learning-communities, the high number of responses in these this should be noted.

## Final Recommendations

**Design the living-learning communities around specific, measurable learning outcomes.** Identifying what residents should learn from residing in the communities and creating hall/apartment activities based on those outcomes are key to creating effective, efficient, and purposeful living-learning communities. These learning outcomes should be developed in partnership between the respective faculty/staff advisor and Residence Hall Director (or designee).

**Clearly define and incorporate “high-impact practices” that meet essential learning outcomes and best practices of living-learning communities.** As determined by The National Study of Living-Learning Programs, best practices of living-learning communities incorporate residing in a common area, academic components (required common courses, faculty advising, faculty/staff interactions, supportive academic climate, etc.), co-curricular components (study groups, workshops and activities based on major and career interests, experiential learning component, etc.), and a strong academic/student affairs partnership (Inkelas, 2008). In order for living-learning communities to be successful, these practices must be integrated intentionally. Although some of aforementioned characteristics were described throughout the residents’ responses, there does not appear to be consistency across the living-learning communities as to what intentional activities and services are being offered.

**Assign a faculty/staff advisor to each living-learning community with clear responsibilities, input into, and active interaction within his/her respective living-learning community.** To establish a clear relationship between academic affairs and the living-learning communities, a faculty/staff advisor should be assigned to each living-learning community. Faculty/staff advisors are imperative to keeping the living-learning communities in line with academic expectations respective to each community’s theme. This advisor should have experience with and/or interest in the theme of the living-learning community to which he/she is assigned and should be regularly available for engagement opportunities with the residents of his/her living-learning community and planning meetings with Residential Life staff as necessary.

**Consider ways to select and train RA/CAs based on the specific needs of the living-learning communities.** Similarly to faculty/staff advisors, RA/CAs should have experience with and/or interest in the theme of the living-learning community to which he/she is assigned in order to effectively serve residents’ needs. Although RA/CAs were given high ratings with regard to overall job performance, selecting RA/CAs respective to the themes of the living-learning communities will only enhance the overall residential experience.

**Develop a comprehensive assessment plan to assess each living-learning community.** A comprehensive assessment plan must be developed in partnership between the respective faculty/staff advisors, Residence Hall Directors, and other vested parties to ensure the learning outcomes of each living-learning community are being met and offer opportunities for improvement of the communities.

### Reference:

Inkelas, K. K. (2008). National Study of Living-Learning Programs: 2007 Report of Findings. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/8392>.

**Appendix A: Fall 2012 Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation**

**Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation**

**\*1. Select your Residence Hall/Apartment Community**

- Dominion House
- England House
- France House
- Gresham Hall
- Foundation House
- Ireland House
- Nusbaum Apartments
- Powhatan Apartments
- Rogers Hall
- Scotland House
- The Inn
- University Village
- Virginia House
- Whitehurst Towers

**\*2. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Dominion House**

- Kaberlyn Daniel
- Graham Evans
- Erik Hovland
- Allcia Howard
- Caitlin Abbatiello
- Kamry Nedd
- Montrell White
- DaNeshia Williams
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \*3. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from England House

- Richard Blanchette
- Tori Huber
- Ilana Pinsky
- Franklin Womack
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \*4. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from France House

- Danielle Arrington
- Oliver Borden
- Ann Creasy
- Shenise Guy
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \*5. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Foundation House

- Angela Diaz
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \*6. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Gresham Hall

- Uniqua Alexander
- Barbara Banks
- Andrew Dynan
- Katelyn Kiehlinski
- Emanuelle Rice
- Shauna Richards
- Ashley Richardson
- Catherine Scott
- Nicholas Sestito
- Ryan Smith
- Darryl Thompson
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \*7. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Ireland House

- Lester Garis
- Charline Gordon
- Emily Kerns
- Brandon Mowfy
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \*8. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Nusbaum Apartments

- Mehdi Mouajib
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.



## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \*9. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Powhatan Apartments

- Matthew Bradley
- Christopher Breighner
- Jeanette Carter
- Ila Cartwright
- Joshua Darr
- Mimi Garcia-Otero
- Jared Mays
- William Milliner
- Kevin Mondragon
- Rodin Ndandula
- Magan Sheppard
- Justin Smart
- Dena Straus
- Joseph Vance
- Kenya Whitney
- Jahmal Woods
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \*10. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Rogers Hall

- Eslam Abuhmad
- Clarence Cartwright
- Erika Cobb
- Christopher Dean
- Jasmine Dixon
- Aaron Downing
- Mutez El-Gak
- Chad Harris
- Cherese Lewis
- Taniesha Simmons
- Jessica Weicht
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \*11. Select your Resident/Community Advisor from Scotland House

- Marlie De-Clerck
- Briana-Allyn Ellison
- Elliott Fisher
- Niesha Gibbs
- Derwin Kinston
- Scott Malcolm
- Daniel McCarthy
- Brittany Smith
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \* 12. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from The Inn

- Hokkina Hong
- Jonnelsha Jacobs
- Zaki Khalrzac
- Nicole Lewis
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \* 13. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from University Village

- Kionna Baskerville
- Charl Brown
- Chanel Derricott
- Tyler Drewes
- Marcus Elliston
- Thevelline Felix
- Dominique Fleming
- Katie Fortner
- Allan Gervacio
- Bobby Irving
- Shaunda Lambert
- Kendra Lewis
- Georgla McKown
- Rotimi Osiberu
- Jennifer Roubik
- Scott Tillman
- Nia Wilson
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

### \* 14. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Virginia House

- Rawn Boulden
- Jessica Farley
- Brittney Whitehead
- Charial Williams
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

### \* 15. Select your Resident/Community Assistant from Whitehurst Towers

- Millad Ahmadl
- Kevin Anderson
- Derek Braxton
- Kaci Carter
- Michael Cartwright
- Lindsey Conner
- Erinn Edwards
- Shermese Epps
- Jasmine Galloway
- Otis Johnson
- Christopher Levy
- Bitaseme Mboe
- Shazla Naeem
- Olubunmi Olusada
- Shaniece Sanford
- Lauren Scutt
- Bradley Shallcross
- Justin Shelley
- Trianne Smith
- Julia Sutton
- Samantha Vowell
- Dara Willinger
- I do not know who my RA/CA is.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

**\* 16. Using a scale of Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree, how would you rate your RA/CA in the following areas?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Observed
Encourages and supports my academic achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Serves as a positive role model for our living community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides important information in a timely manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can be trusted to respect confidentiality when handling a sensitive matter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can effectively solve problems or conflicts that arise in my living community between residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Displays a positive attitude as often as possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenges opinions, ideas, and viewpoints to promote awareness and appreciation of diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Demonstrates and communicates to others an awareness of and respect for differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has developed a positive sense of community with a comfortable and respectful atmosphere on my floor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourages conditions on my floor that are conducive to studying and sleeping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understands and is able to explain university policies and regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enforces university policies in a consistent and fair manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is willing to help me with personal and academic concerns when I ask for assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is able to refer me to appropriate resources on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

campus based on my needs and concerns

Is able to assist me with problem solving when I ask for assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follows up on concerns I have raised about my residential community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Demonstrates empathy when I raise concerns about me or my residential community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps me to be aware of how my actions impact the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is visible on the floor and available to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is friendly and approachable - I could go to him/her with a concern or problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has made an effort to get to know me and knows me by name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinates well-planned and organized activities for my residential community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offers activities and learning opportunities that meet my needs and interests (can include, but are not limited to, bulletin boards, flyers, active programs, and socials)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, my RA/CA does a good job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### \* 17. How does your RA/CA influence you as it relates to the following tenets of REP ODU (you can choose more than one answer)?

- Responsibility - we believe ODU students will step up as responsible members of their local and campus communities and hold others accountable for their actions.
- Engagement - we believe ODU students will forge meaningful connections with peers, faculty, and staff.
- Pride - we believe ODU students will demonstrate Monarch Pride by positively representing ODU at all times.
- My RA/CA does not influence my experience as it relates to REP ODU.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

**\* 18. Please describe in more detail how your RA/CA influences you as it relates to the tenets of REP ODU.**

**\* 19. Name at least two (2) things you enjoy about living in your residential community.**

**\* 20. Name at least two (2) things that could be improved with regard to living in your residential community.**

**\* 21. Do you live in one of the following living learning communities?**

- Army ROTC
- College of Engineering & Technology
- Health Professions
- College of Science
- Honors College
- Lavender Floor
- Women In Science & Engineering
- I do not reside in a living learning community.

## Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Evaluation

**\*22. Using a scale of Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree, how would you rate your living learning community in the following area?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My living learning community has provided me with opportunities and experiences to learn about my major, discuss career opportunities, and connect with faculty/administrators in my college/area of interest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\*23. Using a scale of Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree, how would you rate the advising session(s) that occurred within your living learning community?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I was aware of, but did not participate in an advising session.	I was not aware that an advising session(s) was offered to me within my living learning community.
The advising session(s) offered within my living learning community provided me with an opportunity to learn about the registration process and connected me with useful resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. What types of activities would you like to see implemented in your living learning community?**

**25. Is there anything else you would like to mention about the performance of your RA/CA that was not addressed in the aforementioned questions?**