

Benefits for Faculty and Staff Members Involved in Residential Learning Communities

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Abstract

Research suggests that residential learning communities (RLCs) provide benefits for members of those communities. Although much research has been done on benefits for students in RLCs, there has been little research done on the benefits for faculty and student affairs staff members involved in RLCs. An unexplored dimension in both these areas is a comparison of the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The present study was designed to address this gap in the existing literature on RLCs.

The purpose of this study was to identify the benefits faculty members and student affairs staff members gain from being involved in RLCs and explore any differences between the two groups. Data were collected by administering the Residential Learning Community Faculty and Staff Benefits Survey to faculty and staff members involved in RLCs at institutions listed in the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International Institutional Database as offering learning communities.

Results revealed that faculty and staff members report gaining intrinsic benefits more often than extrinsic benefits from their involvement in residential learning communities. The results also indicated statistically significant difference between faculty members and student affairs staff members on 2 of the 30 benefits examined. Student affairs staff members were more likely to have received opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations than their faculty member counterparts, while faculty members were more likely to have shared research interests with students outside of the classroom than their student affairs staff member counterparts.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Appendices	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions	6
Significance of the Study	6
Delimitations	8
Organization of Study	9
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
Types of Residential Learning Communities	10
Faculty Involvement in Residential Learning Communities	11
Benefits for Faculty and Staff Involved in Learning Communities	15
Benefits for Faculty and Staff Involved in RLCs	18
Work-related Motivators for Faculty Members	19
Chapter Three: Methods	21
Sample Selection	22
Instrumentation	23
Validity and Reliability	24
Data Collection Procedures	25

Data Analysis Procedures	26
Chapter Four: Results.....	28
Description of the Sample.....	28
Reliability.....	28
Results Reported by Research Question.....	30
Results Regarding the Intrinsic Benefits for Faculty Members	30
Results Regarding the Intrinsic Benefits for Student Affairs Staff Members.....	34
Results Regarding the Differences in Intrinsic Benefits.....	34
Results Regarding the Extrinsic Benefits for Faculty Members.....	35
Results Regarding the Extrinsic Benefits for Student Affairs Staff Members....	39
Results Regarding the Differences in Intrinsic Benefits.....	39
Chapter Five: Discussion.....	41
Discussion of the Results	41
Relationship of the Results to Prior Research.....	49
Implications for Future Practice	51
Implications for Future Research	52
Limitations	53
Conclusion	54
References	56
Appendices	61
Vita.....	67

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.....	29
Table 2: Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Intrinsic Benefits	31
Table 3: Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Extrinsic Benefits	36

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Residential Learning Community Faculty and Staff Benefits Survey	61
Appendix B: Initial CHO Participation Letter.....	63
Appendix C: Reminder CHO Participation Letter.....	64
Appendix D: Follow-up CHO Participation Letter.....	65
Appendix E: Faculty and Staff Participant Letter.....	66

Chapter One

Introduction

Residence halls have been a part of the American higher education system since colonial times. Thus, on-campus residential students have always been a part of the American college and university system. In colonial times, colleges served as a way of controlling unruly boys, and the residence halls were one of the ways to accomplish this task. Parents gave complete control of their sons' lives to the institution. This provided a way for the institution to control the students' actions and keep them from associating with the common layperson and other disorderly people. It also allowed for an integrated program of curricular and extracurricular instruction (Cohen, 1998).

In the nineteenth century, the Germanic influence on higher education also affected student dormitories. Faculty members now viewed students as capable of housing themselves. Schools in financial crisis were unable to repair their decaying dormitories. However, when the University of Chicago and its student housing program thrived, institutions began to reevaluate their housing programs (Schuh, 1988).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, institutions became increasingly interested in student housing as women began entering higher education. Women were deemed to need separate facilities that provided close supervision. Student housing also became popular for students who wanted easier access to extracurricular activities provided by the institutions (Schuh, 1988).

Since the end of World War II, the word "residence hall" has replaced "dormitory," and coeducational halls have been introduced. Facilities have begun to be designed with amenities, recreational areas, and service desks for more than only housing students, and the staff members

has become professionalized (Fitzgerald, 1974). The role of residence halls has now shifted from dormitories with rules controlling students' lives to residence halls with activities and programs offered to the residents (Cohen, 1998).

The activities provided by the residence hall staff members offer more than social outings. They also provide opportunities to combine academic activities with extracurricular activities (Greenleaf, 1974; Schuh, 1988). These programs encourage academic learning and personal development (Williams & Reilley, 1974).

One such program for combining academic activities within the residence halls is to have faculty members hold discussions in the residence hall. These can be informal conversations or presentations about a topic in which the faculty member has a particular interest. These programs demonstrate to the residents that the faculty member has interests outside his or her discipline (Brown, 1974; Schuh, 1988).

Classroom instruction within the residence halls is another program that combines academic activities within the residence halls. This allows the students to realize that the residence halls can be used for more than just a place to sleep. It also encourages the faculty members to see alternatives to the traditional classroom setting (Brown, 1974).

A final example of a program that combines academic activities with the residence halls is a residential learning community (RLC) (Brown, 1974; Schuh, 1988; Williams & Reilley, 1974). Generally speaking, residential learning communities involve students who take at least one course together, who apply to live together, and involve some type of curricular and/or cultural component associated with the community. Compared to traditional residence halls, RLCs provide residents with a more intense and intentional connection between in-class and out-of-class learning. They often have a larger staff and offer a higher level of interaction between

residents, faculty members, and staff members (Hargrave, 2000; Jones, 2003; Winston & Anchors, 1993).

Students living in residential learning communities gain many benefits that their non-RLC counterparts do not. One such benefit is that residential learning communities encourage academic success. Students in an engineering RLC reported a closer connection to the college of engineering than those students living in traditional halls and those students living off-campus (McKelfresh, 1980). They also reported feeling a greater sense of rapport with fellow engineering students than those not in the RLC and reported greater awareness of tutoring services and other academic assistance programs. This supports the notion that residential learning communities foster students who are academically more confident and are more closely connected to the campus.

Although the students in RLCs report higher levels of satisfaction, connection to the university and academic confidence, few studies have focused on the reasons this occurs. Recently, a study compared two residence halls, one with a residential learning community in place and a traditional hall scheduled to become a residential learning community. Residents of both facilities report similar positive living experiences, yet those who lived in the current residential learning community reported a significant positive difference in the academic and social factors (Henry & Schein, 1998). However, it is important to note that the higher reported academic and social factors were due to planned programming efforts and not merely because they lived in a residential learning environment. This suggests that residential learning communities by nature aid in the community-building process, but planned programming by residential assistants and other housing staff members are still necessary to foster this development.

There are many beneficial effects of living in a residential learning community when compared to a traditional hall. However, these benefits vary by type of residential learning community. A large study compared the effects of living in a student-run residential learning community, a faculty-involved program, and a hall with a formal theme (Clarke, Miser, & Roberts, 1988). Students living in student-oriented residential learning halls were more likely to use career and personal counseling services and were less likely to watch TV or go to clubs or bars. Students in faculty-involved programs were more satisfied with their curriculum and more likely to be satisfied with their college experience. They were also more social than students in the other groups and were more likely to go to clubs or bars. Students in formal theme housing programs were more likely to work in groups, participate in class discussions, and appreciate the arts and other culture activities. They were less likely to watch TV and prioritize choosing a career. Understanding the effects of a particular residential learning structure is important for housing staff members. Such data can be used by resident assistants to create appropriate programs that target the particular goals and habits of their residents.

A few studies have focused on the benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs. When faculty members make presentations, they report receiving only limited tangible benefits. For instance, little more than half received a thank you card from students and approximately 44% received a T-shirt (Tampke, 1993).

Faculty members involved in RLCs report gaining a new and fuller understanding of the contemporary collegiate experience. They find that their involvement rekindles enthusiasm for their work. They also report a greater understanding of the developmental role of the residence halls (Jackson & Stevens, 1990).

Student housing has seen many changes since the Colonial days. Staff members in the dormitories have served as temporary parents (Cohen, 1998) and facilitated access to other campus activities (Schuh, 1988). Administrators have fluctuated in their views on housing as well (Fitzgerald, 1974; Schuh, 1988). Contemporary residence hall staff members now promote academic programs and personal development within the halls (Greenleaf, 1974; Schuh, 1988; Williams & Reilley, 1974). These programs include informal discussions, holding class within the residence halls, and residential learning communities (Brown, 1974; Schuh, 1988; Williams & Reilley, 1974).

Residential learning communities provide benefits for members of those communities. Students living in RLCs report greater connection to the university (McKelfresh, 1980) and greater academic and social involvement (Henry & Schein, 1998). These student benefits vary by the type of RLC in which student is living (Clarke, Miser, & Roberts, 1988).

Although much research has been done on benefits for students in RLCs, there has been little research done on the benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs (Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Tampke, 1993). Research on benefits for student affairs staff members appears even less frequently. An unexplored dimension in both these areas is a comparison of the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The present study was designed to address this gap in the existing literature on RLCs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the benefits faculty members and student affairs staff members gain from being involved in residential learning communities (RLCs). I defined involvement as participation in the RLC through day-to-day administration, planning, or teaching a course. I defined benefits through two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic

benefits are more overt and related to the formal roles that faculty and staff members play (i.e. consideration for tenure/promotion, a reduced teaching load or collateral assignment, increased knowledge of pedagogy). Intrinsic benefits are more covert and related to the personal values placed on formal roles (i.e., involvement with students, contact with other faculty or staff members, feeling like you make a difference).

An online survey will be administered to faculty and staff members involved in RLCs at selected institutions. The survey will ask respondents to indicate whether they had or had not received benefits due to their involvement within the RLC.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the intrinsic benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs?
2. What are the intrinsic benefits for student affairs staff members involved in RLCs?
3. Are there differences in the intrinsic benefits between faculty members and student affairs staff members?
4. What are the extrinsic benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs?
5. What are the extrinsic benefits for student affairs staff members involved in RLCs?
6. Are there differences in the extrinsic benefits between faculty members and student affairs staff members?

Significance of the Study

The present study has significance for future practice, research, and policy. In terms of practice, this study may be significant for several campus constituencies. One group that might benefit from the findings includes coordinators of RLCs. The results of this study may provide coordinators with data about the benefits faculty and staff members might gain by being involved

in residential learning communities. Coordinators might use the results to aid in recruiting faculty and staff members for RLCs.

Residential Life/Housing staff members might also benefit from the results of this study. The study explores the benefits faculty members gain by being involved in RLCs. The results may identify benefits faculty and staff members receive by being involved. Residential life staff members can use this data when formulating possible benefits faculty and staff members at their institutions might receive for being involved in RLCs.

Finally, this study may have significance for faculty and staff members as they consider their involvement in RLCs. Faculty and staff members might gain a better understanding of the benefits they could receive by becoming involved. They might use the results of this study when deciding whether to become involved with RLCs.

The present study also may have significance for future research. For example, this study explores the benefits faculty and staff members might gain by being involved in residential learning communities. Previous studies have focused on the benefits for students living in RLCs. Future studies might explore the benefits for resident assistants who work in buildings which house RLCs. Such a study would fill a gap in the literature.

Future scholars might also wish to explore whether the benefits differ based on the type of involvement in the RLCs. For instance, future studies might compare those who are involved in the creation and administrations aspects of the RLC to those who only present occasional programs to RLC students. Such a study would expand on the information about faculty and staff involvement in RLCs.

Finally, future researchers may wish to investigate whether a certain type of faculty member is more likely to get involved in RLCs. This study focused on the benefits the faculty

members might gain by being involved, but a future study could focus on the demographics of the faculty members already involved in RLCs. The demographics explored might include sex, academic department, tenure/non-tenure, and years of experience in the field. Such a study would broaden the information available about faculty involvement in RLCs.

The present study may also be significant for future policy. The results may provide academic policymakers with information about the benefits faculty members gain by being involved in residential learning communities. Policymakers might use this information to assess policies related to the faculty reward system.

This study may have significance for student affairs policymakers when they consider their relationship with faculty members. The results may provide policymakers with information about the benefits faculty members gain from their RLC involvement. This information might be used by to assess policies related to recruiting faculty members to be involved.

Finally, policymakers might use this study when deciding whether to develop RLCs on their campuses. This study focuses on the benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. Policymakers might use this information and research on benefits for students involved in RLCs to understand the potential impact RLCs might have on their campuses.

Delimitations

As with all research, this study has some initial delimitations. The first deals with the sample. Respondents in this study will be required to have participated in day-to-day administration, planning, or teaching a course for an RLC. Those who did not meet the criteria will be excluded. Because of this, a specific type of faculty or staff member may be over represented in this sample. Generalizing the results of this group of faculty members to all faculty members is not possible.

The technique used to collect data will be quantitative in nature. There are numerous delimitations associated with surveys. Participants may not understand certain items and may interpret items differently. Likewise, the survey might not elicit data about all the benefits, either intrinsic or extrinsic. Finally, the survey might not have offer participants all the response options they need to express their thoughts. If any of these occur, the results might be skewed.

Finally, faculty and staff members will serve as the data source. Like any study involving people, there is a possibility that participants will not respond candidly. If this is the case, then results may be influenced.

Despite these delimitations, the present study serves to fill a gap in the literature about benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. Faculty and staff members involved in RLCs serve as the best sources of information regarding the benefits they receive because of their involvement.

Organization of Study

This study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter served as a general introduction to the issue of benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. Chapter Two provides a literature review of topics related to the study. The third chapter describes the methods used in the study including the sampling technique and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. The last chapter includes a discussion of those results, including their implications for future research and practice.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

To initially explore the benefits of faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities (RLCs), an examination of the literature on the types of RLCs and the literature on faculty involvement in RLCs is necessary. The next step involves an examination of the literature on benefits for faculty and staff members involved in learning communities.

To fully explore the topic, a review of literature focusing on previous studies about benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs is necessary. The final section examines research on work-related motivators for faculty members. The literature review is organized around these five major categories and their respective subtopics.

Types of Residential Learning Communities

Several types of RLCs currently exist in the field. The different types vary based on the level of academic faculty involvement, the level of student engagement, and the level of theme integration. The following section provides a list of five possible types of RLCs based on categories suggested by Charles Schroeder (1994).

The first type of RLC is the Common Curricular Experience Community. This type of RLC has a cohort of students, usually freshman, grouped together based on academic majors or common interests (Schroeder, 1994). Those centered on academic majors can have the cohort take the same class, and this class may or may not meet in the residence hall. Those centered on common interests may offer either noncredit classes or for-credit classes and/or provide programming around the theme (Rowe, 1981).

A second type of RLC is a Service Learning Community. Residents in this type of RLC receive academic credit for non-traditional, hands-on learning. Examples include community

service and practical learning applications. These communities may focus on the development of such humanitarian values as justice, altruism, good citizenship, and social responsibility (Rowe, 1981; Schroeder, 1994).

A third type of RLC is a Multicultural Learning Community. These communities are a response to the increase of minority students at institutions. They focus on understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, racial understanding, increased cultural awareness, and appreciation of diversity (Schroeder, 1994).

A fourth type of RLC is a Freshman-Experience Learning Community. These RLCs provide the integration and coherence of the freshman transition to college with the residence hall experience. A variation of this theme is a Learning Community for Undecided Students. Residents in this RLC would be involved for one year with the goal of deciding a major by the end of the year (Schroeder, 1994).

The last type of RLC is a Residential College. This type of RLC functions as a mini-college. Residents pursue all or a major portion of their credit classes together within the Residential College. The most structured Residential College has the faculty members live and work within the residence hall (Rowe, 1981).

Understanding the types of RLCs is an important step to examine the benefits of faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The following section will focus on the various topics about faculty involvement in RLCs.

Faculty Involvement in Residential Learning Communities

Faculty involvement in RLCs has become a topic of discussion for housing officials. Housing officials and other student affairs professionals have been discussing ways to

collaborate with their academic colleagues. However, faculty members have not been doing the same (Martin & Murphy, 2003).

To get faculty members involved, it is necessary to have an understanding of why faculty members might want to be involved in the first place. Faculty members already involved in RLCs report several reasons for taking part in the out-of-class lives of students. The first reason is that faculty members want to develop a sense of total community for the institution (Hennessy, 1981). RLCs help promote the “collegiate way of life.” This ideal promotes both formal and informal instructional interactions from faculty members (Ryan, 1992).

Another reason faculty members want to be involved is to establish an academic climate (Hennessy, 1981). RLCs represent an interdisciplinary and innovative form of education. They allow faculty members to share the passion for their discipline outside of the classroom and their academic lives into the residence halls. (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000).

A third reason faculty members want to be involved lies within the personal nature of RLCs. Faculty members searching for ways to get to know students better can find an avenue for connection within the RLC. Faculty members, especially those with liberal arts backgrounds, have an opportunity to relive a similar educational experience they had in their undergraduate days (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000).

A final reason faculty members want to be involved is to maximize resources (Hennessy, 1981). Facilities and resources are declining for both student affairs and academic departments. Collaboration between these two groups can help make the funding request more attractive to budget managers (McClellan & Barr, 2000).

Once faculty members are interested in being involved in the RLCs, the next step for student affairs staff is to convince faculty of the different roles they can play. Faculty members

can serve in many capacities, including that of director, instructor, adviser, tutor, or consultant (Rowe, 1981). However, there are several mechanisms that involve faculty members in their various roles within the RLCs (Grimm, 1993).

The first mechanism is to have faculty involvement programs where the faculty member participates in programming efforts. This can include attending group dinners or attending cultural events with the students. Faculty members who are willing to devote more time to the programs can also participate in off-campus field trips or host a dinner get-together at their houses (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; Zeller, 1994).

Another mechanism is to provide office space for faculty members, which can alleviate cramped quarters that faculty members may have elsewhere on campus (Grimm, 1993). Adequate office space within the residence hall can make the faculty member feel integrated into the RLC. However, facilities that are ill equipped or not working can deter faculty members from being involved. This can also cause the student to view the RLC as less intellectually stimulating (Rowe, 1981).

A third mechanism is a faculty-in-residence program where the faculty member resides in the residence hall (Grimm, 1993). Faculty-in-residence become consultants to assist with community issues and projects and are able to assist freshman with adjustment issues (Eddy, Herman, & Milani, 1989). This option is almost reminiscent of colonial times. This emphasis on faculty interaction reflects the focus among post-secondary institutions to holistically educate students and combine the extracurricular with the curricular (Martin & Murphy, 2003).

Although there are several mechanisms to get faculty members involved, there are factors that affect the success of a faculty member's involvement within the RLC. The first factor is the amount of time required. Programs of less preparation and contact time were preferred by the

faculty members over activities that are more intensive. These less time intensive programs are especially preferred by busy and senior faculty members and are more likely to be coordinated by residence hall staff members (Tampke, 1993).

Another factor affecting RLC faculty success is the format of the interaction. Classes that are held within the halls are found more enjoyable when the instructional techniques differ from the traditional classroom setting. This can include more discussion oriented classes or serving coffee (Brown, 1974). However, any form of classroom-like behavior is less successful than informal social encounters (Kuh, Schuh, & Thomas, 1985; Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Schuh & Kuh, 1984).

A third factor affecting RLC faculty success is the amount of student involvement in planning the interactions. Faculty involvement reaches the highest levels if students exhibit readiness to participate (Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Schuh & Kuh, 1984). Residence hall staff members can encourage the RAs and the hall government members to plan programs and activities and designate someone to assume the role of faculty liaison (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; Kuh, Schuh, & Thomas, 1985). This person can personally invite the faculty members, who find personal invitations from students more appealing than from staff members (Rowe, 1981).

The final factor affecting RLC faculty success is the expectations faculty members have of their outcomes. Faculty members have greater success when they set realistic expectations in terms of learning and reaching only a handful of students (Jackson & Stevens, 1990). It is unrealistic that faculty members will have a profound affect on 50 or more students living in a hall. Residence hall staff members should stress the quality of interactions over the quantity (Kuh, Schuh, & Thomas, 1985; Schuh & Kuh, 1984).

Understanding the type of involvement faculty members can have in the RLC is important. To begin to explore the benefits that faculty and staff members receive for being involved in RLCs, it is necessary to examine studies that related to benefits for faculty and staff members involved in learning communities.

Benefits for Faculty and Staff Involved in Learning Communities

In the past two decades, several articles on benefits for faculty members involved in learning communities have appeared in the literature. Many of these articles involved case studies on an individual learning community and only briefly mentioned what some of the faculty members reported. Lenning and Ebbers (1999) developed a list of benefits faculty members receive by being involved in learning communities. The following section is organized around topics included in that list.

First, learning communities allow faculty members to work together more closely and effectively (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Faculty members are able to make connections with faculty from other disciplines. Involved faculty members are able to form bonds and supportive peer groups (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; MacKay, 1996; Matthews, 1994; Smith & Hunter, 1987; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Tinto, 1998)

Second, learning communities lead to increased continuity and integration of the curriculum (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Involved faculty members gain the opportunity to revitalize stale courses that they have taught for years. The team-teaching approach removes the feeling of having to be an expert on the topic. The result is the rediscovery of learning as an engagement of both student and faculty members (Finley, 1990; Matthews, 1994; Tinto, 1998).

Third, learning communities constitute a valuable activity for faculty development (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). For the institution, learning communities may become a low financial

cost, high yield approach to faculty development and educational reform. Faculty members feel revitalized and a sense of renewal after their involvement (Gaff, 1997; Smith & Hunter, 1987; Stark & Lattuca, 1997).

Fourth, learning communities help participating faculty members to view their disciplines in a more revealing light (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Because participating faculty members teach along side faculty members from other disciplines, they learn to use these other disciplines' views to examine their own discipline. Linking the courses allows faculty members to move away from the specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge (Gabelnik et al., 1990; Tinto, 1998).

Fifth, learning communities encourage faculty members to share knowledge with one another (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Team teaching allows faculty members to gain insight into other fields of study. The faculty members learn to count on each other for suggestions and solutions. They begin to share knowledge about special problems they are facing in their classrooms and within their departments (MacKay, 1996; Tinto, 1998)

Sixth, participation in learning communities broadens faculty members' knowledge about pedagogy (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Faculty members have opportunities to try new teaching methods. They learn different strategies from watching their colleagues teach, and they gain experience using the team-teaching approach. Because they have other faculty members in the classroom, they get feedback on their teaching skills and are able to apply that feedback (Finley, 1990; Gabelnik et al., 1990; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Matthews, 1994; Tinto, 1998).

Seventh, the act of participating and creating learning communities is a community-building event (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Faculty members gain a sense of collegiality with faculty members from other departments. The engagement of students, faculty members, and

student affairs staff members helps involved faculty members develop a greater sense of an academic community at the institution (Finley, 1990; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000).

Finally, faculty members gain tangible benefits because of their involvement in learning communities. Faculty members can be provided with dining hall meal privileges and free tickets to cultural events. They can also receive money to attend conferences, a graduate assistant to help with the additional workload, publicity on campus, and even increases in merit pay. If these rewards are not available, faculty members can be rewarded with thank you receptions (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; Gabelnik et al., 1990)

Faculty members are not the only ones who benefit from learning communities. Student affairs staff members also benefit from participating in learning communities. They gain the opportunity to show academic faculty members their work and the educational role they play at the institution (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Like faculty, they also gain the experience of being shared, connected learners (Tinto, 1998).

Student affairs staff members also gain benefits that enhance their work. Involved faculty members can provide staff members with insight on residential policies from their previous institutions. Involved faculty members are also more likely to participate in other educational programs and support expenditures for improving undergraduate housing (Colwell & Lifka, 1983).

The topic of benefits for faculty and staff members involved in learning communities is important in understanding their involvement in the learning communities. However, the present study focused on the benefits that faculty and staff members receive for being involved in RLCs. Thus, it was important to examine studies that related to that topic as well.

Benefits for Faculty and Staff Involved in RLCs

While many studies have examined the benefits for faculty members involved in learning communities, fewer studies have examined the benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs. Many of the benefits that have been reported parallel those in learning communities in general.

First, faculty members involved in RLCs gain a new insight about the contemporary college student. They gain a new and fuller understanding of the contemporary collegiate experience and see students from nonstereotypical, less formal, and multidimensional perspectives (Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Smith, 1994).

Second, faculty members involved in RLCs have interactions with students that are atypical of the normal classroom relationship. They may hold conversations with students that are normally uncomfortable and taboo topics. They are also able to channel students into productive endeavors to integrate in and out of class learning (Jackson & Stevens, 1990).

Finally, faculty members involved in RLCs see positive effects on other aspects of their work. Faculty members find that involvement in RLCs rekindles enthusiasm for their work (Jackson & Stevens, 1990). Their experience with working with faculty members from other disciplines and team teaching leads them to experiment with innovative teaching strategies in their classes. Involved faculty members also become more concerned with the educational philosophy of the institution than their uninvolved colleagues (Smith, 1994).

While there have been a few studies on benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs, an even smaller focus has been given to benefits for student affairs staff members involved in RLCs. Because of their collaboration with faculty members, student affairs staff members are able to show how their work contributes to the academic mission of the institution. Thus, faculty members gain a greater understanding of the developmental role of the residence halls. Both

faculty and student affairs staff members realize the mutually supportive roles they have in integrating the academic and out-of-class learning opportunities (Clarke, Miser, & Roberts, 1988; Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Smith, 1994).

Work-related Motivators for Faculty Members

Having a well-developed reward system is one method to motivate faculty members to become involved in RLCs. However, other methods exist as well. When determining which method to use, one must understand faculty members' motivations for being involved. Currently, there are two explanations for work-related motivations.

One explanation comes from extrinsic motivation theorists. They believe that people are rational. People will always act to maximize rewards. The rewards can be a promotion, public recognition, or extra resources. While rewards come in many forms, money is usually the most preferred. Under this view, faculty members will do whatever the institution wants when they believe the institution will reward them (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

Evidence that faculty members are extrinsically motivated can be found in job satisfaction. New faculty members report lower satisfaction with job security than their senior colleagues. However, both groups report salary and time available to keep current in one's field as low factors for job satisfaction (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998).

A second explanation comes from intrinsic motivation theorists. They believe people's behavior comes from their internal drives and interests. While faculty members compete for prizes, they continue to participate even if they lose because they enjoy the activity. They fulfill their obligations, but when time allocations are theirs to make, they continue to spend their time on what they want to do (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

Evidence that faculty members are intrinsically motivated can be found in the motivations of current graduate students and young faculty members. Graduate students and early-career faculty members are looking for cultures and environments that value community, collegiality, and collaborations. They believe these institutions will enable them to do good work and live satisfying lives. (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Faculty members who lack the support and sense of shared purpose from colleagues and administrators in their institutions may become demoralized. Consequently, they may also find it difficult to establish a supportive learning environment for their students (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998).

It is clear that the debate to determine the motivations behind faculty behavior cannot be answered with a single theory. Neither theory alone adequately explains the motivations. A more likely answer is that there are interactions involved, and that faculty call on one or the other reward system depending on factors and circumstances (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

In summary, RLCs are beginning to appear at institutions across the nation. Studies have focused on the benefits for students involved in RLCs. Studies have also reported the different methods that faculty and staff members can be involved in RLCs. However, few studies have focused on the benefits faculty and staff members receive for being involved. Thus, RLC coordinators are lacking ways of recruiting faculty and staff members. The present study addresses this gap in the literature.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to identify the benefits faculty and staff members gain from being involved in residential learning communities (RLCs). I defined involvement as participation in the RLC through day-to-day administration, planning, or teaching a course. I defined benefits through two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic benefits are more overt and related to the formal roles that faculty and staff members play (e.g. consideration for tenure/promotion, a reduced teaching load or collateral assignment, increased knowledge of pedagogy). Intrinsic benefits are more covert and their importance may vary from person to person (e.g. involvement with students, contact with other faculty or staff members, feeling like you make a difference). The goal was to describe the benefits faculty and staff members gain from being involved in RLCs. Specifically, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the intrinsic benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs?
2. What are the intrinsic benefits for student affairs staff members involved in RLCs?
3. Are there differences in the intrinsic benefits between faculty members and student affairs staff members?
4. What are the extrinsic benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs?
5. What are the extrinsic benefits for student affairs staff members involved in RLCs?
6. Are there differences in the extrinsic benefits between faculty members and student affairs staff members?

Sample Selection

The sample used in this study was faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. To be included in the sample, the faculty and staff members had to meet two criteria. First, their institutions had to be listed in the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International Institutional Database as offering learning communities. This database is sponsored by ACUHO-I and includes all institutional members.

Second, the faculty and staff members had to be active participants in the RLC. Because the purpose of the study was to determine the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs, this criterion ensured that the sample includes only faculty and staff members who have an active role in the RLC.

The first step in selecting the sample was identifying institutions with RLCs. To accomplish this, I visited the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International Institutional Database website (https://www.acuho-i.org/cgi-bin/membership/search-profiles.cgi?_source=new). I then searched for institutions with learning communities under section 1.8 Housing Programs and Services. For an institution to be included in the sample, the institution had to be listed in the search results.

The next step in selecting the sample was compiling a list of potential participants and a list of potential institutions. The participant list included faculty and staff members with whom I would serve as the primary contact. This list included the person's name, e-mail address, and institution.

The institution list included institutions where the CHO or RLC coordinator would serve as the primary contact to the faculty and staff members. This list provided the institution, the

contact's name, the contact's e-mail, the number of faculty members involved in the RLC, and the number of staff members involved in the RLC.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect data about benefits for faculty members involved in RLCs was the Residential Learning Community Faculty and Staff Benefits Survey (FSBS). The FSBS was designed specifically for the purposes of this study by the researcher. Items on the FSBS were based on prior research on learning community benefits for faculty and staff members. Items were also developed from the suggestions of faculty members and student affairs practitioners with knowledge or experience with RLCs or benefits.

The instrument has three sections: intrinsic benefits, extrinsic benefits, and demographics. The first two sections each consisted of 15 items, with possible responses being yes or no. The third section explored the demographic characteristics of the participants. A copy of the instrument is included in Appendix A.

Section one included a series of items relating to intrinsic benefits. This section contained 15 items. Participants were asked if they had received intrinsic benefits due to their involvement in RLCs. For example, participants were asked whether they had experienced greater involvement with students, had contact with faculty members from other academic disciplines, and felt like they make a difference in student lives.

Section two included a series of items relating to extrinsic benefits. This section contained 15 items. Participants reported whether they had (yes) or had not (no) received benefits due to their involvement. For example, participants were asked whether they had received a meal plan, had their teaching load/collateral assignments reduced, or been given an increase in salary due to their involvement in the RLC.

Section three included an item related to the participants' demographic information. This section asked 3 questions to determine the general demographic information. Participants were asked to identify their primary role at the institution, their level of involvement in the RLC, and the type of RLC in which they are involved.

Upon initial drafting of the instrument, a panel of experts reviewed the questionnaire. This panel consisted of higher education faculty members, student affairs practitioners with knowledge or experience with RLCs or benefits, and student affairs assessment staff members. The panel reviewed the instrument to ensure that the items asked related to the research questions. The instrument was then revised to incorporate suggestions made by the panel.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is a term that relates to the level of accurateness with which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Suskie, 1996). Data collected from valid questionnaires can have meaningful inferences drawn from it (Creswell, 2003; Suskie, 1996). To establish validity, an expert panel was used to review the survey items. A panel review is a procedure that can enhance face validity by asking qualified people to determine whether the instrument measures the concept being studied (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991).

Reliability is the level of consistency in the data (Suskie, 1996). A coefficient of internal consistency can compute test reliability by using a single administration of a single form of the test. Reliability was established by calculating a coefficient of internal consistency on the data set collected by the researcher (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Data Collection Procedures

Before the data collection process could begin, the researcher sought approval from the university's Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects. Once approval was obtained, the sample was selected and the data collection began.

The first step in the data collection process was posting the survey online. Several trial runs were conducted on the website to ensure that it was properly running. The survey website went active on March 31, 2004.

The next step in selecting the sample was contacting the sample. An e-mail was sent to the Chief Housing Officers (CHOs) on March 31, 2004. This e-mail explained the purpose of the study, asked for their participation, included the URL address for the online survey, and provided them the researcher's contact information. I also asked for them to be involved by either sending me contact information for faculty and staff members involved with the RLCs at their schools or asking them to serve as the contact coordinator at their institution. The e-mail also asked that participants complete the survey and send the contact information within a two-week period. A copy of this e-mail appears in Appendix B.

Participants went online to complete the survey from March 31, 2004 through April 16, 2004. A reminder e-mail was sent on March 12, 2004. This e-mail thanked those CHOs who had already sent contact information for their institution. A copy of this e-mail is included in Appendix C. A separate email asked CHOs who had not responded to please do so. A copy of this e-mail is included in Appendix D.

A reminder e-mail was also sent to any faculty and staff member on the participant list. This e-mail explained the purpose of the study and provided them the researcher's contact

information. It explained why they were being contacted and asked for their participation. A copy of this e-mail is included in Appendix E.

The final step in the data collection process was taking the website offline. This occurred on April 17, 2004.

Data Analysis Procedures

After participants completed the survey and data were collected, I began to analyze the data. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The first phase of the analysis required sorting the participants into two categories: faculty members and staff members. The researcher used data provided to the questions in the demographic section of the survey to assign the participants into categories. Results from participants who selected Other were discarded.

The first research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. The questionnaire items related to this section yielded categorical data. Thus, frequencies were calculated and used to address the question.

The second research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by staff members involved in RLCs. The questionnaire items related to this section yielded categorical data. Thus, frequencies were calculated and used to address the question.

The third research question posed in the study examined differences in intrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The researcher calculated the frequency with which each category of participants (Faculty, Staff) responded to each item that elicited data about intrinsic benefits. Then a series of chi-squares was conducted on each questionnaire item to look for significant relationships among frequencies ($p < .05$)

The fourth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. The questionnaire items related to this section yielded categorical data as well. Thus, frequencies were employed to answer the research question.

The fifth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by staff members involved in RLCs. The questionnaire items related to this section yielded categorical data as well. Thus, frequencies were employed to answer the research question.

The sixth research question posed in the study examined differences in extrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The researcher calculated the frequency with which each category of participants (Faculty, Staff) responded to each item that elicited data about extrinsic benefits. Then a series of chi-squares was conducted on each questionnaire item to look for significant relationships among frequencies ($p < .05$)

In summary, this study sought to understand the types of benefits faculty and staff members gain from their involvements in RLCs. The methods used to collect and analyze the data described in this section were deemed sufficient to answer the research questions posed in this study.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the present study. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section describes the demographic characteristics of the sample. The second section describes the reliability data. The third section describes the results of the study. These results are reported in the order of the research questions posed in the study.

Description of the Sample

A total of 213 institutions were listed in the ACUHO-I Institutional Database as having RLCs. Of these 213 institutions, 207 included a working email address for the CHO. The final sample included 24 institutions, representing 11.6% of the potential institutions. Twelve institutions, representing 5.8% of the potential institutions, either declined to participate or no longer had RLCs at the institution.

A total of 110 respondents completed the FSBS. This represented 50.7% of the 217 potential participants. Among respondents, 29 (26.4%) identified as Academic Faculty, 67 (60.9%) identified as Student Affairs Faculty/Staff, and 14 (12.7%) identified as Other. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Reliability

I evaluated the reliability of the FSBS by calculating a coefficient of internal consistency on the data set collected. Calculations were run on each of the sections of the instrument as well as the complete instrument. The internal consistency reliability for the entire instrument was 0.79.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=110)

Characteristics	n	(%)
Role at the Institution		
Academic faculty	29	(26.4)
Student Affairs faculty/staff	67	(60.9)
Other	14	(12.7)
Level of Involvement		
Marginal	3	(2.7)
Occasional	25	(22.7)
Regular	47	(42.7)
Intense	35	(31.8)
Type of RLC		
New/Just getting started	16	(14.5)
Young/Within the first few years of existence	37	(33.6)
Growing and developing	37	(33.6)
Mature	18	(16.4)

Results Reported by Research Question

The following section describes the results of the study. The results are organized around the six research questions presented in this study. Because the study focused on benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs, results from respondents who selected Other were discarded during analysis.

Results Regarding the Intrinsic Benefits for Faculty Members

The first research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. Frequencies were calculated and used to address the question. The results of the frequency counts are shown in Table 2. The table includes the number of respondents who responded to each item, and the percentage of that subgroup that number represents. A summary of the three highest items follows.

Item 1 focused on whether faculty members had greater interaction with students because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 29 faculty respondents, 28 (96.6%) responded affirmatively.

The next highest item for faculty members in the intrinsic section was item 2. This question focused on whether faculty members had conversations with students about topics not related to class because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 29 faculty respondents, 27 (93.1%) responded affirmatively.

The third highest item intrinsic benefit for faculty members was item 11. This item focused on whether faculty members had become aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 29 faculty respondents, 27 (93.1%) responded affirmatively.

Table 2

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Intrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
Greater interaction with students (94)			2.281	1	0.131
Yes	28 (96.6)	56 (86.2)			
No	1 (3.4)	9 (13.8)			
Conversations with students about topics not related to class (95)			2.042	1	0.153
Yes	27 (93.1)	54 (81.8)			
No	2 (6.9)	12 (18.2)			
Experienced increased interaction with faculty from disciplines other than my own (95)			0.572	1	0.450
Yes	22 (75.9)	45 (68.2)			
No	7 (24.1)	21 (31.8)			
Become more aware of a greater sense of community within the institution (96)			0.942	1	0.332
Yes	25 (86.2)	52 (77.6)			
No	4 (13.8)	15 (22.4)			
Noticed students to be engaged and actively involved in learning (95)			0.754	1	0.385
Yes	19 (65.5)	49 (74.2)			
No	10 (34.5)	17 (25.8)			
Developed my teaching skills (94)			1.247	1	0.264
Yes	12 (41.4)	35 (53.8)			
No	17 (58.6)	30 (46.2)			

Table 2 (continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Intrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
Gained skills in using a team approach to teaching (94)			1.327	1	0.249
Yes	11 (37.9)	33 (50.8)			
No	18 (62.1)	32 (49.2)			
Felt like I make a difference in students' lives (95)			2.456	1	0.117
Yes	23 (79.3)	60 (90.9)			
No	6 (20.7)	6 (9.1)			
Experienced increased interaction with student affairs faculty and staff in other departments other than my own (96)			0.808	1	0.369
Yes	23 (79.3)	58 (86.6)			
No	6 (20.7)	9 (13.4)			
Felt like I have furthered the academic mission of the university (95)			0.277	1	0.599
Yes	25 (86.2)	54 (81.8)			
No	4 (13.8)	12 (18.2)			
Become aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm (95)			0.323	1	0.570
Yes	27 (93.1)	59 (89.4)			
No	2 (6.9)	7 (10.6)			
Shared my research interests with students outside of the classroom (94)			5.839	1	0.016*
Yes	15 (51.7)	17 (26.2)			
No	14 (48.3)	48 (73.8)			

Table 2 (continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Intrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
Discussed my interests and hobbies with students outside of the classroom (94)			0.221	1	0.639
Yes	21 (72.4)	50 (76.9)			
No	8 (27.6)	15 (23.1)			
Experienced working with veteran faculty and staff members (96)			0.360	1	0.548
Yes	19 (65.5)	48 (71.6)			
No	10 (34.5)	19 (28.4)			
Acted as a consultant to assist with community issues and projects (95)			1.856	1	0.173
Yes	17 (58.6)	48 (72.7)			
No	12 (41.1)	18 (27.3)			

* Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Results Regarding the Intrinsic Benefits for Student Affairs Staff Members

The second research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by student affairs staff members involved in RLCs. Frequencies were calculated and used to address the question. The results of the frequency counts are shown in Table 2. The table includes the number of respondents who responded to each item, and the percentage of that subgroup that number represents. A summary of the three highest items follows.

Item 8 focused on whether staff members had felt like they make a difference in students' lives because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 66 staff respondents, 60 (90.1%) responded affirmatively.

The next highest item for staff members in the intrinsic section was item 11. This question focused on whether staff members had become aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 66 staff respondents, 59 (89.4%) responded affirmatively.

The third highest item intrinsic benefit for staff members was item 9. This item focused on whether staff members had experienced increased interaction with student affairs faculty and staff in other departments other than their own because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 67 staff respondents, 58 (86.6%) responded affirmatively.

Results Regarding the Differences in Intrinsic Benefits

The third research question posed in the study examined differences in intrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The results of the 15 chi-square analyses for each item in the intrinsic section are shown in Table 2. The table indicates the chi-square test results, the degree of freedom, and the p value. Any chi-square tests that resulted in p values less than .05 were deemed statistically significant.

There was one statistically significant difference between faculty and staff members in terms of intrinsic benefits. This was item 12, which focused on whether respondents had shared research interests with students outside of the classroom because of their involvement in the RLC. A significant difference was revealed at the 0.016 level. Faculty members were more likely to have shared research interests with students outside of the classroom than their student affairs staff member counterparts.

Results Regarding the Extrinsic Benefits for Faculty Members

The fourth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. Frequencies were calculated and used to address the question. The results of the frequency counts are shown in Table 3. The table includes the number of respondents who responded to each item, and the percentage of that subgroup that number represents. A summary of the two highest items follows.

Item 11 focused on whether faculty members had received allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 29 faculty respondents, 15 (51.7%) responded affirmatively.

The next highest item for faculty members in the extrinsic section was item 6. This question focused on whether faculty members had received a partial meal plan or dining dollar allotment because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 29 faculty respondents, 27 (41.4%) responded affirmatively.

Table 3

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Extrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
A reduction in my teaching load or collateral assignments (93)			0.246	1	0.620
Yes	2 (7.1)	3 (4.6)			
No	26 (92.9)	62 (95.4)			
An increase in my salary or a teaching stipend (95)			0.394	1	0.530
Yes	3 (10.3)	10 (15.2)			
No	26 (89.7)	56 (84.8)			
A professional development stipend (95)			1.619	1	0.203
Yes	3 (10.3)	14 (21.2)			
No	26 (89.7)	52 (78.8)			
Office space in the residence hall (94)			2.656	1	0.103
Yes	3 (10.7)	17 (25.8)			
No	25 (89.3)	49 (74.2)			
A full meal plan (95)			2.948	1	0.086
Yes	2 (6.9)	14 (21.2)			
No	27 (93.1)	52 (78.8)			
A partial meal plan or dining dollar allotment (94)			1.005	1	0.316
Yes	12 (41.4)	20 (30.8)			
No	17 (58.6)	45 (69.2)			
Living quarters in the residence hall (94)			0.210	1	0.647
Yes	8 (27.6)	21 (32.3)			
No	21 (72.4)	44 (67.7)			

Table 3 (continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Extrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
Living quarters in the residence hall at a reduced price (92)			0.015	1	0.902
Yes	3 (10.3)	6 (9.5)			
No	26 (89.7)	57 (90.5)			
Opportunities to participate in research on learning communities (95)			2.680	1	0.102
Yes	8 (27.6)	30 (45.5)			
No	21 (72.4)	36 (54.5)			
Opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations (94)			6.916	1	0.009*
Yes	8 (27.6)	37 (56.9)			
No	21 (72.4)	28 (43.1)			
Allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities (94)			0.130	1	0.718
Yes	15 (51.7)	31 (47.7)			
No	14 (48.3)	34 (52.3)			
A free parking pass (95)			0.024	1	0.877
Yes	2 (6.9)	4 (6.1)			
No	27 (93.1)	62 (93.9)			
Reduced fees for parking (94)			0.211	1	0.646
Yes	4 (14.3)	12 (18.2)			
No	24 (85.7)	54 (81.8)			

Table 3 (continued)

Results of Chi-Square Analysis on Extrinsic Benefits (N=96)

Item	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	χ^2	df	p
A parking spot near the residence hall (94)			0.917	1	0.338
Yes	9 (32.1)	15 (22.7)			
No	19 (67.9)	51 (77.3)			
Opportunities to assist with grant writing for the RLC (93)			0.673	1	0.412
Yes	6 (22.2)	10 (15.2)			
No	21 (77.8)	56 (84.8)			

* Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Results Regarding the Extrinsic Benefits for Student Affairs Staff Members

The fifth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by staff members involved in RLCs. Frequencies were calculated and used to address the question. The results of the frequency counts are shown in Table 3. The table includes the number of respondents who responded to each item, and the percentage of that subgroup that number represents. A summary of the three highest items follows.

Item 10 focused on whether staff members had received opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 65 staff respondents, 37 (56.9%) responded affirmatively.

The next highest item for staff members in the extrinsic section was item 11. This question focused on whether staff members had had received allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 65 staff respondents, 31 (47.7%) responded affirmatively.

The third highest item extrinsic benefit for staff members was item 9. This item focused on whether staff members had received opportunities to participate in research on learning communities because of their involvement in the RLC. Of the 66 staff respondents, 30 (45.5%) responded affirmatively.

Results Regarding the Differences in Intrinsic Benefits

The sixth research question posed in the study examined differences in extrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The results of the 15 chi-square analyses for each item in the extrinsic section are shown in Table 3. The table indicates the chi-square test results, the degree of freedom, and the *p* value. Any chi-square tests that resulted in *p* values less than 0.05 were deemed statistically significant.

There was one statistically significant difference between faculty and staff members in terms of extrinsic benefits. This was item 10, which focused on whether respondents had received opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations because of their involvement in the RLC. A significant difference was revealed at the 0.009 level. Student affairs staff members were more likely to have received opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations than their faculty member counterparts.

In summary, I conducted frequency calculations on the 30 items included in the intrinsic benefits section and extrinsic benefits sections of the FSBS to answer research questions 1, 2, 4, and 5. I also conducted chi-square analyses for each of the 30 items to answer research questions 3 and 6. The results reveal some interesting patterns of benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. These findings and their implications for future practice and research are discussed in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study examined the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. The data, collected through the administration of the Faculty and Staff Benefits Survey, were analyzed using frequency calculations and chi-square tests.

The chapter is organized into six sections. The first section discusses the result of the study. The second section compares the results of this study to findings from previous research. The next section describes implications for future practice. The fourth section discusses the implications for future research. The fifth section considers the limitations of the present study. Finally, some conclusions about the study are drawn.

Discussion of the Results

The first research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. Participants were asked if they had received any intrinsic benefits due to their involvement in RLCs. Participants responded to 15 items in the Intrinsic Benefits Section of the FSBS. More than half of the faculty members reported receiving 13 of the 15 items.

Because of their involvement in RLCs, faculty members report receiving a wealth of intrinsic benefits. These benefits can be placed into 4 categories based on the various roles of a faculty member. The roles include professional colleague, advisor, teacher, and friend.

Faculty members noted the impact on their role as professional colleague. RLCs encourage faculty members to work in teams with other faculty and staff members. The results of the study indicate that faculty members became more aware of a greater sense of community within the institution (86.2%). Moreover, the faculty members experienced an increased

interaction with faculty from other disciplines (75.9%), an increased interaction with student affairs faculty and staff (79.3%), and the opportunity to work with veteran faculty and staff members (65.5%).

An explanation for these findings is that RLCs are often interdisciplinary endeavors. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of RLCs, faculty members will work with faculty members and student affairs staff members from multiple departments. Consequently, faculty members are able to view themselves as colleagues with faculty and staff members from across the university.

Involvement in RLCs also changed the faculty members' role as advisor. They are able to connect with students' lives outside of the classroom. They reported becoming aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm (93.1%). Many faculty members have also acted as a consultant to assist with community issues and projects (58.6%). In general, faculty members felt like they make a difference in students' lives (79.3%).

These findings may be related to the setup of RLCs as a way to connect in-class instruction to out-of-class activities. RLCs encourage discussions relating out-of-class learning opportunities to in-class assignments. Because students already discuss out-of-class activities with the faculty members, they may also choose to seek the advice of the faculty members for problems and issues affecting their lives outside the classroom.

Faculty members also noted that they received benefits related to their teaching roles at the institution. They noticed students were engaged and actively involved in learning (65.5%). Many felt like they had furthered the academic mission of the university (86.2%).

An explanation for these findings can be found in the teaching structure of RLCs. Faculty members teaching in RLCs may be encouraged to try other methods of instruction beyond

lecturing. These alternate methods of instruction might encourage a higher level of involvement from students. Because most RLCs require that students apply to join the RLC, the students may actively participate in the classroom due to the students' choice to belong to the RLC.

Finally, faculty members are able to connect as a friend with students. They reported receiving greater interaction with students (96.6%). They also reported having conversations with students about topics not related to class (93.1%), discussing their interests and hobbies with students outside of the classroom (72.4%), and sharing their research interests with students outside of the classroom (51.7%).

Similar to the advisor role, these findings may be related to the setup of RLCs as a way to connect in-class instruction to out-of-class activities. Students may involve the faculty members in their non-academic lives if the RLC interactions with the faculty members take place outside of a traditional classroom. These interactions may take place during class instruction within the residence hall or while attending cultural or social activities.

The second research question posed in the study explored the intrinsic benefits gained by staff members involved in RLCs. Participants were asked if they had received intrinsic benefits due to their involvement in RLCs. Participants responded to 15 items in the Intrinsic Benefits Section of the FSBS. More than half of the staff members reported receiving 14 of the 15 items.

Because of their involvement in RLCs, student affairs staff members report receiving a wealth of intrinsic benefits. These benefits can be placed into 4 categories based on the various roles of a student affairs staff member. The roles include friend and advisor, professional colleague, community builder, and educator.

Student affairs staff members have the opportunity to serve a students' friends and advisors during their out-of-class experiences. Because of their involvement in the RLC, staff

members reported receiving greater interaction with students (86.2%). They also reported having conversations with students about topics not related to class (81.8%). They were able to discuss their interests and hobbies with students outside of the classroom (76.9%), and became aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm (89.4%).

An explanation for these findings may be related to students' perception of the role of student affairs staff. Students may only come to staff members in need of services. For instance, a residence hall director may only be approached by students when they are in need of facility maintenance or during a judicial hearing on a case involving incidents in the hall. RLCs allow students to see staff members as a source of advice. RLCs may also encourage students to view staff members as friends with whom to discuss topics that are of interest to the student.

Student affairs staff members serve on various committees as professional colleagues. Being involved in the RLC allows them another opportunity to expand that role. Staff members experienced an increased interaction with faculty (68.2%) and an increased interaction with student affairs faculty and staff in other departments (86.6%). They also experienced working with veteran faculty and staff members (71.6%).

These findings may be related to the committee structures at the institution. While staff members may participate on several committees, many of these committees may be departmental based. Thus, these committees only allow staff members to interact with staff members from their same department. In addition, university wide committees that involve both faculty and staff members may not be very large. These committees may have half of the spots reserved for faculty members and half of the spot reserved for staff members. Consequently, only a handful of staff members have the opportunity to serve on the university wide committees.

Involvement in RLCs also impacted staff members' role as community builders. Because of their RLC involvement, staff members reported becoming more aware of a greater sense of community within the institution (77.6%). They also acted as a consultant to assist with community issues and projects (72.7%). Consequently, staff members felt like they make a difference in students' lives (90.9%)

An explanation for these findings may be related to the daily functions of student affairs staff members. Many staff members have contact with only a specific student population. For instance, a leadership office staff member will have contact with students involved in leadership positions on campus, while a judicial staff member will have contact with students serving on judicial boards and students who have violated student conduct rules. RLCs allow faculty members to interact with students that they may not typically have contact with during their normal daily activities. Students may view these staff members as unbiased and ask for their advice for issues that might typically involve a staff member from a different student affairs department.

Finally, staff members gain benefits that impact their role as an educator. In general, the RLC involvement allowed staff members to develop their teaching skills (53.8%). More specifically, they have gained skills in using a team approach to teaching (50.8%) Through their involvement, staff members also noticed students to be engaged and actively involved in learning (74.2%). Their involvement allowed them to feel like they have furthered the academic mission of the university (90.9%).

Student affairs staff members involved in RLCs have the opportunity to feel more like academic faculty members. By teaching an RLC class, staff members have the opportunity to perform the role of instructor and see students in a classroom. While many student affairs staff

members provide out-of-class learning opportunities in their daily activities, teaching an RLC class allows them a chance to provide in-class instruction as well.

The third research question posed in the study examined differences in intrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The results indicate that faculty members (51.7%) were more likely to have shared research interests with students outside of the classroom than their student affairs staff member counterparts (26.2%). This difference was significant at the 0.016 level.

One possible explanation for the findings related to sharing research interests is that faculty members are performing research more regularly than student affairs staff members. Research is often a job requirement for faculty members. However, research is usually not required of student affairs staff members. If staff members are performing research less often, they may have fewer research interests to discuss with students.

Another explanation may relate to the students' interest. Students may be interested in faculty members' research, because they are interested in that academic field. Since few institutions offer a student affairs degree at the undergraduate level, undergraduates may not be interested in student affairs research. Thus, if students are not interested in staff members' research interests, the staff members may not have opportunities to share them.

While only one statistically significant difference was found, a high level of agreement occurred between the faculty participants and the staff participants. Of the 15 questionnaire items related to intrinsic benefits, 7 had a 75% or greater affirmative response from both faculty participants and staff participants.

One possible explanation for this is that RLCs provide benefits equally for both faculty members and staff members. RLCs may provide the opportunity for faculty members and staff

members to participate equally in the educational experience. Thus, involved faculty and staff members report receiving similar intrinsic benefits.

The fourth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by faculty members involved in RLCs. Participants were asked if they had received extrinsic benefits due to their involvement in RLCs. Participants responded to 15 items in the Extrinsic Benefits Section of the FSBS. More than half of the faculty members reported receiving for only 1 of the 15 items.

The results of the study indicate that faculty members (51.7%) received allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities. RLCs might provide the faculty members with this funding to encourage discussion outside of the classroom.

Another explanation may relate to the funding for meal plans. Few faculty members (6.9%) reported receiving a full meal plan, and less than half (41.4%) reported receiving a partial meal plan or dining dollar allotment. Thus, RLCs may provide allotments for meals and other activities instead of providing meal plans for the faculty members.

The fifth research question posed in the study explored the extrinsic benefits gained by staff members involved in RLCs. Participants were asked if they had received extrinsic benefits due to their involvement in RLCs. Participants responded to 15 items in the Extrinsic Benefits Section of the FSBS. More than half of the staff members reported receiving for only 1 of the 15 items.

The results of the study indicate that staff members (56.9%) receive opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations. One explanation for this finding is that staff members might have interests in learning communities and seek opportunities to share their experience and knowledge at professional conferences. Because some student affairs

departments fund conference travel for presenters, it is also possible that staff members actively seek out these opportunities as means to increase their professional development funding.

The sixth research question posed in the study examined differences in extrinsic benefits gained by faculty and staff members involved in RLCs. The results indicate that student affairs staff members (56.9%) were more likely to have received opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations than their faculty member counterparts (27.6%) were. This difference was significant at the 0.009 level.

One possible explanation for the findings related to professional conference presentations is that these presentations primarily occur at student affairs professional conferences. As a result, faculty members might not readily attend those conferences to have the opportunity to present.

Another explanation may relate to the number of faculty members participating in research on learning communities. Only 27.6% of the faculty members reported receiving opportunities to participate in research. Thus, if faculty members were not involved in the research on learning communities, they would not have research to present at a professional conference.

While only one statistically significant difference was found, a high level of agreement occurred between the faculty participants and the staff participants. Of the 15 questionnaire items related to extrinsic benefits, 8 had a 75% or greater negative response from both faculty participants and staff participants.

One possible explanation for this is that RLCs provide benefits equally for both faculty members and staff members. RLCs may provide the opportunity for faculty members and staff members to participate equally in the educational experience. Since RLCs are unable to provide

extrinsic benefits to one group, they do not provide extrinsic benefits for the other group either. Thus, involved faculty and staff members report not receiving similar extrinsic benefits.

The present study provided data that allowed me to answer the research questions posed in the study. However, an examination of prior research provides a context in which to place the findings.

Relationship of the Results to Prior Research

It is important to consider the results of this study in relation to prior research on the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in learning communities and RLCs. When the results of the present study are compared with prior research, two patterns emerge. In some cases, the results support prior research. In other instances, the results contradict those of prior studies.

The present study supports several previous research findings. For example, previous studies revealed that learning communities allow faculty members to work together more closely and effectively (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; MacKay, 1996; Matthews, 1994; Smith & Hunter, 1987; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Tinto, 1998). The present study noted that faculty members had experienced increased interactions with faculty members from disciplines other than their own because of their involvement in the RLC. They had also become aware of a greater sense of community within the institution.

An earlier study suggested student affairs staff members gain the opportunity to show academic faculty members their work and the educational role they play at the institution (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). In the present study, staff members reported that they had experienced increased interactions with faculty members from disciplines other than their own.

Finally, prior research suggested faculty members involved in RLCs gain a new insight about the contemporary college student. Faculty members involved in RLCs interact with students that are atypical of the normal classroom relationship (Jackson & Stevens, 1990; Smith, 1994). The present study supported this research. Faculty members reported becoming aware of student's needs outside the academic realm and discussing their interests and hobbies with students outside of the classroom.

While the present study supported some previous research, it also contradicted other previous research. For instance, prior studies suggested participation in learning communities broadens faculty members' knowledge about pedagogy (Finley, 1990; Gabelnik et al., 1990; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Matthews, 1994; Tinto, 1998). The results of the present study does not support these findings. Faculty members reported not to have developed their teaching skills or gained skills in using a team teaching approach to teaching.

An earlier study suggested that faculty members gain tangible benefits because of their involvement in learning communities (Colwell & Lifka, 1983; Gabelnik et al., 1990). The present study found that faculty members were less likely to receive extrinsic benefits than intrinsic benefits. Of the 15 items in the extrinsic benefits, only one item had above half of the faculty members (51.7%) indicating they had received that extrinsic benefit. Faculty members were more likely than not to report receiving allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities.

In general, the present study both supports and contradicts prior research on the topic of benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities.

Additionally, while the study found only a few statistically significant differences between faculty members and student affairs staff members, the study provided data on the current state

of practice for RLC faculty and staff benefits. The study also provided implications for future practice and research.

Implications for Future Practice

The present study has implications for future practice. Coordinators of RLCs, campus administrators developing RLCs, and faculty and student affairs staff members might benefit from the results of the study.

One group that might benefit from the findings includes coordinators of RLCs. The results provide frequency counts of the benefits received by faculty members and student affairs staff members involved in residential learning communities. Coordinators recruiting faculty members and staff members might use the results in recruitment literature as a list of possible benefits from being involved in the RLC.

Campus administrators developing RLCs might also benefit from the results of this study. The study provides a description of the current state of practice. The results provide a frequency count of the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits faculty and staff members gain by being involved in RLCs. Campus administrators developing RLCs can use this data when identifying the benefits faculty and staff members at their institutions might receive for being involved in RLCs.

Finally, this study might have significance for faculty and staff members as they consider their involvement in RLCs. The results provided information on the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that faculty and staff members currently involved in RLCs gain. Faculty and staff members might use the results of this study when deciding whether to become involved with RLCs.

Implications for Future Research

The present study also has implications for future research. For example, this study explores the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits faculty and staff members gain by being involved in residential learning communities. It is possible that these benefits differ by the type of RLC in which the faculty or staff member is participating. Future studies might explore the benefits based on type of RLC. Such a study would fill a gap in the literature.

Future scholars might also wish to explore whether the benefits differ based on the depth, quality, and intensity of the faculty or staff member's level of participation in the RLC. For instance, future studies might compare those who are involved in the creation and administration aspects of the RLC to those who only present occasional programs to RLC students. Such a study would broaden the information available about faculty and staff involvement in RLCs.

Future researchers might wish to investigate whether a certain type of faculty member is more likely to become involved in RLCs. This study focused on the benefits faculty members might gain by being involved, but a future study could focus on the demographics of faculty members already involved in RLCs. The study could use a disciplinary model (i.e., hard sciences versus soft sciences, people oriented disciplines versus data oriented disciplines) to explore the disciplines of the faculty members likely to be involved. Such a study would broaden the information about faculty involvement in RLCs.

Finally, future scholars might explore the benefits for resident assistants who work in buildings that house RLCs. This study focused on the benefits the faculty members might gain by being involved. Previous studies have focused on the benefits for students living in RLCs. A study on the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for resident assistants who work in RLCs would contribute to the body of knowledge about the benefits of residential learning communities.

Limitations

As with all research, the present study had limitations. The first dealt with the sample. All the institutional participants were chosen based on their affiliation with the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International. The sample was a convenient sample based on affiliation. This might limit the results of the study because it is not an overall sample of higher education in general.

The second limitation also dealt with the sample. Institutions had to be listed in the ACUHO-I Institutional Database as offering learning communities. The sample was a convenient sample based on self-reporting. This might limit the results because it is not an overall sample of institutions that have learning communities. The use of the database may also limit the results if the database is not kept current through regular updates.

Another limitation was the type of data employed in the analysis. By relying on quantitative data, the study was restricted to findings based on the pre-determined response options on the instrument. A study that allowed participants more flexibility in their responses might have provided different results.

A fourth limitation was the timing of the survey. The survey was distributed in April. While the participant response rate represented 50.7% of the 217 potential participants, the institutional response rate only represented 11.6% of the potential institutions. Because April is a busy month for both faculty and student affairs staff members, the timing of the survey distribution may have affected whether institutions chose to participate. A study that was distributed earlier in the semester might have provided different results.

A final limitation deals with the participant sampling. Chief housing officers were asked to identify faculty and staff members involved in RLCs at their institutions. The CHOs may not

have contacted faculty and staff members with a marginal level of involvement in the RLC. A study that included these faculty and staff members might have provided different results.

Although the present study had several limitations, the study was worthwhile in spite of them. The results of the study expanded the body of literature on benefits for faculty and staff members involved in RLCs.

Conclusion

Prior research had never focused solely on benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. This study should be seen as a step further in understanding the benefits of learning communities for all of those involved. As more institutions develop residential learning communities, the need for more information and research on benefits for faculty and staff members will increase. Future research is needed to better understand the impact residential learning communities have on faculty and staff members.

In conclusion, it appears that the faculty and staff members involved in RLCs are those who are motivated more often by intrinsic benefits than extrinsic benefits. This finding reflects the values of the higher education professions. The field of student affairs and the academic disciplines place value on internal motivation. Those members who are driven by external motivational factors appear less likely to be involved with programs that encourage learning of students, faculty members, and staff members by integrating in-class learning and out-of-class activities.

The present study suggests that faculty members and staff members gain a wealth of intrinsic benefits from their involvement in residential learning communities. It is also apparent that they receive little to no extrinsic benefits from their involvement. These gaps in benefits

need to be addressed as coordinators search for interested faculty and staff members to become involved in the residential learning communities at their institutions.

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Appendix A

Residential Learning Community Faculty and Staff Benefits Survey

Please reflect on your current experiences with the Residential Learning Community (including Theme Housing and Living-Learning Communities). This questionnaire looks to identify benefits for faculty and staff members involved in Residential Learning Communities. As you complete the questionnaire, please indicate whether you agree (yes) or disagree (no) with the following statements. Respond to each item based solely on your participation in the Residential Learning Community.

Intrinsic Benefits

Because of my current involvement with the Residential Learning Community, I have ...

1. Greater interaction with students..... Yes..... No
2. Conversations with students about topics not related to class Yes..... No
3. Experienced increased interaction with faculty from disciplines other than my own Yes..... No
4. Become more aware of a greater sense of community within the institution. Yes..... No
5. Noticed students to be engaged and actively involved in learning. Yes..... No
6. Developed my teaching skills Yes..... No
7. Gained skills in using a team approach to teaching. Yes..... No
8. Felt like I make a difference in students' lives..... Yes..... No
9. Experienced increased interaction with student affairs faculty and staff in other departments other than my own Yes..... No
10. Felt like I have furthered the academic mission of the university Yes..... No
11. Become aware of students' needs outside of the academic realm Yes..... No
12. Shared my research interests with students outside of the classroom Yes..... No
13. Discussed my interests and hobbies with students outside of the classroom Yes..... No
14. Experienced working with veteran faculty and staff members Yes..... No
15. Acted as a consultant to assist with community issues and projects Yes..... No

Extrinsic Benefits

Because of my current involvement with the Residential Learning Community, I have received ...

1. A reduction in my teaching load or collateral assignments..... Yes..... No
2. An increase in my salary or a teaching stipend. Yes..... No
3. A professional development stipend. Yes..... No
4. Office space in the residence hall..... Yes..... No
5. A full meal plan..... Yes..... No
6. A partial meal plan or dining dollar allotment Yes..... No
7. Living quarters in the residence hall. Yes..... No
8. Living quarters in the residence hall at a reduced price Yes..... No
9. Opportunities to participate in research on learning communities..... Yes..... No
10. Opportunities to participate in professional conference presentations..... Yes..... No
11. Allotments for expenses associated with inviting students to a meal or other social activities Yes..... No
12. A free parking pass Yes..... No
13. Reduced fees for parking Yes..... No
14. A parking spot near the residence hall Yes..... No
15. Opportunities to assist with grant writing for the RLC Yes..... No

Demographic Characteristics

1. Which of the following most accurately reflects how you spend most of your time at the institution?
 - a. Academic faculty
 - b. Student Affairs faculty/staff
 - c. Other

2. My level of involvement in the RLC is ...
 - a. Marginal.
 - b. Occasional.
 - c. Regular.
 - d. Intense.

3. The RLC with which I am involved is ...
 - a. New/Just getting started.
 - b. Young/Within the first few years of existence.
 - c. Growing and developing.
 - d. Mature.

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix B

SUBJECT LINE: Learning Community Research Assistance

Dear Chief Housing Officer,

My name is Cliff Haynes, and I am a graduate student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at Virginia Tech. I am currently conducting research on the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. I am contacting you because your institution is listed in the ACUHO-I Institutional Database as having residential learning communities (RLCs), including theme housing and living-learning communities.

I would like to invite your institution to participate in this study. Your participation is extremely important. The results of this study may help to describe the current state of practice for faculty members and student affairs staff benefits for involvement in residential learning communities.

You can participate in two ways. The first way is to send me the name and email addresses of faculty and staff members involved with the RLCs at your institution. If you do not feel comfortable providing that information, you can serve as the contact coordinator at your institution. As the contact coordinator, I ask that you send me the number of faculty members and the number of student affairs staff members involved in the RLCs at your institution. Then, you would send a note to each person included in those lists asking him or her to participate in the study by completing an on-line questionnaire.

The survey consists of 33 items and takes about 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please visit <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1080095702915>. Please encourage all participants to complete the survey by April 16, 2004.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the contact information listed below.

Thank You,

Cliff Haynes
Virginia Tech
2110 Pritchard East
Blacksburg, VA 24060-0023
540-232-4447
cliffhaynes@vt.edu

Appendix C

SUBJECT LINE: Reminder for Learning Community Research

Let me begin by thanking you for agreeing to participate in my research on the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. The results of this study may help to describe the current state of practice for faculty members and student affairs staff benefits for involvement in residential learning communities.

If you have not already done so, please remind the faculty and staff members that you have identified for participation to complete the survey by this Friday, April 16, 2004. The survey consists of 33 items and takes about 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please visit <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1080095702915>.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the contact information listed below.

Thank You,

Cliff Haynes
Virginia Tech
2110 Pritchard East
Blacksburg, VA 24060-0023
540-232-4447
cliffhaynes@vt.edu

Appendix D

SUBJECT LINE: Learning Community Research Request Reminder

Dear Chief Housing Officer,

Let me begin by thanking you for taking the time to review this email. My name is Cliff Haynes, and I am currently conducting research on the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities.

You previously received an email requesting your participation in the research. If you have already volunteered to participate, please disregard the rest of this email.

If you have not already done so, I would like to invite your institution to participate in this study. You can participate in two ways. The first way is to send me the name and email addresses of faculty and staff members involved with the RLCs at your institution. If you do not feel comfortable providing that information, you can serve as the contact coordinator at your institution. As the contact coordinator, I ask that you send me the number of faculty members and the number of student affairs staff members involved in the RLCs at your institution. Then, you would send a note to each person included in those lists asking him or her to participate in the study by completing an on-line questionnaire.

The survey consists of 33 items and takes about 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please visit <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1080095702915>. Please encourage all participants to complete the survey by April 16, 2004.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the contact information listed below.

Thank You,

Cliff Haynes
Virginia Tech
2110 Pritchard East
Blacksburg, VA 24060-0023
540-232-4447
cliffhaynes@vt.edu

Appendix E

SUBJECT LINE: Learning Community Research Assistance

Dear <insert Faculty/Staff name>,

My name is Cliff Haynes, and I am a graduate student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at Virginia Tech. I am currently conducting research on the benefits for faculty and staff members involved in residential learning communities. I am contacting you because your name was given to me by <CHO name> as a <faculty/staff member> involved in the residential learning communities at <institution>.

I would like to invite your institution to participate in this study. Your participation is extremely important. The results of this study may help to describe the current state of practice for faculty members and student affairs staff benefits for involvement in residential learning communities.

The survey consists of 33 items and takes about 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please visit <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1080095702915>.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the contact information listed below.

Thank You,

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CLIFF HAYNES

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EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Education, Virginia Tech Graduation Date: May 2004 GPA 3.914.00
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Concentration: Higher Education and Student Affairs
Thesis: Benefits for Faculty and Staff Members Involved in Residential Learning Communities

Bachelor of Arts, University of Arkansas Graduation Date: May 2002 GPA 3.93/4.00
Major: Communication Minor: Political Science Graduated with Senior Honor Citation

WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Hall Director, Pritchard Hall, Office of Student Programs, Virginia Tech (August 2003-May 2004)

- Assisted Complex Director with supervision and evaluation of 29 Resident Advisors and a building of 1,050 male residents.
- Coordinated housing management including check-in/out procedures, room inspections, and residence hall opening/closing.
- Administered staff duty protocol and conducted weekly individual meetings, staff meetings, development, and training.
- Co-taught the Introduction to Residence Life course for first-year Resident Advisors.
- Served on call campus crisis management coverage rotation with other staff members for over 8,500 students.
- Assisted in the judicial hearing process and sanctioning of residents.
- Served as advisor to hall council; initiated and approved fund allocations, monitor accounts for council and staff with combined budgets of over \$2,000.
- Provided programming support and leadership guidance in the application of various university and Resident Advisor initiatives within the residence hall.
- Developed and presented staff development programs for 55 area staff members.

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Residential Leadership Community, Virginia Tech (January 2004-May 2004)

- Co-taught a class that explores leadership training by developing a daylong leadership conference for high school students.
- Assisted with planning and running a 1-½ day teambuilding retreat.
- Led peer group class sessions on various topics, including facilitation and public speaking, communication styles, marketing, programming, and diversity.
- Read and provided comments on students' weekly journal entries.

Residence Life Summer Intern, Office of Student Programs, Virginia Tech (May 2003-July 2003)

- Developed the outlines and materials for in-hall training sessions.
- Coordinated the closing session.
- Developed the alcohol sessions for new and returning staff members.
- Created various training session outlines, the opening graduate assistant session, and a summer newsletter for residence hall staff members.
- Assisted with various administrative tasks associated with the Fall Training and Leadership Workshop, including, making room reservations, copying manuals, and binding and distributing manuals.

Residence Hall Federation Graduate Advisor, Office of Student Programs, Virginia Tech (May 2002-May 2003)

- Provided daily support, advisement, and training for 9 executive board members, 50 members of General Assembly, and approximately 200 residence hall council officers.
- Advised the programming, public relations, conferences, and leadership development committees.
- Assisted with the allotment of the \$100,000 budget.
- Co-coordinated the Hall Council Advisors roundtable.
- Co-advised the Fall Leadership Conference, Winter Leadership Retreat, and the on-going Leading Edge Series.
- Supported programming and governance efforts of the Executive Board.
Assisted summer officers with Orientation programs and night activities.

Practicum Student, The Women's Center at Virginia Tech (January 2003-May 2003)

- Developed and implemented assessment tool for the student volunteer program.
- Created a post-analysis report and presented findings to staff.
- Researched various topics of interest to staff, including resources and scholarships/fellowships.
- Experienced working on a staff operating under the feminist circle of supervision.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Representative, Virginia Association of College and University Housing Officers (May 2003-May 2004)

- Attended quarterly governing council meetings.
- Co-plan the annual conference graduate track.
- Assisted the New Member/Mentor chair with Colleague Connections for the annual conference.
- Served as a link for higher education graduate students to state and regional housing activities.
- Developed a graduate assistantship database and higher education graduate student listserv.

National Communication Coordinator, Residents' Interhall Congress, University of Arkansas (August 2001-May 2002)

- Coordinated all conference preparation for delegation.
- Served as delegation leader and voting delegate at conference business meetings.
- Coordinated bids and Of the Months awards.
- Informed RIC of all regional and national news.

President, Humphreys Hall, University of Arkansas (August 2000-May 2002)

- Presided over hall senate meetings.
- Organized events for 400 residents.
- Oversaw yearly budget of \$4,000.
- Attended Hall President's Council.
- Acted as official representative of hall at various functions and campus leadership meetings.

ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

American College Personnel Association (May 2003-present)

Designated Safe Zone for LGBTQ Students and Persons (April 2003-May 2004)

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (October 2002-present)

Association for Student Development, Virginia Tech (September 2002-May 2004)

University of Arkansas Alumni Association (May 2002-present)

National Residence Hall Honorary (December 2002-present)

COMMITTEES

Assistant Coordinator Search Committee, Virginia Tech (May 2003-June 2003)

Day Coordinator, RA Selection Committee, Virginia Tech (Spring 2003)

Student Programs Graduate Assistant Selection Interviewer, Virginia Tech (February 2003, 2004)

Housing Graduate Assistant Selection Task Force, University of Arkansas (Spring 2002)

Housing Construction Contract Selection Committee, University of Arkansas (Spring 2002)

On-Campus Leadership Summit Coordinator, University of Arkansas (Spring 2001, Spring 2002)

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Programming for Male Residents, SEAHO 2004

Exploring the Mountain Together...Colleague Connections, VACUHO 2003

Taming the Lion: Programming Made Easy, RHF Fall Hall Council Conference 2003

Pizza, Candy, & Ice Cream, NACURH 2003 [Top 36 Program]

Programs Need Love to be Successful, VACURH 2003

Love the Advising Position, VACURH 2003

Reflections of SEAHO Conference Fee Waiver Scholarships: "One Grad's Tale from SEAHO 2003", *SEAHO Report*, Spring 2003

HONORS & AWARDS

Hall Council Advisor of the Year (2004)

Prairie Community Advisor of the Month (August 2003, March 2004)

Campus Advisor of the Month (May 2003)

SAACURH Regional Advisor of the Month (July 2002)

VACURH State Advisor of the Month (July 2002)

NACURH National NRHH Member of the Year (2002)

SWACUHO Gene Ward Outstanding Student Leader- Arkansas (2002)

SWACURH NRHH Member of the Year (2002)

Graduating Student Leader Award for Excellence in Leadership, University of Arkansas (2002)