Understanding and Enhancing Student Experience: First Year Residence Experience and Student Career Success

1. Initial Welcome
   a. Students expressed very positive perceptions around their initial welcome to campus.
   b. However, some noted issues with the lack of sustenance of such support.
   c. “Felt welcomed in the beginning and really liked how so many people helped to move her into her room…has an autistic father and the helper gave him a ride and that made an impression”

2. The Role of Community Advisors
   a. Students mentioned the important role of CAs in students’ first-year residence experiences (good or bad) by 67% of interviewees.
      i. “CA announced at the beginning of the year that the kids are on their own and they wouldn’t be getting involved”
      ii. “[I felt] welcomed right away when she got to campus and indicated her CAs were great and helped with making her feel welcome”
      iii. “Had roommate issues, resolved it with the CA, and felt it very important to have the CA handle situations like that”
   b. Respondents commented on quality of living issues in the residence halls (e.g., noise, drugs, bullying, mold).

3. Roommate Issues
   a. 80% of respondents noted some negative experience vis-à-vis his or her roommates.
   b. “Good in the beginning but not so good later on. Boyfriend was there and smoked weed”

4. Food Options
   a. Hours
   b. Healthy options
   c. Variety
   d. “She enjoyed the Grant South flatbreads but you cannot get those on campus anymore once they renovated”
   e. “Doesn’t like the food—lots of friend foods. Eating healthy is limited”

Solutions:
- Further systematic study of these issues:
  o Solicit students’ ideas to promote welcoming atmosphere
  o Current food options and marketing
  o Current processes for selecting, training, supporting, and evaluating CAs
  o Roommate selection processes
- Peer institutions benchmarking with respect to
  o Welcoming activities and strategies
  o Food options
  o CA processes
  o Roommate selection processes