

Cultures of Engagement, Opportunity, and Professionalism: Recruiting and Retaining Professional Staff

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Framework

- Having competent, knowledgeable, and skilled professional staff in residential facilities is essential to promoting student learning and development on campus (Belch & Kimble, 2006; Belch & Mueller, 2003)

- Professional positions in residence life provide an outstanding training ground for student affairs practitioners
- Staff develop skills needed in a variety of mid- and senior-level positions in student affairs

- Recruitment activities are time consuming and costly
- Departures can be disruptive, drain resources, and affect morale (Buck & Watson, 2002)
- Retention is "essential to the health of student affairs as a profession" (Davis Barham & Winston, 2006, p. 64).

- Several key factors have converged to create greater challenges for some institutions in their ability to hire and retain RDs
 - more options for entering student affairs field
 - quality of life associated with living in
 - complexity and severity of student issues
- Many master's graduates declare no willingness to work in residence life

- Recent research has focused on:
 - Senior housing officers' perceptions of problems (Belch & Mueller, 2003; St. Onge & Nestor, 2005)
 - Quality of life issues among live-in professionals (Belch, n.d.)
- Despite the emerging body of research in this area, little if any research identified successful and innovative recruitment and retention activities

	Study Overview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National study to examine best practices in recruiting and retaining entry-level live-in professionals in housing and residence life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What attracts candidates to these positions? – Why do they stay?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Campuses having best practices in recruiting and retaining entry-level live-in professional staff identified using Delphi technique ■ Expert panel consisted of ACUHO-I Leadership Assembly and Small College Task Force members ■ 72 group and individual interviews conducted by 3 researchers on 11 campuses

	Institutions				
	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <u>Retention</u> Emerson College (MA) University of Georgia Western Illinois University </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <u>Recruitment & Retention</u> Ball State University (IN) University of Florida University of Maryland </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding-top: 20px;"> <u>Recruitment</u> Alfred University (NY) East Carolina University Kansas State University Seton Hall University (NJ) University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh </td> </tr> </table>	<u>Retention</u> Emerson College (MA) University of Georgia Western Illinois University	<u>Recruitment & Retention</u> Ball State University (IN) University of Florida University of Maryland	<u>Recruitment</u> Alfred University (NY) East Carolina University Kansas State University Seton Hall University (NJ) University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	
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	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Today's Focus: Organizational Culture</h2>
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	Organizational Culture Defined
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organizational culture – a shared system of beliefs, values, and assumptions among an organization's inhabitants ■ Organizational members share a common understanding that unites them, helps them to understand how they fit in, what is valued, appropriate, and inappropriate <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">(Allen & Cherrey, 2000; Davis, 1984; Kuh, 1991; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1992; Whitt, 1997)</p>

	DEEP Study Findings (Documenting Effective Educational Practice)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improvement-oriented campus cultures were: (Kuh et al., 2005) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – internally driven and oriented toward innovation – openly discussed what was needed to improve – adopted best practices from other institutions – supported initiatives and invested in success – utilized data-informed decision making practices to develop and modify policy

	Impact of Culture on Job Satisfaction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Job satisfaction results when employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Believe their work is meaningful and valued^{1,2,3} – Know their ideas and expertise are respected^{2,3,4,5} – Trust that communication is valued^{1,2} ■ Receiving information from higher-ups significant predictor of satisfaction with work and colleagues¹ ■ New professionals say entry into their first job was informal, less than comprehensive, and haphazard^{6,7} ■ Ongoing supervisory contact is not the norm^{6,8,9} <p><small>¹Goris, Voight, & Pettit, 2000; ²Kim, 2002; ³Maslach & Leiter, 1997; ⁴O'Toole, 1996; ⁵Wakabayashi, 2005; ⁶Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004; ⁷Winston & Creamer, 1997; ⁸Ignelzi & Whitley, 2004; ⁹Saunders, Cooper, Winston, & Chernow, 2000</small></p>

	Your Organizational Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Please take a few moments to jot down a description of the culture of your department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How does your departmental culture compare to what was just described?

	Culture of Sites Described
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mission ■ Engagement ■ Opportunity ■ Professionalism

	Mission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mission communicated throughout the recruitment process so candidates who fit with it can be courted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “[It’s] important to be able to be very clear about our environment and kind of who we are and what we believe in.” ■ Although the fundamental mission is consistent, new members and their contributions are welcomed and valued

	<p>We need to think about ourselves as a new organization each year. Our new staff brings their wealth of experience, new perspectives, ideas, and values; they challenge us to think in new ways about students and how we approach our work. Our returning staff carry our history, campus experience, job expertise, and a refined experience regarding their work based on the lessons learned in our department and their knowledge of the political environment. The goal is to capitalize on gifts of our new and returning staff in a way that enhances our work with students.</p>

	Culture of Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mutual fit ■ Friendly ■ Family environment ■ Support ■ “We’ll take care of you”

	Culture of Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seek strong, mutual fit between candidates and the department <p>"I'd rather be frank and honest with you. If there's things that right now that [this town] or [this university] can't meet for you, I'd rather have you happy in the field as a colleague than go somewhere, not get what you thought you were gonna get. And I see many people just leave the profession and I feel like everyone suffers then." (senior housing officer)</p>

	Culture of Opportunity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broad view of professional development and plenty of support for it ■ Not all opportunities require financial resources (e.g., important committee assignments) ■ Prepare for future – staff will be ready for next position

	<p>I'm certain that new professionals are/were thinking the same thing that I was thinking as I was trying to decide where my next step was gonna be and that you wish to go someplace that's well respected. You wish to be someplace where the professionals that work there have/are accomplishing really great things, and are churning out well-skilled people. You want to be a part of a program that's vibrant, where you have opportunities to learn and opportunities to partake in things. You want to be with other people who are passionate and really care about what it is that's happening and what it is that's occurring. (senior housing officer)</p>

	Culture of Professionalism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Empowerment ■ Autonomy and ownership are promoted ■ Leadership is strong and accessible ■ Professional development expected and modeled ■ Staff feel valued ■ Staff homes are respected

	<p>"I feel like we have tried to give the live-in staff as much autonomy as possible. We want them to take ownership for the areas they are responsible for [We] treat them as professionals. We tell them, 'This is your area, and you have to work within certain boundaries, but you are the decision maker.'"</p>

	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Articulate a clear mission to candidates and staff members ■ Engage members in the life of the department ■ Recognize and promote success ■ Create opportunities for development and advancement

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