

RA Recruitment

2000 – 2001 Survey Results

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RA Recruitment Assessment Project

2000 – 2001 Survey Results

Overview

The Office of Residence Life identified Resident Advisor (RA) recruitment as one of the top three assessment projects for 2000 – 2001. The Office of Residence Life conducted three upper-class student focus groups in the fall 2000. Themes were extrapolated from the focus groups to develop a web-based survey which was conducted in the beginning of the spring 2001 semester (n=339). Overall, students saw the RA experience as a leadership opportunity.

Survey Report

Purpose

The purpose for this report is to illustrate students' perceptions of the RA position as a leadership position, the benefits currently offered to RAs, and potential affect of additional benefits not currently offered to RAs on recruitment.

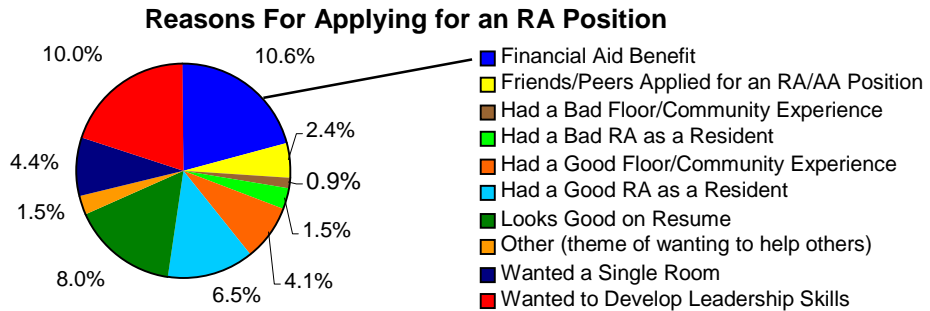
Findings

Demographic Results

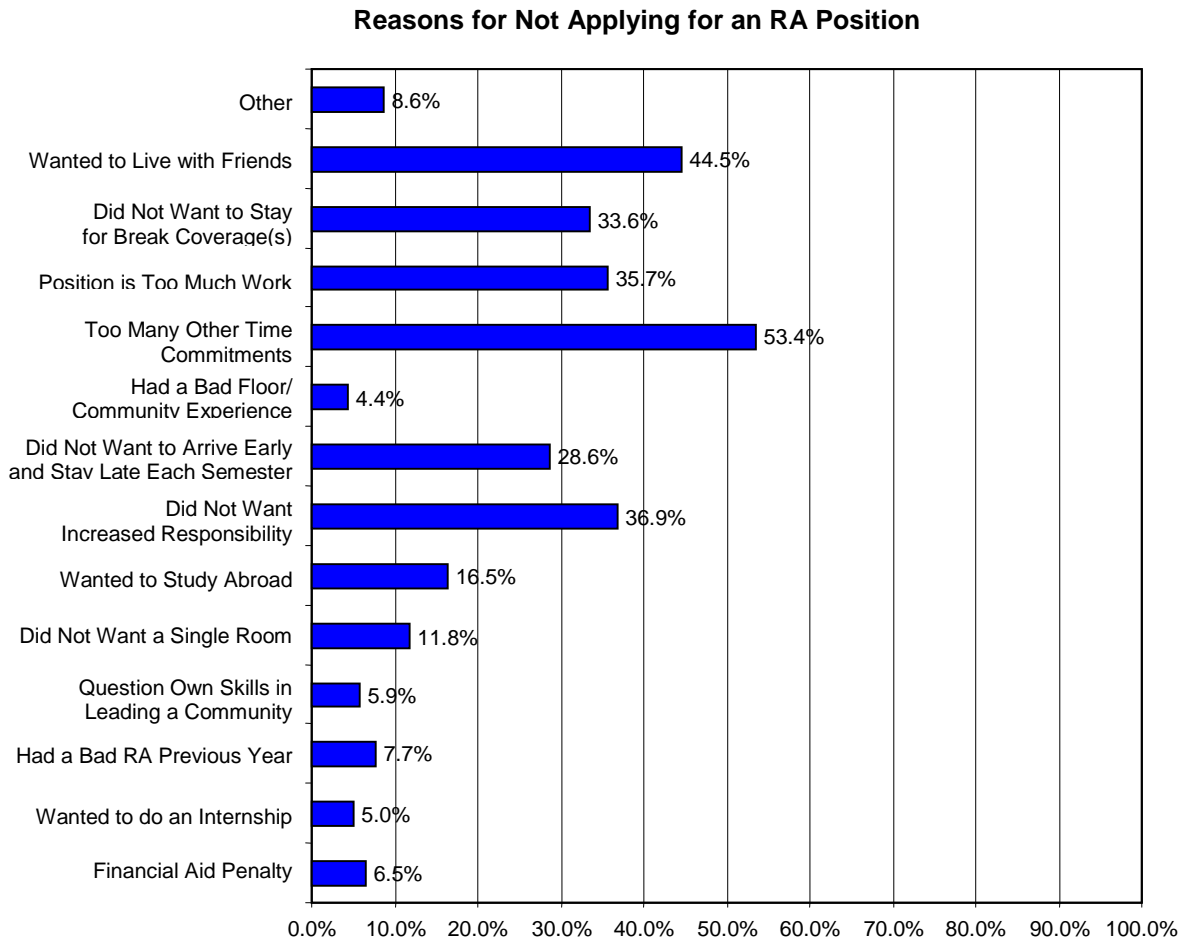
- Most students (64.4%) who completed the survey were female.
- The class standing breakdown was as follows: Freshman (2.1%), Sophomore (43.0%), Junior (37.7%), Senior (16.6%), and Graduate (0.6%).
- Ethnic breakdown was as follows, with 336 of 339 responding: White, Non-Hispanic (79.5%), African American (8.9%), Asian / Pacific Islander (6.3%), Latino American (4.5%), Non-resident Alien (0.9%), American Indian / Alaskan Native (0.0%). Three individuals abstained from this optional question.
- School and college breakdown for respondents were as follows: College of Arts and Sciences (26.5%), S.I., Newhouse School of Public Communication (20.6%), College of Visual and Performing Arts (14.5%), L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science (11.5%), School of Management (6.8%), School of Education (5.9%), School of Information Studies (5.0%), College of Human Development (4.4%), School of Architecture and School of Social Work (1.5%), College of Nursing (1.2%), Graduate School and College of Law (0.3%). No respondents identified themselves as a member of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Recruitment Results

- About half (n=177) of the students indicated that they have not considered applying for an RA position while over one-third (n=121) indicated they have considered applying. Less than a quarter (n=41) indicated that they have considered applying and have also applied for a position.
- For the overall reasons that students apply for an RA position, the top three reasons include Financial Aid Benefit, 10.6% (n=36); Want to Develop Leadership Skills, 10.0% (n=34); Looks Good on Resume, 8.0% (n=27). Further breakdown of responses can be seen below:



- For the overall reasons students indicated that they have not applied for an RA position, their top three responses included the following: Too Many Other Time Commitments, 53.4% (n=181); Wanted to Live with Friends, 44.5% (n=151); Did Not Want Increased Responsibility, 36.9% (n=125). The full range of possible responses broke-down as follows:

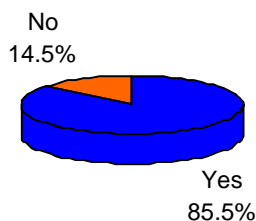


- For those that chose Other (n=29), on the above graph, reasons included the following: offered job related to major, Greek housing, had course-load requirements (e.g., Architecture), conflicting loyalties (residents vs. ORL/SU), no interest, and desire to be an area advisor which will no longer be a position.

Opportunities for Campus Involvement

- Over half of the students indicated that they believe they are student leaders (n=180).
- When choosing from the list of provided leadership roles, students had the opportunity to select as many organizations of which they were apart. The highest response was for the category of Other, receiving 21.8% of the responses (n=74). Community Service Volunteer received 15.6% (n=53) and Honor Society Member received 21.1% (n=41). The remaining options received the following: Student Peer Advisor, 10.9% (n=37); Student Association Elected Officer, 5.3% (n=18); Greek Organization Elected Officer, 4.1% (n=14); RHA or Community Council Member, 3.2% (n=11); U100, 2.7% (n=9); RHA or Community Council Elected Officer, 2.1% (n=7); and Remembrance Scholar, 0.0% (n=0).
- For the respondents who chose Other (n=74), the following were the major themes for their responses: Religious Organization, Artistic Group (i.e., DanceWorks, band, choir, etc.), Professional Society Member, SU Athlete, ROTC Participant, Club Member or Officer, Radio Broadcaster, Advisory Board Member, Hard Worker/Leader at Heart.
- A majority of students see the RA position as a leadership opportunity (n=290).

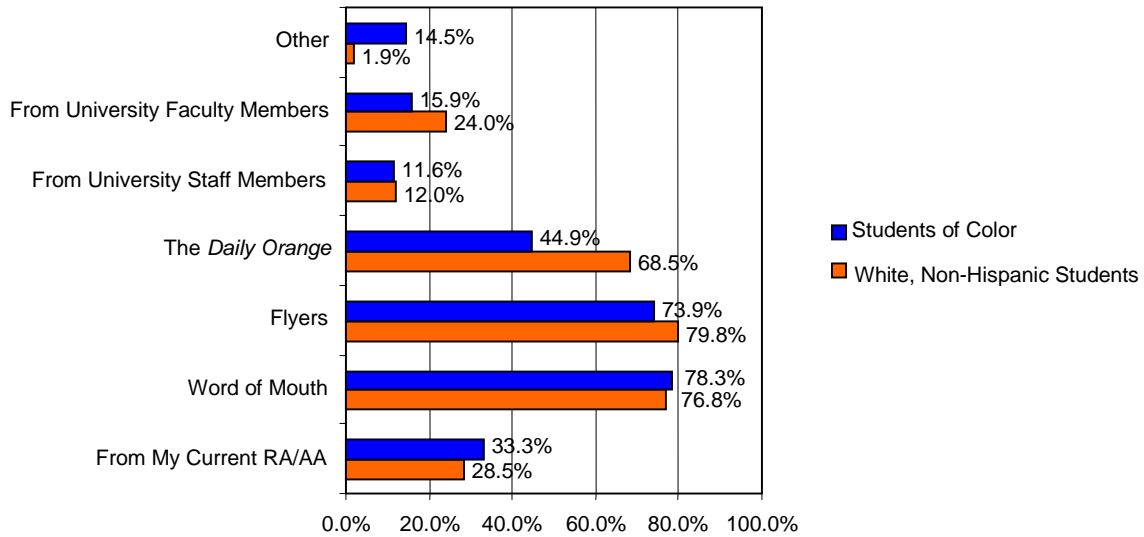
Do You Consider the Resident Advisor Position a Leadership Position?



- Students had the opportunity to explain their reasons for their response to the "RA as a leadership position" question. For those students that indicated the RA position is a leadership position (n=290), their responses focused on the following nine themes: Responsibility, Role Model, Guidance, Influence, Helping, Organizational Skills/Organizer, Crisis Management, High Level of Training, Freshman floors require more leadership. A few responses which highlight these themes are as follows:
 - "It's a leadership opportunity, because you have a chance to guide students on the path that they should take while at school. It's one of their biggest influences that they will have while they are at school and should be a possitive [sic] one."
 - "You are the facilitator for a floor of your peers, and it takes a qualified leader to be a successful RA, with all the time management skills and facilitation skills required."

- "Becoming an RA is a large responsibility because you are the person your floormates go to when a problem arises and you must learn to deal with various situations. Not only that, but many times the people on your floor learn to look up to you and often times see you as a role model."
- For the students who indicated the RA position is not a leadership position (n=49), the major themes found in their responses include the following: RA is Only an Authority Figure, RA is a Babysitter, Students Do Not Take the RA Seriously, RAs Are Not Around Enough to be Taken Seriously, and RAs Are Not Committed to Residents. Three responses which highlight these themes are as follows:
 - "It is more of a babysitting opportunity...busting people for doing "naughty" things, making sure no one gets alcohol poisoning, dealing with people's problems and stuff. You don't lead as much as you probably, at least I think, end up acting more as a babysitter."
 - "No one really cares what the RA does. All they care about is whether or not they are going to get busted for drinking. No one on the floor wants to talk about their feelings, alcohol abuse, drugs, etc. You can't lead a group of people that have no motivation, desire, or vested interested [sic] in following ridiculous [sic] floor 'opportunities'. (or so they try to make us believe)"
 - "Lead what??? A bunch of little freshmen? All RAs do is help orient freshmen during the first week, then make sure they don't die for the rest of the year. It's a chaperone position, not a leadership position."
- The majority of students reported learning about campus involvement opportunities through Flyers (n=264), Word of Mouth (n=259), and The *Daily Orange* (n=214). More than a quarter of respondents indicated learning about these opportunities from their RA/AA (n=99) while less than a quarter reported learning from University Faculty Members (n=75), University Staff Members (n=40), and Other means (n=15). Areas that were identified as Other include email, web, and alumni.
- Differences were found on how students learn of campus involvement opportunities between White, Non-Hispanic students and Students of Color (data collapsed). While the top two methods of learning about information remained similar in percentage, there were differences between use of the *Daily Orange* and University Faculty Members. For the *Daily Orange*, 68.5% of White, Non-Hispanic Students selected that response (n=183) whereas 44.9% of Students of Color selected it (n=31). When learning about campus involvement opportunities from University Faculty Members, 24.0% of White, Non-Hispanic Students indicated that they learn about them from this group (n=64). Only 15.9% of Students of Color indicated learning of these opportunities from University Faculty Members (n=11). The graph below illustrates this difference:

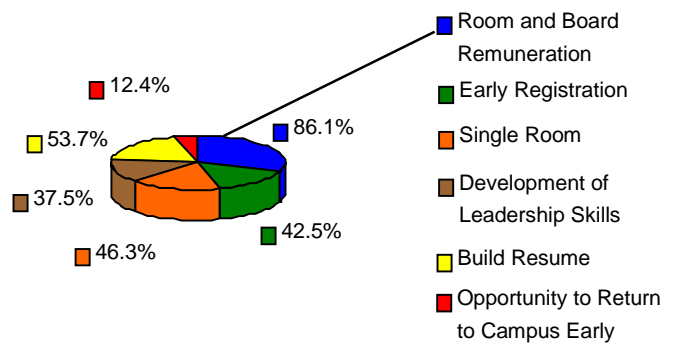
Where Students Learn About Campus Involvement Opportunities



Benefits of the Resident Advisor Position

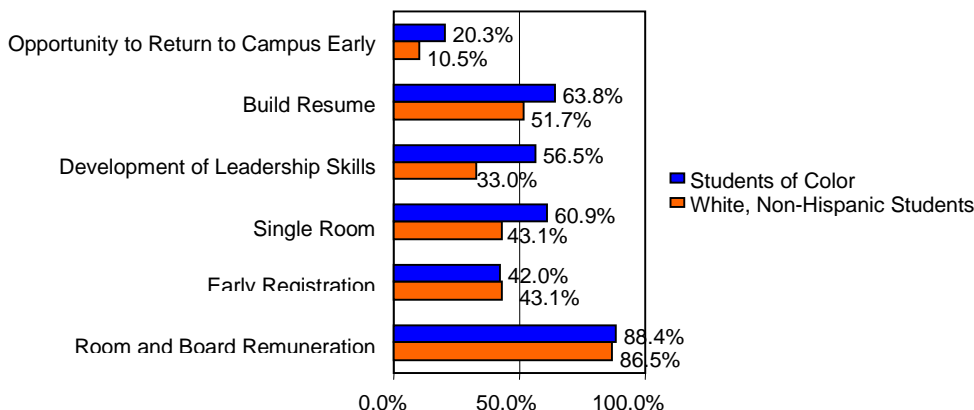
- Of the benefits currently offered to RAs, more than three quarter of the respondents selected Room and Board Remuneration (n=292) as the primary benefit that would encourage them to apply for a position. Over half of the respondents selected Build Resume (n=182). Over one-third selected Single Room (n=157) and Early Registration (n=144) as benefits that would encourage their application. Overall, the selections by respondents broke-down as follows:

Current Benefits That Would Encourage Students to Apply for an RA Position



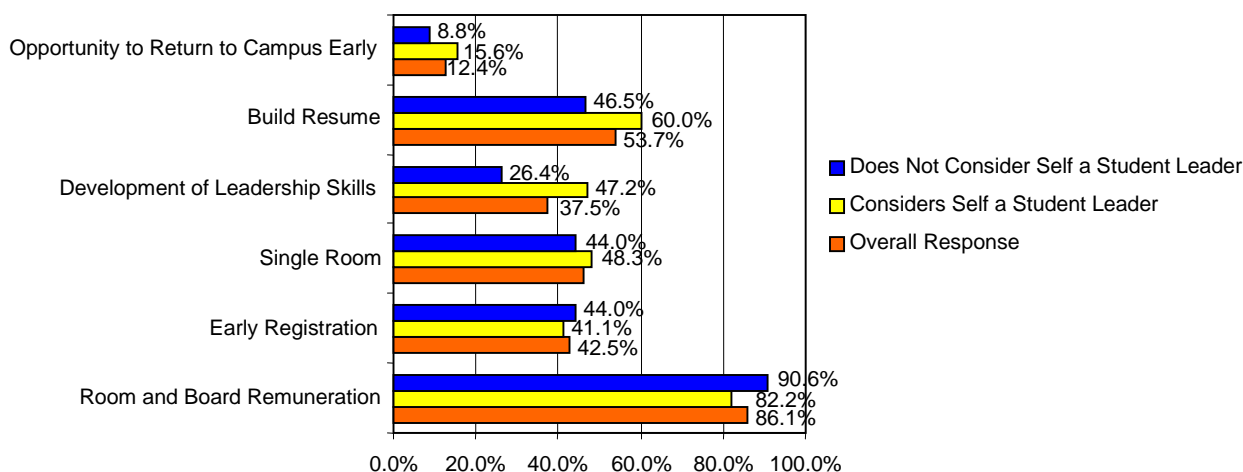
- When comparing the selections made by White, Non-Hispanic students to those made by Students of Color, there is a difference in the type benefits that appeal to the students. These differences can be seen in the following graph:

Appeal of Current RA Benefits to White, Non-Hispanic Students and Students of Color



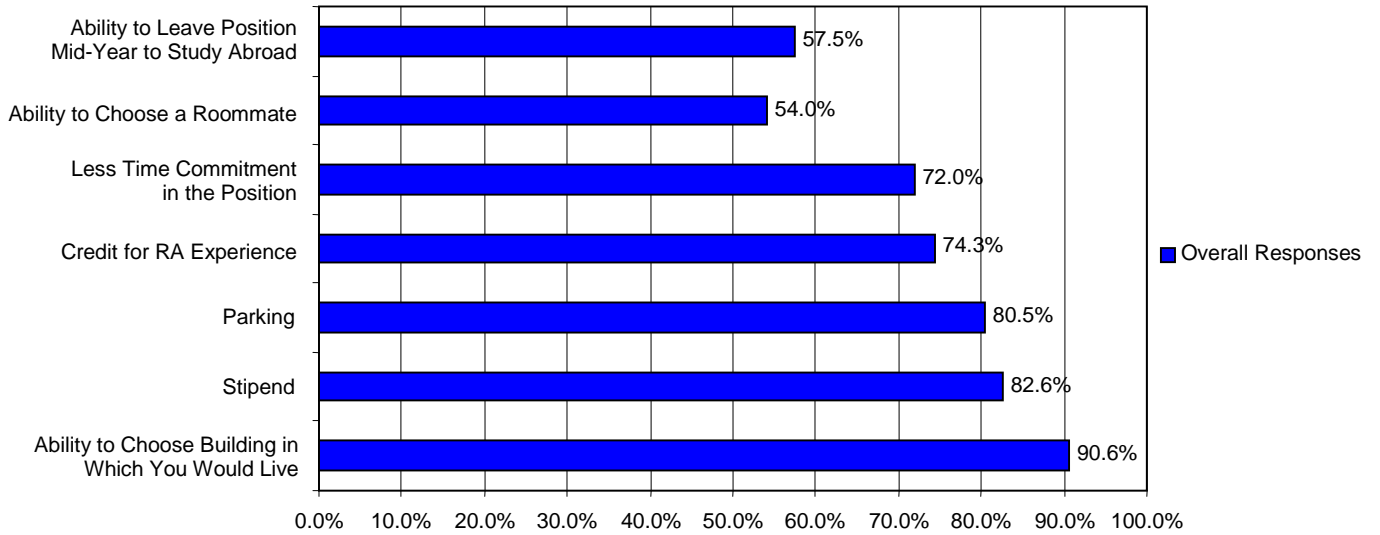
- Within the Students of Color, there are some differences between what African Americans and Asian / Pacific Islanders find appealing. The major differences are found between two benefits, Single Room and Build Resume. For African American students, 60.0% selected Single Room (n=18) while 76.2% of Asian / Pacific Islanders selected Single Room (n=16). In regards to Build Resume, 50.0% of African Americans selected that option (n=15) while 71.4% of Asian / Pacific Islanders selected that response (n=15).
- When comparing the overall results of current benefits to students' self-reported response to being a student leader, some more themes emerge. While Room and Board Remuneration and Build Resume remain the top two responses among all three groups, the percentage of responses varies greatly. The graph below illustrates this difference:

Appeal of Current RA Benefits to Self-Reported Student Leaders



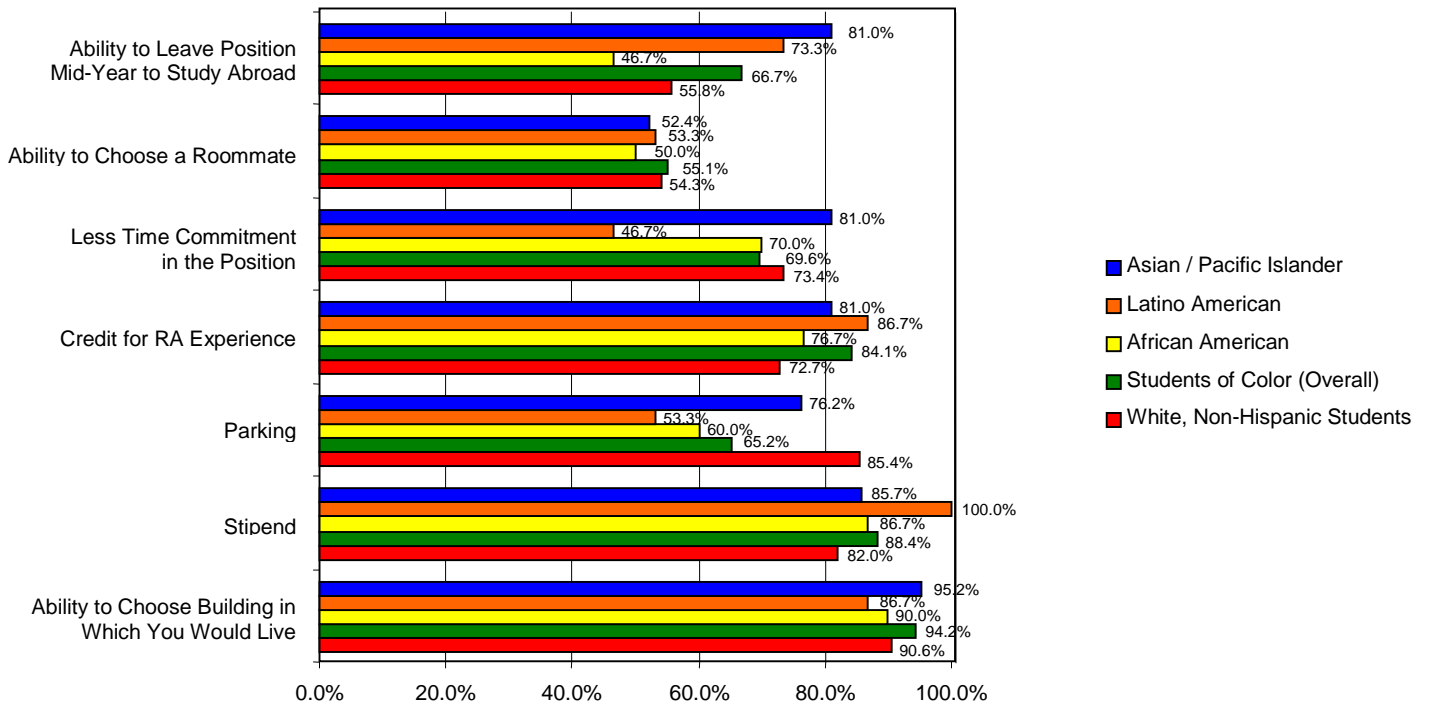
- Respondents had the opportunity to indicate which benefits that are not currently offered to RAs would make the position more attractive. Collapsing the data for responses of Very Attractive and Attractive, The Ability to Choose Building in Which You Would Live received 90.6% of the respondents selections (n=307). The results can be seen from the following graph:

Appeal of Benefits That Would Make RA Position More Attractive



- Breaking the Appeal of Benefits Not Currently Offered down by self-reported ethnicity, several themes begin to emerge. While the Ability to Choose the Building in Which You Would Live was the most preferred benefit overall, some differences do emerge between ethnicities. Collapsing the data for Attractive and Very Attractive responses, the result can be seen from the following graph:

Appeal of Benefits Not Currently Offered to RAs, Based on Ethnicity



Recommendations

Marketing

- Based on the means by which White, Non-Hispanic Students and Students of Color learn about opportunities for campus involvement, a marketing strategy should be developed to target a diverse applicant pool. For example, for the majority of Students of Color to learn about an RA position, the department should not put its resources into *Daily Orange* advertisements.
- In order to attract student leaders to the RA position, the department should market the benefits that are most attractive to this group of students: Room and Board Remuneration and Build Resume.
- As a result of the importance placed on Build Resume, it is recommended that marketing of the position include "buzz words and quotes" from high profile employers on their thoughts of hiring candidates with RA experience.
- In order to attract more Students of Color, it is recommended that marketing strategies focus on how being an RA can help Build a Resume and Develop Leadership Skills. These two areas were selected by students as benefits that would attract them to the position disproportionately to the number of White, Non-Hispanic Students that selected these two options.

Benefits

- The most attractive benefit that is not offered currently is the Ability to Choose the Building in Which You Would Live. The department has control over this potential benefit. With an average of 90.6% of students selecting this option (including 94.2% of Students of Color), it is recommended that more emphasis be given to placing RA candidates in their building preferences when possible. The third reason students chose as reasons for not applying for a position was that they wanted to live with friends. Adding this benefit would increase the candidate pool and increase the level of satisfaction in the position.
- Based on 82.6% of the respondents (including 88.4% of Students of Color) selecting Stipend as a benefit, it is recommended that this option be looked into for feasibility. There is potential to include this into a stratified RA Compensation Package that was recommended by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee for Benchmarking.
- With over 70% of overall respondents selecting Less Time Commitment in the Position, Credit For RA Experience, and Parking, it is recommended that these three options be looked into and reviewed as potential benefits for the future. Between White, Non-Hispanic Students and Students of Color, the option of Credit for RA Experience had the most consistent responses from students in both groups. Therefore, this option may be most attractive to the largest number of students in the future.

- Given the overall low level of responses, it is recommended that the department not adopt the Ability to Choose a Roommate or the Ability to Leave the Position Mid-Year to Study Abroad as future benefits at this time.

Other

- Based on the self-reported responses by students on whether they consider themselves student leaders, the department should adopt a more global definition than the one recommended to be used in this assessment project. Many students clearly define themselves as a student leader that did not correspond to the definition provided to the assessment committee.