



Residence Hall Experiences of International Students



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What experiences do international students have in the residence halls?

How does residence life impact the students' experiences at a four-year university?

Background: What We Know

- ❖ Social support is essential for college success
- ❖ Proximity is a large factor in social integration (i.e. roommates and floor-mates)
- ❖ International students that spend more time with American students are better able to adapt to life in the U.S. (Grant and Saidla, 1992).
- ❖ In studies of minority students at universities, social success in residence halls was related to success in the classroom
- ❖ Anthropology Professor at UWEC Helaine Minkus found residence halls to be the #1 place to make friends for American and International students



This Four-Year University

- ❖ Number of Students: 10,487 undergraduates, 559 undergraduates
- ❖ Community: Metro Population 151,000
- ❖ International students at university: 150
- ❖ 8 Residence Halls; 1 "Global Learning Community" which houses the most international students

Research Methods

Survey of total international student population administered in Spring 2009 and again in Fall 2009 with modifications. Sent via email. Survey contained ranking, likert scale, and open ended questions.

Works Cited

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Contact for Further Information

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Spring 2009 Survey Results

- ❖ Overall, students were pleased with their social experiences in the residence halls.
- ❖ Major factors of satisfaction were the following:
 - ❖ Quality of the RA
 - ❖ Quality of the roommate
- ❖ Students indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the following:
 - ❖ They learned more about US culture (89%)
 - ❖ The residence halls helped them to make American friends (75%)
 - ❖ They had a positive roommate experience (70%)

Over 75% of students surveyed during Fall 2009 indicated that they were more confident speaking English and that they learned about US culture through their experiences in the residence halls

"We learn from each other. He learn[s] about my place and religion while I learn US culture and English from him indirectly"

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Percent
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my social experiences in the residence halls.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%
2. The quality of the RA is a major factor of my satisfaction.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%
3. The quality of the roommate is a major factor of my satisfaction.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%
4. I learned more about US culture through my experiences in the residence halls.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%
5. The residence halls helped me to make American friends.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%
6. I had a positive roommate experience.	0	0	0	100	0	100	100.00%

Fall 2009 Survey Results

- ❖ Fall and Spring results were consistent
- ❖ RA and roommate were integral to positive residence hall experiences
- ❖ In an open-ended question asking for student opinions on how to improve the residence hall experiences, common responses included the following:
 - ❖ Provide quality and willing roommates
 - ❖ International students should live with American peers
 - ❖ More activities, especially social and cultural (RA responsibility)

Findings

- ❖ Approximately half of the international students surveyed are making friends on their floors, but not necessarily through planned activities in the residence halls.
- ❖ There appears to be a need for more planned activities in the residence halls, but there is not a clear indication of what types of activities should be organized.
- ❖ The attitude of the roommate and the RA towards international students plays a significant role on the experience.

