Housing and Residential Life Programs Response to Program Review Recommendations

The recommendations of the committee have been thoughtfully considered and discussed among the staff of the Housing and Greek Life office and with the Associate Vice President for Student Life. We appreciate the collegial nature of the review process as well as the time invested by all members of the committee to craft responses and recommendation that can help guide and steer the Housing and Residential Life programs into the future.

Within the committee’s response were approximately 60 recommendations. In review of the document, Housing and Residential Life Program (HRLP) staff identified common themes and has decided to respond to the more salient of recommendations within specific thematic areas. The responses are as follows:

Facilities and Finances

Recommendation 1
The Committee encourages HRLP and the University’s administration, including Business and Finance, to work together to make the renovation of student residential facilities among the University’s highest priorities. In this recommendation the Committee is encouraging MAJOR renovations (i.e., a “from studs out” type renovation), especially for those housing units that do not meet current standards.

Response
Beginning in Fall 2012 HRLP worked in conjunction with Physical Plant and the Director for Space Management and Capital Planning to undergo the process of creating a new Housing Facilities Master Plan. This process will allow for a critical and systematic review of all current facilities. Included in the master planning process is the evaluation of need for an analysis of all operational systems of facilities and who should be responsible for the facilitation of such review. HRLP believes that facilities review process would be best facilitated by an outside source with guidance and direction from both HRLP and Physical Plant.

Action Items
- Continue to play an integral role in the process to develop a new Housing Facilities Master Plan
- Work with Budget and Finance to develop strategies for funding major renovations and on-going repair/maintenance needs as identified by the Housing Facilities Master Plan.
- Identify funds to support the external review and analysis of all housing structures/systems in an effort to provide better insight into deferred maintenance needs.

Recommendation 2
The Review Committee found that a major concern to many students living in University housing was with the lack of reliable access to wireless internet and the ability to maintain those connections over a period of time.

Response
Up until 2012-2013, areas of the residential campus were on a different internet access system than the campus’ PacificNet. The areas of Townhouse Apartments and Towerview Apartments had secondary contracts with Comcast to provide internet access in these residential areas which resulted in inconsistent service and areas of control that fell outside of HRLP. During the summer of 2012, HRLP moved to a new cable service provider for all residential facilities. During this transition process all residential facilities were equipped with PacificNet wireless system. This allowed all residents to have a systematic experience with WiFi in all residential facilities.

**Action Item**

- Work with the Office of Institutional Technology (OIT) and Student Life Technology (SLTech) to perform systematic and random tests of WiFi connectivity in all communities and troubleshoot issues as needed.

**Recommendation 3**

The Committee recommends that the HRLP assess housing rates and amenities to ensure that our housing is affordable, equitable and accessible for all students, including students with limited financial resources.

**Response**

HRLP agrees that there is a lack of diversity in the type of on-campus housing accommodations offered to students. These include traditional double occupancy rooms, a few single and triple rooms, and the various on-campus apartments. An additional challenge is that the rates that are charged to students are the same across the system (i.e. students living in a Southwest double room pay the same as a student living in a double room in John Ballantyne Hall).

In order to meet the changing housing needs of students, HRLP believes that it will be important in the future to create a variable Housing fee schedule based on the differences in facilities and amenities. In addition, it will be important to diversify the type of housing accommodations available to students. This includes possibly remodeling a few current facilities into suites and increasing the number of triple room options (for those students who are looking for a lower price point), and consider the design and construction of suite-style buildings. At this time, HRLP is investigating spaces currently used as triples when the University had high occupancy levels while also ensuring that there are adequate academic social spaces for residents.

During the process of budget forecasting and establishing housing rates for FY14, an analysis of room rates relative to Fair Market Rent (FMR) was completed. The one-bedroom room rate for each of the California 8 peers was compared to their local FMRs as designated by U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The analysis, which is attached to this response, noted that though Pacific’s combined room and board rate was at the lower end of the peer benchmarking, the rate relative to the local FMR was higher than any in the peer group. Current practices for benchmarking have failed to consider local FMR and have led to an inflated rate structure for Pacific students.

**Action Items**
• Continue to evaluate rates relative to specific buildings and type of accommodations. Further diversifying types of accommodations (double vs. triple, standard vs. semi-suite, etc.) provide opportunities for varying price points.
• Continue to evaluate room and board increases and adjust if and only guided and directed by increases in the Consumer Price Index. The CPI projection for FY14 is estimated to increase by 2.6% with HRLP increasing the published room/board rate 2.48%.
• Ensure that lounge reclamation is included as part of the conversation of the Housing Facilities Master Planning process. Include discussion on diversifying housing stock as well as identifying ways to increase affordable housing options.
• Work with Financial Aid and Pacific Fund to identify ways to secure funding to support students living on-campus as the distance between the cost to attend Pacific and available aid widens.

**Programmatic Initiatives**

**Recommendation 1**
Multiple recommendations involved an evaluation of design, implementation and evaluation of programs built around the PACIFIC! Experience Model.

**Response**
HRLP, under the guidance and direction of the newly hired Associate Director for Residential Life, has begun the process of undergoing a systematic review of vision, goals, objectives and outcomes for the area of residential life as it pertains to the residential and apartment communities. This process will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the PACIFIC! Experience Program model.

**Action Items**
- Residential Life professional and paraprofessional staff will conduct focus groups with students and paraprofessional staff to determine if PACIFIC! Experience Model is meeting the needs of all students served by HRLP.
- Provide summary recommendations of evaluation of goals and programming model to Executive Director by July 15, 2013.
- Continue to use Educational Benchmarking, Incorporated (EBI) surveys to provide longitudinal data as to satisfaction with programs provided as well as identify if learning outcomes are being met through implementing programs within the residential facilities.

**Recommendation 2**
The Committee agreed with HRLP’s self-recommendation to establish a Residential Learning Community (RLC) Steering Committee.

**Response**
During Fall 2012, a RLC Steering Committee was convened and chaired by Dr. Ray Sylvester. The summary analysis of this committee is attached to this document. The HRLP has made the decision to retire two communities for 2013-2014 (REELL and Interfaith/Social Justice) and has supported the creation of a new community (Engineering/Computer Sciences). Adjustments are being made to the
Honors Community due to changes in the Honors Program. Further assessment of the Inter-American Community in Casa Jackson is still needed.

**Action Items**
- Create Standard Operating Procedures that govern and guide the establishment, evaluation and, if needed, retirement/revaluation of RLCs.
- Establish Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) between HRLP and campus partners responsible for the vitality and vibrancy of RLCs.
- Evaluate staffing and programming needs as they differ from general residential facilities and make recommendations accordingly.

**Recommendation 3**
The Review Committee requests that HRLP examine the process for assigning international students to housing units. Ideally, this process would involve allowing international students to select preferences that might include options such as full immersion into regular housing or possibly developing one or a series of unique International Living RLCs.

**Response**
HRLP has continued to work with International Programs to identify the needs of students coming in through the programs they provide. As the university looks to increase the amount of international students it serves, it is important to continue to find ways to meet their needs. Current meetings between departments have increased the ability to serve the students but efforts should continually be evaluated.

**Action Items**
- Following the guidelines within the newly created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for RLC development, work with International Programs to determine if an RLC is the best avenue to support international students.
- Continue to increase communication between HRLP and International Programs to identify living arrangements that are working and refine processes for assignments for international students.

**Staffing and Response**

**Recommendation 1**
The Committee recommends that HRLP re-visit the current staffing model that has masters-seeking staff overseeing residential facilities and compare that with standards as defined by CAS

**Response**
The current practice of having masters-seeking staff overseeing residential facilities is standard practice within the field, as long as they have support and guidance at the higher level by a staff member who has attained at least a Master’s Degree. HRLPs current model was developed approximately 10 years ago and can be benchmarked against institutions such as Bowling Green State University, Ball State University, Colorado State University – housing programs that have a defined master’s program to support the professional development in the area of student affairs and campus housing and residential life. However,
current budget analysis has HRLP determining the overall cost impact of the high turnover rate of graduate staff as opposed to masters-level staff that has lower attrition rates.

**Action Items**
- Benchmark staffing model against University of the Pacific’s California 8 peers:
  - Masters Level Staff: Students Served
  - Graduate Staff: Students Served
  - % of budget spent on masters-level, graduate level and student staff
- Work with leadership in Benard School of Education’s Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership – Student Affairs to determine the impact that transitioning to a professional staffing model would have on the program and the School.

**Recommendation 2**
The Review Committee recommends that the HRLP:
- I. Develop a policy/process to address instances of intolerance in residence halls;
- II. Establish a policy regarding intolerance in the residence halls;
- III. Establish a process to ensure diversity is considered in housing placement process;
- IV. Establish a process to evaluate diversity programming effectiveness.

**Response**
University of the Pacific and the Division of Student Life has been working to develop a Bias Incident Response team. During the development of this team, a member from HRLP has been included in creating and implementing new procedures and processes but was not an official member of the committee.

**Action Items**
- Formalize the involvement of an HRLP staff member serving on the bias incident response committee.
- Build into the new programming model a new component that highlights development around the topics of inclusion, diversity and social justice.

**Concluding Thoughts**
HRLP would like to thank the Review Committee for their hard work and strong recommendations. During times of enrollment and financial uncertainty, it is important to have a solid foundation and a charted course of action that allows our program to continue to grow and thrive during tough economic times. The committee’s recommendations provide HRLP the ability to respond accordingly and create systems that help guide it through our uncertain future. Along with responding to the recommendations, HRLP will continue to find ways to align itself with the University’s strategic plan: Pacific 2020. An emphasis will be placed on continuing our proven record for supporting whole-student learning and assessing our role in supporting the career preparedness of all students served by the HRLP. Further efforts will also be made to find ways to serve the increased transfer, graduate, international and professional students sought by the university.