

THE NAVIGATOR

Northeast Association of College and University Housing Officers

MARCH 2021 EDITION



EVALUATING POST-COVID

what can be done differently?

JOINT CONFERENCE UPDATES

What You Need to Know About the 2021 Joint Annual

STRATEGY IN INTENTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

Making Sure we know the impact of our interactions

INSIDE THIS EDITION



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NEACUHO

Northeast Association of College and University Housing Officers

“You don’t have to hold a position in order to be a leader.” – Henry Ford

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to join a committee today

WELCOME

A LETTER FROM YOUR MEDIA & PUBLICATIONS CHAIR



Hello, NEACUHO!

We're back with a packed edition of the Navigator and I could not be more excited. In this edition, we focus on the future, as well as how the pandemic is affecting us, both as professionals and as people. I want to thank those who submitted for their honesty and perspective. It's a hard time and being able to share your experience in writing is such helpful context.

I don't know about you, but I know for me it feels like there's a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel but it just doesn't seem to be getting any closer, right? Students are tired, we're tired, we just want things to feel "normal".

One thing I've personally learned is to work on recognizing that normal isn't always good, and that change isn't always a negative. This edition has perspectives on how to look to the future, reduce stigma, and be intentional. I think those are at the top of my goal list moving forward, too.

Be on the lookout for information on the upcoming election for NEACUHO, considering joining a committee, and definitely check out the slate of virtual events coming our way until we meet again in PA in October. It's a great, free, low time commitment for us to get together, have some conversations and professional development, and socialize when we can. I'll see you there!

Best,

Danielle Remigio (she|her)
Media & Publications Chair

FROM THE PRESIDENT MATT FOSTER

Hello NEACUHO!

One year. It has been one year since most, if not all, of our campuses shut down, staff members packed up student rooms, staff were asked to meet with students virtually to support from afar, and our personal lives took a toll as we were forced into our own spaces for what we thought was going to be only a few weeks. Here we are one year later with virtual programming, new and unique move-in processes, weekly/multi-weekly testing, campus status changes, and a drain on our staffs.



As I reflect on the last year, I think about the impact this work has had on all of us in the field of housing and residence life, but I also think about the opportunities we have moving forward. I am excited to think about some of the basics we can and need to go back to in housing when it comes to student support, engaging in one on one conversations with residents, helping build some life skills with students, and just having a social program to allow students to meet one another. We have an opportunity to flip all that we do on its head and I hope you all are thinking about ways to do this at your institution.

The shutdown also had its impacts on NEACUHO and we have not held an in person event over the past year, but we have also been able to engage with professionals in our region in new ways. We currently have 64 member institutions, with 13 new or returning members who were not with us during 2020. I am excited to engage with all of these member institutions and continue having conversations with those not yet members.

Some other updates from NEACUHO:

- On February 20 we held a very successful event this past Saturday in collaboration with the 413 Area RA Conference, hosted by AIC, that occurred virtually with NEACUHO helping with the RD2B track, moderating a roundtable for current professionals in the region, moderating a panel on working in higher education/residence life for interested undergraduates, and co-hosted a social the night prior for professionals in the region.

- Our EDI retreat had 31 registrants with some great dialogues on a variety of topics. Keep an eye out for more EDI Circles throughout this year.

- We have a robust schedule of events for both members and non-members through the remainder of this year. We are excited for the webinars, socials, meet and greets, and more!

Wishing you all health and happiness during this time.

SLATE OF EVENTS

NEACUHO Virtual Event Schedule

Event	Type of Event	Date	Time	Link to Register	Audience
SHO Roundtable: What will housing look like in the fall?	Roundtable	Friday, March 19, 2021	11:30am-1pm	www.neacuho.org/event/SHOroundtable	Senior Housing Officers
NEACUHO Meet & Mingle	Social	Tuesday, April 6, 2021	5pm-6pm	www.neacuho.org/event/MeetMingleApril	Members Only
Networking Social	Social	Thursday, April 22, 2021	5pm-7pm	www.neacuho.org/event/NetworkingSocialApril	Open
Sharpening Your Supervision Up and Down	Webinar	Friday, May 7, 2021	11:30am-1pm	www.neacuho.org/event/SupervisionWebinar	Members Only
NEACUHO Meet & Mingle	Social	Thursday, May 20, 2021	5pm-6pm	www.neacuho.org/event/MeetMingleMay	Members Only
Post-COVID Roundtable	Roundtable	Wednesday, June 9, 2021	11:30am-1pm	www.neacuho.org/event/PostCovid	Open
Networking Social	Social	Thursday, June 10, 2021	5pm-7pm	www.neacuho.org/event/NetworkingSocialJune	Open
On-Boarding Webinar	Webinar	Friday, June 18, 2021	11:30am-1pm	www.neacuho.org/event/OnBoardingWebinar	Open
NEACUHO Meet & Mingle	Social	Thursday, August 5, 2021	5pm-6pm	www.neacuho.org/event/MeetMingleAugust	Members Only
Networking Social	Social	Thursday, September 9, 2021	5pm-7pm	www.neacuho.org/event/NetworkingSocialSept	Open

More information can be found on the NEACUHO website at <https://www.neacuho.org/page/rates>

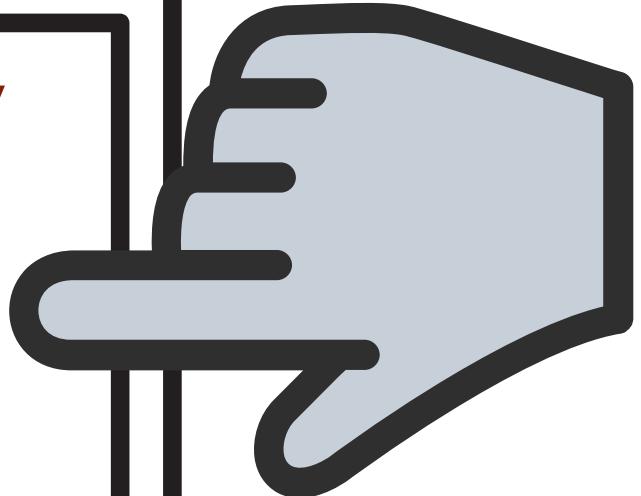
METRO NY DC UPDATE

Sam Bassford

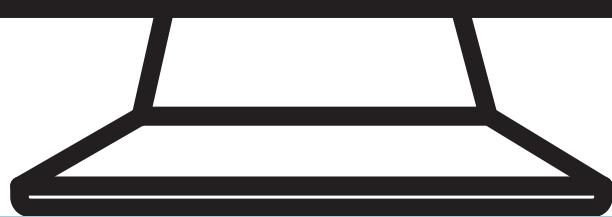
MEMBER SCHOOLS OF METRO NY

WEEKLY MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS AT 11AM



Interested in attending? Email your DC, Sam Bassford at
mnyneacuho@gmail.com



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ACUHO-I FOUNDATION REPORT

NATE GORDON, (HE/HIM) UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Nate here, your friendly NEACUHO Rep to the ACUHO-I Foundation.

ACUHO-I is celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year!!!

The Foundation is launching two new ways to celebrate through sponsored giving.

Celebrating 70 Years of the ACUHO-I Conference

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the ACUHO-I Conference and we are excited to be able to celebrate our history and engagement with our membership. Through this campaign, we strive to bring awareness and understanding of how the Foundation supports the work of ACUHO-I. This campaign will support, among other things, the important strategic initiatives of ACUHO-I. We are particularly excited to support our Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, exploring resources for HBCU & small schools, research grant opportunities, and programs for live-in professionals. Suggested giving levels for the 70th-anniversary campaign are below:

- i. Pledge - \$70 for 12 months (\$840 total)
- ii. Pledge - \$19.51 for 12 months (\$234.12 total) –
This is known as the 1951 Club, which celebrates the year ACUHO-I was founded!

Wanna be a member???

Back by popular demand, I will be hosting the Basket Raffle at our Annual Conference. All proceeds will go to the ACUHO-I Foundation. It will look a little different this year due to our joint conference with MACUHO, stay tuned!

If you are interested in setting up a donation pledge to the Foundation, I can help!!

Individuals can support the Foundation by making annual tax-deductible pledges that will help fund future-focused research and programs that support current and new members.

NOTE: Electronic Fund Transfer is available for monthly gifts of \$5 or more. Individuals can become Major Donors by making a minimum pledge of \$1,000 each year for five (5) years. That's all for now!!

Thanks

Nate – NEACUHO Foundation Rep



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2021 JOINT CONFERENCE UPDATE

TOMMY TRESSLER-GELOOK, JOINT CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

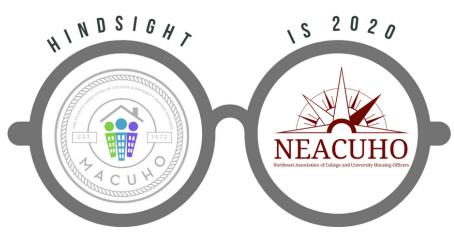
Greetings from the Joint Conference Annual Planning Team!

As we continue to approach October 2021, our joint conference at the Kalahari Resorts in the Poconos, Pennsylvania is beginning to gain some momentum. Since our last update, we have assembled a great group of practitioners from across both regions to serve on our planning committee and leadership team. We want to formally introduce our region to the team! Our conference experience committee chairs are as follows:

- Nick Becker of St. John Fisher College & Brian Medina of the University of Maryland will chair our Website and Technology Sub-Committee.
- Jenna Konyak of Hobart & William Smith Colleges & Blaise Marshall of Pennsylvania College of Technology will chair our Registration & Hospitality Sub-Committee.
- Ashley Fletcher of St. Anselm College & Ryan Young of Temple University will chair our Marketing & Promotions Sub-Committee.
- Allison Gagne of Springfield College & Grace Reynolds of Lafayette College will serve as our Dining Chairs.
- Amanda Hemond of Endicott College & Angela Delfine-Mechler of West Virginia University will serve as our Volunteer Chairs.
- Christina Duncan of New York University & Bernadine Griffin of Goldey-Beacom University will chair our Special Events & Local Arrangements Sub-Committee.

2021 JOINT CONFERENCE UPDATE CONT'D

TOMMY TRESSLER-GELOOK, JOINT CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR



INNOVATING TOGETHER

JOINT ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 11-15TH
2021

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KALAHARI RESORTS
POCONO, PA

- Vinnie Birkenmeyer of Pace University & Jinai Gordon of Lincoln University will chair our Pre-Conference & Affinity Group Experiences Sub-Committee.
 - Antonio Willis-Berry of Merrimack College & Lawrence LJ Morgan of LaRoche College will chair our Exhibit Hall.
 - David Grimes of The New School & Johnny Kocher of West Virginia University will chair our Stores and Basket Raffle.
 - & last, but not least, we have identified 4 programming chairs who will be responsible for overseeing our slate of programs! These 4 leads are Trish Loring-Godino of NHTI-Conrod's Community College, Shawn Tremblay of American International College, Alex Whrenberg of The College of New Jersey, and Jessica Proano of Seton Hall University.
- In the upcoming issue, we will provide updates on the call for programs and registration. As always, if you have any questions or want to get involved, please feel free to let the Annual Conference Co-Chairs know. Our contact information is: Tommy Tressler-Gelok (thomas.tressler-gelok@wagner.edu) and Jackie Cetera (jc088@bucknell.edu).

Looking forward to seeing you in-person in October 2021!

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9/20

COVID-19 POSITIVE

Sam Bassford, (She|Her|Hers), Residence Hall Director
Adelphi University

We knew it was a possibility for a staff member to get Covid. The thought in the back of our heads every time we sneeze or cough was that “it’s happening”. We plan, and plan, and then plan some more for our students. I was prepared and had an idea of what that would look like for a staff member however I was not emotionally prepared when I opened my email and found out I was the one who positive one this time.

A flood of emotions and fear came flooding in but my first item of action was to do my own contact tracing. The contact tracing and telling the people who I possibly infected what to do. After 4 hours of racking my brain, it hit me that I was now one of the people who I heard about in the news. The fear of months and months of what I read on social media hit me. I felt shame and embarrassed that my result affected three staff members who now need to quarantine for 14 days right before Christmas. It was like a scarlet letter was virtually stamped to my name.

Luckily I had mild symptoms but who knows what I was in for. Through the fear, I started thinking how awful this must be for our students. I am isolated in my living quarters with all my things and at least slightly more walking space. When our students test positive or need to go to quarantine they bring whatever they can carry for two weeks.

I am a person who has direct contact with our resources at my fingertips so I wasn’t completely helpless yet I felt cabin fever counting down the days until I can step outside. Besides the mind games of having covid, it put things in perspective of what it is like to be a college student going through this same process. Don’t get me wrong, getting fed three times a day would have been a great concierge service to receive like our students do, but I was lucky because of my physical space. It made me realize how important our Res Life professional staff was during these times.

We are our student’s lifeline when they are placed in this situation. They have three physical knocks throughout the day that connects them to the outside world besides technology. I won’t lie, I was annoyed carrying 8 bags of snacks to a student’s room when it was my turn to serve our quarantine and isolation students but now I know what those 8 bags could have possibly meant to them.

Other duties assigned can often be very time-consuming but I can admit I was disconnecting what it meant to be the student on the other side of the door I was delivering to.

As I was going through the motions of having covid and needing my own support, I realized people aren’t talking about their own personal experience with covid because there is a stigma that you are at fault. Unless you are never leaving your living quarters, this could happen any time you set foot out of your private space. There is also shame that you feel because of the mild symptoms you have means you shouldn’t complain because your lucky you are not hospitalized with serious complications.

Why as housing professionals do we always downplay our own experiences? Maybe it’s the nature of being caretakers? So, as soon as I was up to it I decided to write this experience in The Navigator because it is okay if you get covid. You shouldn’t feel shame.

Things happen. Especially when we have been working so hard that goes beyond duties as assigned. My advice is to make time to prepare what you could need if you were to get sick. Let your emotions out (obviously, keep your job while doing so).

Be the person you would give advice to. Don’t make your struggle worse, ask for help. If you need some to talk through this, reach out to me you are not alone.

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POST-PANDEMIC POSITIVE CHANGES

TYLER BRADLEY, (THEY/ THEM) RESIDENCE DIRECTOR, UMASS AMHERST

Responding to COVID-19 has presented an enormous amount of changes in daily practices and procedures across higher education institutions. In an environment where decisions had to be made swiftly, but rationalized by science, safety, and sometimes budget, residential life departments faced a lot of unique challenges and presented a lot of creative solutions. Some of these situations have shined spotlights on existing issues campus communities were unaware about, including situations where certain procedures are so rarely enacted that they haven't had an opportunity to be properly assessed and modified to better support student needs. Nevertheless, institutions have developed several ideas and changes that may persist and continue living out post-pandemic, and here are a few of those changes.

Re-evaluating Move-In

Many institutions pride themselves on their move-in process, some even referring to the planning groups as Disney Dream Teams, based on how much intentional effort is put into it. But with safety precautions in mind, changes in move-in for departments have included reducing the amount of stops required at move-in, determining no shows, and more. Some of these changes have potential of reducing lines and overcrowding in long-term planning. Some institutions moved with a nearly contactless move-in, where students picked up their keys and new students picked up their student IDs from their residential mailbox, then proceeded to move-in. Seeing a friendly face who can help troubleshoot issues during move-in will likely always remain an essential part of move-in, but this process may have significantly streamlined universal check-in processes.

Continuing Online Engagement Opportunities
How do you develop communities with physical barriers in the way? Communities with multiple small buildings, townhouses, no community bathrooms, limited shared public spaces and lounges have more difficulties creating the small organic interactions residents have compared to the typical-style residence hall. Even in communities with all these in place, it can still be a challenge for some residents to strike up an interaction with others in the community in-person. **Online engagement is a tool in the toolbox to assist with this.**

Many institutions revisited work from Dr. Paul Gordon Brown, finding ways to engage with communities beyond repurposing everything into Zoom. This has included expanded social media access; creating group chats through Slack, Discord, or GroupMe; and quite likely increased reliance on email communications. While moderating, focusing on developing students' communication and conflict management skills, and staying up-to-date on the technologies is certainly another challenge for practitioners when entering this arena, these methods of engagement are likely here to stay.

Virtual engagement even pedagogically makes sense in some cases. Virtual staff meetings and floor meetings can be very helpful to be able to use slideshows and other visuals without relying on the space having a projector. Even more so, individuals can see information directly on their screen, giving them ease and opportunity to screenshot information quickly instead of the dreaded moments where you have to pause. For environments where attendees are regularly away and unable to attend fixed meeting times, or even at large-scale institutions where folks are spending large amounts of time travelling to an in-person meeting, continuing virtual opportunities allows for those engagements to continue with ease without the need for follow-up meetings to disseminate what the person missed.

Communication and Wayfinding

With less visible staffing to answer some of the simple questions such as "Where is the laundry room?" or "How do I get this thing to work?", institutions have had to reassess how, where, and when students are getting information. Yes, we may have sent students an email newsletter before they moved in that was 2000 words long, so they technically did see information at some point and time about having to complete a roommate agreement, but we cannot expect students to be a library of all information they've consumed at all times. All great communication plans have layers, which is why it's essential information is readily available for students.

This shows up in our workspaces in directional signs in the hallways, clear troubleshooting messaging, and reminders about policies in most common areas one could expect that specific policy violation to occur.

So much of decision-making for student expectations in the pandemic been said to be like building a cardboard boat while you're already on the water. If that's what it's like for the practitioner, imagine for a moment, what it's like for the student. This has demonstrated the need for regular and ongoing usability testing and reminding us why we need to put on a student's perspective more regularly when it comes to signage, FAQs, email communication, and websites.

Displaying occupancy of frequently visited locations has been a huge change. Planet Fitness introduced a crowd meter so folks don't have to waste time travelling to a location when it's too busy for them to feel comfortable using the space. The same impacts can be seen in higher education, where institutions created live cams or foot traffic scales so students could see how busy a frequented location is like campus recreation, dining commons, what laundry machines are in use, or even package pick up spots. While many of these changes were to ensure occupancy limits aren't surpassed or that social distancing can be maintained, keeping this as an ongoing practice saves students time and can help support students with social anxiety.

Wellness-Themed Days

Many institutions shortened their academic calendars this year, reducing the amount of time students are in the halls, and limiting possibilities of additional outbreaks. In many of these cases, breaks students used to look forward to as a time to catch up on courses they were falling behind it or just to take a breath and relax for a moment were stripped away. As a result, many campuses introduced wellness-themed days where classes may have been cancelled to allow focus on activities that allow students to re-center, recharge, and reflect on how they're doing for the semester.

So often, days off from classes are also days off for many staff since they typically fall on federal holidays. In some cases, the days off already have thematic programming associated with them, such as the MLK Day of Service. Looking into the future of higher education, where mental health has had such a significant focus for issues facing college students, maintaining some variation of this type of day will likely continue.

The Future of Higher Ed

All things considered, this barely grasps the tip of the iceberg of the effects that will be long-lasting due to the pandemic. Staffing numbers have fluctuated and organizational changes have occurred. Residential occupancy levels may be more unpredictable for some time to come, due to so many students feeling safer living off-campus and no longer having a desire to have an on-campus experience. Spring campus traditions are at risk and on the cusp of disappearing as nearly 50% of students have not participated in them. It is likely more paper forms have permanently made the move from physical copies to digital sign and storage. Emergency housing and relocation processes may have changed. Perhaps even incident response can see a permanent impacts in some capacity such as contacting students with their registered cell phone number. All these changes will certainly vary by institution and the environments they exist in, but it's evident that when the pandemic is over, few institutions will go back to the way things were before.

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ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR WESLEYEN STUDENT LEADERS

* *Also featured on ACUI.org

Stephanie Burke Lewis

William Ollayos, Adelphi University

Students earning academic credit for serving in roles as interns, work-study employees, and other placements is not unusual in student affairs. But it's at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where students earn academic credit through the campus housing program by doing the work that is similar to that of student organization leaders: planning topical forums, scheduling and running concerts, and organizing film festivals. Wesleyan's system is run through residential "program houses" akin to the safe spaces typically offered through campus cultural centers, many of which are located in student unions.

Driven by a unique combination of student activism, faculty engagement, and staff supervision, program housing allows students to live communally based on shared interests and sociocultural identities. Wesleyan enrolls approximately 3,000 undergraduates each year, with 99% of students residing on campus. As a liberal arts college in New England known for a focus on social justice, program houses operate as much more than a student housing assignment. Every house has a mission, with a clearly established and publicized role on campus and recognized within the student body.

Program houses can offer a location for student organizations to regularly assemble, like spaces within student unions, as well as create an easily identifiable environment for non-white students who may need to escape the stressors that can be present in a predominantly white campus. In line with the work of campus professionals who manage student organizations on other campuses, the success of program housing at Wesleyan allows the Office of Residential Life to support the most marginalized student populations.

In the Wesleyan residential curriculum, program houses share an educational plan specifically designed to encapsulate the community-building efforts of house managers, as well as the managerial aspects of living and learning in a standalone house. Program housing has existed as a staple of Wesleyan University for more than 50 years, and each house has emerged as the result of student advocacy, just as student organizations are created.

The Office of Residential Life accepts proposals from students for new program houses whenever a vacancy arises, which usually occurs when the university acquires a new building or through diminished student interest in an existing current house. The office currently oversees about 30 houses, and each is categorized as either interest- or identity-based. Some of the specific interest-based houses include Music House, Film House, and Art House, each of which have become popular spaces for student populations with an interest in theater.

La Casa de Albizu Campos, an example of an identity-based house, serves Latinx students as well as allies interested in issues facing that community. La Casa also serves as the regular meeting space for Ajúa Campos, Wesleyan's Latinx identity and affinity group. In that same spirit, Womxn of Color House and Outhouse have symbiotic relationships with student organizations Womxn of Color Collective and Outing Club respectively, and each interchangeably bolsters the success of the other.

The roster of interest- and identity-based houses has shifted throughout the history of Wesleyan, responding to current events as well as ever-changing student needs and interests, but what has remained is the uniqueness associated with the way residents in each unit commit to working toward and supporting the house mission throughout the academic year. The spirit of program housing is clearly analogous to the energy and commitment required of successful student organizations, with both campus compartments fueled by and responding to student needs.

Just as Wesleyan's program houses display the inherent diversity on campus, its course catalog is equally broad, and credit-bearing courses are not contained to classrooms or academic buildings. Student-led forums, where undergraduates act as course instructors, are regular academic features offered each semester. Forums may enroll between five and 15 students, must enlist one or more faculty sponsors, and can earn undergraduates academic credit toward degree requirements. Forum topics have ranged from "Russian Movement Training for Performers" to "Why Things Fall Down."

Each forum offers an opportunity for undergraduates to stretch their knowledge, in addition to providing an opportunity for them to practice with pedagogical design in a supportive, empowering environment. Above all, these forums grant academic value to the passions that students pursue outside of the classroom, equivalent to the vigor student organization leaders often display.

Area coordinators with Wesleyan's Office of Residential Life directly oversee the program houses on campus, and those coordinators recently introduced something called an engagement contract, a learning tool utilized by all program houses to support their unique missions. Each program house consists of an undergraduate paraeducator, known as a house manager, and anywhere from eight to 25 residents. House managers complete an engagement contract with their residents in the first week of each semester, setting ground rules about communal living and planning their mission-based initiatives throughout the semester.

Just as student organizations reserve, maintain, and operate spaces for various events, program houses create ideal venues for mission-based activities, and the contracts help embed that culture of activism. For example, residents in Malcolm X House might support that house's mission of exploring the African diaspora by hosting a film screening of related documentaries, with the associated engagement contracts serving as one onus for residents of the house to actively support and engage in the house's mission. Residents of the house go through brainstorming sessions with the intention of implementing exciting, often academically oriented initiatives. House managers guide their residents through the completion of their engagement contract, while also addressing other residential issues that may arise throughout the semester. That's not dissimilar from student organization leaders taking some leadership roles with respect to programming, while also often having some responsibility for budgets, marketing, and collaborations with other campus entities.

The concept of hosting student forums in program houses, and in turn granting academic credit for the advocacy and educational work occurring in these spaces, originated in 2018 as the Office of Residential Life decided to liken the engagement contract fulfilled by each program house to that of an academic course syllabus. It was clear that both contained a roster of educational and community-building opportunities, and through fruitful discussions between representatives of student affairs and academic affairs, the Office of Residential Life was able to better understand the process for creating student forums, with the aid of the engagement contracts, into full-fledged academic syllabi.

By working with faculty members who sponsor the various student forums in program houses—just as student organizations usually have professional or faculty advisors—the goal of gaining course credit for residential learning activities was actualized in Spring 2019. For example, Music House's initial plans to host a series of resident-led concerts throughout that semester transformed into a scholarly exploration of creating "venues." Residents continued to host the concerts, featuring on-campus bands composed of Music House's residents, while also historicizing performance spaces via peer-reviewed articles.

Three successful student forums launched that spring—at Music House, Womxn of Color House, and Science House. A student leader from each house partnered with a faculty member to plan class topics, track attendance, and follow final projects from forum participants, in turn earning academic credit not only for themselves, but for their housemates and co-residents as well.

In addition to those three pilot forums, the program house La Casa de Albizu Campos followed up by hosting what could only be described as a drool-inducing student forum around Latinx foods and culinary traditions. Even after the pandemic forced campus closure, forum participants continued to study cooking techniques, reflect on personal relationships with culture and food, and produced dishes indicative of both historical and present times. The La Casa forum and other long-running forums inspired by programmatic communities, like Farm Forum, frequently based out of Farm House, and Outing Forum, based out of Outhouse (Wesleyan's wilderness community), underscore a real value in learning that can occur away from lecture halls and laptops.

The process of creating, approving, and hosting a student forum takes roughly two semesters, with house managers typically collaborating with their residents in the fall semester to identify a topic they want to explore and identify the professional and faculty support they will need to work with to make it a success in the spring. While the impact of the pandemic continues to span across campus, the Office of Residential Life at Wesleyan is continuing its support in hosting student forums in interested program houses throughout the Spring 2021 semester. The success of previous student forums in various program houses increased student interest in the program at other program houses, and the campus Music House is now devising a new syllabus for the upcoming semester. As the pandemic upended most undergraduates' sense of normalcy, the proliferation of student forums in residential spaces demonstrates the renewed importance of finding and strengthening community, which resonates within campus student organization structures on campus, and virtually, as well.

Much of the heavy lifting needed to connect academic credit opportunities with student organization leadership may already be in place at many institutions: internship models, symbiotic relationships between organizations and faculty/staff structures via the advisor roles, educational programming models, and student support. The final piece in that puzzle might well be something like Wesleyan's engagement contract model that injects responsibility, review, and assessment into the academic component of the program.



Academic Credit for Wesleyan Student Leaders

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REVIEW OF THE 413 CONFERENCE

**MARIAH MAUKE, (SHE/HER) UNDERGRADUATE AND ATTENDEE
AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE**

The 413 Area RA Conference, which occurred on February 20th, 2021, looked a bit different this year. In response to the ongoing pandemic, the conference committee brought the event to life virtually for the first time in its 7-year history.

Shawn Tremblay, the Associate Director for Student Life at AIC, is one of the annual co-chairs for the conference, along with Erica Sharp from Eastern Connecticut State University. The pair oversaw a team of 12 volunteers tasked with transitioning to an online format while trying to maintain the feeling of an in-person networking event.

"I think so many students and staff alike are experiencing Zoom fatigue and wanting to turn their screens off to go outside and be in-person, so our hope for this conference was to mimic all of the things that people love about the in-person experience", Tremblay said.

Katelyn Hurley, AIC's Assistant Director for Student Life Operations, participated in the conference as the co-chair of the workshops committee. Hurley commented on her team's ability saying, "We had a strong conference committee that was able to brainstorm ideas and take each other's opinions into account to make the best virtual conference we could with the resources that we had".

The schedule for the conference was close to its usual setup with a welcome, keynote speaker, workshop sessions with various topics that students could choose from, and networking opportunities. During the mid-day break, participants could attend virtual graduate and vendor fairs and receive digital caricatures.

However similar the virtual conference was to its in-person counterpart, Tremblay addressed what many participants felt, saying "Through all of that what was still missing was that interpersonal connection and those organic conversations passing through the hallway".

That sentiment was echoed by Michael Carlin, a first-year Resident Advisor at AIC. Carlin spoke about how the conference was well-organized and informational, but unavoidably lacking the interpersonal engagement that would have been present during a normal year. "The most engaging part of the day was when we all came together in breakout rooms to discuss our shared experiences", Carlin mentioned.

Carlin explained that the Student Leader Networking Activity, led by Troi Branham of AIC and Devon O'Dowd of New England College, was the highlight of the conference. The format of the activity was a question/answer session where the student leaders could discuss and compare experiences they've had working on campus.

Question topics for the activity included what motivated students to become leaders and craziest experiences while on duty, among other conversation starters. Carlin expressed that the interactions and connections he was able to have during that activity made him feel almost as if he was in-person.

Gathering virtually may have put a damper on many of the social interactions, but it provided the conference with the unique ability to reach a wider audience. This was the first year that the 413 Conference was able to reach students and professionals from outside the 413 area, with the increased accessibility of a virtual event.

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"We welcomed 237 attendees from 38 different institutions from Kansas to Maine", commented Tremblay. He went on to explain that this was the largest number of participants the conference has seen to date.

INTENTIONAL DOCUMENTATION FOR DATA DRIVEN RESULTS

Sarah Sheldon, Florida State University

Cate Morrison, eRezLife Software

Our field is consistently responding to the demand for data and the ability to “prove” our efforts are having a positive impact on the student experience. It’s no longer good enough to say we believe intentional interactions make a difference; we need to show the impact through data. Due to the nature of intentional interactions, it can be difficult to collect data, as we rely on student staff members to obtain and document this information. It’s important to precisely identify what information you need to report. If you start at the end and work backwards, you’ll likely end up with a documentation process that is simple, efficient, and quick for staff members to complete.

From our experience, students appreciate two things when it comes to forms: accessibility and efficiency. Students want to be able to quickly complete their forms from any location. Whether via cellphone, tablet, or laptop, the easier you make the form to access, the more success you will have in completion. Regarding efficiency, it is pivotal that you only require the collection of the “need to-know” information. Consider using your intentional interaction forms as a starting point with optional questions to inform when needed. If you are collecting data on student wellness, the interaction may request student staff to explore wellness areas in which students need additional support and report on that, for example. Staff may feel inclined to share details of that conversation, or they may simply prefer to report the raw data. Providing an option to collect details but requiring the “raw data” response will result in more users completing the form while still collecting the qualitative information on a case-by-case basis.

There are a number of factors to examine when considering what you need to report. To begin, consider your stakeholders as well as the type of report that you need to gather. If you’re creating an infographic to showcase what topics your staff is spending their time on, you’ll likely need more quantitative data. Therefore, ask questions about specific topics or learning outcomes that relate to your student needs or learning outcomes that have a multiple-choice response. If you’re writing a report for your supervisors or Deans, you might need more qualitative data to support the quantitative data that you’ve collected. Perhaps your report guides your intentional interactions for future months. When searching for trends in your data, a supportive mix of qualitative and quantitative data will help you learn more about those conversations and how to support those exchanges through ongoing development. Lastly, some institutions are using intentional interactions to showcase the personalized time that student staff spends with their students to increase budgets for their programs. If this is the case, you may want to consider asking a question about the length of time on each conversation so you can easily pull and calculate that data in a way that makes sense for your institution.

Our student staff members are essential to the success of this process. Without their buy-in, your data will not be complete. We need to consult with students in the development of forms to ensure the information collected is easy to document and feels appropriate to students. This consultation needs to be continuous. Once your form is rolled out, you should pull the staff back and analyze the functionality of the report. If staff input and buy in are missing, you will continually receive pushback from student staff members or experience apathy in your data acquisition, potentially resulting in a misrepresented data set.

Finding ways and means to fold the interactions into tasks, the student staff is already performing can help tremendously with buy-in from student staff members. When the interaction is naturally looped into the rhythm of the semester or folded into a tool staff is comfortable using, then the interaction will be easier to achieve. Florida State University utilizes national and campus level students-of-concern trends to build their educational plan. Having these trends identified helps professional staff provide the context and “why” behind the intentional interaction lesson plan.

When implementing curriculum, we fold interactions into tasks staff are comfortable performing. For example, FSU's resident assistants are accustomed to navigating roommate agreements. Therefore, we built an interaction into our roommate agreement process for students to discuss resolution strategies when conflict occurs. Lastly, providing multiple methods of facilitation can help staff feel more competent and confident in completing each interaction. Try building out 1:1, small group, or event facilitation strategies into your lesson plan. This way, the staff member is prepared with multiple tools in achieving the task at hand, and the student is provided more than one option in interacting with your staff.

At the end of the day, the documentation is only effective if your staff completes the documentation. Two actions can contribute to increased completion rates for your staff: ease and buy-in. When the data collection is easy and can be completed in five minutes or less right after an interaction, staff will be able to easily check that item off of their list. Additionally, you don't need your staff to spend twenty minutes on a form when you will only use 2 pieces of information.

Many will agree, intentional interactions are the lifeblood of Residential Curriculum. These encounters between students and staff not only build interpersonal relationships but create a foundation for community to be built upon. Intentional interactions allow the practitioner to customize learning. It encourages goal setting, targeted resource sharing, and a more meaningful connection on campus. Although the benefits of utilizing intentional interactions as a strategy in curriculum are vast, staff buy-in can be an obstacle for successful implementation specifically as it relates to documentation.

Make the process easy yet intentionally planned. The rest will follow.



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