Interview Process

Our group conducted interviews with nine current NIU students. We asked open-ended questions about their experience, with particular interest in their thoughts on residence halls and living on campus.

Through these interviews, several common themes and issues were quickly noticed.

Short-Term Opportunities for Improvement

While major challenges exist in funding mechanisms for physical improvements, the following ideas can likely be implemented quickly utilizing internal resources.

- **Modernize Roommate Selection Process**
  - Many schools use software to pair roommates based on common interests and lifestyles. This proactive approach could prevent many roommate problems before they start.

- **Community Advisors as True Peer Mentors**
  - Revamp Community Advisor training to ensure that CAs are effectively equipped to assist students and serve as a true peer advisor to connect students to important campus resources.

- **Improved Dining Hall Experience**
  - Adjust dining hours to ensure convenience for students, particularly on nights and weekends. More healthy eating options and more daily variety are also desired by students.

- **A Year-Long Programming Model**
  - Maintaining high levels of programming and events throughout the year, not just during the first weeks of the fall semester, will help students to feel more connected to campus.

Long-Term Considerations

- **Affordable Housing**: The most common concern reported was cost of living on campus. Working to keep long-term costs under control is imperative to keeping students on campus.

- **Facility Upgrades**: Continuing to strategically upgrade residence hall facilities as appropriate with modern amenities that accommodate student lifestyles is crucial to retaining students.

- **Connections to Campus**: Students note that most residence halls are on west campus, farther away from classes and campus resources. Working to bridge this gap—either through better integration of facilities or increased academic presence in existing facilities—is very important to students.