An Evaluation of College Sophomore Living Environments: Traditional Residence Compared to a Living Learning Community with Respect to Interaction with Faculty, Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area

A Dissertation Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nancy Papagno Crimmin

May 2008
Nancy Papagno Crimmin

Dissertation Committee
Major Advisor

Stacey L. Kite, D.B.A.
Professor, School of Education
Johnson & Wales University

Dissertation Committee Member

Robert K. Gable, Ed.D.
Director, ELP Doctoral Program, School of Education
Johnson & Wales University

Dissertation Committee Member

Jane Fried, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Education and Professional Studies
Central Connecticut State University
Acknowledgements

I am grateful to many people for their support and guidance through this most amazing journey.

- My friends and co-workers, especially Catherine WoodBrooks, for allowing me to take the time I needed and the kind words that kept me going.
- My committee, Stacey Kite, Bob Gable, and Jane Fried, thank you for all your guidance and encouragement.
- My amazing cohort, every class was an experience, and every project and adventure. I can’t imagine having gone through this with anyone else.
- My husband, Bill, you are my best friend and I am so thankful to have you in my life – thank you for being there to make me laugh when I needed it the most.
- My mother, Antoinette, thank you for always believing in me.
- My sons, Patrick and Jonathan, you are always in my heart and yes, Mom is done with her homework now.
# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgements/Copyright** .................................................................................................................. iii

**List of Tables** ........................................................................................................................................ viii

**Abstract** .................................................................................................................................................. x

I. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Statement of the Problem .......................................................................................................................... 2

1.2 Background of the Study ........................................................................................................................... 4

1.2.1 Seamless Learning Environments ....................................................................................................... 4

1.2.2 Influence, Benefits, and Satisfaction with Campus Living ................................................................. 6

1.2.3 Living Learning Communities .............................................................................................................. 7

1.2.4 Roommate Configurations .................................................................................................................... 9

1.2.5 Interactions with Faculty and Peers ...................................................................................................... 10

1.2.6 Attending to Sophomores ................................................................................................................ 11

1.2.7 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................ 12

1.3 Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................................... 12

1.4 Research Questions ............................................................................................................................... 14

1.5 Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 16

1.5.1 Population ....................................................................................................................................... 16

1.5.2 Instrumentation .................................................................................................................................. 16

1.5.2.1 Questionnaire .............................................................................................................................. 16

1.5.2.2 Focus Groups .............................................................................................................................. 17

1.6 Data Collection ..................................................................................................................................... 18

1.7 Data Analysis ......................................................................................................................................... 18

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations ................................................................................................................ 19

1.9 Resulting Actions ................................................................................................................................... 21

1.10 Organization of the Dissertation .......................................................................................................... 22

1.11 Summary ............................................................................................................................................. 23

II. Review of Literature ............................................................................................................................... 24

2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................................ 24

2.2 American College Education ................................................................................................................ 25

2.2.1 History ............................................................................................................................................ 25

2.2.2 Holistic Learning Environments ...................................................................................................... 25

2.2.3 Seamless learning Environments ..................................................................................................... 26

2.3 Examining the Living Area .................................................................................................................... 30

2.3.1 The Environment ........................................................................................................................... 30

2.3.2 The Benefits .................................................................................................................................... 31

2.4 Living Learning Communities .............................................................................................................. 34

2.5 Satisfaction ........................................................................................................................................... 36
Appendixes

Appendix A Housing Selection, Living Learning Center Process .................. 141
Appendix B Permission to Use the Research Site ........................................ 142
Appendix C Focus Group Invitation ............................................................. 143
Appendix D Institutional Review Board Approval ........................................ 144
Appendix E Derived Factors, Item Stems, and Alpha Reliabilities .................. 145
Appendix F Cover Letter and Questionnaire ............................................... 147
Appendix G Focus Group Procedure Guide ................................................. 152
Appendix H Focus Group Participation Agreement ........................................ 153
# List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Demographic Characteristics of Sophomore Residents</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha for Category-Level Dependent Variables</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance $t$ Values of Interactions with Faculty by Type of Residence Area</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance $t$ Values of Interactions with Peers by Type of Residence Area</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance $t$ Values of Satisfaction with Living Area by Type of Residence Area</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficients between the Three Dependent Variables and the Two Covariates</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty after Controlling for the Number of Roommates</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers after Controlling for the Number of Roommates</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area after Controlling for the Number of Roommates</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty after Controlling for Self-Predictions</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 16</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers after Controlling for Self-Predictions</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 17</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 18</td>
<td>ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area after Controlling for Self-Predictions</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

This research evaluated housing for sophomores on a small, private, Catholic campus. Students in traditional residence halls (TRH) and a living learning community (LLC) participated in this evaluation to determine if campus housing provided an academically and socially supportive environment for sophomores. Consistent with existing LLC literature, this facility had a requirement for student participation in an academically oriented activity meant to foster relationships with faculty outside the classroom.

The variables for this study were: Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area. Existing literature, specifically linking sophomores and housing type with these variables, is limited. This study sought to contribute to this base of research and assist the institution with their evaluation of sophomore on campus housing options.

A sequential, mixed method qualitative and quantitative design with a post-only comparison group model was employed. The theoretical frameworks utilized were Stufflebeam’s (2007) CIPP Evaluation Model and Astin’s (1993) Input-Evaluation-Outcome Model.

Survey research utilizing a 65 item questionnaire was administered to students living in TRH (N = 275) and a LLC (N = 102). Following analysis of the data, three focus groups were conducted (N = 21) to assist in interpreting and explaining the quantitative data.

Sophomores in this study, as in the literature, reported stressors with: choice of major, parental and faculty expectations, and lack of structured attention from the college. Consistent with the literature, students in the LLC were significantly more satisfied than those living in a TRH (t = 9.04; p = .001; ES = 1.12, large). Although separate analysis with Independent t-tests revealed no significant differences all means were higher for:

- The TRH compared to the LLC regarding Interactions with Faculty. Focus group data revealed LLC students felt their activities with faculty were considered “like a class” and therefore not “outside the classroom” interactions.

- The LLC compared to the TRH regarding academically and socially supportive Interactions with Peers. Focus group data revealed TRH students felt their interactions with peers were socially supportive, but not academically supportive.

These findings have ramifications for those planning LLC programs, on campus housing, and sophomore experience research.
I. INTRODUCTION

The college environment provides opportunities for learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Educating the student holistically provides a seamless learning environment; “creating conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom” (American College Personnel Association (ACPA), 1994, p. 1).

On campus student housing can be an area rich in potential for collaborative relationships between academic and student affairs. Various styles of campus housing can enhance a student’s academic and social experience by extending learning opportunities throughout the campus community (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991). This research evaluated on campus housing options for sophomore students at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeast. The specific areas studied for sophomores included: a comparison of traditional housing options versus a living learning environment; their opportunities to engage in quality interactions with faculty and peers; and their perceived satisfaction with their living area.

Sophomores were chosen as the target population for this research due to their unique academic and social needs. Past the days of orientation, acclimating to the campus culture, and learning how to navigate the academic challenges of college life, sophomores face rising expectations and difficult career path decisions (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). This chapter will provide an overview of
the research problem, background of the study, a definition of relevant terms, the research questions, and the methodology used to conduct the research.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study evaluated the living areas designated for sophomores on a small, private, Catholic campus in the Northeast. Students living in traditional residence halls (TRH) and a living learning community (LLC) were asked to participate in a mixed method study to determine if the living areas designated for sophomores provided the conditions necessary to enhance their college experience.

Three important conditions were viewed as necessary elements to a student’s success in college. They were: Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area (see for example: Astin, 1993; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Blimling, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; 1991; 2005).

Within college residence halls, students experience many social and academically based activities. Given the many documented benefits of on campus living (see Astin, 1993; Li, Sheely, and Whalen, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005), residence halls must “serve as an extension of the campus rather than a retreat from it” (Longerbeam, Inkelas, & Brower, 2007).

It is the responsibility of a residential college to create an environment conducive to meeting the social and academic needs of the population (Strange & Banning, 2001). Learning environments that promote a sense of security, mechanisms for involvement, and a sense of community are the most productive
for the students (Strange & Banning). If the goal is for student and academic affairs to collaborate in fostering a seamless learning environment, then creating living areas which are academically and socially supportive is necessary (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).

Sophomores, the college’s middle children (Schaller, 2005), generally find themselves without the added attention they had as first year students (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). The campus community expects they are well adjusted to the college environment, academic rigors, and social structures of the institution and, therefore, generally do not have specific programs targeted to their needs (Lemons & Richmond). Faced with major academic and personal decisions, sophomores generally do not have the support system readily available to them as they did their first year of college (Lemons & Richmond).

Typically, first year students are assigned to their living area as well as placed with a roommate, while sophomores generally enter some sort of lottery process and can choose their own roommates (Gansemer-Topf, Stern, & Benjamin, 2007). Given the opportunity to choose their own roommate(s) offers a sense of ownership toward the process since the onus of responsibility is on the student to choose rather than the housing staff to assign (Gansemer-Topf et al.).

Zeller (2005) believed one dilemma facing housing professionals on college and university campuses was how to provide living space that balances two needs: (1) the student’s need for privacy and space for personal belongings, and (2) “the institution’s need for creating quality interactions with peers, faculty and staff, and the larger campus community” (p. 414). This study evaluated traditional
residence halls and a living learning center to determine which living environment better meets the needs of the sophomore resident population with respect to Interactions with Faculty, Peers and Satisfaction with Living Area.

Background of the Study

This chapter examined several key areas important for understanding the scope of this research: seamless learning environments; the influence, benefits, and the satisfaction with on campus living; living learning communities; roommate configurations; interactions with faculty and peers; and attending to sophomores.

Seamless Learning Environments

Educating the body and spirit of college students continues to be an appropriate and developmentally sound theoretical framework. However, traditional approaches summoned the faculty to educate the mind (cognitive growth) and student affairs to foster the spirit and the body (affective, social/emotional growth) (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).

The term seamless “suggests that what was once believed to be separate distinct parts, are now of one piece, bound together to appear whole and continuous” (Kuh, 1996, p. 136). For seamless learning to become entrenched in the fabric of the institution, increased collaboration and communication between faculty and student affairs administrators must become a reality (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005).
Love and Goodsell Love (1995) in agreement with Kezar (2003) also cited the following reasons why colleges and universities should make it a part of their mission to develop a more integrative approach to their educational process: increased educational impact on students; increased student retention; greater social harmony; decreased social deviations (p. x). The goal, Love and Goodsell Love (1995) contend, is to “help develop a common understanding between the academic and student affairs disciplines promoting increased communication and mutual respect for the contributions each professional segment makes to the integration of these developmental areas into the educational mission” (p.xi).

In a seamless learning environment, students are encouraged, and opportunities exist, to take advantage of learning resources that exist both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005). The transition to a seamless environment challenges the college community to examine the mission and learning outcomes of the institution. All must be in alignment, advocating and requiring a holistic approach to learning across the college experience.

One area rich in possibilities for strong collaboration and partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs is residential life. To maximize the educational potential of residence hall environments, residential life programs should align policies, procedures, and programs to complement the institutional mission. When student life and academic life have a mutual respect and strong collaborative foundation, the benefits for students are found across all areas of functionality (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).
This foundation based on knowledge, competence, and trust, argued Kuh et al., (1991) can extend learning opportunities throughout the campus community. Residence hall living has the potential to connect in-class educationally purposeful activities with the out-of-class realities of contemporary college students’ lives.

**Influence, Benefits, and Satisfaction with Campus Living**

Residence hall living presents a unique opportunity for student affairs administrators to contribute to and support the educational experience of the college student. Some may see the residence halls as a place of shelter: a practical necessity on a college campus for just that reason (Strange & Banning, 2001). Others may see opportunities for education that extends the learning environment of the classroom (Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991).

Strange and Banning (2001) proposed three conditions that help make a learning environment productive: “a sense of security and inclusion, mechanisms for involvement, and an experience of community” (p. xiv). Banning and Kaiser’s (1974) examination of the ecological perspective on the relationship between students and their environments described “the influence of environments on persons and persons on environments” (p. 371). Foremost in this relationship, is the responsibility of the institution to create an environment conducive to meeting the educational needs of the population (Strange & Banning).

Some of the benefits of on-campus living, as documented by previous research, are demonstrated by higher levels of student satisfaction (Li et al., 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996); academic engagement (Astin, 1993); and greater
opportunities for social and interpersonal relationships (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Terenzini et al., 1996).

Resident students, compared to their commuting peers, are more likely to be involved with co-curricular activities and to use campus facilities (Pascarella et al., 1994). These results, along with similar findings from Pascarella (1984), appear to persist, even when controls are made for differences in certain pre-enrollment characteristics, such as: aptitude, socioeconomic status, secondary school extracurricular involvement, and private/public affiliation of their high school.

The typical full-time, residential college student spends approximately 15 hours a week in class: that leaves 153 hours spent outside the classroom, essentially in residential life (Levine, 1994). We know students’ involvement outside the classroom has been linked to persistence and retention (Tinto, 1993). Tinto believed residence hall living assists students in their social integration within the institution. Given the amount of time spent outside the classroom, satisfaction with their living area seems an important consideration.

**Living Learning Communities**

Efforts to create a seamless educational environment and “to bridge the students’ academic experiences with other aspects of their lives” (Inkelas, Vogt, Longerbeam, Owen, & Johnson, 2006, p. 40) have led to the creation of living learning programs in colleges and universities across the country. Living learning programs “can be described as communities in which students not only pursue a
curricular or co-curricular theme together but also live together in a reserved portion of the residence hall” (Inkelas et al., p. 40).

LLCs vary in physical structure and array of activities. Typically, a LLC provides greater opportunities for faculty and peer interactions, coordinated learning activities, and an academically and socially supportive learning environment (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, & Gabelnick, 2004). A successful LLC requires an educational commitment from students, and collaboration between faculty and student affairs personnel; all of whom support a holistic, student-centered learning environment (Keeling, 2004; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995).

Residency in a living learning center presupposes certain conditions. It is believed at some level, there will be a component to the living area that is different from that which exists in a traditional hall. Some examples are students enrolled in the same core classes or team taught courses; participation in study groups; attending classes in their residence hall; or involvement in small group interest circles facilitated by faculty (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Living learning communities effectively merge in-class and out-of-class learning, creating a seamless environment (ACPA, 1994; Smith et al., 2004). This type of specialized housing arrangement appears to combine the best of all possibilities; an opportunity for quality interactions with faculty, as well as, providing the environment for interactions with peers to be meaningful and a
critical part of their learning experience (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

**Roommate Configurations**

Today’s college students come from homes where many of them never had to share personal living space (a bedroom), have become accustomed to certain levels of privacy, and come with a vast array of technological devices (Zeller, 2005). It has been recommended that to meet the needs of first year students, rooms should be designed as doubles, with adequate space for belongings and a furniture configuration that can facilitate some level of privacy (Zeller). In halls where first and second year students reside together, it was preferable to have a mixture of double and single rooms with the option for semi-private bathrooms (Zeller).

Another difference between first and second year housing, was that typically first year students were assigned to their living area as well as placed with a roommate(s), while sophomores typically entered some sort of lottery process and could chose their own roommates (Gansemmer-Topf et al., 2007; Zeller, 2005). The process for either class of students could have varying results, both positive and negative. For sophomores, however, there seemed to be more of a sense of ownership of the situation since they picked their own roommates (Gansemmer-Topf et al.).

Tripling can be traced back to the 1970’s when college enrollments increased and double rooms were tripled to meet the demand for on campus space (Mullen...
& Felleman, 1990). Tripling has since become more the norm, along with the typical double rooms, suites and apartments.

Sinha and Mukherjee (1996) studied personal space requirements in college housing. They confirmed that the higher the number of roommates, the more demands on personal space, the decreased tolerance for crowding, “and a more negative attitude toward room environment” was prevalent (Sinha & Mukherjee, p. 656). In fact, quadruple (or quads) rooms were more positively perceived than triples. In Mullen & Felleman’s (1990) analysis of studies on tripling, they described the “isolate” of the triple room, defined as “the student who feels left out of activities and not closer to one roommate than the another” (p. 37).

**Interactions with Faculty and Peers**

Past studies have discovered that interactions with faculty impact satisfaction, retention, and leadership ability (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). Astin’s (1993) work found that faculty and peer interaction exerted a positive influence on cognitive and affective development and was the variable most strongly related to student satisfaction in college. Kuh and Hu’s (2001) results supported much of the previous research on faculty and peer interaction.

Out of class contact proved to positively influence students’ perceptions of the campus environment which, in turn, directly contributed to the effort expended, which consequently affected satisfaction (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Out of class contact with faculty was also one of the major tenets in an educational environment that appeared to be seamless.
Astin (1993) contended the three most powerful kinds of involvement were “academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups” (p. 126). He claimed the aspect of involvement with the most potential to influence all areas of growth and development was indeed the influence of, and interaction with, the peer group. Astin’s (1993) longitudinal study that started with incoming first year students and progressed through their senior year, suggested the “peer group is powerful because it has the capacity to involve the student more intensely in the educational experience” (p.126).

**Attending to Sophomores**

The “sophomore slump”, was described by Freedman (1956) and Feldman & Newcomb (1969) as a student’s dissatisfaction with the college and their personal experience at college. Specifically, Lemons and Richmond (1987) believed the sophomore slump experience “can be traced to the problems encountered in the following four (of Chickering’s, 1969) vectors: achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose” (p. 16). Some of the intervention strategies for sophomores described by Lemons and Richmond included development of special programs specifically for sophomores, development of mentoring relationships with faculty, and offering individualized attention centered on self-esteem and positive reinforcement.

Families, society, and colleges and universities expected and accepted the first-year transitional issues. Boivin, Fountain, and Baylis (2000) asserted that sophomores were expected to have adapted and, therefore, attention was
focused on the incoming class of first-year students. With the second year of college looming, students began to realize what they were actually good at and interested in may be two distinct entities. Forced to take an honest look at the institution and what it can realistically offer, they may become cynical and disillusioned (Boivin et al.).

**Conclusion**

The areas discussed in this section were the background for the research that was conducted. Campus housing programs offer varied options, each with their own subculture embedded within the campus community (Kuh et al., 1991). Understanding the importance of interactions with faculty and peers, as well as how satisfaction with living on campus can influence a student’s experience is critical knowledge for campus administration responsible for providing an environment conducive to educationally purposeful activities (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

Centering this research on sophomores highlighted a segment of the population on campus often misunderstood and overlooked in terms of special support and targeted programming (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). Evaluation of traditional residence halls and a living learning community to ascertain the effectiveness in terms of being academically and socially supportive, specifically with respect to sophomores, may add depth to the existing literature.

**Definition of Terms**

**Academic Affairs** was defined as the unit responsible for the education of college students; oversee faculty in a college setting.
**Educationally purposefully activity** was defined as undergraduate activities, events, and experiences that are congruent with the institution’s educational purposes and the student’s own educational aspirations, both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994).

**Faculty** was defined as professional educators, employed at a college or university, generally skilled on one particular discipline.

**Holistic** was defined as concern with the whole rather than a system of parts (Love & Goodsell Love, 1995).

**Interaction with faculty** was defined as quality contact with faculty outside the traditional classroom setting (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Variable defined by responses to questions 45-52 in the questionnaire.

**Interaction with peers** was defined as opportunities for socialization, academic reflection and discussion, and development of interpersonal relationships (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Variable defined by responses to questions 33-44 in the questionnaire.

**Living learning community (LLC)** was defined as a specific residential living area for college students with varying types of academically oriented activities (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

**Roommate configuration** was defined as the specific number of roommates allowable for each particular residence hall room type.

**Satisfaction with living area** was defined as a socially and academically supportive residential setting (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).

**Seamless learning environment** was defined as what was once separate, distinct parts, are now one piece; inside and outside the classroom educational activities (Kuh, 1996).

**Student** was defined as a person enrolled in classes at the college for full time study; the students in this study will be sophomores, or second year students, having earned 30 to 60 credit hours at the college in credit courses.

**Student satisfaction** was defined as contentment with or approval of a college living area.

**Student Affairs** was the unit working with students primarily outside the classroom; responsible for activities and residential areas which support the mission of the institution.
Traditional residence hall (TRH) was defined as the building in which students live while enrolled in college; generally the rooms have basic furnishings, and common area bathrooms (Schroeder & Mable, 1994).

Research Questions

This study included survey research followed by focus groups. A survey, according to Creswell (2003), “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 153). Specific questions included in the focus groups were developed based on the results of the survey research data (Krueger, 1998a).

The primary research question for this study was:

Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers?

For the purposes of this study, the secondary research questions were as follows:

Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to students’ satisfaction with their living area?

After controlling for number of roommates, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

After controlling for self-predictions, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

The qualitative research questions for this study evolved from an exploration of the data generated from the survey research. The intent of this supplementary
source of data was to assist with the clarification of survey research results
(Morgan, 1997).

The focus group questions were as follows:

1. Prior to coming to xxxxxxxx, you may have had certain expectations of what the experience would be like. Can you describe some of those expectations? Have your expectations been met? If not, can you explain what may be missing from your experience?

2. In your living area – do you feel your peers are supportive of each other socially? Academically? What are some of the “hot topics” you discuss with your peers in the halls?

3. What is your perception of the residence hall staff (RAs and RDs)? What kind of interactions do you have with them? Do you feel they are supportive of your social and academic goals?

4. Regarding your roommates – how does the total number of people living in your room impact your academic work? Your socializing?

5. Would you recommend your current residence hall to someone in the class of 2011? Why or why not?

6. Talk about your relationship with faculty. Include information about interactions inside the classroom as well as outside the classroom. What kind of informal conversations do you have with faculty (not directly related to course content)? Have you met a faculty member outside of class socially, for example in the snack bar for a cup of coffee or meeting in the dining hall for lunch?

7. Describe what it means to be a sophomore. How is this year different from your first year (academically and socially)?

8. Keeping with the theme of being a sophomore – describe the changes, if any, you have had with your friendships from your first to your second year. How did your make friends last year? Do you still have the same friends? Why or why not? Did where you live impact who your friends were/are?
Methodology

This study utilized a mixed method quantitative and qualitative design in two phases. The quantitative aspect of the study included a 65 item questionnaire which was distributed to the target population. Focus groups, conducted after data collection, were the qualitative component of this mixed method study. The purpose of this sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003) was to have the qualitative portion (the focus groups) “assist in explaining and interpreting the findings” (p.215) of the quantitative part of the research. The sequential exploratory design of this study consisted of the following order: quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, followed by an interpretation of the entire analysis (Creswell, 2003, p. 213).

Population

Data were collected from the sophomore resident population at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeast. The total usable sample, $N = 377$, came from traditional residence hall (TRH) students, $n = 275$, and living learning community (LLC) students, $n = 102$.

Instrumentation

**Questionnaire.** The first phase of the research utilized an adapted questionnaire with 65 items. There were five parts to the instrument. The first part included demographic information, including: gender, ethnicity, GPA range, major, housing, number of roommates, activities for the respondent’s first and second years, housing lottery and selection items, and a question about the
respondents overall level of satisfaction with their own academic performance at the college.

The second part included 16 items related to the respondent’s Self-Predictions of level of success and importance of involvement on campus prior to arrival for their first year. Each utilized a 4-point Likert style rating; level of success included 1 = Not at all confident to 4 = Very Confident; importance of involvement included 1 = Not at all important to 4 = Very Important.

The third part included 12 items related to the respondent’s Interaction with their Peers with a 4-point Likert style scale ranging from 1 = Never to 4 = Once or More a Week. The fourth part investigated the respondent’s Interactions with their Faculty and included eight questions with a 4-point Likert style scale ranging from 1 = Never to 4 = Once or More a Week. Finally, the fifth part consisted of questions relating to the respondent’s Satisfaction with their Living Area with 13 questions. The 4-point Likert scale for this item was 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree.

The content validity for the questionnaire items was derived from a review of the pertinent literature, as well as, a group of four content experts who provided comments for improving the quality and clarity of the items. The content experts were all selected from senior level higher education positions and/or residential life and housing departments.

**Focus Groups.** The focus group questions evolved from an exploration of the data generated from the survey research. This supplementary source of data (Morgan, 1997) helped explain the survey research results; assisting with poorly
understood questions, or results that were confusing to the researcher. A pilot of the focus group questions was conducted with current sophomores, $N=10$, to assess the clarity of the questions and the item content. Their feedback was used in drafting the final questions, which were used in the focus groups.

**Data Collection**

The instrument was administered via a paper format to residents through the student staff (resident assistants) on each floor. Anonymity and confidentiality controls were in place, for example: not collecting any identifying information from the respondent and asking the respondent to return their questionnaire in a large, sealed envelope (provided).

The focus groups were conducted by the researcher. Interview standardization (utilizing and interview guide) and a structured moderator involvement strategy were utilized for the focus groups (Krueger, 1998b; Morgan, 1997). Each participant was asked to read and sign a participant agreement which explained: the purpose of the study; rationale for the use of focus groups as a follow up to the questionnaire; how the findings will be used; who will have access to the audio tapes; confidentiality and anonymity controls.

**Data Analysis**

Data validity was obtained from different sources: the literature base, the questionnaire, and the focus groups. This triangulation helped develop “coherent justification for themes” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). The questionnaire results were
analyzed using various statistical techniques. Research questions 1 and 2 included Independent Sample $t$ tests run for the dimensions as well as the individual items within each dimension. This was to examine the differences, if any, between TRH and LLC with respect to Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area.

Research questions 3 and 4 included an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for the Number of Roommates and the Self-Predictions with respect to Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area. Effect Sizes were calculated for all significant findings. Correlations were run to assess the direction and magnitude of the relationship of the Number of Roommates and the Self-Prediction items with each of the dimensions (dependent variables).

The focus group data were transcribed from the audio recordings taped during the actual groups. Notes from the researcher were also transcribed. Data analysis included coding, which involves organizing text into categories (Creswell, 2003). Reporting of the results was in narrative form and included quotes for the participants.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations are provided “to identify potential weaknesses of the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 148). In this study, experimental treatment diffusion, and resentful demoralization of the comparison group were potential threats to internal validity (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, pp. 386-388).
The theoretical framework used for this study, Astin’s (1993) I-E-O Model hypothesized that students come to college with a wide range of academic, personal, and social characteristics. These areas shaped the student’s experience at the institution and their engagement with curricular and co-curricular pursuits. Past research which has used the I-E-O model to control for these pre-college characteristics within the statistical design to reduce the risk of mitigating factors influencing the outcome of the study (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). When the population for the research is first year students, the pre-college characteristics are appropriate covariates. Since sophomores were the population used for this research, Self-Perceptions rather than pre-college characteristics were used in an attempt to control for areas which may potentially influence the results of the study. One criticism of prior research centered on residential outcomes was that positive outcomes may be less related to the program or environment and more related to the “innate abilities and preferences of the students” (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003, p. 337). Therefore, a limitation of this study was the use of Self-Perceptions rather than expanding the demographic information to include pre-college characteristics along with Self-Perceptions. This will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

Delimitations, as defined by Creswell (2003) “narrow the scope of the study” (p. 148). The use of an experimentally accessible population may affect generalizability to a larger population, with the exception of targeted similar small, liberal arts, private, catholic, residential colleges (Gall et al., 2007). Larger state
institutions could have difficulty finding the results helpful to their work on their campuses because of the differences in housing operations.

Another obstacle to generalizing results would be the single institution model of this study. As Gall et al. (2007) indicate stronger evidence for generalizability comes from repeated replication. This study will only include sophomores, therefore excluding freshmen, juniors, and seniors. Additionally, the diverse array of housing options available to sophomores at the research site may inhibit generalization to larger, outside populations.

Given the complexities of housing selection, the population was not randomly assigned into housing areas. The students self-select housing based on the particular lottery process in which they participate. Appendix A describes the housing selection and lottery and LLC application procedure in more detail.

Within the focus groups, a tendency toward conformity or polarization could have been issues (Morgan, 1997). Given that the moderator may have been known to some participants, accuracy and bias within the conversation may have been an issue. To try and reduce the risk of this bias, the students selected to receive invitations to participate in the focus groups were not readily known to the researcher. Also, their participant agreement stressed the level of confidentiality and anonymity controls in place in an effort to address any concerns.

**Resulting Actions**

This study offers valuable information to professionals working in the areas of student affairs and academic affairs. It also reinforced the work of past research
and expanded the knowledge base on issues related to on campus housing options for sophomores.

Campus housing offers opportunities for education that extends the learning environment of classroom (ACPA, 1994; Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005; Kuh et al., 1991). Creating this seamless learning environment offers the students a holistic educational experience designed to meet academic, social, and interpersonal needs (Kuh, 1996; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995).

Broadening the understanding of issues unique to the sophomore year experience can assist with targeted programming initiatives, mentoring opportunities, and enhanced academic guidance and advisement (Boivin et al., 2000). Combining these initiatives with living areas specifically targeted to this population can provide environments devoted to development of character, identity, purpose, and autonomy (Boivin et al., 2000; Lemons & Richmond, 1987). The specific areas studied in this research for sophomores included: a comparison of traditional housing options versus a living learning environment; their opportunities to engage in quality interactions with faculty and peers; and their perceived satisfaction with their living area.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

This research is reported in five separate chapters. The first chapter contains a complete overview of the study. Chapter II reviews relevant literature on all pertinent areas of study: on campus housing environments, benefits of on campus housing, living learning communities, issues relating to sophomores, interactions with faculty and peers, and satisfaction. Chapter III outlines the
methodology, research design, and research questions of the study. Chapter IV offers the results of the quantitative and qualitative research. Finally, Chapter V summarizes and describes the major findings, conclusions, and suggestions for future research on these topics.

**Summary**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate on campus housing options for sophomore students at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeast. The specific areas studied for sophomores included: an evaluation of traditional housing options versus a living learning environment; their opportunities to engage in quality Interactions with Faculty and Peers; and their perceived Satisfaction with their Living Area.
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Campus housing has been an area rich in research for many years (Chickering, 1974; Lacy, 1978; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Schroeder & Mable, 1994). The benefits for students living on campus have been widely documented (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Terenzini et al., 1996). Various housing arrangements have been studied (Pascarella & Terenzini; 1980) and the effect of positive interpersonal interactions with faculty and peers have been assessed (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). One of the goals of this research was to merge the wealth of information available on campus housing, including academically based living learning centers (Shapiro & Levine, 1999), with the growing body of research related to sophomore students’ experiences and expectations (Boivin et al., 2000; Schaller, 2005).

To accomplish this goal, this study evaluated various styles of sophomore students’ campus housing to determine which type of living environment better influences meaningful Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and is perceived as being academically and socially supportive. To maximize opportunities for these important interactions, collaboration and communication between student and academic affairs is essential. When collaboration and communication is successful, the learning environment can be called seamless (ACPA, 1994; Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005).

This review of relevant literature begins with an examination of seamless learning environments: leading to the area rich in opportunities for collaborative
efforts, on campus housing. Other research areas addressed in relation to the
focus of this study are: environmental theories, living learning centers, the
uniqueness of sophomore students, and the impact of roommates.

American College Education

History

The American college education structure, including residence halls, has
historical roots dating back to the 12th century European systems, specifically
those with the most influence being Germany and England (Frederiksen, 1993).
The English system took a more holistic approach to education while the German
system favored research and stressed instruction over all other interests. By the
19th century in America, the educational system dictated faculty be responsible
for both teaching and discipline, the origins of which became in loco parentis.
During this time, when student affairs positions were created, life outside the
classroom was recognized as separate from academics (Schroeder & Mabel,
1994).

Holistic Learning Environments. Beginning over a decade ago, professional
organizations in student affairs began collaborating on powerful publications
aimed at addressing learning on college campuses. The American College
Personnel Association and The National Association of Student Personnel
Administrators, flagship generalist organizations of the profession, published The
Student Learning Imperative (ACPA, 1994), Principles of Good Practice for
Student Affairs (n.d.), Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the
Student Experience (Keeling, 2004), and most recently, Learning Reconsidered

Why did so many professional organizations and panels of esteemed scholars and practitioners join together to give direction to the masses in the trenches of colleges and universities? Over the years, the definition of learning has shifted from a teacher-student centered philosophy to an active, integrated approach, crossing boundaries of functionality, to encompass a holistic framework (AAHE, ACPA & NASPA 1998; ACPA, 1994; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Keeling, 2004; Keeling, 2006; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Terenzini et al., 1996).

**Seamless Learning Environments.** Educating the body and spirit of college students continues to be an appropriate and developmentally sound theoretical framework. However, traditional approaches summoned the faculty to educate the mind (cognitive growth) and student affairs to foster the spirit and the body (affective, social/emotional growth) (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Terenzini et al., 1996). The Student Learning Imperative (ACPA) stated:

The key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more or better, but also to create these conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom (p.1).
The term educationally purposeful referred to undergraduate activities, events, and experiences that were congruent with the institution’s educational purposes (mission and learning outcomes) and a student’s own educational aspirations. Research on college student development showed “the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development” (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 8).

There are many areas on campus where collaborative practices successfully occur. Service learning opportunities, dinner and discussions, lectures, student leader training activities, clubs and organizations are all examples of opportunities for student affairs and academic affairs to work collaboratively with students outside the classroom. Student affairs personnel can be very helpful to faculty with behavioral problems in their classes, assessing mental health issues, team-teaching and coordinating events (Terenzini et al., 1996).

The term seamless “suggests that what was once believed to be separate distinct parts, are now of one piece, bound together to appear whole and continuous” (Kuh, 1996, p. 136). Increased collaboration and communication between faculty and student affairs administrators can a support seamless learning environment (ACPA, 1994; Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996, Kuh et al., 2005).

Historically, faculty and student affairs collaborative attempts may have been sabotaged by a simple lack of understanding and knowledge of what the other contingency does for the student population. Kezar (2003) elaborated:

The gap between faculty and student affairs professionals emerged based on a division of labor, reflected inside the classroom and outside the classroom, as well as incorrect perceptions and lack of knowledge about each other’s jobs, increased specialization, as well as financial competition between these two groups (p. 137).
Love and Goodsell Love (1995) in agreement with Kezar (2003) also cited the following reasons why colleges and universities should make it a part of their mission to develop a more integrative approach to their educational process: increased educational impact on students; increased student retention; greater social harmony; decreased social deviations (p. x). The goal, Love & Goodsell Love (1995) contended, is to “help develop a common understanding between the academic and student affairs disciplines promoting increased communication and mutual respect for the contributions each professional segment makes to the integration of these developmental areas into the educational mission” (p.xi).

In a seamless learning environment, students are encouraged, and opportunities exist, to take advantage of learning resources that exist both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005). The transition to a seamless environment challenges the college community to examine the mission and learning outcomes of the institution. All must be in alignment, advocating and requiring a holistic approach to learning across the college experience.

Treating learners as an integrated whole rather than the sum of the parts reflects a growing body of research that supports learning across the academe, the seamless learning environment, facilitated by academics and student affairs alike (Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 2005; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Sandeen, 2004). Promoting learning as a balance between guiding the learner and enabling the student should be one of the central goals of higher education (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).
Kuh (1996) contended there are six principles institutions should aspire to in their campus community. They were: generate enthusiasm for institutional renewal, create a common vision of learning, develop a common language, foster collaboration and cross-functional dialogue, examine the influence of student cultures on student learning, and focus on systemic change. Baxter Magolda (1999) adds “connecting to students’ lived experience means using it as a foundation from which they can explore knowledge and determine what to believe” (p. 13). Examination of these principles revealed nothing can be accomplished without strong collaboration, an institutional ethos which emphasizes learning outcomes, and commitment to change.

One area rich in possibilities for strong collaboration and partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs is residential life. To maximize the educational potential of residence hall environments, residential life programs should align policies, procedures, and programs to complement the institutional mission. When student life and academic life have a mutual respect and strong collaborative foundation, the benefits for students are found across all areas of functionality (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

This foundation based on knowledge, competence, and trust, argued Kuh et al. (1991) can extend learning opportunities throughout the campus community. Residence hall living has the potential to connect in-class educationally purposeful activities with the out-of-class realities of contemporary college students’ lives.
Examining the Living Area

The Environment

Residence hall living presents a unique opportunity for student affairs administrators to contribute to and support the educational experience of the college student. Some on campus may see the residence halls as a place of shelter: a practical necessity on a college campus for just that reason (Strange & Banning, 2001). Others may see opportunities for education that extends the learning environment of the classroom (Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991).

Strange and Banning (2001) proposed three conditions that help make a learning environment productive: “a sense of security and inclusion, mechanisms for involvement, and an experience of community” (p. xiv). Banning and Kaiser’s (1974) examination of the ecological perspective on the relationship between students and their environments described “the influence of environments on persons and persons on environments” (p. 371). Foremost in this relationship is the responsibility of the institution to create an environment conducive to meeting the educational needs of the population (Strange & Banning).

This ecosystem model, first proposed by a task force associated with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) (Aulepp & Delworth, 1976), provided a methodology of how to assess current environments with the intent to design future environments and structures to produce more optimal person-environment fits. The desired outcome was for campus environments to be designed to promote interactions between the student and
their environment that contribute to educational consistency across the campus environment (Banning & Kaiser, 1974).

The residence hall environment was reported by Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) to be “perhaps the single most consistent within-college determinant of impact” (p. 611) on the student’s experience. It would be challenging, and beyond the scope of this study, to isolate specific elements of the particular residence hall environment that lead to the observed outcomes. However, by examining different types of housing (for example: double rooms, triple and quad rooms, suites, and living learning arrangements) researchers may be better prepared to understand if the living environments provided by the college are those that “will challenge students toward active learning, growth, and development” (Strange & Banning, 2003, p. 4). Meeting these needs outside the classroom contributes to the development and sustainability of seamless learning environments (Kezar, 2003).

The Benefits

Some of the benefits of on campus living, as documented by previous research, are demonstrated by higher levels of student satisfaction (Li et al., 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996); academic engagement (Astin, 1993); and greater opportunities for social and interpersonal relationships (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Terenzini et al., 1996).

In Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1991) research synthesis, they concluded that living on campus while controlling for background traits and other confounding influences, had a significant positive relationship with psychosocial and attitudinal
measures (such as developing autonomy, independence, positive self-concept, tolerance, empathy, and ability to relate to others), and also increased the likelihood of persistence to graduation. In their second volume (2005) living away, without specifically addressing on campus residence, was shown to have a positive relationship on students' interpersonal skills.

As in their first volume, they contended the residential settings with the strongest influence were those structured to intentionally expose students to “people different from themselves and with ideas different from those they currently hold” (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005, p. 603). In addition, there were limited consistent findings that living on campus “directly influences knowledge acquisition or more general cognitive growth” (p. 604). Rather they found that an indirect relationship may be more prevalent given that living on campus facilitates academic and social engagement and such involvements clearly relate to a student’s persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini).

Pascarella (1984), in a longitudinal, multi-institution causal model study, found while background characteristics and institutional control (public or private) are held constant, living on campus had “significant direct effects” (p. 257) on social integration with peers and with faculty. His work emphasized the positive indirect relationships to social integration (with peers and faculty) versus the direct relationships to resident or commuter status.

Resident students, once again compared to their commuting peers, were significantly more likely to be involved with co-curricular activities and to use campus facilities (Pascarella et al., 1994). These results, along with similar
findings from Pascarella (1984), appeared to persist, even when controls were made for differences in certain pre-enrollment characteristics, such as: aptitude, socioeconomic status, secondary school extracurricular involvement, and private/public affiliation of their high school.

In discussing the benefits of residence hall living, an examination of the size of the residence area was a point of consideration. There may be assumptions that a smaller community may have benefits over a larger community for the student population. For example, Clark and Hirt (1998) hypothesized that students living in small residence halls would be more satisfied with community life than those living in larger residences. Their findings however, contradicted their hypothesis, given that students living in larger residence hall reported: a greater sense of cohesiveness; higher levels of involvement; higher levels of emotional support; personal development; support from residence life staff; and academic achievement (Clark & Hirt).

Gellin's (2003) meta-analysis of eight studies from 1991 to 2000 examined various indicators of involvement, one being living on-campus, to measure the relationship to critical thinking skills. His findings illustrated that living on campus had a positive effect (ES = .23; Confidence Intervals of .17, .28; p = < .05), for the development of critical thinking skills.

Given the many documented benefits of on campus living, it seems apparent that residence halls must “serve as an extension of the campus rather than a retreat from it” (Longerbeam et al., 2007, p. 20). Institutions tend to have many subcultures represented by varying styles of residence (Pascarella et al., 1994).
One particular style of college housing that has the potential to enrich the educational experience is a living learning center (LLC) or living learning community.

**Living Learning Communities**

Efforts to create a seamless educational environment and “to bridge the students’ academic experiences with other aspects of their lives” (Inkelas et al., 2006, p. 40) have led to the creation of living learning programs in colleges and universities across the country. Living learning programs “can be described as communities in which students not only pursue a curricular or co curricular theme together but also live together in a reserved portion of the residence hall” (Inkelas et al., p. 40).

In a presentation at the Living Learning Programs and Residential Colleges Conference at Indiana University in November of 2004, Inkelas described LLC programs as “the ultimate learning experience” (p. 3). In the first multi-institutional study of living learning programs, the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (with Inkelas as the lead investigator), found students who participated in a LLC program were more likely to: (a) “have positive peer interactions”, (b) “perceive a positive residence hall climate”, (c) “have stronger transition to college, academic achievement, and retention outcomes”, (d) “have higher levels of civic engagement”, and (e) “have lower levels of binge drinking” (Inkelas, 2004, p. V-1). Residence based LLC combine a structured living environment meant to build community with intentional academic programming (Shapiro & Levine, 1999; Smith et al., 2004). The historical and philosophical origins of LLC come from
John Dewey (1903) and stressed social interaction, active learning, and student-centered learning, which were deeply rooted in community and democracy (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Shapiro & Levine, 1999; Smith et al.).

LLCs vary in physical structure and array of activities. Typically, a LLC provides greater opportunities for faculty and peer interactions, coordinated learning activities, and an academically and socially supportive learning environment (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Smith et al., 2004). A successful LLC requires an educational commitment from students, and collaboration between faculty and student affairs personnel; all of whom support a holistic, student-centered learning environment (ACPA, 1994; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995).

Residency in a living learning center presupposes certain conditions. It is believed at some level, there will be a component to the living area that is different from that which exists in a traditional hall. Some examples are students enrolled in the same core classes or team taught courses; participation in study groups; attending classes in their residence hall; or involvement in small group interest circles facilitated by faculty (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Given these academically oriented activities, one could assume students in a living learning center would be more involved and academically engaged. However, participation in these activities may not be required, and individuals successfully attaining these goals may depend upon personal effort and pre-enrollment characteristics (Astin, 1993; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).
Living learning communities effectively merge in-class and out-of-class learning, creating a seamless environment (ACPA, 1994; Smith et al., 2004). This type of specialized housing arrangement appears to combine the best of all possibilities; an opportunity for quality interactions with faculty, as well as, providing the environment for interactions with peers to be meaningful and a critical part of their learning experience (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

**Satisfaction**

The typical full-time, on campus resident student spends approximately 15 hours a week in class: that leaves 153 hours spent outside the classroom essentially in residential life (Levine, 1994). We know students' involvement outside the classroom has been linked to persistence, retention, and social integration within the institution (Tinto, 1993). Given the amount of time spent outside the classroom, satisfaction with their living area seems an important consideration. Satisfaction with the living area was defined as perceiving the area to be academically and socially supportive (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).

Arboleda, Wang, Shelley, and Whalen (2003) conducted a single institution quantitative study controlling for pre-college characteristics and influences from the residence hall environment to predict students' involvement in their residence halls. Their research found that students who are more involved in their residence hall community did, indeed, tend to be more satisfied, both academically and socially, with their living environment. The study defined involvement in the residence hall community as being more satisfied with hall
governance, having contact with professional and student staff within the area, and the opportunity to engage in group study (Arboleda et al.) Interestingly, a preference for quiet study and single room occupancy were not seen as positive indicators of involvement. Although much can be gained by quiet study and time alone, it appeared through Arboleda’s et al. work that getting to know others and being involved in the residence environment outweighed these two factors.

Living areas where students expressed high levels of satisfaction were said to be academically and socially supportive (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). In some instances, students participating in a LLC program may be housed in the same building as students who are not involved in the program. Longerbeam et al., (2007) found that non-LLC students gained “secondhand benefits” from living in buildings with a LLC component (p. 26). These benefits included a higher perception of a socially and academically supportive environment: one that supports academic achievement and success (Longerbeam et al.). An area that can have a major impact on satisfaction, as well as implications for academic success, is the study of roommates.

**Roommate Configurations**

Many of today’s college students come from homes where many of them never had to share personal living space (a bedroom), have become accustomed to certain levels of privacy, and come with a vast array of technological devices (Zeller, 2005). Zeller found the dilemma facing housing offices on college and university campuses was how to provide living space that balanced two needs: (1) the student’s need for privacy and adequate space for personal belongings,
and (2) “the institution’s need for creating quality interactions with peers, faculty and staff, and the larger campus community” (p. 414). Zeller recommended that to meet these needs for first year students, rooms should be designed as doubles, with adequate space for belongings and a furniture configuration that can facilitate some level of privacy. In halls where first and second year students reside together, it was preferable to have a mixture of double and single rooms with the option for semi-private bathrooms (Zeller).

Another difference between first and second year housing, was that typically first year students were assigned to their living area as well as placed with a roommate(s), while sophomores typically entered some sort of lottery process and chose their own roommates (Gansemer-Topf et al., 2007; Zeller, 2005). The process for either class of students can have varying results, both positive and negative.

For sophomores however, there seems to be more of a sense of ownership of the situation since they picked their own roommates (Gansemer-Topf et al., 2007). During Gansemer - Topf et al. qualitative study, one junior reflected upon his sophomore year, claiming that “if there are issues, you feel a lot more guilty, or it kind of strikes closer to home. It’s more personal” (p. 39).

Mullen and Felleman (1990) conducted a meta-analytic integration on the effects of tripling in college residence halls. Based on their research, tripling can be traced back to the 1970’s when college enrollments increased and double rooms were tripled to meet the demand for on campus space. Tripling has since become more the norm, along with the typical double rooms, suites and
apartments. However, in Mullen and Felleman’s analysis of studies on tripling, they describe “the isolate” of the triple room, defined as “the student who feels left out of activities and not closer to one roommate than the another” (p. 37).

Sinha and Mukherjee (1996) studied personal space requirements in college housing. They confirmed that the higher the number of roommates, the more demands on personal space, the decreased tolerance for crowding, “and a more negative attitude toward room environment” was prevalent (Sinha & Mukherjee, p. 656). In fact, quadruple (or quads) rooms were more positively perceived than triples.

In 2005, the Association of College and University Housing – International (ACUHO-I) reported on a construction and renovation study of Chief Housing Officers from across the country. The findings showed that single occupancy rooms and apartments with single and double bedrooms around a common area, a bathroom, and a kitchen were the most popular new construction projects (Balough, Grimm, & Hardy, 2005).

In this study, different types of housing and number of roommates were examined to determine if either variable had any influence on Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with the college living area. Because no areas at the research site were experiencing overcrowding, all the types of rooms in this study were designed to be the occupancy as dictated by the Office of Residential Life (2007-2008 Lottery & Housing Selection Handbook, 2007). Residence areas perceived to be the most socially and academically supportive, and with the most positive benefits for the residents, appeared to be
those with opportunities for interactions with faculty and with peers (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Pascarella et al., 1994).

**Interactions with Faculty and with Peers**

Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) conducted a study utilizing a quasi-experimental design to investigate the influence of residence arrangement on persistence to graduation, educational outcomes, measures of intellectual and social growth, and academic achievement. Controlling for certain pre-enrollment characteristics, peer group interactions and interactions with faculty were “significant predictors (alpha reliabilities ranged from .73 to .85) of intellectual development and personal development” (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003, p. 339). Pascarella and Terenzini also added that “the structural and organizational influence of residence arrangement is accounted for, or mediated by, the quality of interpersonal interactions with important agents of socialization (faculty and peers)” (p. 344). Regarding “college self-concepts”, Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) add:

Net of other factors including pre-college self-concepts, the levels of academic and social integration (manifested in many forms but particularly in the degree of involvement with peers and faculty members) were positively associated with enhanced academic and social self-concepts. These effects, particularly those associated with peer involvement, were both direct and substantial in terms of academic and social outcomes (p. 238).

Past studies have discovered that interactions with faculty influenced satisfaction, retention, and leadership ability (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Sax, Bryant, and Harper (2005) examined if the effects by gender were different with respect to their interactions with faculty. Women’s interactions were reported to be: more frequent and positive, more intellectually challenging,
emotionally supportive, and encouraging with regards to attending graduate school. Men reported a slightly higher rate of challenging professors’ ideas in class and feeling that faculty did not take their ideas seriously (Sax et al.).

Astin’s (1993) work found that faculty and peer interaction supported a positive effect on cognitive and affective development and was the variable most strongly related to student satisfaction in college. Kuh and Hu’s (2001) results supported much of the previous research on faculty and peer interaction. Out of class contact proved to positively influence students’ perceptions of the campus environment that, in turn, directly contributed to the effort expended, which consequently affected satisfaction (Kuh & Hu). Out of class contact with faculty is also one of the major tenets in an educational environment that appears to be seamless.

In Astin’s (1996) description of a Higher Education Research Institute multi-institution longitudinal study, he described the importance of involvement as a “means of enhancing almost all aspects of the undergraduate student’s cognitive and affective development” (p. 126). He went on to contend the three most powerful kinds of involvement are “academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups” (p. 126).

Astin (1996) claimed the aspect of involvement with the most potential to influence all areas of growth and development was the influence of, and interaction with, the peer group. The longitudinal study that started with incoming first year students and progressed through their senior year, suggested the “peer
group is powerful because it has the capacity to involve the student more intensely in the educational experience” (p.126).

Involvement with faculty and with peers was supported by literature that demonstrated strong implications for success and impacting many areas of cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993, 1996; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Kuh & Hu, 2001). These interactions assisted with creating educationally purposeful environments (ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004; Kuh et al., 2005). Living learning programs appeared to have the most naturally occurring link with faculty outside of the classroom and provided a supportive environment for interactions with peers (Inkelas, 2004).

The population studied in this work was limited to sophomore students in on campus college residence halls. Sophomores were chosen for the combination of their unique needs coupled with the types of housing available to them on campus. The purpose of this evaluation was to discover if the residence areas provided to sophomores facilitated positive interactions with faculty and peers, as well as providing an environment which is academically and socially supportive.

Attending to Sophomores

For decades, colleges and universities have addressed transitions issues of first year students by structuring initiatives which enhanced belonging and connectivity to the institution. Retention rates were higher in some institutions as first year students got support from specific interventions targeted to their needs (Schaller, 2005). Schreiner and Pattengale (2000) suggested that sophomores “often begin college with high hopes, and unrealistic expectations” (p. vi). Reality
does not sink in until the sophomore year, when specific attention was relaxed from the institution (Schreiner & Pattengale).

The “sophomore slump”, was described by Freedman (1956) and Feldman & Newcomb (1969) as a student’s dissatisfaction with the college and their personal experiences at college. Lemons and Richmond (1987) proposed Chickering’s (1969) student development theory involving seven vectors, or areas of development, which can be used to understand and provide strategies for assisting students who experience the slump. Specifically, Lemons and Richmond believe the sophomore slump experience “can be traced to the problems encountered in the following four vectors: achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose” (p. 16).

Some of the intervention strategies for sophomores described by Lemons and Richmond (1987) included developing special programs specifically for sophomores, developing mentoring relations with faculty, and offering individualized attention centering on self-esteem and positive reinforcement. As the research has showed, quality relationships with faculty also had positive implications for retention (Astin, 1993), cognitive and affective development (Astin), and contributed to positive perceptions of the campus environment (Kuh & Hu, 2001).

Lemons and Richmond (1987) described sophomores as feeling unsure in their ability to meet their own expectations, as well as those of family and friends. These expectations can be intensified by the pressure to make important decisions with career path, lifestyle, and academic major.
Boivin et al. (2000) conducted a qualitative study of students who had left a particular institution during their first two years. Freshmen reported “issues related to their own academic, social, financial, or motivational struggles and challenges” (p. 1). Sophomores in their study more often reported “issues or problems related to the school itself and its ability to deliver in terms of the students’ initial expectations” (p. 1). This is supported by Feldman and Newcomb’s (1969) description of the sophomore slump which described dissatisfaction with the college and the student’s personal experiences at that college.

Families, society, and colleges and universities expect and accept first year students’ transitional issues. Boivin et al. (2000) asserted that sophomores were expected to have adapted and, therefore, attention was focused on the incoming class of first year students. With the second year of college looming, students began to realize what they were actually good at and interested in may be two distinct entities. This was a time when an honest look at the institution and what it could realistically offer, might result in the sophomore becoming cynical and disillusioned (Boivin et al.). Schaller (2005) posed a pertinent question for administrators and faculty to ponder about these middle children: What were the needs of this population and what responsibilities did administrators and faculty have in designing environments to meet those needs?

Faculty and Academic Influences. In her 2005 qualitative study of sophomores, Schaller identified four stages that the students may move through: random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices, and commitment.
These stages began with sophomores feeling unclear about the challenges of self, friends, and future (Schaller). While in focused exploration, these challenges became apparent and can produce the greatest amount of dissonance, especially if students remain in this stage for an extended period. Making tentative choices leading to commitment can be more satisfying for students as they believe they have found a plan for building their foundation for future life choices (Schaller).

In their quantitative study exploring academic success of sophomore students, Graunke and Woosley (2005) found that faculty interactions and the extent in which students felt faculty were concerned with their academic success were significant predictors of academic performance (also supported by Tinto, 1993). Their second predictor of academic success was certainty in the choice of academic major. This supports Schaller’s (2005) assumptions that transitioning from focused exploration where uncertainty and challenges with future direction are prevalent, (for example, deciding upon academic major), to making tentative choices and commitment, can lead to greater levels of comfort.

**Peer Interactions.** Interactions with peers have positive benefits for all students (see for example: Astin, 1993, 1996; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980), however influences from the sophomore year challenges may make interactions with peers more important during this tumultuous year. In a qualitative study at a small private institution, Gansemer-Topf et al., (2007) described “friendships of choice vs. friendships of convenience” (p. 38). The students in their study reported friendships in their first year formed around their
residence area: forming their social life and peer interactions based upon the convenience of having their friends right around them (Gansemer-Topf et al.). For their sophomore year, through a housing lottery process, friendship groups may be dispersed throughout a campus, requiring more of an effort to maintain these initial friendships.

The sophomore students in Gansemer-Topf et al., (2007) study found they needed to be more intentional about their friendships, and that balancing that with rising academic challenges became difficult (Gansemer-Topf et al.). In support of this, one male had the following to say: “It’s hard for me to just to get out of my room, to get out of the books, take10 minutes, walk across campus, say hello. It seems like such a big effort all of a sudden” (p. 39). Some students had difficulty making friends their sophomore year, claiming that once friendships are set, it is difficult to navigate that dynamic. One third year student, reflecting back on their sophomore year said her sophomore year was “less traumatic because you don’t have that added stress of making friends” (Gansemer-Topf, p. 38).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that not all sophomores experience challenges and fall victim to the sophomore slump. Gansemer-Topf, et al. (2007) found that some students didn’t need special initiatives targeted especially for them. Despite the unique nature of this period in time, some sophomores can navigate the year with few challenges. Gansemer-Topf et al. found students who see the year as “stable” (p. 45), and those with direction and focus, similar to
Schaller’s (2005) tentative choices and commitment stages, are able to successfully academically and socially engage during their sophomore year.

**Conclusion**

Boivin et al. (2000) described *transformational education* as the “creation of a learning environment in which the student’s whole person is shaped as he or she interacts with faculty and other students in a process of making meaning with the college experience” (p. 9). For a learning environment to be holistic and educationally seamless there must be increased collaboration and communication between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs (ACPA, 1994: Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005). Creating this alignment extends the learning environment outside the classroom (Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991). College residential environments provide a unique opportunity for Student Affairs to contribute to and support the educational mission of the institution.

College residence halls have traditionally been seen as a positive influence on: student satisfaction (Li et al., 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996); academic engagement (Astin, 1993); social integration with faculty and peers (Pascarella, 1984); co-curricular involvement (Pascarella et al., 1994); and persistence to graduation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). Traditional on campus housing should be designed with the goal of providing an environment conducive to meeting the educational needs of the population (Strange & Banning, 2001).

This review of pertinent literature provided an overview of college housing: examining the importance of designing an environment which supports
educationally purposeful activities (ACPA, 1994); describing the many benefits of living on campus; and a description of living learning programs. The population for this study of college living environments was exclusively sophomores.

Sophomore students are faced with challenging academic and social decisions (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). They are past the orientation phase of their college experience, on to choosing an academic major, navigating and sustaining friendship, and dealing with the expectations of family, professors and self (Lemons & Richmond).

The review also provided substantial information on the influence of interactions with faculty and interactions with peers. These interactions have strong implications for success and relate to many areas of cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993, 1996; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Kuh & Hu, 2001). LLCs have the potential to offer purposeful and educationally meaningful interactions with faculty and peers as the students move through the co-curricular and curricular expectations of this unique style housing (Inkelas & Weisman).

This study evaluated the styles of housing provided for sophomores at the research site. This included an evaluation of traditional housing accommodations with a living learning program, while controlling for certain conditions, such as Number of Roommates and Self-Prediction items. Given the curricular functions associated with LLCs, it is assumed the students in this area will have greater opportunities for quality interactions with faculty and with peers. Through the use of mixed methods, this study examined the perceptions of the students in
traditional residence hall settings, including their opportunities to engage with faculty and peers, as well as their satisfaction with their living area.

In the next chapter, Chapter III, the methodology of the research, the population, and the instrumentation are described. The two theoretical frameworks utilized for this study are also presented. Astin’s (1993) Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) Model and Stufflebeam’s (2007) Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model were used to contextually frame the study.
III. Methodology

Introduction

In a seamless learning environment, opportunities exist both inside and outside the classroom for students to take full advantage of the learning resources (ACPA, 1994; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 2005). When academic and student affairs are in alignment with regard to policies, procedures, learning outcomes, and programming to complement the educational mission of the institution, the benefits for students are found across all areas of functionality (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

Residence hall living presents rich opportunities for student affairs to contribute to, and support the educational experience of the college student. There are many benefits to residing on-campus, for example: an increased level of involvement in activities (Pascarella et al., 1994); higher levels of student satisfaction (Terenzini et al., 1996) and academic engagement (Astin, 1993); and greater opportunities for social and interpersonal relationships (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). One particular style of residence, a living learning center (LLC), offers an environment that links the curricular and co-curricular within a residential setting (Inkelas et al., 2006).

This study evaluated on campus living areas, traditional residence hall (TRH) settings and a LLC, to determine which environment has greater influence with Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and was perceived as being academically and socially supportive. The specific population for the research was sophomore college students in residence.
Sophomores presented unique issues, such as pressure to make important academic and career path decisions, and difficulty with affective measures of development (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). Typically, with the attention being placed on first year students and their transition issues, sophomores who experienced the “sophomore slump” (Freedman, 1956) could encounter dissatisfaction with the institution and their personal experiences (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969).

This chapter described the specific process used in this mixed method quantitative and qualitative design which evaluated sophomore living environments to see which best contributed to research based evidence of students’ satisfaction and success.

**Purpose**

Campus housing, and the experiences and supports within these environments, have substantial influence on students' learning and academic success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Kuh et al., (1991) and Pascarella et al., (1994) found that diverse types of on campus living arrangements could produce various interpersonal climates and normative peer cultures.

Living areas where students expressed high levels of satisfaction were said to be academically and socially supportive (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). Past research has offered information on the various influences of different college living arrangements (Chickering, 1974; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).
Significant precursors of student success in college were cited as interactions with faculty and interactions with peers (Lacy, 1978; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Schaller's (2005) qualitative study of sophomore students' campus experiences highlighted the need to develop environments that support active learning, self-exploration, and fostering meaningful relationships.

This single institution evaluation study compared various styles of sophomore students' campus housing to determine which type of living environment better relates to meaningful Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and is perceived as being socially and academically supportive.

Research Questions

Quantitative Questions

The quantitative research questions for this study compared the type of on campus living arrangement (traditional versus living learning center) with respect to students' perceptions of Interactions with Faculty, Peers and their Satisfaction with their Living Area. Number of Roommates and the Self-Prediction items were the covariates whose influence on the dependent variables were controlled by Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) which will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Primary Research Question. The primary research question for this study was:

Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers?
Secondary Research Questions. For the purposes of this study, the secondary research questions were as follows:

Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to students’ satisfaction with their living area?

After controlling for number of roommates, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

After controlling for self-predictions, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

Qualitative Research Questions

The qualitative research questions for this study evolved from an exploration of the data generated from the survey research. The intent of this supplementary source of data was to help clarify survey research results (Morgan, 1997).

Focus Group Questions. The focus group questions were:

1. Prior to coming to XXXXXXX, you may have had certain expectations of what the experience would be like. Can you describe some of those expectations? Have your expectations been met? If not, can you explain what may be missing from your experience?

2. In your living area – do you feel your peers are supportive of each other socially? Academically? What are some of the “hot topics” you discuss with your peers in the halls?

3. What is your perception of the residence hall staff (RAs and RDs)? What kind of interactions do you have with them? Do you feel they are supportive of your social and academic goals?

4. Regarding your roommates – how does the total number of people living in your room impact your academic work? Your socializing?
5. Would you recommend your current residence hall to someone in the class of 2011? Why or why not?

6. Talk about your relationship with faculty. Include information about interactions inside the classroom as well as outside the classroom. What kind of informal conversations do you have with faculty (not directly related to course content)? Have you met a faculty member outside of class socially, for example in the snack bar for a cup of coffee or meeting in the dining hall for lunch?

7. Describe what it means to be a sophomore. How is this year different from your first year (academically and socially)?

8. Keeping with the theme of being a sophomore – describe the changes, if any, you have had with your friendships from your first to your second year. How did your make friends last year? Do you still have the same friends? Why or why not? Did where you live impact who your friends were/are?

**Conceptual Frameworks**

**Astin’s I-E-O Model**

Astin’s (1993) conceptual model for studying college student development is called the Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) Model. *Inputs* are defined as “the characteristics of the student at the time of initial entry to the institution” (Astin, p. 7). *Environment* refers to the “programs, policies, faculty, peers, and educational experiences to which the student is exposed” (p. 7). *Outcomes* are defined as the “student’s characteristics after exposure to the environment” (p.7). The determination of growth or change in the student comes from an examination of the outcomes as compared to the input characteristics.

Astin (1993) believed the purpose of the I-E-O Model was “to assess the impact of various environmental experiences by determining whether students grow or change differently under varying environmental conditions” (p.7). Since
environmental outcomes can be influenced by various input measures besides characteristics at entry to the institution, care must be given to control for as many student inputs as possible (Astin). Failure to do so may overestimate the significance of the variable by not taking into account other activities or environmental influences affecting the students (Astin; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).

There are particular outcome measures that do not have appropriate pretest measures available. Some examples of these are, according to Astin (1993), student retention and levels of satisfaction. Astin believed one way to deal with this scenario was “to obtain students’ predictions or expectations with respect to the outcome measure in question” (p. 14). Since the population in this study was sophomores and the outcomes measured related solely to the college environment, utilization of “Self-Predictions” (Astin, p.14) appeared to be the most reasonable input measures. These Self-Predictions constituted sixteen items on the survey for this study.

First, six items addressed students’ perceptions of confidence prior to enrollment as very confident, confident, somewhat confident, or not at all confident relating to their transition to campus. Secondly, ten items queried the students on their pre-enrollment expectations of certain activities outside of class to be very important, important, somewhat important, or not at all important. These 16 items were considered the input for the outcomes measured in the study.
Environmental measures included current on campus residence hall, and number of current roommates. There were eleven demographic questions requested by the host institution for research possibilities separate from the purpose of this study.

The outcome measures in this study involved the students’ perceptions of their: Interactions with Faculty (\( n = 4 \) items related to social student-faculty interactions, and \( n = 4 \) items related to formal student-faculty interactions); Interactions with Peers (\( n = 4 \) items regarding academic issues and \( n = 6 \) items related to social and cultural issues); and Satisfaction with their Living Area (\( n = 6 \) items related to a socially supportive environment and \( n = 5 \) items related to an academically supportive environment). Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area were the dimensions utilized for analysis.

**Stufflebeam’s CIPP Model**

A second framework used for this study was the Stufflebeam Context, Input, Process, and Product program evaluation model (CIPP) (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Since the living arrangements at the research site were already established through the spring 2007 housing selection and lottery process, the focus of the evaluation was on the product. Specifically, the perceived outcomes of the living arrangements in the form of Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with the Living Area were assessed.

Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) defined the CIPP Model as “a comprehensive framework for conducting formative and summative evaluations
of programs, projects, personnel, products, organizations, and evaluation systems” (p. 325). Product evaluations “identify and assess outcomes – intended and unintended, short term and long term” (p. 326) to determine “impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability” (p. 327).

As the definition stated, the CIPP Model uses formative and summative evaluations. The most appropriate type of product evaluation for this study was a formative one; to determine if the program (residence hall) was meeting the academic and social needs of the students, and providing the appropriate environmental conditions for quality Interactions with Faculty and Peers. Based on an assessment of the desired outcomes within each type of residence area, the results of a formative product evaluation may offer guidance to the research site administration on the need for improvement and/or modifications within the residence areas designed for sophomore on-campus housing (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

Product evaluations can include various methods of study, both qualitative and quantitative (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). It was recommended that a combination of techniques be used, specifically to be thorough in the evaluation process as well as allowing for cross-checking of the various findings (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield). This study used survey research and focus groups as the means for evaluation. The focus groups were intentionally conducted after analysis of the survey data to assist with delving deeper into the data. This process is explained more fully in the following section.
**Conceptual Framework Summary**

This research was an evaluation of current residence hall arrangements reserved for sophomores at a small, private, Catholic, four year college in the Northeast. Controlling for certain expectations (Self-Predictions) from prior to enrollment (input), the effect of certain environmental measures, such type of residence area (environment), were assessed with regards to Interactions with Faculty, Peers, and perceived Satisfaction with the Living Areas (outputs) (Astin, 1993). This evaluation research with a focus on the product (type of residence hall), offered the research site administration insight into the living areas designed for sophomore on campus housing (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

**Researcher’s Involvement**

This section addresses the researcher’s complex role in relationship to the research site and the population for the study (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Questions recommended by Herr and Anderson (see p. 77) that should be addressed as measures of full disclosure are:

1. **Who was the researcher in terms of hierarchy and status?**

   The researcher for this study was a long-term employee (15 years) at the host institution in an upper-level Student Affairs Dean’s position, which reported directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs. Job responsibilities included, but were not limited to; oversight of three departments within Student Affairs, coordination of student leadership development activities, and assistance with Student Affairs assessment procedures. The researcher did not participate in the
College Judicial system. That system was responsible for all matters of discipline at the College. The researcher also worked in the capacity of a mentor or advisor with student leaders in the Student Government Association and the office of Residential Life. The researcher was generally known on campus to faculty, staff, and administrators, but not widely known to the general student population.

2. Who was the researcher to the research process? Was the researcher considered an “insider to the research” or “an outsider” (p. 77)?

The researcher was a full time doctoral student in the dissertation phase of study. This study served as the basis for the researcher’s doctoral dissertation; the final phase of the doctoral program and a requirement for graduation. The researcher was considered an insider to the research since the researcher was the “facilitator and instigator of the process” (p. 77).

3. What did the researcher bring in terms of role and experience?

Within the area of assessment, the researcher assisted the Vice President with survey construction, data collection, and dissemination of results to the campus community. Data analysis was generally coordinated by the department of Information Technology. The researcher also monitored the use of an online survey tool utilized by members of the division of Student Affairs for department specific survey research. The researcher had conducted survey research on various topics for six years, as well as having moderated focus groups. It was not unusual for the researcher to coordinate assessment efforts with the student population. It is important to note that participation in the study was voluntary: participants had the right to excuse themselves at any time during the process.
Students who were directly known to the researcher were not invited to participate in the focus group phase of the research.

Finally, interview standardization and a structured moderator involvement strategy were utilized for the focus groups (Krueger, 1998a; 1998b; Morgan, 1997) to assist with potential of experimenter bias (Gall et al., p. 394).

**Research Design**

This study utilized a mixed method quantitative and qualitative design. The quantitative aspect of the study employed a quasi-experimental design utilizing a post-only comparison group. Given that both the experimental and comparison groups were not randomly constituted, it was true that the comparison groups were created by a random lottery and selection process. The sequential exploratory design of this study consisted of the following order: quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, followed by an interpretation of the entire analysis (Creswell, 2003, p. 213).

Focus groups, conducted after data collection, were the qualitative component of this mixed method study. Morgan (1997) described the value of focus groups as “follow-up data collection that pursues “exploratory” aspects of the analysis” (p. 27). The purpose of this sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003) was to have the qualitative portion (the focus groups) “assist in explaining and interpreting the findings” (p.215) of the quantitative data. The purpose for selecting this type of approach was to compare the relevance and influence of
the independent variable, the living arrangement, on the dependent variables (Satisfaction with Living Area, Interactions with Faculty, and Interactions with Peers), with one independent variable actually being the treatment, specifically the living learning center.

This research design included survey research followed by focus groups. A survey, according to Creswell (2003), “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 153). The survey method was appropriate for this type of research for practical reasons, such as: ease of distribution and collection of the instrument within the halls, and the ability to generalize to similar sophomore resident populations in small, private, religiously affiliated colleges.

Taped focus groups, \( N = 3 \), consisting of, \( N = 21 \) students, were conducted post analysis of the survey data. Specific questions included in the focus groups were developed based on the results of the survey research (Krueger, 1998a).

**Population**

The population for this study was sophomore resident students from a small, private, liberal arts, residential, Catholic college in the Northeast. A sophomore was defined by the college registrar as a person enrolled in classes at the college for full time study; traditionally seen as a second year student, having earned 30 to 60 credit hours in credit courses. The Vice President of Student Affairs approved that this research be conducted on the campus and specifically with sophomore resident students (see Appendix B). The sophomore population at
the research site is comprised of students falling between 18-22 years of age.

According to the college registrar, there were no resident sophomores who were under the age of 18 at the time of the survey distribution.

**Questionnaire**

Using the convenience sample (Gall et al., 2007) from the sophomore residence areas for the questionnaire, the research was conducted with a single-stage sampling procedure (Creswell, 2003) in which the population was contacted directly. The size of the population was \( N = 483 \) students, with specific numbers in each living area provided by the Office of Residential Life.

**Focus Group**

The focus group participants were selected with the assistance of the resident assistants in each category of living area. This segmented sample, \( N = 80 \), allowed for the identification of students within the living area who could best vocalize their experiences within these areas. In an effort to control bias, specific care was given to only invite students unknown to the researcher. Any student who expressed concern with the researcher’s facilitation of the focus groups was not included in the process. A copy of the invitation, which was distributed through intercampus mail, is included in Appendix C. This homogeneity in the composition of the sample allowed for “more free-flowing conversations among participants within the groups but also facilitates the examination of differences in perspectives between groups” (Morgan, 1997, p. 35).
Instrumentation

Questionnaire

This modified instrument was based on the work of Inkelas & Weisman (2003). Email correspondence with the lead author, Dr. Karen Inkelas from University of Maryland, College Park (personal communication, March 5, 2007 and September 7, 2007) resulted in permission to utilize questions from her instrument with proper acknowledgement. The version of the instrument utilized is the 2000-2001 University Housing Residence Environment Assessment from the University of Michigan, adapted from the work of Dr. Karen Inkelas, with data obtained from Dr. Laurel Park of the University of Michigan (personal correspondence September 21, 2007 and October 1, 2007).

The 65 item questionnaire consisted of a majority of the items utilizing a 4-point Likert-type scale format with varying response types (not at all confident to very confident; not at all important to very important; never to once or more a week; strongly disagree to strongly agree). Demographic items queried the following: respondent’s gender; ethnicity; GPA range; current housing; major course of study; number of roommates; activities they participated in their first year and in their current year; satisfaction with their academic performance; and some binary questions related to their specific, current housing situation and experiences with the selection process. The first 16 questions (considered the demographic section) was information specifically requested by the host site for data gathering and comparisons separate from the intent of this study.
The research plan was reviewed by the College Institutional Review Board. Included in the information sent to the Institutional Review Board was an example of the cover letter to the instrument. It explained: the purpose of the study; who will have access to the findings; who will see the data; how the findings will be used; risks and benefits; confidentiality and anonymity controls; information about the researcher; contact information for the researcher; assurance that participation is completely voluntary; and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. See Appendix D for the approval letter from the Institutional Review Board.

A draft of the instrument was sent, along with a copy of the Abstract and Research Questions, to $N = 4$ professionals with extensive experience in housing and residential life. Based on their review and assessment of the content as it related to the research questions, revisions were made to the instrument. Support for the content validity of the instrument came from the review of these experts, along with the literature previously mentioned. Information on the alpha reliability data from a similar group of students can be found in Appendix E.

A pilot was conducted with current sophomores, $N = 8$, to assess understanding of directions, the item content, clarity of the questions, and the rating scales utilized. Their insight and feedback was used in drafting the final version of the instrument which can be found, along with the cover letter, in Appendix F. Some of the feedback the student pilot group offered was: bolding and capitalizing key words in lead-in statements for emphasis; word changes to
assist with clarity; and adding instructions at the end of the survey for returning the instrument to the resident assistant.

**Focus Groups**

The focus group questions evolved from an exploration of the data generated from the survey research. This supplementary source of data (Morgan, 1997) assisted in the explanation of the survey research results; assisting with poorly understood questions, or results were confusing to the researcher.

A pilot of the focus group questions was conducted with current sophomores (N=10) to assess the clarity of the questions and the item content. Their feedback was positive and therefore no edits were made to the questions prior to the start of the focus groups.

**Data Collection**

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was cross-sectional, with the data collected at one point in time, post-test only. The instrument was distributed in early February 2008 by the resident assistants in each of the areas where sophomores lived on campus. Floor rosters were generated by the Office of Residential Life so that the correct number of packets could be distributed to each resident assistant.

Each resident received the following information in their packet: cover sheet and survey, a large envelope for returning the survey, a pencil, and a raffle ticket. The students were instructed to seal the envelope with the survey enclosed prior to returning it to the resident assistant to assist with measures of confidentiality.
and anonymity (Creswell, 2003). Identification of individual students was not possible and all participants’ identities remained anonymous. Participation in this project was voluntary.

Each resident that returned a sealed questionnaire envelope to the resident assistant filled out a raffle ticket for a prize drawing which was held after all resident assistants returned their envelopes. Three prizes were awarded, based on suggestions from the pilot group. Members of the professional staff from residential life picked the three prize winners from all the returned raffle tickets. The prizes were an iPod Nano, a $20.00 gas card, and a $20.00 grocery store gift card. The three raffle winners were notified by campus email to come to the Office of Residential Life to claim their prize.

Focus Groups

Interview standardization and a structured moderator involvement strategy were utilized for the focus groups (Krueger, 1998a; 1998b; Morgan, 1997). A focus group procedure guide can be located in Appendix G.

Each participant of the focus group was instructed to review a consent form prior to beginning the session. The participation agreement explained: the purpose of the study; rationale for the use of focus groups as a follow up to the questionnaire; how the findings will be used; who will have access to the audio tapes; confidentiality and anonymity controls. A copy of the focus group participation agreement can be found in Appendix H. The focus groups were audio taped to capture exactly what was said, and brief notes were taken during the sessions.
Incentives for participation in a focus group included, pizza offered at the end of the session, and one raffle ticket per participant. The raffle was held after the completion of all the groups. The Residential Life staff chose the prize winners. Prizes included tickets to the college sponsored spring concert and college apparel.

**Data Analysis**

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

Because each dimension was used in multiple analysis, and the item level calculations were run, the probability of Type I error was increased. The Bonferroni adjustment technique (Huck, 2004) was used in an effort to reduce the risk of this type of error, resulting in an operational alpha (Huck). The item level data was analyzed with probability equal to .05 divided by the number of the items in the dimension ($p = 0.05/\text{number of items}$). Category-level dependent variables (i.e., means for the set of items) were run at the $p = 0.05$ significance level. Four category-level variables, or dimensions, were identified. These dimensions have been labeled: Interaction with faculty (InteractFaculty, $N = 8$ items), Interaction with peers (InteractPeers, $N = 12$ items), Satisfaction ($N = 11$ items), and Self-Predictions (SelfPredictions, $N = 16$ items).

Research questions 1 and 2 included Independent Sample $t$ tests for the dimensions, as well as the individual items. Research questions 3 and 4 included an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for the number of roommates and the self-predictions. Effect Sizes were calculated for any significant findings.
Correlations were run to assess the direction and magnitude of the relationship of the Number of Roommates and Self-Predictions with each of the dimensions (dependent variables). As previously mentioned, a prior factor analysis conducted on a similar group of students can be found in Appendix E.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

The audio tapes from the focus groups were transcribed. Notes taken during the sessions were reviewed against the transcribed notes to fill in any missing or incomplete information. After thorough examination, the notes were categorized to develop themes. The focus group data was coded to themes which emerged from the specific conversations (Kruger, 1998c). Because this study included $N = 3$ focus groups, group to group validation was helpful in determining how much emphasis a theme should receive (Morgan, 1997). Information was categorized by type of living area and themes were developed for each variable (Kruger).

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The internal validity, according to Gall et al., (2007) “is the extent to which extraneous variables have been controlled by the researcher, so that any observed effect can be attributed solely to the treatment variable” (p. 383). In this study, experimental treatment diffusion, and resentful demoralization of the comparison group were potential threats to internal validity (Gall et al., pp. 386-388). It was logistically impossible to keep the residents from the halls apart for the duration of the study, so effects of these threats were addressed through the research process.
Gall et al., (2007) defined the external validity as “the extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to individuals and settings beyond those that were studied” (p. 388). The use of an experimentally accessible population could affect generalizability to a larger population, with the exception of a target population of similar small, liberal arts, private, catholic, residential colleges (Gall et al.). Larger state institutions may have difficulty finding the results helpful to their work on their campuses because of the differences in housing operations, number of residents, and different types of living areas.

Another obstacle to generalizing results was the single institution model of this study. As Gall et al. (2007) indicated stronger evidence for generalizability comes from repeated replication. This study only included sophomores, therefore excluding freshmen, juniors and seniors. Additionally, the diverse array of housing options available to sophomores at the research site may inhibit generalization to larger, outside populations.

Given the complexities of housing selection, the population was not randomly assigned into housing areas. The students self-selected housing based on the particular lottery process they participate in. As previously mentioned, Appendix A describes the housing selection and lottery and LLC application procedure in more detail.

Within the focus groups, a tendency toward conformity or a tendency toward polarization may have been present within the groups (Morgan, 1997). Although procedures were in place to develop a list of focus group participants unknown to the researcher, the possibility existed that one or more of the students may have
some knowledge of who the researcher was. Therefore, accuracy and bias within
the conversation may have been an issue.

Summary

This single-institution evaluation study examined sophomore students’ on
campus housing options available at a small, private, Catholic institution in the
Northeast. Specific variables assessed were the students’ perceived Interactions
with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with their Living Area. A
group of 16 Self-Prediction questions constituted the input for the questionnaire.
These Self-Predictions and the Number of Roommates were covariates for a
comparison of living area with respect to Interactions with Faculty, Interactions
with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area.

The population for the research was current sophomore resident students.
This particular class of students was chosen due to their unique academic and
social issues during a time in their college career when the attention had shifted
from them and their needs to the entering class and their issues with transition,
belonging, and adjusting to the academic rigor of college.

Past research has demonstrated the importance of quality faculty interactions
outside the classroom (Terenzini et al., 1996), opportunities for interactions with
peers (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980), and satisfaction with living area (Inkelas &
Weisman, 2003). Sophomores specifically can benefit from quality relationships
with faculty and peers (Lemons & Richmond, 1987), and an academically and
socially supportive environment (Boivin et al., 2000).
This study, utilizing Stufflebeam’s CIPP program evaluation model is a formative one focused on product, to determine if the program (residence hall) is meeting the academic and social needs of the students, and providing the appropriate environmental conditions for quality interactions with faculty and peers. A second framework, Astin’s (1993) Input-Environment-Output Model, was employed to control for certain expectations (Self-Predictions) from prior to enrollment (input), with the effect of certain environmental measures, such type of residence area (environment), and assessed with regards to Interactions with Faculty, Peers, and perceived Satisfaction with the students’ Living Areas (outputs) (Astin, 1993). This evaluation research with a focus on the product (type of residence hall), may offer the research site administration insight into the living areas designed for sophomore on campus housing (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

The data analysis included: $t$ tests to compare means with a Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type I error; and ANCOVA analysis to control for Number of Roommates and the Self-Predictions. In the next chapter, details of the gathered sample, reliability of the data, and analysis by research question will be described.
IV. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate living areas on campus designated for sophomores to determine which fostered greater opportunities for Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with their Living Area. Satisfaction in this study was defined as perceiving the living environment as academically and socially supportive. This chapter presents the demographics of the population used for the research, a summary of the findings, reliability results, and analysis by research question.

The data were collected sequentially in two separate processes. Quantitative data were collected first using a 65 item questionnaire that asked: demographic questions; Self-Predicted perceptions of confidence prior to enrollment; Self-Predicted expectations of the importance of activities while enrolled; type and quality of Interactions with Faculty; type and quality of Interactions with Peers; and whether they find their living area academically and socially supportive.

Taped focus groups, \( N = 3 \), were conducted with sophomores, \( N = 21 \), post analysis of the survey data. Traditional residence hall (TRH) students were included in one group, \( n = 8 \), LLC students in another group, \( n = 6 \), and the third group was a mixture of students from the two types of living areas (TRH, \( n = 4 \); LLC, \( n = 3 \)). Specific questions for the focus groups were developed based on the results of the survey research (Krueger, 1998a). The purpose of this sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003) was to allow the qualitative
portion (the focus groups) “assist in explaining and interpreting the findings” (p.215) of the quantitative part of the research.

Demographics of the Population

Completed questionnaires were received from $N = 389$ respondents out of the $N = 483$ sophomore residents (81%) included in the distribution. However, once the sealed envelopes, which contained the surveys were opened, $n = 5$ were found to be blank and subsequently discarded. An additional $n = 7$ were discarded because more than 50% of the questions were left blank by the respondents. The final gathered sample of usable instruments used in the analysis was $N = 377$.

Table 1 depicts the demographic characteristics of the sophomores who responded to the survey. Inspection of the data revealed that the respondents were 66% female and 33% male, which according to the college’s Institutional Research Office, closely resembles the gender breakdown for the entire sophomore class at 60% female and 40% male (personal correspondence, March 17, 2008). The reported grade point averages (GPA) for the respondents were overwhelmingly within the 2.51-4.00 range (90%): 34% falling within 2.51-3.00, 38% within 3.01-3.50, and 18% within the 3.51-4.00 range.

In terms of living area, 73% reported living in a traditional residence hall (TRH), while 27% reported living in the LLC. Housing arrangements at the research site include singles, doubles, triples, quads, 4-person suites in traditional housing settings, and 4-person apartments within the LLC. There are
six different traditional residences on campus at the research site, and one LLC.

To accomplish the goal of comparing TRH with a LLC, housing was recoded into
one category called housingrecode, with values of 1 = TRH, $n = 275$, and 2 = LLC, $n = 102$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table1</th>
<th>Demographic Characteristics of Sophomore Residents ($N = 377$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>2.01-2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.51-3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.01-3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.51-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>TRH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LLC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument Data

Because each dimension was used in multiple analyses, and the item level
calculations were run, the probability of a Type I error was increased. The
Bonferroni adjustment technique was used in an effort to reduce the risk of this
type of error, resulting in an operational alpha (Huck, 2004). The probability for
statistical significance was adjusted by dividing $p = .05$ by the calculations
completed $p = .05$/number of items) (Huck). Four category-level variables, or
dimensions, were identified. These dimensions have been labeled: Interaction
with Faculty (InteractFaculty, 8 items), Interaction with Peers (InteractPeers, 12
items), Satisfaction with Living Area (Satisfaction, 12 items), and Self-Predictions
(SelfPredictions, 16 items).
Table 2 presents the reliability statistics, or internal consistency, for the data from the four dimensions. Measures of internal consistency were defined as consistency of the data across individual items of the instrument, to the extent that these items measure the same thing (Huck, 2004).

Table 2
Cronbach’s Alpha for Category-Level Dependent Variables (N = 377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InteractFaculty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InteractPeers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Predictions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction with Faculty was assessed using 8 items, each with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 4 = Once or more a week). Cronbach’s alpha for the InteractFaculty dimension data was .86. Interaction with Peers was assessed using 12 items, each with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 4 = Once or more a week). Cronbach’s alpha for the data from the InteractPeers dimension was .88. Satisfaction was assessed using 13 items, each with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 4 = Strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for the data for the Satisfaction dimension was assessed at .92. Finally, Self-Predictions was assessed using 16 items, 6 of which used a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all confident to 4 = Very confident) and 10 items using a scale of importance (1 = Not at all important to 4 = Very important). Cronbach’s alpha for the data for the SelfPredictions dimension was assessed at .83.
Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1
Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers?

Separate independent t tests were run to compare living areas (1 = TRH, and 2 = LLC) with Interactions with Faculty and then Interactions with Peers. Since multiple t tests were calculated, for both the dimension level, as well as the item level, the alpha level was adjusted using the Bonferroni adjustment (\( p = \frac{.05}{\text{number of calculations}} \)) to reduce the risk of Type I error (Huck, 2004). The 4-point Likert scale used for these two variables was: 1 = Never, 2 = A few times a semester, 3 = A few times a month, 4 = Once or more a week.

Interaction with Faculty. Table 3 contains the means, standard deviations and comparison of living area with respect to Interaction with Faculty. Since Levene’s equal variance test was not significant (\( F = 1.08, p = .300 \)), the t values used in the table represent equal variance t values. The probability levels used were \( p = .05 \) for the dimension, and \( p = .006 \) for the items.

Review of the data indicated there was no significant difference between the living areas with regards to Interaction with Faculty (\( t = 1.33, p = .184 \)). The means, however, for all items within this dimension were higher, although not significant, for the traditional living areas rather than the LLC. Given the unique nature of the LLC, and the additional opportunities residents in this building have for interacting with faculty outside the classroom, this area was examined further during the focus groups to explain and interpret (Creswell, 2003) this finding.
Other areas of interest were the following: *Visited informally with a professor during a social occasion (lunch, coffee, met off campus)* (TRH, $M = 1.62$, $SD = .90$; LLC, $M = 1.57$, $SD = .88$); *Discussed personal problems or concerns with your professor* (TRH, $M = 1.65$, $SD = .89$; LLC, $M = 1.62$, $SD = .93$); *Went to a cultural event (for example, concert or a play)* with a professor (TRH, $M = 1.44$, $SD = .82$; LLC, $M = 1.44$, $SD = .86$).

**Table 3**

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance t Values of Interactions with Faculty by Type of Residence Area*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Item</th>
<th>TRH¹ $M$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LLC² $M$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InteractFaculty (Dimension)</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked professor info. about a course</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited informally with a professor</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments with a professor</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated via email</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited socially with a professor</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed career plans</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed personal problems</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went to a cultural event with professor</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹$N = 275$

²$N = 102$

**Focus Group Question.** The focus group question pertinent to this area was as follows:

*Talk about your relationship with faculty. Include information about interactions inside the classroom as well as outside the classroom. What kind of informal conversations do you have with faculty (not directly related to course content)? Have you met a faculty member outside of class socially, for example in the snack bar for a cup of coffee or meeting in the dining hall for lunch?*

**Traditional Residence Hall Students.** Students from TRH, $n = 12$, expressed varying levels of contact with faculty outside the classroom. Programs hosted by resident assistants featuring faculty, called *Dessert and Dialogues* by
the Office of Residential Life, were very popular and involved topics either within
the faculty person’s academic discipline or an outside interest he/she may have
to share. One student spoke about having faculty on her floor facilitating a
program and how “strange” that seemed to her. She explained that seeing a
faculty member walking around her hall seemed like an “invasion of our space”,
although her reactions to the actual programs were very positive.

Academic advising sessions and seeking help after a class were frequently
referenced as points of contact with faculty. When questioned further about more
social and informal interactions, students spoke of meeting for a meal or
“grabbing a cup of coffee.”

The TRH students do not have kitchen facilities in their residence halls.
Residents in TRH must, by college policy, have a meal plan, which gives them
access to the campus dining room and the snack bar area (2007-2008 Lottery
and Housing Selection Handbook (LHSH), 2007). Students in apartments with
kitchens, such as the LLC, may have meal plans or purchase points for use with
their college ID in the dining hall and snack bar (LHSH). According to dining
services management (personal correspondence, March 28, 2008), \( n = 24 \) (15%)
of the residents of the LLC have a meal plan and an estimate of the percentage
of LLC students with campus cash would probably be over 90%.

Traditional residence hall students spoke about meeting in the snack bar with
faculty or stopping by their table in the dining hall for a conversation. One student
said, “I go to get coffee a couple times a day. There are always faculty hanging
around, meeting with kids, using their laptops. You can just go over and start a
conversation.” Another agreed and added, “That’s true. Most of them are friendly and want to talk to you.”

Although feedback was mostly positive about Interactions with Faculty, there were students who did not express the same level of comfort. “I think I am probably a little intimidated by professors.” said one student. Another student was clearly looking for the faculty to initiate contact. “They don’t invite us.” and “The offer hasn’t been presented to meet outside of class.” Others in the group challenged their peers by adding, “You don’t have to wait for them. They are open to doing it. You’re probably more uncomfortable with them.”

The two areas TRH students spoke about in regards to Interactions with Faculty were attending programs hosted by resident assistants in their halls, or meeting in the snack bar or dining hall. Going off campus with a faculty member wasn’t the experience of any TRH students in the focus groups.

The depth of conversations with faculty outside the classroom resulted in comments such as, “General stuff. Nothing major.” and “We talk about what is going on. What’s the big issues on campus, sometimes world issues. Some sports.” and “Maybe about a project or paper I am working on, or a test coming up.”

**Living Learning Center Students.** Students living in the LLC meet in small groups (8-10 maximum) with a faculty member for 10 hours each semester. This “interest circle” format has the faculty facilitating discussions around specific topics, offering open conversations about a topic of interest, or allowing the

Interestingly, the students in the LLC, $n = 9$, did not view their interest circle time with faculty as “informal”. Every LLC student who participated in the focus groups readily agreed that interest circle time was “like a class,” although most did admit to forming good relationships with faculty as a result of their interest circle participation. One student reported, “I’ve gotten to know two professors I would never have had in class. I am a science major, but my faculty in the LLC have been from philosophy and business.”

LLC residents also reported “hanging out” with faculty in the campus center with similar responses as their TRH peers. No one said they had met with a faculty member in the dining hall, although 3 stated they did have meal plans. Some spoke positively about the Dessert and Dialogues they had in their freshmen residence halls. There were two students who had gone off campus with their interest circle and faculty for reasons specifically related to their group (i.e., the local art museum and a mosque).

The depth of the conversations LLC students reported with faculty outside the class were similar to those in the TRH settings. One student said “casual stuff, nothing too serious” when asked about their conversations. Another stated, “When I see faculty I know in the snack bar, we just talk about what may be happening that day, or something on campus, but I talk about class too.”

**Summary.** Review of the data indicated no significant difference between the living areas with respect to Interactions with Faculty. Interestingly, the means for
all the items within the TRH dimension were higher, although not significant, than for means for the LLC. This was reflected in the focus groups data. Overall, 10 out of the $n = 12$ students participating from TRH (83%) indicated they had positive interactions with faculty outside of class, specifically mentioning meals, meeting in the snack bar, or programs in the hall. The LLC residents (100%) agreed they did not consider their interest circle to be informal interaction with faculty outside of class. The discussion revealed $n = 4$ out of $n = 9$ LLC students (44%) felt they had gotten to know their interest circle faculty well. A smaller subgroup, $n = 2$ out of $n = 9$ (22%), also reported meeting faculty for meals or in the snack bar.

**Interactions with Peers**

The second independent $t$ test was run to compare living areas with respect to Interaction with Peers. Since the $t$ tests were conducted on the overall dimension, as well as the item level for all 12 items, the Bonferroni adjustment to the probability level resulted in a $p = .004$ ($p = .05$/number of items). Levene’s test for equal variance was not significant at the .001 level ($F = .001$, $p = .972$) so the $t$ values used in Table 4 represent the equal variance $t$ values. Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations, and comparisons by living area of Interaction with Peers.

Inspection of the data, represented in Table 4, revealed no significant differences within the living areas with respect to Interaction with Peers ($t = 1.22$, $p = .222$). The means for Interactions with Peers were higher in the LLC group in
all areas, with the exception of one, *Talked about current news events.* This area was also examined during the focus group process to help interpret this finding.

**Table 4**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance t Values of Interactions with Peers by Type of Residence Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/ Item</th>
<th>TRH¹</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LLC²</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InteractPeers (Dimension)</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed something learned in class</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about current news events</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared concerns about classes</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed issues with those whose values are different than your own</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied in groups</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed social problems</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed issues with those whose lifestyles and customs are different</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed future plans and ambitions</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed issues with those whose religious beliefs are different</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed multiculturalism</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in cultural pursuits</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed issues with those whose political views are different</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ N = 275  
² N = 102

**Focus Group Question.** The focus group question related to this topic was as follows:

In your living area – do you feel your peers are supportive of each other socially? Academically? What are some of the “hot topics” you discuss with your peers in the halls?

**Traditional Residence Hall Students.** Most of the n = 12 TRH students reported their peers were socially supportive in the residence hall. They described “hanging out,” “going from room to room to see everyone,” “knowing where everyone lives and knowing who will listen to you when you need support.”
One student described a recent judicial incident on his floor. He spoke of his view of being socially supportive is “sticking together as a floor so no one gets in trouble” and that “no one would rat out anyone else because that wouldn’t be right.”

Regarding their peers being academically supportive, one student said she sometimes felt pressure to “hurry up and do my work” because her friends were waiting for her to go out. Another mentioned that sometimes he felt “like a peer pressure” to stop his homework and socialize, drink, or go out. One student said she didn’t understand how some of her friends were “still here” (in school) because she never seemed to see them studying or doing homework. She went on to say that made it “harder for me to get my work done well because of all the distractions.”

Hot topics in the residence halls included: campus events, the opposite sex, policies, and homework. Interestingly, no one spoke of current state or world events, politics (considering the research occurred during a Presidential election year), or any in depth academically oriented topics.

Living Learning Center Students. The LLC students described their peers being socially supportive as “having friends around to hang out with” and “knowing there is always something going on in someone’s room.” They described the LLC as “a great place to live with good people.” One student talked about how lucky she felt because most of her friends from her freshmen year were in the LLC so that made her feel like there was always someone around who would be supportive.
The students in the LLC also spoke of pressure to get their work done so they would be “ready to party.” One student specifically mentioned drinking and that choosing not to drink had caused “some tension” with her and her friends in the residence hall.

A LLC student said “most people in the hall do their schoolwork and take it pretty seriously, but there are always some kids who just don’t seem to do much.” That was frustrating to her since she did take her schoolwork seriously and didn’t like it when others “blew off work to party instead.” A group member challenged her by saying he thought most students in the building did take their school work seriously and that people seemed concerned about each other.

Hot topics in the LLC were similar to those in the TRH, with the exception of the addition of their interest circles. All students reported that they engaged in frequent discussions with roommates and friends about their interest circle. One student said, “I think it is interesting to hear what other people are talking about. Each one of our roommates is in a different group so we all get to share about our topics.” Other topics included: weekend activities, homework, college events and issues, and the opposite sex. The interest circle topics were so varied that conversations with peers included many areas, for example: political, social, religious, environmental and financial topics.

**Summary.** The findings indicate no significant difference between the living areas with respect to Interactions with Peers. The means were higher for the LLC than the TRH with the exception of one item, *Talked about current news events.* This is reflected in the focus group data. Overall, \( n = 11 \) out of \( n = 12 \) students
(92%) in the TRH felt their peers were socially supportive, and \( n = 3 \) out of \( n = 12 \) students (25%) felt they were academically supportive. In the LLC, \( n = 8 \) out of \( n = 9 \) students (89%) felt there peers were socially supportive, and \( n = 8 \) out \( n = 9 \) students (89%) felt they were academically supportive. The top three hot topics for the TRH students were: campus events and issues (40%), opposite sex (40%), and homework (20%). The top three hot topics for the LLC students were: their interest circles (80%), opposite sex (10%), and campus events and issues (10%). Interest circle topics included areas such as, politics, religion, environmental, and financial topics. Interestingly, Talked about current news events was the only item for the LLC with a mean lower than the TRH mean.

**Research Question 2**
Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall area with respect to students’ satisfaction with their living area?

In research question 2, an independent \( t \) tests was run to compare living areas (1 = TRH, and 2=LLC) with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area. The 4-point Likert scale used for this variable was: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

**Satisfaction with Living Area.** Table 5 contains means, standard deviations, and the comparison of living area with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area. Since Levene’s equal variance test was not significant at the \( p < .001 \) level (\( F = 4.14, p = .042 \)), the \( t \) values used in the table represent equal variance \( t \) values. The Bonferroni adjustment to the probability levels used were \( p = .001 \) \( (p = .05/\text{number of items}) \) for the dimension and for the items.
Inspection of the data indicated there was a significant difference between the living areas. The Scheffè post hoc test revealed that the LLC students were significantly more satisfied with their living areas than those in traditional residence halls ($t = 9.04; p = .001; ES = 1.12$, large).

Effect size (ES) was reported for the statistically significant finding that yielded “estimates that are standardized in the sense that they take into consideration the amount of variability in the data” (Huck, 2004, p. 181). For this statistical analysis, “estimated effect sizes of .20, .50, and .80 indicate small, medium, and large differences between the two sample means being compared” (Huck, 2004, p.182).

Furthermore, Table 5 shows that all the items, except Appreciation for different races, were significant at the $p < .001$ level. Further, after examination of Effect Sizes, seven items had what would be considered a “large” Effect Size when calculated to consider the amount of variability in the data.

**Focus Group Questions.** The following questions related to this topic:

1. What is your perception of the residence hall staff (RAs and RDs)? What kind of interactions do you have with them? Do you feel they are supportive of your social and academic goals?

2. Would you recommend your current residence hall to someone in the class of 2011? Why or why not?
Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and Equal Variance t Values for Satisfaction with Living Area by Type of Residence Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Item</th>
<th>TRH(^2)</th>
<th>LLC(^1)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>(p)</th>
<th>ES(^3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction (Dimension)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for different races</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss issues that matter</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are concerned, helpful, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supportive of each other</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is intellectually stimulating</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for people of different</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religious backgrounds</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend this hall to class of 2011</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience peer support to do well</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students study a lot</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are aware of academic support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students think academic success is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence hall supports academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievement</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can find quiet study space in the hall</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to form study groups in the hall</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\text{TRH}^\circ\) \(N = 275\). \(\text{LLC}^\circ\) \(N = 102\)
\(\text{p} = .001\)
\(\text{ES} \text{ (Effect Size) guidelines were as follows: .20 = small, .50 = medium, .80 = large.}\)

**Traditional Residence Hall Students.** TRH students were equally divided with their reactions to the question about their residential life staff. The positive comments were about the availability of the staff, their helpfulness, and their support (specifically around personal issues and where to get academic assistance). The negative comments were about policy enforcement, inconsistencies within policy enforcement, and unprofessional behavior.

One student said she never saw her resident assistant or resident director her first year, but that the staff in her area this year were “very available to us, very helpful, so supportive, and really nice.” Another mentioned a friend who had
“emotional problems” and how great the resident director had been with her.
“She (the resident director) checked in with her all the time, and would sit and talk with her. I know she talked to my friend about counseling and how it could maybe help her.”

Another student mentioned when someone on their floor “freaked out during finals in December”. He said the resident assistant was really “calm with him and helped him find a tutor for one class and then told him where to go to talk about his problems with the another class.” One student said her resident assistant did a good job of keeping the floor “under control” and “kept the noise level down most of the time”.

The negative impressions TRH students had of the residential life staff centered on judicial matters and unprofessional behavior. A student said she felt some resident assistants had blurred boundaries between their positions in residential life and their social life. She stated she saw some resident assistants as “crossing the line to drink with or have relations with residents without regard to their position as a member of residential life.”

Another student said the staff can be “seen as the enemy because they have to write you up (document policy violations) and that just sucks.” Although all agreed policy enforcement was necessary in the residence halls, there was little consensus on how it should be carried out. Some students felt the staff should “lighten up” and others responded with comments such as “they have to do their jobs.”
Predictably, those who viewed the staff positively had good comments about how academically and socially supportive the staff in their building was (i.e., “They are very helpful.” and “She often tries to help me and she is always encouraging”). Those with negative opinions really didn’t have any distinct commentary (i.e., “I don’t know.” and “I suppose they are, but I’ve never seen it.”).

Regarding the question as to whether they would recommend their residence hall to some in the freshmen class, all the participants agreed except one. The one who didn’t agree talked about how the residence hall he lives in was not his first or second choice of housing and he was very unhappy with his environment.

**Living Learning Center Students.** LLC residents were very positive about their residence life staff. One of the participants said their resident assistant was “very supportive, helpful, and always available”. Another spoke about some problems she had the first weekend of school. She talked about being sent to the hospital one night because she drank too much alcohol. She said her resident assistant and resident director were “just fantastic. They took a really bad thing, something really embarrassing for me, and helped me get through it. I never felt like they were judging me. They just wanted to help.”

One resident of the LLC said he started the year off in August on “the wrong foot.” He talked about not being committed to his LLC interest circle at first and how he applied to the building so “he could get the best housing for sophomores he could get.” He reported that when he heard his resident director talk about
the building and how much work went into the interest circles by the faculty, he realized he should try his best.

LLC students didn’t speak about judicial matters as their TRH peers did. When judicial matters were brought up, the students acknowledged the role of the residential life staff and the job they were responsible for. They did mention their socializing was mostly conducted outside of the LLC, specifically in the traditional residence halls or upper class apartments. As one student said, “I prefer to go to some other hall or to a friend’s room if I am going to party on the weekends. I don’t want a bunch of people in my apartment.” Another agreed and added, “I like my place (apartment). I’d rather go to X hall (name deleted) to hang out then I can come home when I want and the place isn’t all trashed. It’s better to party somewhere else.”

When asked if they would recommend their hall to members of the freshmen class, the answer was a resounding and unanimous “yes.” The student who had entered the LLC because he felt it was the best housing added “Students need to know what they have to do extra to stay in the building. It has to be clear.” One of his peers countered with “We all knew, you just thought you could get away with not doing it.” He sheepishly agreed.

**Summary.** Inspection of the data indicated there was a significant difference between the TRH and the LLC. The Scheffè post hoc test revealed that the LLC students were significantly more satisfied with their living areas than those in traditional residence halls \((t = 9.04; p = .001; \text{ES} = 1.12, \text{large})\). This result was supported by the focus group data. Overall, \(n = 6\) out of \(n = 12\) TRH students
(50%) felt their residence hall staff was academically and socially supportive and $n = 11$ out of $n = 12$ students (91%) would recommend their current housing to a member of the freshmen class. LLC students all agreed their residence hall staff was academically and socially supportive (100%) and that they would recommend the LLC to members of the freshmen class (100%).

**Analysis of Covariance**

Research questions 3 and 4 utilized Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to control for differences between the groups on selected covariates (Huck, 2004). The first covariate, which was Number of Roommates, was employed in an attempt to control for the many different roommate configurations available for sophomores at the research site.

The second covariate, Self-Predictions, addressed the input characteristics as described by Astin’s I-E-O model (1993). The goal of the I-E-O model was to control for certain expectations (Self-Predictions) from prior to enrollment (input), compared with the effect of certain environmental measures, such type of residence area (environment), and assessed with regards to Interactions with Faculty, Peers, and perceived Satisfaction with the students’ Living Area (outputs) (Astin).

**Correlation Coefficients**

Although this study did not have a research question that addressed the issue of relationship between variables, it is interesting to note the correlations
between the covariates and the three dependent variables. Inspection of the data in Table 6 revealed significance between the following: (4,1) Satisfaction and the Number of Roommates ($r = .24; p < .001; r^2 = .06; ES = \text{small/medium}$); (5,1) Self-Predictions and the Number of Roommates ($r = .12; p < .05; r^2 = .02; ES = \text{small}$); (3,2) Interactions with Peers and Interaction with Faculty ($r = .43; p < .001; r^2 = .18; ES = \text{medium/large}$); (5,2) Self-Predictions and Interaction with Faculty ($r = .25; p < .001; r^2 = .06; ES = \text{small/medium}$); (4,3) Satisfaction and Interaction with Peers ($r = .17; p < .001; r^2 = .03; ES = \text{small}$); (5,3) Self-Predictions and Interactions with Peers ($r = .41; p < .001; r^2 = .17; ES = \text{medium/large}$); and (5,4) Self-Predictions and Satisfaction ($r = .33; p < .001; r^2 = .11; ES = \text{medium/large}$).

Self-Predictions correlated with every other variable, including the covariate Number of Roommates. Each relationship was weak to moderate suggesting the students’ expectations prior to enrollment were positively correlated to Satisfaction with Living Area, Interactions with Peers, Interactions with Faculty, and Number of Roommates. The next section will report the findings from research questions 3 and 4 which used ANCOVA.

### Table 6
**Correlation Coefficients Between the Three Dependant Variables and the Two Covariates ($N = 377$)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/Covariate</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of Roommates (covariate)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interaction with Faculty</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interaction with Peers</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Satisfaction</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-Predictions (covariate)</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$. ** $p = .001$
Research Question 3
After controlling for Number of Roommates, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) Interaction with Faculty, (b) Interaction with peers, (c) and Satisfaction with their Living Area?

In research question 3 the living areas (TRH = 1, LLC = 2) were compared on Interaction with Faculty, Interaction with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area after controlling for the Number of Roommates using an ANCOVA. That is to say, the Interaction with Faculty, Interaction with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area data were adjusted to equate the groups based on the Number of Roommates.

The 4-point Likert scales used for these variables were as follows: (a) Interaction with Faculty and Interactions with Peers; 1 = Never, 2 = A few times a semester, 3 = A few times a month, 4 = Once or more a week, (b) Satisfaction with Living Area; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Interaction with Faculty. Table 7 depicts the means, standard deviations, and adjusted means for the two types of living areas (TRH and LLC) with respect to Interaction with Faculty with the covariate being the number of roommates. Levene’s test of the equality of variances indicated that, as preferred, the equal variance assumption was not rejected, so the ANCOVA could be run \( F = 2.00, df1 = 1, df2 = 368, p = .274 \). Note that the adjusted means for the TRH are higher than those of the LLC as was seen in research question 1.
Table 7
Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty (N = 370)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 presents the ANCOVA source table for comparing TRH with a LLC with respect to Interactions with Faculty after controlling for the Number of Roommates. After equating the housing types (1 = TRH and 2 = LLC) based on the Number of Roommates, Interactions with Faculty were not found to be statistically significant ($F = 3.02$, df = 1, $p = .083$).

Table 8
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty After Controlling for the Number of Roommates (N = 370)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Roommates</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>1.798</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td>3.021</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>129.896</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1991.137</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction with Peers. Table 9 represents the means, standard deviations and adjusted means for the living areas with respect to Interactions with Peers while controlling for the Number of Roommates. Levene’s test of the equality of variance indicated that, as preferred, the equal variance assumption was not rejected, so the ANCOVA could be run ($F = .03$, df1 =1, df2 = 368, $p = .863$). The adjusted mean for the LLC is higher than the mean of the TRH as was seen in research question 1.
Table 9
Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers
\((N = 370)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANCOVA source table in Table 10 compares TRH with a LLC with respect to Interaction with Peers after controlling for the Number of Roommates. After keeping the Number of Roommates constant, Interaction with Peers was not found to be statistically significant \((F = 1.76, df = 1, p = .186)\).

Table 10
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers After Controlling for the Number of Roommates \((N = 370)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>(SS)</th>
<th>(df)</th>
<th>(MS)</th>
<th>(F)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Roommates</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>1.756</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>112.865</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2949.611</td>
<td>370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(p < .001\)

**Satisfaction.** Table 11 presents the means, standard deviations, and adjusted means for the two types of living areas with respect to Satisfaction with their Living Area while controlling for the Number of Roommates. Levene’s test of the equality of variance indicated that, as preferred, the equal variance assumption was not rejected, so the ANCOVA could be run \((F = 4.46, df1 = 1, df2 = 368, p = .035)\).
Table 11
Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area (N = 370)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 presents the ANCOVA source table for comparing TRH with a LLC with respect to Satisfaction with Living Environment after controlling for the Number of Roommates. The differences between the adjusted means for the TRH and the LLC groups with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area was considered to be significant ($F = 57.06, df = 1, p = .001$) after controlling for the Number of Roommates while comparing the two types of living areas. This area will be addressed further in the focus group data.

Table 12
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area After Controlling for the Number of Roommates (N = 370)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Roommates</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>16.412</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.412</td>
<td>57.064</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>105.551</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>.288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3186.727</td>
<td>370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .001$

Focus Group Question. The focus group question relevant to this topic was as follows:

Regarding your roommates – how does the total number of people living in your room impact your academic work? Your socializing?
Traditional Residence Hall Students. The TRH students, who came to the focus group, live in buildings with doubles, \( n = 5 \), triples, \( n = 4 \), quadruples (quads), \( n = 2 \), and 4 person suite style housing, \( n = 1 \). The suite style housing includes two double bedrooms with a bathroom. There is no common space in the suite. There was agreement among the participants that the number of roommates affected them academically and socially.

Academically, students spoke about the difficulties with being able to study in their rooms. One student said that she had trouble studying when her roommates were home, unless they were also doing schoolwork at the same time. “If we are all working on homework, then it works out okay. But if one of us wants to watch TV or have a friend in we usually have to split up – go to the library or find a lounge that is quiet to study.” This opinion was agreed upon by all members of the group. Some other comments included, “We don’t have lounges on our floors, so I have to go to the library when I want a quiet place to study when my roommate is home” and “It is hard to put four people in one room, one small room, with all that furniture, and expect that to be a good place to study. When we are all home it is so crowded in there. I don’t like it at all.”

Socially, students said they liked having their friends around but they all agreed it could get uncomfortable in the traditional hall rooms. One student talked about finding rooms where the residents don’t mind having people in there all the time. “There are always rooms in the building where people seem to go to hang out. I don’t know how they get their schoolwork done. It seems like there are always people in there” said one participant. Another one said she was glad
her room wasn’t the “social room” in the building because she has seen those students “get in trouble a lot.” The participants agreed that having a higher number of roommates in a room can be hard for just about every area of their residential experience.

**Living Learning Center Students.** The students in the LLC have two double bedrooms, a small galley type kitchen, a small living room area, and a bathroom. Predictably, their responses were different than the TRH students, especially with regards to academics.

LLC participants said they found it easier to do homework in their rooms because there were more space options available to them. One student said she can go to the living room or sit at the breakfast counter in the kitchen area if her roommate is in their bedroom. Another said that “we are all (the roommates) pretty serious about schoolwork, and we don’t want to have to go to the library to study, so we try to be respectful of each other.” One student said she still likes to go to the library, but doesn’t feel she “has to go” because of the environment she lives in.

The LLC students talked about the socializing in much the same way their TRH peers did, with one exception. These students spoke about rooms in the building “where there are always people hanging out” and that “it was common knowledge whose apartment is always open.” The difference between the LLC students’ perceptions and the TRH students’ perceptions was that the LLC students felt their style of housing gave them more flexibility with regards to socializing. One student said “My roommates can have friends over in the living
room or in their bedroom and I can be my room with my friends or even doing homework.” Another student said “We have more options of places to go. I even hang out in the lounges a lot with my friends.”

Summary. After controlling for the Number of Roommates, Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers were not found to be significant. However, Satisfaction with Living Area was found to be significant \(F = 57.06, df = 1, p = .001\). It is clear the TRH students had more difficulties in their living areas with balancing academics compared to their LLC peers. Overall, 12 out of 12 (100%) of the TRH students said they had challenges academically because of the number of roommates. The LLC students did not express the same displeasure with their roommate configurations. It was evident that the style of housing combined with the number of roommates was the difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the number of roommates and the relationship that may have on their academic and social experiences. This appears to corroborate with the results of the ANCOVA and Satisfaction with Living Area.

Research Question 4
After controlling for self-predictions, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

In research question 4 the living areas (TRH = 1, LLC = 2) were compared on Interaction with Faculty, Interaction with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area after controlling for Self-Predictions. The 4-point Likert scales used for these variables were as follows: (a) Interaction with Faculty and Interactions with Peers; 1 = Never, 2 = A few times a semester, 3 = A few times a month, 4 =
Once or more a week, (b) Satisfaction with Living Area; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

**Interaction with Faculty.** Table 13 depicts the means, standard deviations, and adjusted means for the two types of living areas (TRH and LLC) with respect to Interaction with Faculty with the covariate being the Self-Predictions. Levene’s test of the equality of variances indicated that, as preferred, the equal variance assumption was not rejected, so the ANCOVA could be run \( F = .671, \, df_1 = 1, \, df_2 = 375, \, p = .413 \). Note the adjusted means for TRH are higher than those of the LLC, as was seen in research questions 1 and 3.

**Table 13**
**Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Faculty \((N = 377)\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 presents the ANCOVA source table for comparing TRH with a LLC with respect to Interactions with Faculty after controlling for the Self-Predictions. After equating the housing types based on the Self-Prediction items the adjusted means for the TRH and the LLC groups with respect to Interactions with Faculty were not found to be statistically significant at the \( p = .001 \) level \((F = 3.384, \, df = 1, \, p = .067)\).
Table 14
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect To Interaction with Faculty After Controlling for Self-Predictions (N = 377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selfpredictions</td>
<td>9.201</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.201</td>
<td>26.983</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>1.154</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.154</td>
<td>3.384</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>127.529</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2056.481</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001

Interaction with Peers. Table 15 represents the means, standard deviations and adjusted means for the living areas, with respect to Interactions with Peers while controlling for the Self-Predictions. The means are not considered equal according to Levene’s test of equality of error variance ($F = .289$, $df_1 = 1$, $df_2 = 375$, $p = .591$).

Table 15
Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Interaction with Peers ($N = 377$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANCOVA source table, in Table 16, compares TRH with a LLC with respect to Interaction with Peers after controlling for the Self-Predictions. After controlling for initial Self-Predictions, the differences between the TRH and the LLC groups with respect to Interaction with Peers was not found to be statistically significant ($F = .311$, $df = 1$, $p = .578$).
Table 16
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect To Interaction with Peers After Controlling for Self-Predictions (N = 377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selfpredictions</td>
<td>19.319</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.319</td>
<td>73.946</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>97.710</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3032.361</td>
<td>377</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satisfaction. Table 17 presents the means, standard deviations, and adjusted means for the two types of living areas with respect to Satisfaction with their Living Area while controlling for the Self-Predictions. Levene’s test of the equality of variances indicated that, as preferred, the equal variance assumption was not rejected, so the ANCOVA could be run ($F = 4.369$, $df_1 = 1$, $df_2 = 375$, $p = .037$).

Table 17
Means, Standard Deviations and Adjusted Means for TRH and LLC with Respect to Satisfaction with Living Area (N = 377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRH</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 presents the ANCOVA source table for comparing TRH with a LLC with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area after controlling for the Self-Predictions. Satisfaction with Living Area was considered to be significant ($F = 79.15$, $df = 1$, $p = .001$) after controlling for the Self-Predictions while comparing the two types of living areas.
Table 18
ANCOVA Source Table for Comparing TRH and LLC with Respect To Satisfaction with Living Area After Controlling for Self-Predictions (N = 377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selfpredictions</td>
<td>10.968</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.968</td>
<td>42.761</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housingrecode</td>
<td>20.302</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.302</td>
<td>79.150</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>95.929</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3242.110</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001

**Focus Group Question.** Prior to coming to XXXXXX, you may have had certain expectations of what the experience would be like. Can you describe some of those expectations? Have your expectations been met? If not, can you explain what may be missing from your experience.

**Traditional Residence Hall Students.** The TRH students described some of their expectations prior to enrolling in the college as “adjusting to having roommates,” “getting involved in activities and clubs,” and “having friendly faculty.” They also spoke about expecting to be “a part of a community,” describing it as “a close knit community.”

All of the participants from the TRH said their expectations have been met or have been exceeded since their arrival on campus. There was one exception, however, and that was about the issue of alcohol on campus. That particular student said “I didn’t expect so much drinking when I came here. That made it hard for me last year because for awhile I felt like I didn’t fit in. This year I made new friends who also don’t drink and it has been much better.”

**Living Learning Center Students.** LLC students also spoke favorably about their expectations prior to enrollment being met. They also spoke of “getting involved on campus,” “faculty and staff should be friendly,” as well as “getting
used to having a roommate.” One student spoke about her tour when she was still in the application process. She said “Everyone was so nice when we were walking around campus. People smile at you, and they make eye contact. I was so afraid that might just be for show, but I was happy to find out it wasn’t.”

One student spoke about her involvement in several activities on campus. She said, ”Being involved has been great. I love all the activity, but also all the people I have met. I was involved in high school so I knew I wanted to be involved here.” Another student mentioned how his involvement in activities helped him with time management which assisted him in “staying on track with my schoolwork.”

**Summary.** The TRH and the LLC students agreed that their expectations had been met since their arrival on campus. The only exception was the one comment about the presence of alcohol on campus and the effect it had on one student’s sense of belonging. The commonalities that were discussed included: adjusting to a roommate, being a part of a friendly community, friendly and approachable faculty, and getting involved in activities.

---

**Focus Group Data Pertaining to Sophomores**

The following questions were asked during the focus groups to better understand the issues pertinent to the sophomore students at the research site as compared to relevant literature:

1. Describe what it means to be a sophomore. How is this year different from your first year (academically and socially)?
2. Keeping with the theme of being a sophomore – describe the changes, if any, you have had with your friendships from your first to your second year. How did your make friends last year? Do you still have the same friends? Why or why not? Did where you live impact who your friends were/are?

**Traditional Residence Hall Students.** The TRH students spoke about “having more responsibility and being expected to know more than I do.” They also talked about academics and the pressures they felt to choose a major. One student said he feels pressure because “expectations are higher for me this year. My professors expect more from me and my parents expect more from me.” One student said “You are more advanced than a freshman, but you still have a lot to learn about college and about being an adult.” Another spoke about her classes and how much she liked them as a sophomore because they were directly related to her major instead of general education requirements. Two students spoke about “knowing what to expect” academically and socially.

The questions about friendships sparked a great deal of discussion. Place of residence was cited several times by students. One student said “My friends this year are very different than last year...proximity has a lot to do with that because my friends last year were all in my dorm. This year my friends are really my friends because we like each other for lots of reasons not just because we live near each other.” Another student talked about how her friendships changed from last year because “they were split up” during the housing selection process. She felt anxious going into the year, but quickly realized “I have found out who I am more and that has allowed me to find out who I want to be my friends.” Some students indicated they still had the same friends from their freshmen year, but
now had new friends as well because of where they live and the activities they are involved with.

**Living Learning Center Students.** These students talked about similar issues. One spoke of her “social network expanding because now she had her freshmen friends and her sophomore friends.” Another student echoed that, and also spoke about her friends from last year “definitely being those girls who lived around me” and her friends from this year “being the people on my floor, but also from my involvement with athletics.”

Activities came up for the LLC students as a way to expand their friendships. Some particular activities that were mentioned included: their interest circles, involvement in student government, involvement in intramurals, and participation in theater events.

Regarding the differences from freshmen to sophomore year, the responses were similar to the TRH students. One student talked about how well she did academically last year and how much “pressure” she feels from her parents to “keep it up.” She said that was making her really nervous and sometimes distracted her because she would worry about her grades so much. Another said she had chosen a major last year, but wasn’t happy and was trying to figure out what she should change it to. She spoke of being “nervous and feeling a lot of pressure to make a good choice.” When asked how she would define a “good choice”, she said “one that would make me happy and keep my parents happy.”

LLC students talked about faculty expectations and how they felt more pressure in their classes than they did last year. One student said “I feel like they
(the faculty) think I know what I am doing, and a lot of the time I don’t. At least not right away.” Another student echoed that and added “freshmen year they (the faculty) expected us to be kind of lost. This year they just jumped right in and expected us to be able to keep up. It was hard last semester.”

**Summary.** Since the themes from both of the groups were very similar, it suggests that sophomore issues transcend the type of living area for the students. Being a sophomore, according to the students in all the focus groups, means feeling pressure to do well academically and to choose a major, having more responsibility, feeling stressed because of faculty and parental expectations, and the expectation that they “know what they are doing” because they aren’t freshmen anymore.

Friendship issues were constant between the groups as well. The students specifically mentioned friendships from their freshmen residence area morphing into friendships from activities, their new residence area, and classes. These findings suggest the sophomores in the study had similar issues, regardless of their living environment. These issues are more likely attributed to their personal development rather than from any environmental influence on campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

**Summary of Findings**

This chapter presented the data gathered from the 65 item questionnaire and three focus groups with sophomore, on-campus resident students at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeast. The sample consisted of $N = 377$
sophomores, 67% who were female and 33% male. The students lived in either a traditional residence hall (73%) or a living learning center (27%). Traditional residence hall space included double rooms, triple rooms, quadruples rooms, and four person suite style rooms. The LLC rooms are four person apartments with two double bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, and bathroom.

The findings of the independent t tests indicated that there was no significant difference within the living areas, with regard to Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers. An interesting pattern emerged: the TRH students indicated higher Interactions with Faculty than the LLC students. The focus group process assisted in explaining and interpreting these results. Specifically, the LLC residents did not consider their structured interest circle meetings (required as a LLC resident) were Interactions with Faculty outside the classroom. The students felt the interest circles were another class in their schedule and did not see a difference, although they did indicate they had formed relationships with their interest circle faculty. Most Interactions with Faculty were meeting for a meal or socializing in the college snack bar area.

There was also no significant difference within the living areas with respect to Interaction with Peers. The means for Interactions with Peers, overall, were higher for the LLC residents, and the focus group data supported that finding by revealing 89% of the participants felt their peers were academically and socially supportive. In the traditional residence halls, the participants felt their peers were socially supportive (92%), but not necessarily academically supportive (25%).
The independent $t$ test to determine if there was a difference between the two types of housing, with respect to the students’ Satisfaction with their Living Area, revealed a statistical difference. The students living in the LLC were significantly more satisfied with their living area than those in the TRH. Both groups indicated they would recommend their current residence hall to a member of the freshmen class.

The findings of the ANCOVAs indicated that by controlling for the Number of Roommates, Satisfaction with Living Area was the only variable found to be significant. Focus group data supplied additional information specifically that TRH agreed that having a higher number of roommates is difficult for just about any area of the residential experience. LLC residents found their living area provided them with more options for places to go and study and socialize. The style of housing combined with the number of roommates was the difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the number of roommates and the effect that has on their social and academic experiences.

The findings of the ANCOVA, which controlled for the students’ Self-Perceptions prior to enrollment, revealed that Satisfaction with Living Area was the only variable with significant differences between the TRH and the LLC groups. The students reported that their expectations had been met since their arrival on campus. There were also some common themes the students in both living areas had in common: adjusting to a roommate, being part of a friendly community, friendly and approachable faculty, and involvement in activities.
The two focus group questions relating to the students’ specific experiences as sophomores illuminated similar issues for both styles of housing. Pressure to do well academically, feeling stressed to meet expectations, choosing a major, and being expected to “know what they are doing” were articulated by students in both types of residential areas.

Chapter V provides the summary, recommendations, and conclusions derived from the findings of this research.
V. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, and CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, offers recommendations for future research, and presents conclusions based on the research findings. Major findings were compared and contrasted with relevant literature. The population for this study consisted of sophomore on campus resident students. The specific areas studied for sophomores included: an evaluation of their housing options (TRH or a LLC); their opportunities to engage in quality Interactions with Faculty and Peers; and their perceived Satisfaction with their Living Area.

The two theoretical frameworks used for this study were Astin’s (1993) I-E-O Model and Stufflebeam’s (2007) CIPP Evaluation Model. The purpose of the I-E-O Model Astin (1993) contends, “is to assess the impact of various environmental experiences by determining whether students grow or change differently under varying environmental conditions” (p.7). Controlling for certain expectations (Self-Predictions) from prior to enrollment (input), the effect of certain environmental measures, such type of residence area (environment), was assessed with regards to Interactions with Faculty, Peers, and perceived Satisfaction with the Living Areas (outputs) (Astin, 1993). The second theoretical framework was Stufflebeam’s (2007) CIPP Evaluation Model. The focus of this research was an evaluation of the product (type of residence hall). The results offered the college administration insight into the living areas designed for sophomore on campus housing (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).
This study utilized a mixed method quantitative and qualitative design in two phases. The quantitative aspect of the study consisted of, $N = 377$ sophomores who completed a 65 item questionnaire with demographic information, Self-Predictions, questions about their Interactions with Faculty and Peers, and their Satisfaction with their Living Area. The students lived in a TRH, $n = 275$, or a LLC, $n = 102$. Three focus groups, $N = 21$, conducted after data collection, comprised the qualitative component of this mixed method study. The purpose of this sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003) is to have the qualitative portion (the focus groups) “assist in explaining and interpreting the findings” (p.215) of the quantitative part of the research. Therefore, the questions for the focus groups were developed after survey data were analyzed. The questions challenged the students to reflect and report on: interactions with faculty outside the classroom; the environment in which they live; their friendships; and what their experience has been as a sophomore.

The types of housing available for sophomores were TRH, $n = 6$, or a LLC, $n = 1$. TRH was described as a building in which students live while enrolled in college; generally the single room accommodations have basic furnishings, and common area bathrooms accessible from the hallway (Schroeder & Mable, 1994). A LLC was defined as a specific residential living area for college students with varying types of academically oriented activities (Shapiro & Levine, 1999; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).
Summary of Major Findings

Research Question 1
Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers?

Separate independent t tests were calculated to compare living areas (TRH and LLC) with Interactions with Faculty and then Interactions with Peers.

Interaction with Faculty (1a). There was no statistical significance between a TRH and LLC with respect to Interaction with Faculty ($t = 1.33, p = .184$).

Interestingly, the mean for TRH, $M = 2.28$, was higher than the LLC, $M = 2.19$, (see Table 3). The LLC had a residency requirement consisting of participation in a faculty facilitated interest circle. These interest circles were developed to help foster interactions outside the classroom with faculty. Considering the LLC residents had this extra component to their housing, specifically, interaction with faculty outside the classroom, it was assumed their scores would be higher and potentially significant. In contrast to this finding, Lenning and Ebbers (1999) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) found that students involved in a LLC were more likely to have positive, quality interactions with faculty outside the classroom and experience other positive benefits such as higher academic achievement and persistence to graduation (see also Inkelas & Weisman, 2003).

Focus Group Question (1a). The focus group question for this topic was:

Talk about your relationship with faculty. Include information about interactions inside the classroom as well as outside the classroom. What kind of informal conversations do you have with faculty (not directly related to course content)? Have you met a faculty member outside of class socially, for example in the snack bar for a cup of coffee or meeting in the dining hall for lunch?
The TRH students reported having positive Interactions with Faculty outside of class. Their contact mainly consisted of meeting by chance or an appointment during a meal or coffee in the snack bar. Students reported that having a meal plan put them in the same areas where faculty ate and socialized: therefore, increasing their opportunities to interact outside the classroom. TRH resident assistant staff sponsored programs in the buildings called *Dessert & Dialogues*. These programs had a faculty member come to a specific floor to meet with residents for informal discussion and socializing. LLC students overwhelming described their interest circles as “a class” session. None of the participants considered this interaction with faculty any different than what would happen in the classroom setting. This finding is important information for the evaluation of the structure of the LLC interest circle model.

**Interaction with Peers (1b).** A review of the data revealed no statistical significance between the TRH and the LLC with respect to Interaction with Peers \(t = 1.22, p = .222\). The means for this dimension were all higher for the LLC \((M = 2.84)\) than the TRH \((M = 2.76)\) students in all the areas, with the exception of one, *Talked about current events* (see Table 4). This will be discussed further in the focus group question section. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) supported the contention that “the structural and organizational influence of residence arrangement is accounted for, or mediated by, the quality of interpersonal interactions with important agents of change (faculty and peers)” (p. 344).
Focus Group Question (1b). The focus group question for this topic was:

In your living area – do you feel your peers are supportive of each other socially? Academically? What are some of the “hot topics” you discuss with your peers in the halls?

The majority of students, 92%, TRH expressed that they felt their peers were socially supportive. However, only 25% felt their peers were academically supportive. This was reinforced by comments about the social atmosphere of the buildings, evidence of alcohol and parties, and anecdotal observations that some of the students did not take their studies seriously. Banning and Kaiser’s (1974) examination of the ecological perspective in the relationship between students and their environments describes “the influence of environments on persons and persons on environments” (p. 371). An assessment of climate, policies, and procedures in the TRH may assist housing professionals in developing a plan to redesign the TRH environment to include a more academically supportive climate. This assessment was supported by research that described how colleges can intentionally create conditions to promote student success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1997).

LLC students, 89%, felt their peers were academically and socially supportive. The LLC students expressed a more serious commitment to academics, balanced with a social atmosphere than the TRH students did. Discussed something learned in class (M = 3.37 TRH and M = 3.44 LLC), studied in groups (M = 2.85 TRH and M = 2.91 LLC), and shared concerns about classes (M = 3.51 TRH and M = 3.67 LLC) all had higher means for the LLC with respect to their peers’ level of academic support (see Table 5). This was supported by the
literature, which states that students who participate in a LLC program are more likely to: (a) “have positive peer interactions”, (b) “perceive a positive residence hall climate”, (c) “have stronger transition to college, academic achievement, and retention outcomes”, (d) “have higher levels of civic engagement”, and (e) “have lower levels of binge drinking” (Inkelas, 2004, p. V-1).

The top three hot topics for the TRH students were: campus events and issues (40%), the opposite sex (40%), and homework (20%). The top three hot topics for the LLC students were: their interest circles (80%), opposite sex (10%), and campus events and issues (10%). Talking about current news events, the only topic in which the TRH had a slightly higher mean, \((M = 3.15)\) TRH and \((M = 3.10)\) LLC, was not brought up by the students as a hot topic in either building.

**Research Question 2**
Is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to students’ satisfaction with their living area?

An Independent \(t\) test was conducted to compare the TRH to the LLC with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area. Satisfaction with Living Area was defined as an environment that is academically and socially supportive (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). Inspection of the data showed that the LLC students were significantly more satisfied with their living area than the TRH students \((t = 9.04; p = .001; ES = 1.12, \text{large})\) (see Table 5). *Students study a lot; can find a quiet place to study; easy to form study groups; residence hall supports academic achievement; students think academic success is important, and life is intellectually stimulating* all had Effect Sizes considered to be large \((ES > .80)\) (Huck, 2003) for the LLC students. The literature supported the seamless
educational environment a LLC can provide: one which successfully integrates the academic and social lives of our students (Inkelas et al., 2006; Inkelas & Weisman).

**Focus Group Question (2b).** The following questions related to this topic:

3. What is your perception of the residence hall staff (RAs and RDs)? What kind of interactions do you have with them? Do you feel they are supportive of your social and academic goals?

4. Would you recommend your current residence hall to someone in the class of 2011? Why or why not?

The TRH students were divided in their responses to the questions related to satisfaction, which is defined as an academically and socially supportive living area (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003). Most could identify and agree upon the positive job competencies of the resident assistant staff. However, since the resident hall staff is in place to help provide an environment conducive to the pursuit of academic success, the realities of discipline and accountability push against the freedoms young adults desire when they move away from home and onto a college campus (Schroeder & Mable, 1994). That incongruence could possibly provide the backdrop for the negativity associated with resident life staff performing their duties as confronters of policy infractions.

LLC students were more positive in their reactions to the residential life staff. This could have been attributed to several factors: the residence life staff in that area may be better equipped and more skilled at their jobs, or the residents are not as active in the LLC with policy issues as the TRH residents may be. Students did express their desire to go elsewhere on campus for their socializing than remaining in their own rooms. As previously noted, Inkelas (2004) found in
her research of LLC programs, students who participate in a LLC program were more likely to: (a) “have positive peer interactions”, (b) “perceive a positive residence hall climate”, (c) “have stronger transition to college, academic achievement, and retention outcomes”, (d) “have higher levels of civic engagement”, and (e) “have lower levels of binge drinking” (p. V-1). Students in both areas agreed they would recommend their current residence to a member of the freshman class.

**Research Question 3**
After controlling for number of roommates, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

In addressing research question 3 the living areas were compared on Interaction with Faculty, Interaction with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area after controlling for the Number of Roommates. An ANCOVA was calculated to control for the differences in roommates within the types of housing, thereby equating the groups based on the Number of Roommates. Interaction with Faculty \((F = 3.021, p = .083)\) and Interactions with Peers \((F = 1.756, p = .186)\) were not considered to be significant after controlling for the Number of Roommates (see Tables 8 and 10). It appeared the number of roommates did not influence the level of Interaction with Faculty or Peers within the living area. Zellar (2005) stated that it is the institution’s responsibility to provide a living area that “balances the student’s need for privacy and adequate space for personal belongings” with “the institution’s need to create quality interactions with peers, faculty, staff and the larger campus community” (p. 414). Past literature on
roommate configurations did not address how or if the Number of Roommates would impact Interactions with Faculty and Peers, rather it concentrated more on logistics of space and interpersonal relationships (friendships) (see for example Sinha & Mukherjee, 1996).

Satisfaction with Living Area was found to be significant after controlling for the Number of Roommates (F = 57.064, p = .001) (see Table 12). The TRH students had a variety of living configurations: doubles, triples, quads, and 4-person suites. The LLC students lived in apartments with two double occupancy bedrooms, kitchen, living room, and a bathroom. These findings most likely are a reflection of the obvious differences in room type. However, Zellar (2205) found the most desirable configuration for first and second year students are single or double rooms. The combination of double bedrooms with the added benefit of having the additional living space made the LLC a more satisfying alternative for sophomores. In addition, Sinha and Mukherjee (1996) studied personal space requirements in college housing. Their study confirmed that the higher the number of roommates, the more demands on personal space, the decreased tolerance for crowding, “and a more negative attitude toward room environment” was prevalent (Sinha & Mukherjee, p. 656).

**Focus Group Question (3).** The focus group question relevant to this topic was as follows:

Regarding your roommates – how does the total number of people living in your room impact your academic work? Your socializing?

The focus group participants confirmed the findings of the ANCOVA. The TRH students overwhelming concurred (100%) that they had difficulties within their
living areas balancing academics because of the number of roommates for two reasons: the small living space and lack of study space (i.e., study lounges). The LLC students did not express the same displeasure, stating they had more options for study space in their apartments and study lounges. In terms of their living area being socially supportive, both the TRH and the LLC were in agreement.

The TRH students’ dissatisfaction with their number of roommates was due to small, one room living areas with a higher density of people than the LLC students. These findings are in agreement with Sinha and Mukherjee (1996), in that the higher number of people in a room, the greater increase in dissatisfaction with living environment and Zellar’s (2005) contention about the need for adequate personal space. If the overall goal is to create a seamless learning experience, which extends the learning environment of the classroom to all areas of the campus, then providing on campus housing conducive to meeting the academic needs of the students is critical (Strange & Banning, 2001; Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991).

Research Question 4
After controlling for self-predictions, is there a significant difference between a living learning center and traditional sophomore residence hall environments with respect to opportunities for (a) interaction with faculty, (b) interaction with peers, (c) and satisfaction with their living area?

In addressing research question 4 the living areas were compared on Interaction with Faculty, Interaction with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area after controlling for the Self-Predictions. Since the population in this study was sophomores and the outcomes measured related solely to the college
environment, utilization of “Self-Predictions” appeared to be the most reasonable input measure (Astin, 1993, p.14). An ANCOVA was calculated to control for the differences in Self-Predictions within the types of housing, thereby equating the groups based on the Self-Predictions. The differences between the groups with respect to Interaction with Faculty \( (F = 3.384, p = .067) \) and Interaction with Peers \( (F = .311, p = .578) \) were not considered to be significant after controlling for Self-Predictions (see Table 14 and Table 16). It appeared the Self-Predictions did not influence the level of Interaction with Faculty or Peers within the living area. Satisfaction with Living Area, however, was considered to be significant \( (F = 79.15, df = 1, p = .001) \) after controlling for the Self-Predictions while comparing the two living areas (see Table 18). It is unclear as to why Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers did not have significant results. One possibility for this finding may be that students’ arrive at “college with high hopes, and unrealistic expectations” (Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000, p. vi). Reality, they contend, does not sink in until the sophomore year, when specific attention has relaxed from the institution. It is possible that the students’ high expectations from pre-enrollment did not meet the realities they found within their living areas with respect to Interactions with Faculty and Peers.

**Focus Group Question (4).** The focus group question related to this area was:

Prior to coming to XXXXXXXX, you may have had certain expectations of what the experience would be like. Can you describe some of those expectations? Have your expectations been met? If not, can you explain what may be missing from your experience?
The TRH and the LLC students agreed that their expectations had been met since their arrival on campus. The only exception was one comment about the presence of alcohol on campus and the effect it had on one student’s sense of belonging. The commonalities that were discussed included: adjusting to a roommate, being a part of a friendly community, friendly and approachable faculty, and getting involved in activities.

It appeared through the analysis of these findings coupled with the ANCOVA results that controlling for the Self-Predictions (inputs), the type residence halls (environment) did not have an effect with regards to Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers (outcomes). Equating the students within the two types of residence halls on Self-Predictions, did have an effect with respect to Satisfaction with Living Area.

**Other Findings**

**Correlation Coefficients.** Table 6 described the correlations between the covariates (Number of Roommates and Self-Predictions) and the three dependent variables. Self-Predictions were positively related to every other variable, including the Number of Roommates covariate. The positive relationships were weak to moderate, as shown through Effect Size. Huck (2005) describes the question to be answered by correlation data as “To what extent are the high scores of one variable paired with the high scores of the other variable?” (p. 53). He continues by saying “a strong positive correlation can exist even though the mean of the score of one variable is substantially different than the
mean scores on the other variable” (p. 53-54). This appears to be the case with Research Question 4. After equating the groups by controlling for the Self-Prediction questions, Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers were found not to be statistically significant, however, the variables are positively related.

**Focus Group Data Pertaining to Sophomores.** The following questions were asked regarding sophomore issues:

1. Describe what it means to be a sophomore. How is this year different from your first year (academically and socially)?

2. Keeping with the theme of being a sophomore – describe the changes, if any, you have had with your friendships from your first to your second year. How did your make friends last year? Do you still have the same friends? Why or why not? Did where you live impact who your friends were/are?

Being a sophomore according to the students in all the focus groups means feeling pressure to do well academically and to choose a major, having more responsibility, feeling stressed because of faculty and parental expectations, and the expectation that they “know what they are doing” because they aren’t freshmen anymore. Since the themes from both of the groups were very similar, it suggested that sophomore issues transcend the type of living area for the students. These findings are supported by Lemons and Richmond (1987) who described sophomores as feeling unsure in their ability to meet their own expectations, as well as those of family and friends. These expectations can be intensified by the pressure to make important decisions with career path, lifestyle, and academic major.
Friendship issues were constant between the groups as well. The students specifically mentioned friendships from their freshmen residence area morphing into friendships from activities, their new residence area, and classes. These findings suggest the sophomores in the study had similar issues regardless of their living environment. These issues were more likely attributed to their personal development rather than from any environmental influence on campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). Gansemer-Topf et al., (2007) qualitative study supports these findings by describing “friendships of choice vs. friendships of convenience” (p. 38). The students in this study reported friendships in their first year formed around their residence area: forming their social life and peer interactions based upon the convenience of having their friends right next door (Gansemer-Topf et al.).

Conclusions

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the results of this study.

Interactions with Faculty

There were no statistically significant differences between the LLC and TRH with respect to Interactions with Faculty \((t = 1.33, p = .184)\). This was also true after controlling for the Number of Roommates and Self-Predictions. These conclusions were not supported by literature on LLC which described this type of living environment as providing opportunities for quality interactions with faculty (Inkelas, 2004; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; 2004; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999, Smith et al., 2004). Focus group participants described the interactions they have with
faculty as a “class” session, not “out of class interaction”. Also in the focus
groups, TRH students were able to identify hall programming efforts by their
residence life staff with faculty, and meeting in the snack bar for a meal or coffee
as Interactions with Faculty. LLC students agreed that meeting faculty in the
snack bar or dining hall was common and that they enjoyed such interactions.

Interactions with Peers

There were no statistically significant differences between the LLC and TRH
with respect to Interactions with Peers \( t = 1.22, \ p = .222 \). This was also the
case when the groups were equated by controlling for the Number of
Roommates and Self-Predictions. Literature supported the importance of the
Interaction with Peers (Pascarella, 1984) and the role on campus housing has in
providing the students an appropriate environment that is academically and
socially supportive (ACPA, 2004; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Longerbeam et al.,
2007; Strange & Banning, 2001). Focus group participants from the TRH said
they felt their peers were socially supportive, but not academically supportive.
LLC residents said they perceived their environment to be both academically and
socially supportive. Astin (1993; 1996) and Kuh and Hu, (2001) supported the
importance of Interactions with Peers as important for overall satisfaction, and
enhancing cognitive and affective development.

Satisfaction with Living Area

LLC residents were significantly satisfied with their living environment as
compared to residents of TRH \( t = 9.04; \ p = .001; \ ES = 1.12, \text{ large} \). The
differences appeared to originate from the physical structure of the living areas
as TRH students mentioned lack of study space, small living areas, and more than two roommates as issues. LLC students said they found adequate study spaces within their apartments and in study lounges in the building. Research did support intentionally creating conditions to promote student success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1997). Inkelas (2004) found in her research of LLC programs, students who participated in a LLC program are more likely to: (a) “have positive peer interactions”, (b) “perceive a positive residence hall climate (p. V-1).

Issues Related to Sophomores

Focus group participants agreed that their sophomore year had been stressful. Specific areas stated by students in both types of living areas included: feeling pressure to well academically and to choose a major, having more responsibility, feeling stressed because of faculty and parental expectations, and the expectation that they “know what they are doing” because they aren’t freshmen anymore. Since the themes from both of the groups were very similar, it suggested that sophomore issues transcend the type of living area for the students. These findings were supported by Lemons and Richmond (1987) who described sophomores as feeling unsure in their ability to meet their own expectations, as well as those of family and friends. Regarding friendships, the students specifically mentioned freshmen residence area friends (or “friends of convenience”, Gansemer-Topf et al., 2007, p. 38) morphing into friendships from activities, their new residence area, and classes. These findings suggested the sophomores in the study had similar issues regardless of their living
environment. These changes were more likely attributed to their personal development rather than from any environmental influence on campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005).

**Astin’s I-E-O Model**

The use of the I-E-O Model (Astin, 1993) as it applied to this study was, while controlling for certain expectations (Self-Predictions) from prior to enrollment (input), the effect of certain environmental measures, such type of residence area (environment), was assessed with regards to Interactions with Faculty, Peers, and perceived Satisfaction with the students’ Living Areas (outputs) (Astin, 1993). The findings in this study indicated that while controlling for the Self-Predictions (input), the type of residence area (environment) does not have an effect on Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers. The type of living area did have an effect on Satisfaction with Living Area while controlling for certain Self-Predictions. This was evident in the results for the LLC ($t = 9.04; p = .001; ES = 1.12$, large). This finding was supported by the literature, specifically Astin (1993), Inkelas (2004), Pascarella and Terenzini, (1991), and Tinto, (1997).

**Recommendations**

This study was an evaluation of on campus residence areas designated for sophomores on a small, private, Catholic campus in the Northeast. The concentration was on the product, which were the TRH and the LLC. The results of a “formative evaluation offer guidance for continuing, modifying, adopting, or terminating the effort based on assessing outcomes and side effects,” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 329). Evaluation studies should utilize a
combination of techniques to assist in making comprehensive recommendations and to help “cross-check the various findings” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, p. 345). This study was a mixed-method design, which utilized survey research and focus groups. Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this research, the following is a list of the recommendations that were made to the host institution.

- **Student Affairs and Academic Affairs should continue to review the goals, learning outcomes and assessment plans for the current LLC interest circle model.**

  LLC students felt the current model was “like a class” rather than an “outside the classroom” experience with faculty. In an effort to change this perception, additional training and resources should be made available to the faculty who participate in this program. Faculty mentors should be familiar with best practices and relevant literature in this area and have resources available to assist with planning interest circle topics, format of sessions, and strategies for addressing the needs of sophomores. Students in the LLC should be adequately prepared as to what their responsibilities are to maintain residency in this unique living area. Residence life staff should continue to be available to assist the faculty mentors if necessary, as well as to be an important campus resource for the students who reside in the LLC.

- **Student Affairs and Academic Affairs should cooperatively plan further involvement of faculty in the TRH areas.**

  In an effort to create a more seamless learning environment, administration and faculty should continue to assess the needs of students in the TRH. Intentional planned, educationally-purposeful activities within these residence areas could, over time, assist with the current perception that their living area is
not academically supportive. Creating a more academically rich environment in the residence halls will assist in making the halls an extension of the classroom, rather than a retreat from them (Longerbeam et al., 2007).

- **Student Affairs and Facilities management should conduct a comprehensive assessment of the TRH to address the concerns regarding lack of quiet study space. Highlighting other spaces on campus available for quiet study and open late into the evening and weekends would also be important.**

Students in TRH were looking for places to study since their room environments could be difficult to manage depending upon the number of roommates. Designated quiet study areas on each floor would give the students an alternative in their own building for a place to study and to participate in study groups. Making sure other areas on campus are open and available for study space is important. Adequate library hours, campus center space, and computer lab space are examples of places students could go for study purposes. It is recommended that campus housing be conducive to meeting the academic needs of the students (Strange & Banning, 2001; Kezar, 2003; Kuh et al., 1991).

- **Student Affairs and Academic Affairs should consider targeted programming to address the unique needs of the sophomore population.**

Consistent with existing literature, some sophomores felt stress related to meeting expectations of parents and faculty, and important career and life choices, such as choosing a major. Lemons and Richmond (1987) suggested planning programming and activities centered on Chickering’s (1969) vectors of achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose. It may also be helpful to establish a communication plan
with sophomore parents to assist them in identifying with their son's/daughter's needs and for them to be able to refer their son/daughter to appropriate campus resources for assistance.

**Opportunities for Future Research**

This study evaluated sophomore housing on a small, private, Catholic campus in the Northeast. The research was unique in that it specifically used sophomores with two types of housing options to determine which option offered better opportunities for Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area. As a result of this study, several areas have been identified for future research opportunities.

- **Develop a more comprehensive list of inputs for sophomores to use the I-E-O Model more effectively.**

  There is a large amount of research studies which use the I-E-O Model exclusively with first year students. This study attempted to do so with sophomores using Self-Perceptions. Developing a more comprehensive inventory of appropriate inputs may offer better insight into the areas which can affect the influence the environment has on the desired outcomes.

- **Expand the study to control for more extraneous variables.**

  In an effort to control for additional outside influences, it would be useful to equate the groups on grade point average and gender.

- **Expand the study to include analysis of a multi-ethnic population.**
This study did not take ethnicity into account when analyzing the data. Broadening the scope to include ethnicity as a variable would offer a more comprehensive picture of sophomores.

- **Utilize a multi-campus design, controlling for type of residence, to further study sophomore issues.**

  It would be difficult to find a similar campus with the exact housing structure and LLC model to study. Equating the groups on type of housing and repeating the study, would expand the literature base on sophomores regarding the influence of Interactions with Faculty and Interactions with Peers. This approach may positively affect the level of transferability or generalizing of results that can broaden the research.

**Conclusions**

This research evaluated housing for sophomores on a small, private, Catholic campus. Students in traditional residence halls (TRH) and a living learning community (LLC) participated in this evaluation to determine if campus housing provided an academically and socially supportive environment for sophomores. Consistent with existing LLC literature, this facility had a requirement for student participation in an academically oriented activity meant to foster relationships with faculty outside the classroom.

The variables for this study were: Interactions with Faculty, Interactions with Peers, and Satisfaction with Living Area. Existing literature, specifically linking sophomores and housing type with these variables, is limited. This study sought
to contribute to this base of research and assist the institution with their evaluation of sophomore on campus housing options.

Major findings of this research included:

- Sophomores in this study, as in the literature, reported stressors with: choice of major, parental and faculty expectations, and lack of structured attention from the college.

- Consistent with the literature, students in the LLC were significantly more satisfied than those living in a TRH ($t = 9.04; p = .001; ES = 1.12$, large).

- Although separate analysis with Independent $t$-tests revealed no significant differences, all means were higher for:
  - The TRH compared to the LLC regarding Interactions with Faculty. Focus group data revealed LLC students felt their activities with faculty were considered “like a class” and therefore not “outside the classroom” interactions.
  - The LLC compared to the TRH regarding academically and socially supportive Interactions with Peers. Focus group data revealed TRH students felt their interaction with peers were socially supportive, but not academically supportive.

The findings of this study could help several different stakeholders on campus: those involved in the planning or reviewing LLC programs, professional and student staff in residential life and housing departments, facilities planning for construction and renovation projects, enrollment management and retention
studies, and those concerned with supporting and expanding upon the sophomore experience.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Housing Selection & Lottery
Living Learning Center Process

Students selected their 2007-2008 housing as a result of two distinct processes occurring during the spring semester 2007: both of which were outside the control of the study. The residence options for sophomores included doubles, triples, quads, suites, and 4 person apartments in the LLC. The living learning center application and selection process required students to complete an application and secure references. Students must have an overall GPA of 2.5 to apply to live in the LLC. These applications and references are blindly reviewed by selected faculty and administrators (LLC Handbook, 2007). These accommodations are arranged as four-person apartments with two double bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, and living room.

Traditional hall residents select their housing based on a random, computerized process which assigns each roommate group a number. That number is the order in which they will pick their room, according to class year (Housing Lottery Handbook, 2007). Given the housing selection process, self-selection and lottery, the sample population cannot be randomly assigned into housing areas.

The LLC process occurred first, usually from the beginning of February until the beginning of March. Anyone who applied to the LLC and did not get selected entered the traditional housing lottery and selection process to secure a room. At that time, the students may decide to change their roommate configuration based on what is available in the housing lottery.
September 27, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I fully support Nancy Crimmin's study on college sophomore engagement. She has my permission to conduct her "Sophomore Resident Survey" with the residential students at XXXXXX College.

Sincerely,

(Signature on original)

Dr. Catherine WoodBrooks
APPENDIX C

Focus Group Invitation

March 17, 2008

TO: ______________________________________

FROM: Nancy Crimmin, Dean of Campus Life

In February, you and your class mates were asked to complete a survey. The areas covered in the survey included: your perceptions and expectations before coming to XXXXX College, your perceptions of your interactions with faculty outside the classroom, your interactions with your peers, and information about your living area. All of this information is helpful to the College as we move forward with strategic planning, as well as learning more about our sophomore students and what services they (you!) may need.

The second part to this project is a focus group. We know what the results from the survey tell us, now we want to talk about it. You have been selected as a representative of your living area to participate in a focus group on:

Tuesday, March 25, 2008,
9:00pm, 6th Floor of the LLC,
Pizza and snacks will be available.

This will be a one hour discussion. Information will be kept confidential. There will be more information at the beginning of the group about the procedures in place for this group.

At the end of the group we will have a drawing for Spring Concert tickets!! Please RSVP to Nancy at X7536 or ncrimmin so we can plan for food.
APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board Approval

November 9, 2007

Nancy P. Crimmin
Dean of Campus Life
XXXXXX College

Dear Dean Crimmin,

The Institutional Review Board approves the Student Affairs Sophomore Housing Survey and Focus Group, according to the criteria set out in the XXXXXXXX College Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects, and you may proceed with the research.

Sincerely,

(Signature on the original)

Amy Gazin-Schwartz
Chair, IRB
## APPENDIX E

**Derived Factors, Item Stems, and Alpha Reliabilities**
*(University of Michigan, 2001)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Name and Item Stem</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Importance of Intellectual self discovery</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about cultures different from your own</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know people from backgrounds different from your own</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more about yourself</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining a broad education and appreciation of ideas</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing ideas and intellectual topics with friends and other students</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Important to be active outside of class</em></td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing volunteer work</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being active in extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know your professors outside of class</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Confidence of transition to campus</em></td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like you belong</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident about your academic success</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming friends with students whose views are different from your own</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with professors outside of class</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming homesickness</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming part of extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Discussed socio-cultural issues with other students</em></td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied in groups</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about different lifestyles and/or customs</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about your future plans and career ambitions</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed your views about multiculturalism and diversity</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed major social problems such as peace, human rights, equality, and justice</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held discussions with students whose political views were very different than your own</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Discussed academic issues with other students</em></td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed something learned in class</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held discussions with students whose personal values were very different than your own</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared your concerns about classes and assignments</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held discussions with students whose religious beliefs were very different than your own</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Engaged in social student-faculty interaction</em></td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed personal problems or concerns with a professor</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited informally with a professor during a social occasion (e.g., lunch, coffee, home visit)</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed your career plans and ambitions with your professor</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaged in formal student-faculty interaction</strong></td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made an appointment to meet with a professor in his/her office</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited informally with a professor before or after class</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked your professor for information related to a course you were taking</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated with your professor using e-mail</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Perceive residence environment to be socially supportive</strong></th>
<th>0.83</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find students in my residence hall have an appreciation for people from different religions</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find students in my residence hall have an appreciation for people from different races or ethnic groups</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in my residence hall are concerned with helping and supporting each other</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this residence hall to members of the class of 2011</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life in my residence hall is intellectually stimulating</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enough peer support in my residence hall to do well</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Perceive residence environment to be academically supportive</strong></th>
<th>0.73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think it's easy for students to form study groups at my residence hall</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My residence hall clearly supports my academic achievement</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can find adequate quiet study space available in my residence hall</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think students in my residence hall are well aware of the campus academic support services available to them</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Perceive residence environment to be academically minded</strong></th>
<th>0.65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the majority of students at my residence hall think academic success is important</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most students living here study a lot</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Single variable measures</strong></th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a top student academically</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining knowledge and skills for a career</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

Instrument Cover Letter and Questionnaire

Dear Sophomore Resident Student,

You are being asked to participate in a questionnaire which addresses two main areas: your perceptions of what college life might be like before enrolling in XXXXXX College and your experiences while currently enrolled at the College. You will also be asked questions about your current residence hall. There are several demographic questions which will assist us in getting a broad picture of the entire group of respondents. Participation in this study is voluntary and you do not have to answer any specific question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable in any way.

Research has shown that sophomore students have different expectations of their college than they did as a first year student. The information gathered from this research project will provide important information about the class of 2010 and the activities you participate in at XXXXXX College. It will also help us to examine the places where you live and how well these accommodations provide a socially and academically supportive environment.

Your Resident Assistant has been asked to help with the distribution and collection of these questionnaires. To help protect your confidentiality, you have been given an envelope with the questionnaire. Please place your completed questionnaire into the envelope and seal it before giving it back to your Resident Assistant. You will be given a raffle ticket to fill out with your name and room number. When I receive all the completed questionnaires from the Resident Assistants, there will be a drawing for several prizes, including: an iPod Nano, a $50.00 XXXXXXX College Bookstore Gift Certificate, a $10.00 Shaw’s gift card, and a $10.00 gas gift card.

The information from your questionnaire will not be personally identified with you in any way. The questionnaires are not coded or marked to be able to link the information provided back to you. The data will be stored by the researcher in a locked file, and will be destroyed after the study has been concluded. Results from this research will be presented to the leadership of the College in an effort to help understand our sophomore population and the needs they have in residence.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher at ncrimmin or at X 7536.

Thank you for your participation in this project!

Sincerely,

Nancy P. Crimmin
Dean of Campus Life
2007-2008 Sophomore Resident Survey

Please respond to the following questions by circling the appropriate response choices. Previous respondents have indicated that it takes approximately 10 minutes to complete this survey. Your participation is voluntary and you may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

1. **Gender** (please circle one): Male Female
2. **Ethnicity** (please circle the one option that best describes you):
   - American Indian/Alaskan Native
   - African American
   - Black/Non-Hispanic
   - Latino/a
   - Asian/Pacific Islander
   - Biracial
   - Caucasian
   - Other_______________________
3. **GPA** Range at the end of your first year (please circle one):
   - 1.00 – 1.50
   - 1.51 – 2.00
   - 2.01 – 2.50
   - 2.51 – 3.00
   - 3.01 – 3.50
   - 3.51 – 4.00
4. Have you formally declared a **major**? No Yes: my major is: ______________________
5. **Where do you currently **live on campus**?** (please circle one)
   - Alumni
   - Worcester
   - Salisbury
   - Desautels
   - Nault
   - Hanrahan
   - Young
   - LLC
   - Other_______________________
6. How many **roommates** do you currently have? (please circle one, *do not count yourself*)
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
7. Did you apply to live in the **LLC**? Yes No
8. Are you a Resident Assistant? Yes No
9. Do you have a Resident Assistant as a roommate? Yes No
10. **Do you live in a room designated for a medical accommodation?** Yes No
11. Did you participate in Housing Lottery? Yes No
12. Was your current room your first choice for housing? Yes No
13. Did you reshuffle at any time during the lottery process? Yes No

Please check ALL that apply:

14. **What activities, clubs, or organizations were you **actively** involved with during your first year at XXXXXXX College?**
    - _____ Academic Support Center Tutor
    - _____ CALLS First Year Mentor
    - _____ ALANA Network
    - _____ Campus Activities Board
    - _____ Campus Ministry
    - _____ Intramural Sports

*Question # 14 continued on next page*
14. (Continued from previous page)
What activities, clubs, or organizations were you **actively** involved with during your first year at XXXXXXXX College? (continued)

____ Peer Mentor  _______ Resident Assistant  
____ Plourde Recreational Sports Council _______ Student Athlete Council  
____ Provoc Staff _______ Student Government Association  
____ Reach Out Center _______ Varsity Athletics  
____ Residence Hall Council _______ Other, please list:

15. What activities, clubs, or organizations are you **actively** involved with during the current year at XXXXXXXX College?

____ Academic Support Center Tutor _______ Provoc Staff  
____ ALANA Network _______ Reach Out Center  
____ CALLS First Year Mentor _______ Residence Hall Council  
____ Campus Activities Board _______ Resident Assistant  
____ Campus Ministry _______ Student Athlete Council  
____ Intramural Sports _______ Student Government Association  
____ Peer Mentor _______ Varsity Athletics  
____ Plourde Recreational Sports Council _______ Other, please list

16. How satisfied are you with your **overall academic performance** in college thus far?

___ Strongly Dissatisfied ___ Dissatisfied ___ Neutral ___ Satisfied ___ Strongly Satisfied

Your perceptions **BEFORE** enrolling in XXXXXXX College:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1 = Not at all confident</th>
<th>2 = Somewhat confident</th>
<th>3 = Confident</th>
<th>4 = Very confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident that you belong at XXXXXXXX College</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming friends with students whose views are different from your own</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming part of extra-curricular activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident about your academic abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with professors outside of class</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming homesickness</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answer the following questions using the rating scale below.

1 = Not at all important  2 = Somewhat important  3 = Important  4 = Very important

**What ACTIVITIES did you think were going to be very important to you while at XXXXX College?**

23. Gaining a broad education and appreciation of ideas  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
24. Getting to know your professor outside of class  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
25. Discussing ideas or intellectual topics with friends and other students  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
26. Being active in extra-curricular activities  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
27. Being a top student academically  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
28. Gaining knowledge and skill for a career  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
29. Getting to know people from backgrounds different than your own  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
30. Learning more about yourself  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
31. Doing volunteer work  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
32. Learning about cultures different than your own  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4

**Your perceptions WHILE ENROLLED at XXXXXXXXX:**

Answer the following questions using the rating scale below.

1 = Never  2 = A few times a semester  3 = A few times a month  4 = Once or more a week

**During interactions with other XXXXXXXX STUDENTS, how often have you done each of the following during the CURRENT school year?**

33. Discussed something learned in class  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
34. Talked about current news events  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
35. Shared your concerns about classes and assignments  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
36. Held discussions with students whose personal values are very different than your own  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
37. Studied in groups  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
38. Discussed major social problems such as peace, human rights, equality, and justice  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
39. Talked about different lifestyles and/or customs  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
40. Talked about your future plans and career ambitions  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
41. Held discussions with students whose religious beliefs were very different than your own  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
42. Discussed your views about multiculturalism and diversity  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
43. Talked about art, music, theatre, or other cultural pursuits  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
44. Held discussions with students whose political views were very different than your own  
   .......................................................... 1 2 3 4


1 = Never  
2 = A few times a semester  
3 = A few times a month  
4 = Once or more a week

How often have you done each of the following during the CURRENT school year?

45. Asked your professor for information related to a course you were taking .......................................... 1 2 3 4
46. Visited informally with a professor before or after class ................................................................. 1 2 3 4
47. Made an appointment to meet with a professor in his/her office .......................................................... 1 2 3 4
48. Communicated with your professor using email ....................................................................................... 1 2 3 4
49. Visited informally with a professor during a social occasion (lunch, coffee, met off campus) ................................................................. 1 2 3 4
50. Discussed your career plans and ambitions with your professor ......................................................... 1 2 3 4
51. Discussed personal problems or concerns with a professor .................................................................... 1 2 3 4
52. Went to a cultural event (for example, concert or a play) with a professor ........................................... 1 2 3 4

Your perceptions of your CURRENT residence hall:

Answer the following questions using the rating scale below.

1 = Strongly Disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Agree  
4 = Strongly Agree

Consider how well each of the following statements describes your CURRENT RESIDENCE HALL environment.

53. I find students in my residential hall have an appreciation for people from different races or ethnic groups ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4
54. I am able to discuss issues that really matter to me with other students living here .................................................................................................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
55. Students in my residential hall are concerned with helping and supporting each other ............................................................................................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
56. Life in my residential hall is intellectually stimulating .................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
57. I find students in my residential hall have an appreciation for people from different religious backgrounds ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4
58. I would recommend this residence hall to members of the class of 2011 ............................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
59. I have peer support in my residential hall to do well at XXXXXXX College ............................................. 1 2 3 4
60. Most students living here study a lot .............................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
61. I think students living here are well aware of the academic support services available to them ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4
62. I think the majority of students living here think academic success is important ............................................................................................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
63. My residential hall clearly supports my academic achievement ........................................................................ 1 2 3 4
64. I can find adequate quiet study space in my residential hall ........................................................................ 1 2 3 4
65. I think it is easy for students to form study groups working in my residential hall ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4

Thank you for your participation! Please put your completed survey into the envelope provided and return it to your Resident Assistant

Questionnaire adapted from the Residence Environment Assessment with permission from Dr. Karen Inkelas, University of Maryland
APPENDIX G

Focus Group Procedure Guide

The following is an outline of the procedures followed in preparation for, during, and after each focus group.

1. Room reservations completed, furniture arrangement will be determined to optimize visibility of each participant, and to help the quality of the audio recording.
2. Food will be ordered from catering.
3. Invitations will be sent to a sample, $N = 80$. Details of time, date and location are included, with an RSVP requested to keep track of participants. Reference was made to the relationship of the focus group to the survey administered a few weeks prior.
4. The day before, email reminders were sent to those who said they could attend.
5. On the day of the focus group - the room arrangement was checked and adjusted, audio equipment was checked, and food delivery plans were finalized.
6. When the participants arrived, they were given nametags and asked to introduce themselves to the group. The researcher explained the reason for the audio recording, and the need for confidentiality to maintain the integrity of the conversation, as well as to help all group members feel comfortable.
7. Participants were asked to review the participant agreement and to sign if they were willing to stay and participate.
8. The conversation began with some planned questions based on the data from the questionnaire. Notes were taken by the researcher.
9. At the conclusion of the group, the participants were directed to the food and beverages, and asked to fill out a raffle ticket for the raffle prizes.
10. A final reminder of confidentiality will be given as the participants leave the site.
11. The notes and the tapes will be transcribed. Transcribed notes were carefully checked against the researcher’s notes to check for accuracy and to fill in any missing information.
12. Data analysis included coding by dimension, and identification of common themes within each dimension.
13. Data was compared and combined with the survey research data for a complete analysis prior to reporting the findings.
APPENDIX H

Focus Group Participation Agreement

Date of Focus Group: ____________  Moderator: Nancy P. Crimmin

You are being asked to participate in a focus group as a follow up to a questionnaire that was distributed by your Resident Assistant entitled 2007-2008 Sophomore Resident Survey.

Research has shown that sophomores have different expectations of their college than they did as a first year student. The information gathered from this research project will provide important information about the class of 2010 and the activities you participate in at XXXXXXXXXX College. It will also help us to examine the places where you live and how well these accommodations provide a socially and academically supportive environment.

The questions in this focus group will center on some of the results from the questionnaire in an attempt to clarify and correctly interpret the results of the instrument. The decision to participate in this focus group is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time.

This group will be audio taped. The researcher will be the only person with access to the information on the tape. All information will be transcribed to a written form with no directly identifiable information of the participants linked to the transcript. All records will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office and will be destroyed at the completion of the research study.

I have read this consent form. My signature below indicates that I understand the information provided and have had all my questions answered prior to the beginning of this focus group. I agree to participate in this focus group.

I consent to:
- the group being audio taped    Yes    No
- having the taped information transcribed into written form    Yes    No
- the use of the written transcription of the focus group in presentations and written documents resulting from the study, provided that neither my name nor other identifying information will be associated with the transcript    Yes    No

__________________________________________  ___________________  __________
Name of Participant    Signature of Participant    Date

__________________________________________  ______________
Signature of the Researcher    Date