Montana Tech: Residence Life Annual Program Review

Review Year: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015

Submitted by:
Scott Forthofer, Director of Residence Life

Assessment Committee Review: Spring 2016
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Background

Residence Life operates two housing areas, the residence hall and apartments. The residence halls consists of two residential buildings, Prospector Hall and Centennial Hall. These buildings contain four different living arrangements types; single, double, suite double and suite single rooms. Typically between 75-85% of the students living in the halls are first year students. Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Director of Residence Life, 11 student leaders (resident assistants and resident assistant director) are tasked with developing an environment in which students are enabled to develop and grow.

Montana Tech's Apartment Housing facility is located approximately one mile from the North Campus. It consists of three complexes of 2 and 3-bedroom apartment units. Apartments are available to Montana Tech students, staff, and faculty, and are assigned according to a priority list as they become available.

Mission

The Office of Residence Life is dedicated to assisting students in all facets of residential living and is committed to furthering the college students’ development outside the classroom. It is our priority to promote and foster growth in all areas of students' lives including social, emotional, physical, cultural, and ethical issues. The Office of Residence Life provides a safe, clean, and orderly environment in which students are enabled to develop and grow.

In accordance with Montana Tech residence hall requirements and Policy 502.1 of the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education, all traditional, first-year students are required to live on-campus during their first year at Montana Tech. COT students are exempt from this policy. Exceptions to the live-in requirement may be requested by students who are married or are living with immediate family within a reasonable commuting distance from campus. Students requesting exemption from this policy must complete and submit an exemption form to the Montana Tech Office of Residence Life. Appeals to residence hall decisions may be brought before an appeals board. The decision of the campus body established to hear residence hall appeals shall be final.

Objectives:
1. Provide housing to all traditional first year students in accordance to Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 502.1 and provide housing to upper-class students wanting to live in the residence halls.
2. Develop a culture in the residence halls for students to develop and grow
3. Improvements and development of unique spaces to residential areas.

Objective 1: Provide housing to all traditional first year students in accordance to Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 502.1

Performance Criteria A: All traditional first year students not meeting exemption exception be provided housing on campus.

Assessment Method: All housing applications received from traditional first year students be guaranteed housing on campus in the residence halls.

Evaluation: Following housing sign-ups of returning students in the middle of April 2014 the continuation of sign-ups for upper-class students in the residence halls were halted. A higher than expected interest from returners to return to the residence halls occurred. On June 5, 2014 the residence halls were 52 students over normal capacity. After converting lounge rooms and study spaces there were 37 first year students without an assigned room. In July, emails were sent out to all students living in the residence halls letting them know of the overflow situation and stating we had some one time options for student to volunteer to be placed into the Montana Tech apartments 1 mile off campus as overflow housing. Many volunteered for the apartments (both upper-class and first year students) which resulted in placement of all students on the waiting list into rooms in the residence halls.

Action: Converting lounge and study room spaces in addition to providing some apartments as overflow housing we were able to provide housing to all traditional first year students without releasing upper-class students who had signed up for housing on campus. There was a significant downside in this process. The conversion of lounge and study room spaces to student rooms removed over half of the public spaces for students to use for gathering and group study.

Performance Criteria B: Provide housing to any upper-class student wanting to live on campus in the residence halls.

Assessment Method: All housing applications received from upper class students be guaranteed housing on campus in the residence halls.

Evaluation: Do to the amount of applications received for traditional first year students we were not able to guarantee housing in the residence halls for upper class students after April 2014. We did offer to place them on a waitlist and contact them if any spaces opened up.
Action: Converting lounge and study room spaces in addition to providing some apartments as overflow housing we were able to provide housing to all upper-class students who had signed up for housing by the middle of April 2014. Due to limited bed spaces in the residence hall and because of the one year live on requirement for traditional first year students we are not able to actively market the residence halls to upper-class students. The amount of the first year students enrolling at Montana Tech determines our ability to retain upper-class students in the residence halls. The increase of first year students attending Montana Tech greatly reduces our ability to house all upper-class students wishing to remain in the residence halls after their first year.

Objective 2: Develop a culture in the residence halls for students to develop and grow.

Performance Criteria A: Training of the Resident Assistants to develop and foster student development and growth

Assessment Method: Verbal and written testing of knowledge gained, completion of programing requirements that foster growth in all areas of students' lives including social, emotional, physical, cultural, and ethical issues, completion of weekly reports addressing needs and community growth. Satisfaction survey results.

Evaluation: Resident Assistants (RA) go through a rigorous training program covering areas of community development, mediation, ethical leadership, advising, and mentoring. Additionally they receive training from Montana Tech and community professionals in the areas of bystander awareness, suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention, and recognizing signs of depression. Throughout the academic school year training topics are recovered to insure knowledge remains fresh and current for the RAs.

Throughout the semester RAs are tasked with planning programs and activities for the students of their floor/wing and within both residence halls. They are required to plan three educational programs, three passive educational programs and ten activities. The educational programs and passive educational program are designed to cover the areas of emotional, physical, cultural, and ethical issues. Additionally one educational program is required to use resources from outside the Department of Residence Life to bring outside connections and knowledge to the students living in the halls. Activities are designed to build community, provide release time from academics and expose students to the various opportunities available from other Tech or community organizations.
From Residence Life Satisfaction Survey 2014-2015

Q13#1 - How satisfied are you with your RA on the following: (based on a 5 point scale with 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rules &amp; Hall Policies</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences for policy violations.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency procedures</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security procedures</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence hall/campus activities...</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action:** RAs all completed their programming requirements. Four RAs in the fall semester and three RAs in the spring semester completed “All Star” level program requirements. To achieve “All Star” programming status a RA must complete five education program, five passive educational programs and seventeen activities.

The Residence Hall Survey question on areas of how satisfied with your RA, the mean scores were between 4.33 and 4.44 which is above satisfied.

**Performance Criteria B:** Students living in the residence halls will view that living on campus has enhanced their experience at Montana Tech.

**Assessment Method:** Resident Hall Survey

**Evaluation:** The student experience in the residence hall encompasses everything form satisfaction services provided like laundry, computer labs, and front desk equipment check out to how living in the residence halls have help their ability to grow in their education pursuits.

Q35#1 - The Bottom Line: Overall Satisfaction... (based on a 5 point scale with 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied)

**Action:** The Residence Hall Survey question on overall satisfaction of living in the residence hall mean score was 4.08 which is just slightly above satisfied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how satisfied are you living in your residence hall this year..</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 3: Improvements and development of unique spaces to residential areas.

Performance Criteria A: Remodeling apartments each year.

**Assessment Method:** Inspect vacated apartments with assistance of Physical Plant personnel.

**Evaluation:** At semester breaks Residence Life staff with the assistance of Physical Plant personal inspected vacated apartments. A remodel priority list was made to determine which apartments to be remodeled in a defined time frame.

**Action:** We were able to begin to remodeling two apartments’ kitchen and bathroom during the spring semester. In the future, we need to consider setting aside apartments for remolds even if we have a waiting list of students wanting apartments. We were not able to begin any remolds in the fall semester because the apartments began the semester full.

Performance Criteria B: Update and improve private and public spaces in the residence halls.

**Assessment Method:** Inspection of residential rooms with assistance of Physical Plant personnel. Seek input and suggestions from students with creation and/or design of unique use of underutilized spaces in the residence halls.

**Evaluation:** At the end of spring semester with the assistance of the Physical Plant personal go into each room to repair or replace any room equipment not in full working order. Additionally set a priority list of rooms to repaint and replace carpet over the summer break. Seek input from students in updating or repurposing spaces to allow improved space usage for day to day student use.

**Action:** At the end of the spring semester the Physical Plant personal goes room to room and repaired or recommended replacement or student room furniture. Residence Life staff identified rooms in most need to carpet replacement. Through input from students from the 2013-2014 year we design and opened a movie room lounge space for fall 2014. Additionally with input from the Residence Hall Association, the Office of Residence Life moved its paper supply closet which was located in a central area within Prospector Hall. In this now vacated space a relaxation room including mood lighting and massage chair opened mid semester of spring 2015 for student to reserve through the main desk.
Strengths and Weaknesses

**Strengths:** Residence Life staff is commitment to provide a diverse amount of programs and activities for the residents to be involved with each week to build connections inside and outside the residence halls. With the loss of many lounge and study spaces for overflow rooms the Residence Life staff began seeking ways to repurpose spaces to be of better use for students on a day to day basis.

How will the program maintain the strengths?
We will continue to relook at the program model and make adjustment based upon the needs of the students and the residential life program. One adjustment in the program model will be to require one educational program per RA per semester to be focused on bystander awareness, sexual assault prevention, alcohol awareness, or suicide prevention. Additionally, after the suicide of a residence hall student, the Office of Residence Life will be creating a bystander based initiative called “Take my Hand, Diggers Support Diggers” to help students recognize and know how to help a student thinking of suicide. The program will begin in September of 2015.

Residence Life will also continue to look at ways to improve our public spaces in the residence halls to support continued grow in connecting students. By including students in the discussion we will continue improve to be student centered and focused.

**Weaknesses:** Ability to recruit and retain an unlimited number of upper-class student to live in the residence halls.

Involving residence life staff in a leadership role during orientation after the residence hall move in.

How will the program address the weaknesses?
Until we are able to increase the number of beds available on campus though building of a new residence hall our ability to actively recruit upper-class students is defined by the number of the first year class coming in each year. With the increased growth of the first year class we are having to halt housing guarantees of most non-first year students wanting to live on campus.

This upcoming orientation the Resident Assistant staff will be presenting two sessions during orientation. The first session will be on how to be a Frontstander (Montana Tech’s name for an active bystander). The second session will help students learn where the offices and other resources are located on campus through group team work. The program is call “The Amazing Race: Digger Edition”. The program will pair the RAs with their floor to work as a team and we will also have a team or two for any off campus student lead by student leaders living off campus. The goal is to not only to help students learn where campus resources are located but also fast track building of student to student connections.