

South Campus Assessment 2000

Office of Residence Life Assessment Committee

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OVERVIEW

South Campus currently houses approximately 2,500 residential students living in both apartment and traditional residence hall facilities. The South Campus Residence Life staffing pattern consists of one full-time Assistant Director of Residence Life, one full-time Area Director, one full-time Assistant Residence Director, one half-time Graduate Residence Coordinator and 12 student paraprofessional staff members who work 20 hours per week as Area Advisors. The assessment project team focussed on one section of South Campus, specifically the Phase II and Winding Ridge housing components of South Campus (Attachment A). This area consists of approximately 1,440 residents and six Area Advisors. Each Area Advisor is responsible for approximately 240 residents.

PURPOSE

In August 2000, six Area Advisors working in the Phase II and Winding Ridge apartment areas on South Campus were each charged to provide 70 of their 240 total residents with the *Operation Interaction* program (treatment group), while the remaining 170 residents experienced the regular residence life program (non-treatment group).

The residents that experienced the regular residence life program received deliveries (i.e. flyers), had health and safety inspections performed in their apartments, and received magnets that stated their Area Advisors name and the way in which to contact their Area Advisor. They were also provided with crisis management or conflict mediation intervention if necessary. In addition to experiencing the regular residence life program, the residents that were part of the *Operation Interaction* program experienced more individual interaction with their Area Advisors, received door decorations, received invitations to social and educational programs developed and implemented by their Area Advisor, and received a bi-weekly newsletter created by their Area Advisor. In short, the residents involved with the *Operation Interaction* program received more personal attention from their Area Advisor, as well as increased opportunities to meet and interact with other members of their community.

The purpose of this study was to determine student perceptions of their experiences living in Phase II and Winding Ridge apartments on South Campus. More specifically, the purpose was to assess the effectiveness of the *Operation Interaction* program in changing student perceptions of their South Campus experience.

METHODOLOGY

Two focus groups, one with the Senior Staff working on South Campus and one with the six Area Advisors working in Winding Ridge and Phase II, were performed in October 2000 (Attachments A and B). Although there were four concerted efforts to establish focus groups with residents, they were unwilling to participate in these focus groups and did not show up for the established focus group meetings. One resident, who was experiencing *Operation Interaction*, was willing to do an interview, which was done in the last week of October 2000 (Attachment C). In the first week of November 2000, fifteen interviews were performed in the Goldstein Student Center and after each interview the student completed a questionnaire. In addition we were able to get ten students living in Winding Ridge and Phase II to complete questionnaires about their South campus experience. Finally, during the first week of December 2000, a web-based survey (Attachment D) was distributed to all South Campus residents living in Winding Ridge and Phase II, sampling both treatment and non-treatment groups. For those residents that still had not responded to the survey after its initial distribution, another e-mail was sent to them as a reminder to complete survey. A final reminder was sent the third week of December 2000. A total of 125 Winding Ridge and Phase II residents completed the survey.

Upon the completion of all data collection, results were divided into two groups, one group being the students in the treatment (*Operation Interaction*) cohort and the other group being the non-treatment cohort. This was done to assist in determining if there were any differences between the two groups' perceptions of their South Campus experience. There were 32 responses to the survey from South Campus residents that were a part of the treatment group (*Operation Interaction*) and 93 responses from residents that were a part of the non-treatment group. Tests of significance using Chi-Square analysis illustrated that no statistically significant differences in the two groups' responses existed.

FINDINGS

Qualitative Findings

From document analysis of the qualitative components, similar themes emerged between the responses of those participants that were part of the treatment group and those participants that were part of the non-treatment group. These themes include:

- Residents do not know the name of their Area Advisor or how to contact their Area Advisor.
- Residents have little or no interaction with their Area Advisor.
- Not knowing their Area Advisor is not a problem because they are able to solve problems on their own.
- When asked about what could be improved on South Campus, residents refer to service-related issues (i.e. construction, facilities, parking, etc.).

- Residents make no references to programming and once prompted, state they have not heard of any programs developed by their Area Advisor. When asked if they would attend such programs, most respond they would not attend programs.
- Residents move to South Campus to be independent.
- Overall, they are satisfied with their South Campus experience.

Open Ended Responses from the Survey

The following summarizes the themes of the open-ended responses on the survey:

- Residents do not know their Area Advisors – “I don’t even know where to find this person if I needed to.”
- Residents are concerned with service-based issues such as:
 - Parking – “It’s b.s. that so many parking tickets are given on South Campus.”
 - Grounds – “They are not kept up well.”
 - Safety – “Fix the lighting in the parking lot. It’s unsafe.”
 - Facilities – “The new toilets suck.”

Quantitative Findings

Through the survey instrument, the students were asked to respond to questions related to their community, personal involvement, and perspectives of their Area Advisor. Tables 1.1-1.3 and Figure 1.1-1.6 summarize the results of this analysis as broken down into treatment and non-treatment groups. Overall, little difference was found between these two groups.

Questions Related to Community Involvement (Table 1.1)

In reference to Table 1.1, no statistical significance separates treatment from non-treatment groups, although some minor differences can be found. For example, treatment group respondents reported slightly lower agreement with caring about nearby residents, taking responsibility for what happens in their community, and being connected with other community members.

Questions Related to Personal Involvement (Table 1.2)

In reference to Table 1.2, treatment participants, compared to non-treatment participants, reported less frequency of talking with other residents, doing social things with other residents, sharing personal belongings with other residents, confiding in other residents, studying with other residents, and discussing areas of conflict with other residents. In short, a review of these responses seems to indicate, though not statistically significant, that participation in the treatment group had an adverse impact on perceptions of personal involvement.

Questions Related to Area Advisors (Table 1.3 and Figures 1.1-1.6)

Perhaps the most interesting of sections, in reference to Table 1.3, is that 84% of treatment group participants do not utilize their Area Advisor to request information, though this is an increase from the non-treatment groups response of 95% to the same question. Also, no student reported using their Area Advisor for crisis or emergency situations in the treatment group, while 3% of the non-treatment group had accessed

their Area Advisor under the same conditions. Figures 1.1-1.6 illustrate the perceptions of Area Advisors by treatment and non-treatment participants.

Table 1.1

| Community | Treatment group | | | Non-treatment group | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|----------|---------------------|---------|----------|
| | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
| The people in my building care about one another. | 13% | 53% | 34% | 17% | 43% | 40% |
| The people in my building trust one another. | 19% | 53% | 28% | 18% | 51% | 31% |
| The people in my building seem to be connected to each other in some way. | 13% | 24% | 63% | 14% | 24% | 62% |
| The people in my building participate in community events. | 9% | 44% | 47% | 8% | 40% | 52% |
| The people in my building communicate openly with each other. | 22% | 19% | 59% | 20% | 27% | 53% |
| The people in my building take responsibility for what happens. | 16% | 53% | 31% | 23% | 46% | 31% |
| The building where I live meets my expectations. | 53% | 28% | 19% | 58% | 26% | 16% |
| I am satisfied with my role in the building I live in. | 63% | 24% | 13% | 60% | 32% | 8% |

Non-treatment group n=93

Treatment group n=32

Table 1.2

| Personal Involvement | Treatment group | | | Non-treatment group | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|------------|---------------------|---------|------------|
| | Infrequently | Neutral | Frequently | Infrequently | Neutral | Frequently |
| Talk with other residents in my building. | 56% | 31% | 13% | 47% | 22% | 32% |
| Do social things together with other residents in my building. | 63% | 28% | 9% | 64% | 17% | 18% |
| Share personal belongings with other residents in my building. | 62% | 22% | 16% | 63% | 20% | 17% |
| Confide in another resident in my building about personal things. | 59% | 28% | 13% | 66% | 16% | 18% |
| Study with another resident in my building. | 72% | 28% | 00% | 75% | 17% | 8% |
| Discuss areas of conflict with other residents in my building. | 59% | 35% | 06% | 63% | 18% | 19% |

Non-treatment group n=93

Treatment group n=32

Table 1.3

| Area Advisor | Treatment group | | Non-treatment group | |
|--|-----------------|------|---------------------|-----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| I have utilized my Area Advisor to get help with a roommate conflict. | 3% | 97% | 2% | 98% |
| I have utilized my Area Advisor to request information. | 16% | 84% | 5% | 95% |
| I have utilized my Area Advisor to address a problem with my neighbor or other South Campus residents. | 12% | 88% | 1% | 99% |
| I have utilized my Area Advisor during a crisis or emergency situation. | 0% | 100% | 3% | 97% |

Non-treatment group n=93

Treatment group n=32

Figure 1.1

How satisfied are you with the amount of contact that you have with your Area Advisor?
(Non-treatment Group n=93)

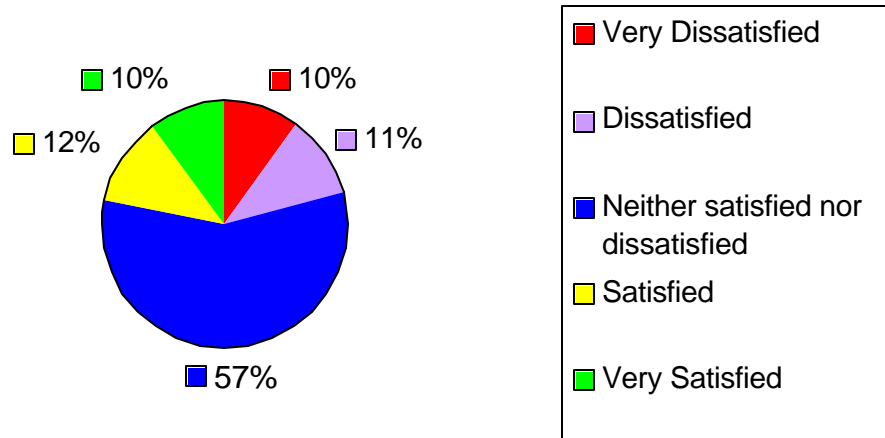


Figure 1.2

How satisfied are you with the amount of contact that you have with your Area Advisor?

(Treatment Group n=32)

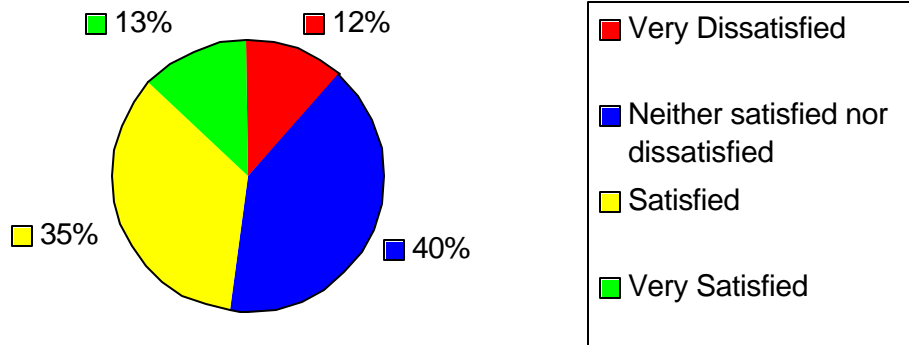


Figure 1.3

I would benefit from increasing my interactions with my Area Advisor.

(Non-treatment Group n=93)

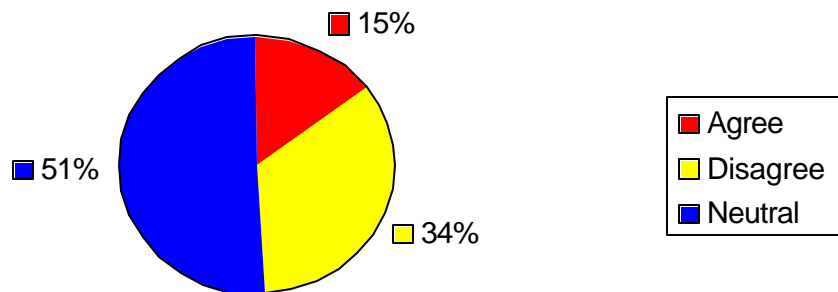


Figure 1.4

I would benefit from increasing my interactions with my Area Advisor.
(Treatment Group n=32)

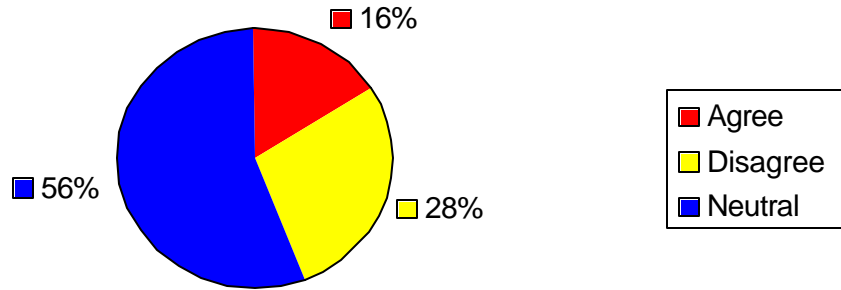


Figure 1.5

I feel Area Advisors are important to have on South Campus.
(Non-treatment Group n=93)

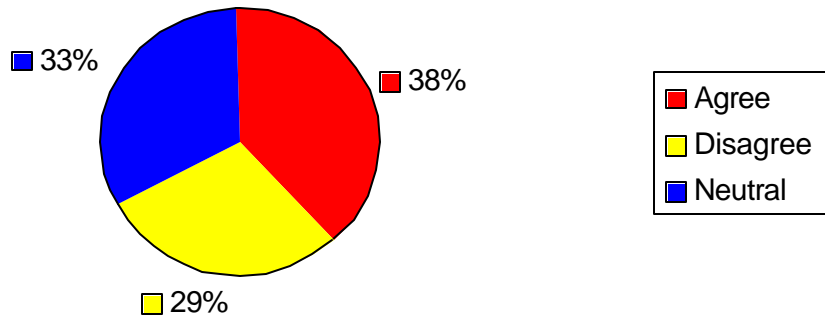
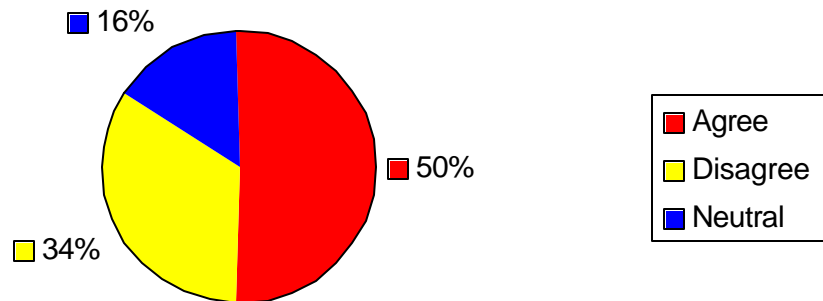


Figure 1.6

I feel Area Advisors are important to have on South Campus.

(Treatment Group n=32)



CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of residents living in Winding Ridge and Phase II are generally satisfied with their experiences on South Campus, but residents do not consider Area Advisors an integral part of that experience. More importantly, the majority of residents do not have interest in experiencing the components (i.e. programs, door decorations, etc.) that comprise the *Operation Interaction* program. This may be the reason why the implementation of the *Operation Interaction* program was not successful in changing resident's perceptions of their community, personal involvement, and Area Advisor. For those residents that are dissatisfied with their South Campus experiences, much of their dissatisfaction is related to service-based problems. Based on the findings of this study and a previous South Campus study (Attachment E), it is recommended there no longer be Area Advisors in Winding Ridge and Phase II. Furthermore, it is suggested that the Office of Residence Life create a staffing structure for Winding Ridge and Phase II that is service-based.