

Out of the Box Snapshots

The Effects of Student Housing on Academic Success

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Living conditions can influence a student's college experience. Whether a student is living in a residential hall, an off-campus apartment, or a fraternity/sorority/cooperative house, each of these housing situations comes with their own set of advantages and disadvantages. Even within each type of housing, there is wide variability. For instance, each of the various styles of residence halls (traditional hall, shared suite, single room, apartment style, etc.) might have different impacts on a student's experience. In the current research project, I am investigating the relationship between a student's academic success and their college living situation.

Prior research has examined the effectiveness of living learning communities. These communities typically live on the same floor of a residential hall and are made up of people pursuing the same interests. For example, Purdue has a women in engineering living learning community. This gives women pursuing an engineering degree the opportunity to live with other women pursuing their same interests. The idea behind these types of housing conditions is that

these communities will foster a more academically focused environment and encourage teamwork and collaboration among students on the floor.

In my own research, I will explore a potential link between the style of residence hall and academic success and retention. The factors that I will analyze include layout of dorm, distance from academic campus, amenities such as air conditioning, as well as a variety of other factors.

As Purdue's incoming classes continue to grow, decisions will have to be made about the type and size of future housing. The current research will assist in determining which style of residence hall should be built to improve overall academic success and retention.

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Research advisor Susan South writes: "This research has practical, real-world consequences for understanding how a student's environment in college can impact academic success. Determining the aspects of college student housing that lead to success can inform how colleges plan for student housing in the future."