

Summary Analysis of Residence Hall Survey and Focus Groups

Prepared by
Campus Planning
Lewis & Clark College
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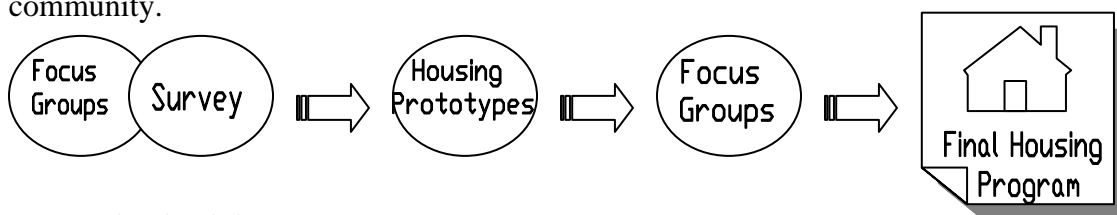
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Executive Summary of Research

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Lewis & Clark College is in the first stages of planning and design for new residence halls on campus. The demand for on-campus housing has grown significantly in recent years; the campus population is increasing and the new apartments constructed in 1999 have filled and warranted a waiting list 3 years in a row. Campus planning is working with Residence Life, architecture firms, and the campus community to develop a variety of models for new residential facilities. The focus groups and survey research summarized below were conducted in order to develop an understanding of the opinions, preferences, and ideas of Lewis & Clark College community members with regards to present and future on-campus housing. The information generated from these sources will be used to inform the decision making process and assure that campus residences reflect the values and interests of the community.



METHODOLOGY

Focus Groups

Two sessions of focus group interviews were held in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the needs, interests, values, and concerns of LC community members with regards to on-campus housing. An administrative focus group was held on Monday June 6, and a student focus group was held on Tuesday June 7.

Both focus groups were facilitated by Lenny Borer and scribed by Lizzie Fussell and Lauren Senkyr. Each group discussion was based on 4 or 5 questions asked to generate a discussion around the pros and cons of current residences on campus and to elicit ideas for future development. Each group was presented with at least one model of housing to critically evaluate. See the “Student Focus Group Discussion Guide” and “Administrative Focus Group Discussion Guide” for a complete outline of the questions.

Survey

In order to obtain quantitative data about student preferences, priorities, and opinions, a survey was conducted through the online survey service, Survey Monkey. The survey was published on the internet for 2 weeks beginning June 6th, 2005. Incoming freshmen, and enrolled sophomores, juniors, and seniors were all solicited to participate via email. Enticed with the prize of a random drawing for an IPOD, 998 students responded, providing an initial return rate of 56%.

Questions concerning current housing were not answered by the incoming freshman, since they have not yet had the experience of living on this campus. Therefore, the data about current findings is representative of the sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

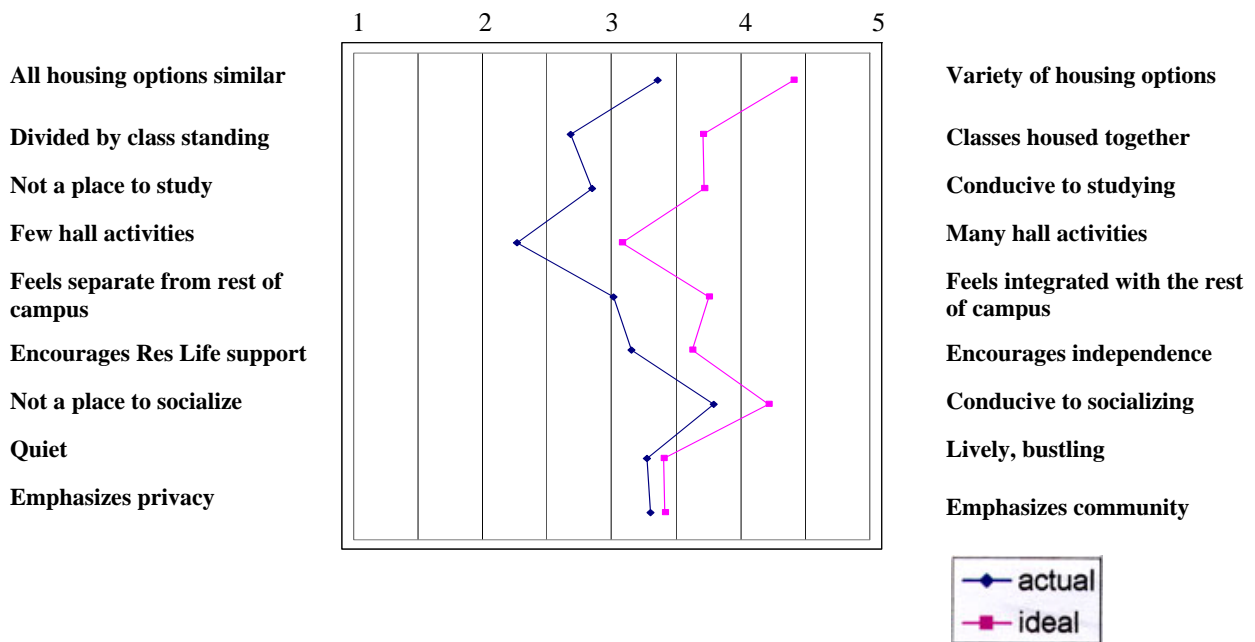
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

47% of students polled said that they have chosen or will choose to live on campus after their sophomore year. Given this information, it is undoubtedly necessary for the college to continue to build on-campus housing to suit the needs of upper division students. Our research suggests that variety, independence, and quality community and private spaces should be prioritized in the design of new residence halls.

Variety

The largest difference between current and ideal aspects of residence life appears to lie in the variety of housing arrangements offered. Students would prefer a larger variety of housing options, as the interest in house, apartment, and co-op housing models shows. The new apartments (East, West, and Roberts Halls) have been well received by the upper classmen living in them. However, many students believe it is “important to continue to offer a range of choices and move beyond the apartment model.”

Aspects of Residence Life: Current and Ideal Perceptions



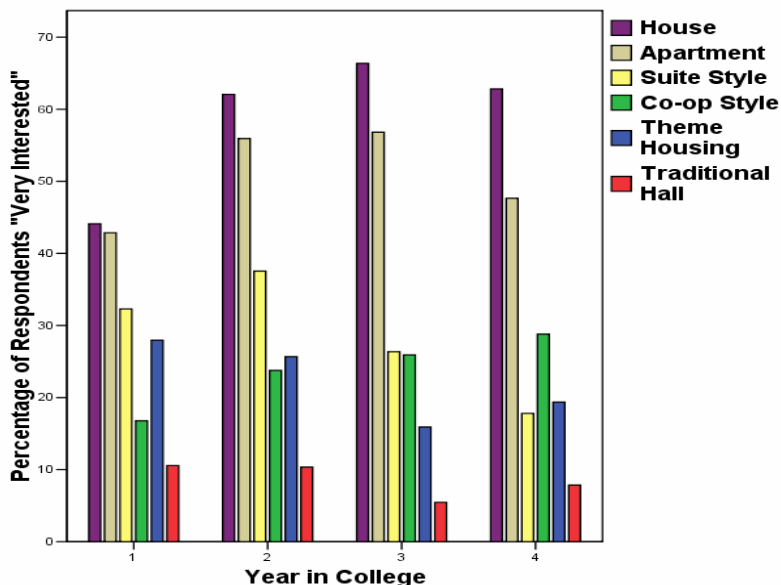
The new apartments are currently the only residence halls reserved for juniors and seniors, and they are also the only residence halls offering single bedrooms for all residents. Students have expressed preference for housing to be less divided by class standing. When given choices about what features are “important” or “very important” to them 74% of respondents answered space to study, 62% sustainable design features, 62% inviting lounge, 61% outdoor areas, 59% large kitchen, and 57% private bedroom. Incorporating these features into new residence halls will create a larger variety of housing options for students.

Independence

There is a desire for Residence Life to encourage more independence. Independence was cited as the primary reason why students do not live on campus after their sophomore year,

while the required meal plan was listed as the third most common reason. Students in the focus group decidedly liked housing models that “acted like a step” between traditional college housing and “the real world.” Students would like exemption from the meal plan, reduced dependence on cleaning services, and more self-management for upper-class students. Residence Life support is still highly valued by students, but some want the ability to gradually take on more responsibility.

Students ‘Very Interested’ in Various Housing Models¹



As one student explains, both community and independence can be fostered in residence halls: “Promote more integration into the living community through shared living arrangements that allow student to take on more responsibility.” The most popular housing models among upper division students (House, Apartment, Co-op) all involve a larger degree of independence and personal responsibility than the less popular, more traditional models. Private bedrooms, ability to personalize space, and exemption from the meal plan would all allow students a greater degree of independence in the shared living environment of an on-campus residence hall.

Quality Community and Private Spaces

Based on current and ideal perceptions, community and privacy appear to be at a good balance, however, judging from the comments made by both survey respondents and focus

¹ **Housing model definitions provided to survey participants:** *House* – Private bedrooms, many common areas such as dining room, living room, and kitchen. Bathrooms shared. Usually less than 10 residents. *Apartment*- Individual bedrooms, semiprivate bathrooms, shared kitchen and living room. Between 2-6 inhabitants. *Suite style* – Two double rooms share bathroom. Lounge and full kitchen shared by entire hall. *Co-op Style* – Community oriented, often involving shared cooking, housekeeping, maintenance, and similar lifestyle decisions. May include educational component whereby student earns credit for running workshops and activities. *Theme housing* – hall or floor that houses students with similar interests, for example music, foreign languages, or the outdoors. *Traditional Hall*- Combination of singles, doubles, and quads along a hallway with a bathroom, lounge, and kitchen shared by each floor.

group participants, there is still a desire to increase the *quality* of both community and private spaces.

Private bedrooms. Private bedroom was listed as “important” or “very important” by 57% of respondents. Students would like these rooms to be large, noise proof, easy to personalize, and naturally well lit. While private bedroom ranked very high, private/semi-private bathroom and private/semi-private kitchen ranked considerably lower in importance. Students do not find having their own bathroom or kitchen nearly as important as having their own bedroom. “Separate bedrooms are very important for privacy, but good inviting...areas are equally important.” Both focus group and survey participants described inviting lounges and large kitchens as necessary and important communal spaces in a residence hall.

Lounges. Currently, 25% of students use their lounge every day or frequently, while 54% of them would like to. The building layout and programmatic arrangement both effect how “inviting” a lounge is perceived to be: “the current furniture is uncomfortable and... the lounges are positioned as more of a room to go through to get to rooms rather than a central communal gathering and socializing area.” As many students explained in their comments and in the focus group, lounges should be comfortable, inviting, centrally located, and not centered around a TV. Common lounge features such as big screen TV, cable TV, and piano were described as “not at all important” by most students.

Kitchens. Ideally 71.3% of students would like to use the kitchen every day or frequently but only 43.5% currently do. Many students want exemption from the meal plan, a large kitchen, and space for eating in their residence hall. “Cooking and eating together is essential! There should be communal kitchens in any new housing arrangement.” Many comments stressed the need for communal type eating and cooking as one way for residents to form strong bonds with each other. “The kitchen is a place to socialize.” Given this, many students want their kitchens to accommodate more students.

Incorporating quality community and private space into a new residence hall is a question of both building and program consideration. The building layout should encourage use of communal spaces while affording individuals ample privacy in private spaces. One student from the focus group described a dorm at another college where “The entry ways opened up into communal space, the rooms opened to the communal space. [It was] nice having your personal space (because everybody needs it) but then it just opens up to the communal space.” The successful functioning of these spaces also depends on a program that allows and encourages their use.

FUTURE RESIDENCE HALLS

Students are eager for future residence halls to add variety to campus housing and encourage a more independent lifestyle. Students want private bedrooms and a variety of communal spaces, including: study rooms, large kitchens, outdoor areas, and inviting lounges. They would like a living environment that provides privacy and allows for independence while encouraging a close, unique community on campus.

Summary Analysis of New Residence Hall Survey and Focus Groups

Lewis & Clark College is in the first stages of planning and design for new upper division residence halls on campus. Campus Planning is working with Residence Life, architecture firms, and the campus community to develop a variety of models for new residential facilities. In order to develop an understanding of the opinions, preferences, and ideas of Lewis & Clark College community members with regards to present and future on campus housing, focus groups and a survey were conducted. The information generated from these sources will be used to inform the decision making process and assure that campus residences reflect the values and interests of the community

An administrative focus group was held Monday June 6th, 2005; participants included a variety of faculty and staff, including the Provost, Residence Life, an RD, a professor, and various other employees involved in the campus community. A student focus group was held Tuesday June 7th, 2005. The 12 student participants ranged from freshmen to seniors and included 3 males and 9 females. The survey was published on the internet for 2 weeks beginning June 6th, 2005. Incoming freshmen, and enrolled sophomores, juniors, and seniors were all solicited to participate via email. 998 students responded, providing an initial return rate of 56%.

Question by Question Analysis

1. What is your class standing as of Fall 2005?

Of the 859 valid survey respondents, 19% were incoming freshmen, 31.4% were sophomores, 26.8% were juniors, and 22.8% were seniors. Because incoming freshmen have not yet lived in the residence halls, their responses were excluded from the following analysis of the survey results, except where noted. Their ideas, expectations, and preferences are discussed at the end of this report and will no doubt provide a valuable perspective for the planning of new residential facilities.

2. What is your (anticipated) major?

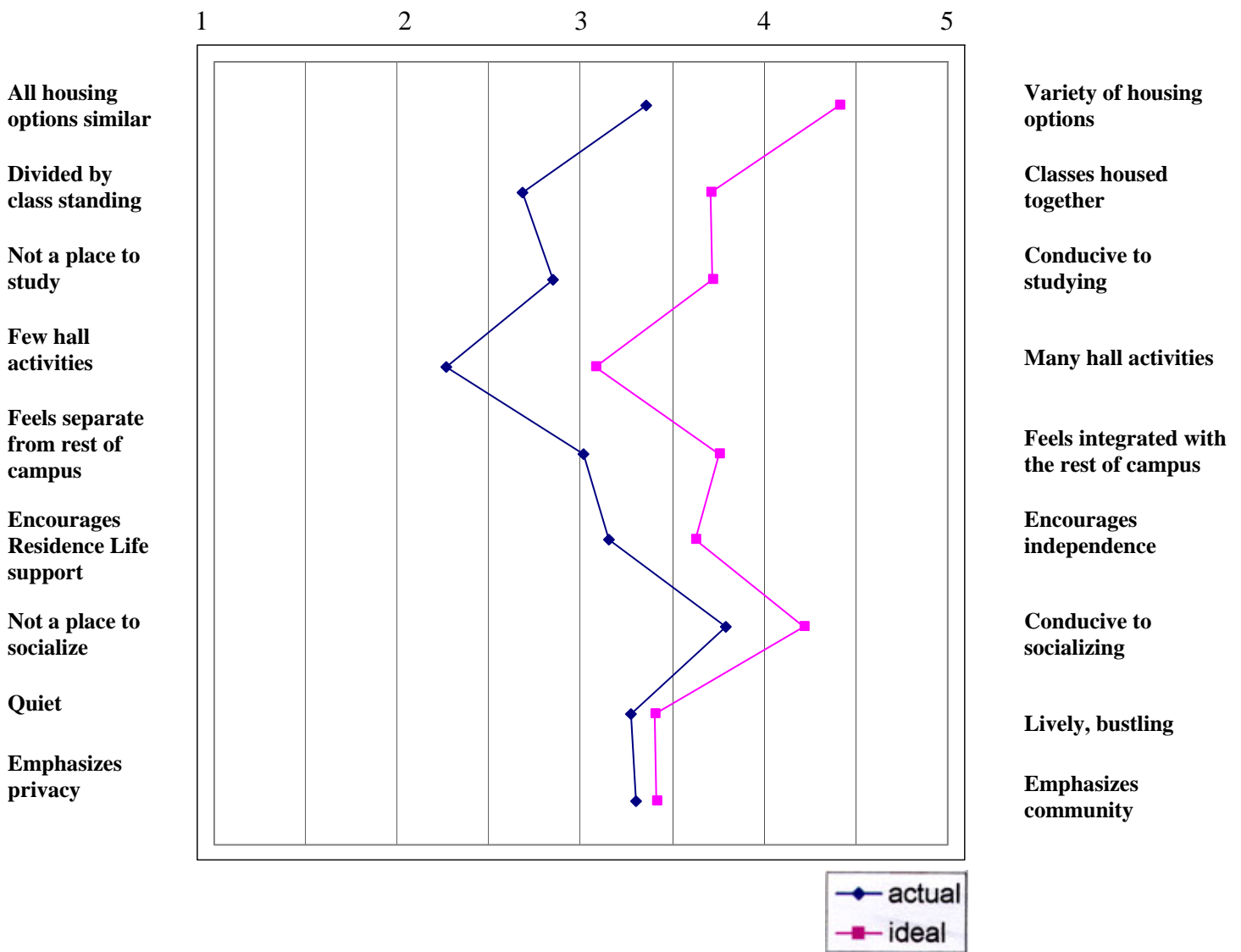
The students responding to the survey represented a distribution of majors and disciplines proportionate to the general distribution at Lewis & Clark College.

3. Where have you lived while attending Lewis & Clark College?

We received responses from students who have lived in all six residence hall complexes on campus (Platt-Howard, Copeland, Hartzfeld, SOA, Forest, and the Apartments) as well as individuals who have never lived on campus or live off campus. The results to the following questions do not differentiate between where individuals have lived, though only students who have lived on campus answered questions about the current residence halls. At the end of this survey summary is a brief description of differences of opinion between students who have lived in the new apartments and students who have not.

4. & 11. The following dichotomies describe aspects of residence life. Please choose the number from 1 to 5 that best describes how you **CURRENTLY** view campus residences. Question 11 then presented the same dichotomies and asked how respondents **IDEALLY** would like campus residences to be.

Aspects of Residence Life Current and Ideal Perceptions



Students were asked on a five point scale how they rate current and ideal aspects of Residence Life. The greatest disparity between the current and ideal rating lies with **Variety**. Respondents want a “greater variety of housing options.” Some Focus Group participants very much liked the apartments but found it “important to continue to offer a range of choices and move beyond the apartment model”. When asked about the type of housing that they are most interested in living in (see #13), “House” was the most popular choice, a choice that students do not currently have. During the Focus Groups, attention was drawn to the fact that the apartments are the only current model in which all residents live in single bedrooms

which changes the dynamic of living in a residence hall. Students also felt that some of our variety of housing is not true variety because it is not administered in a way that makes it work or makes it different from traditional dorm-style living. Theme housing has had trouble staying consistent from year to year, although entire buildings with a theme (Stewart, Akin) seemed to function better than floor themes (Outdoor floor, Environmental Action floor).

It is also clear that respondents need to be able to **Study** more in or around their residence halls. Says one respondent, “It would be nice if there were more places to study than the library, both indoors and out.” Students from the Focus Groups thought that having rooms in residence halls, separate from the main common space, for group study “fitting 5 or 6 people comfortably” would be a good idea.

Students want more **Hall activities** but are particular about the *kinds* of activities they want. Many comments, both in the survey and Focus Groups, centered around a desire for Residence Life to encourage and enable students to have a greater role in the planning and managing of their own hall activities. Students seemed to like the idea of small “group projects” instead of one big trip which is “not very uniting at all.” Food was also a favorite topic, bringing people together for study breaks and meals. “Communal food preparation and communal eating are both powerful catalysts of friendship.” Some students also want to be able to create informal ‘activities’ in their lounge “that don’t center around a TV.”

There is also an apparent desire to **Integrate** residence life better with the rest of campus. Comments from the survey echoed a variety of interpretations on how this integration could take place including: faculty/staff housing on or near campus, more study areas in the dorms, and considering the residence halls as “Living Laboratories.” It appears that in general students want residence life to be more integrated, however, there were also a significant number of comments about the need for space between school and students’ homes. “The reason I live in a house is to separate myself physically and mentally from school work. I work in the library and I come home and enjoy myself and my personal space.” There may be a case where these two opinions are not mutually exclusive, in that, students may want to achieve the independence and comfort of a typical off-campus home, but still feel close to the larger campus community.

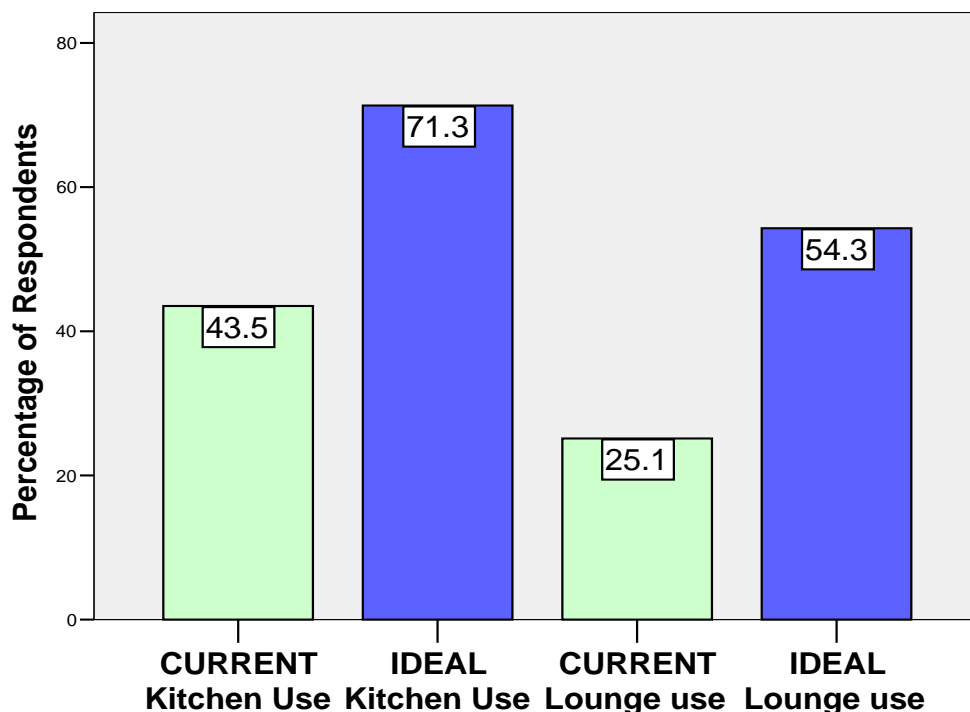
There is also a wish for residence life to encourage more **Independence**. Students in the Focus Group decidedly liked housing models that “acted like a step” between traditional college housing and “the real world” including adjusted meal plan, reduced dependence on cleaning services, and self-management for upper-class students. Residence Life support is still highly valued by students, but some want the ability to gradually take on more responsibility.

Both the ability to **Socialize** and the **Noise** elements of Residence life seem to be at the level that students prefer. However, there were some comments on both sides of the Quiet/Loud issue, which indicated that there may be a large range of preference for noise level, which may point to the value of having some housing that has longer quiet hours. Students in the Focus Group praised the sound-proofing in the apartments.

Community and privacy appear to be at a good balance, however, judging from the comments made by both survey respondents and Focus Group participants, there is still a desire to increase the *quality* of both community and privacy spaces. One student from the Focus Group described a dorm at another college where “Communal spaces are actually communal, the entry ways opened up into communal space, the rooms opened to the communal space. [It was] nice having your personal space (because everybody needs it) but then it just opens up to the communal space.” This desire to have both accessible and quality private and community space was found in many comments in the survey as well.

5. & 12. Personally I..... and Personally I would like to.....

Percentage of Students Who Use or Would Like to Use the Kitchen and Lounge Every Day or Frequently



Respondents were asked to give the frequency² with which they currently **Use the kitchens, Study in my room, Entertain guests in my room, Eat in my room, and Spend time in the lounge.** They were then asked to give the frequency with which they would ideally do the same activities. The greatest discrepancies between current and ideal use were found for **Use the kitchens** and **Spend time in the lounge.** The discrepancy was consistent, in that respondents want to do more of both.

While all residence halls currently have some form of a kitchen, residents feel that they are mostly too small, shared by too many people, and do not have enough amenities. Many also feel that the required meal plan inhibits individuals from being able to use the kitchen as often as they would like. In terms of lounge use, we currently have lounges in every residence hall, why are students not using them as much as they'd like to? One student explains that it is the result of the lounge set up: "the current furniture is uncomfortable and... the lounges are positioned as more of a room to go through to get to rooms rather than a central communal gathering and socializing area." As many students explained in their comments and in the focus group, lounges should be comfortable, inviting, centrally located, and not centered around a TV.

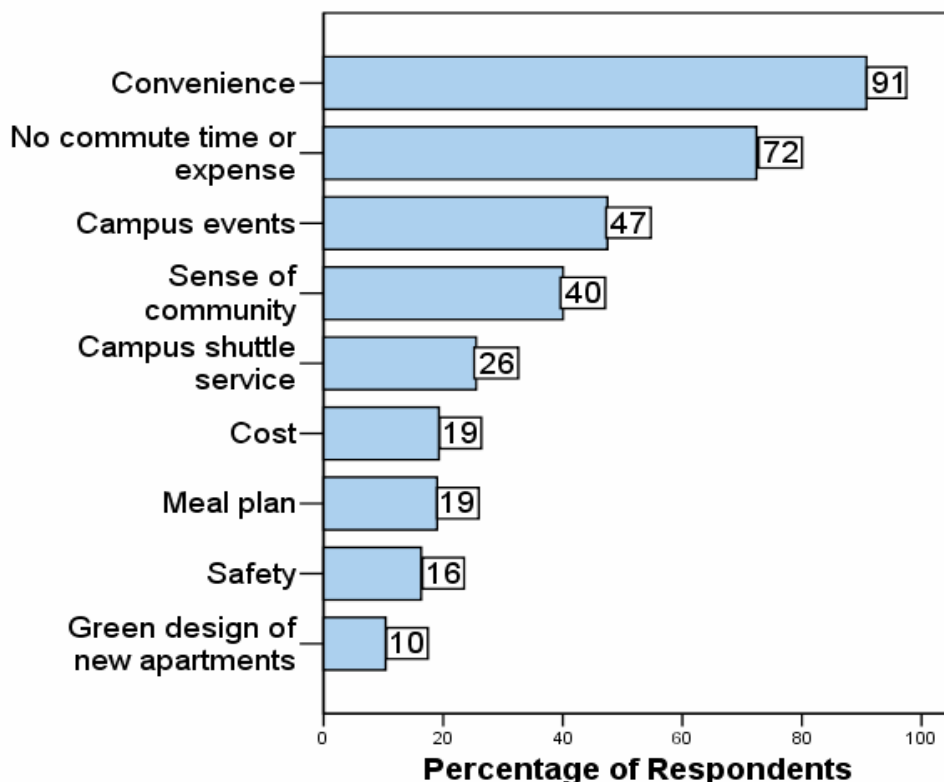
The discrepancies between current and ideal frequencies for **Study in my room, Entertain guests in my room,** and **Eat in my room** are smaller than those for kitchen use and lounge space. Students would prefer to study, entertain guests, and eat in their rooms slightly more often than they currently do. The issues of study space and private bedroom are explored further in question 9.

² The Frequency was on a scale from 1-5, 1=Every day, 2=Frequently, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never

6. Will you (or did you) live on campus after your sophomore year?

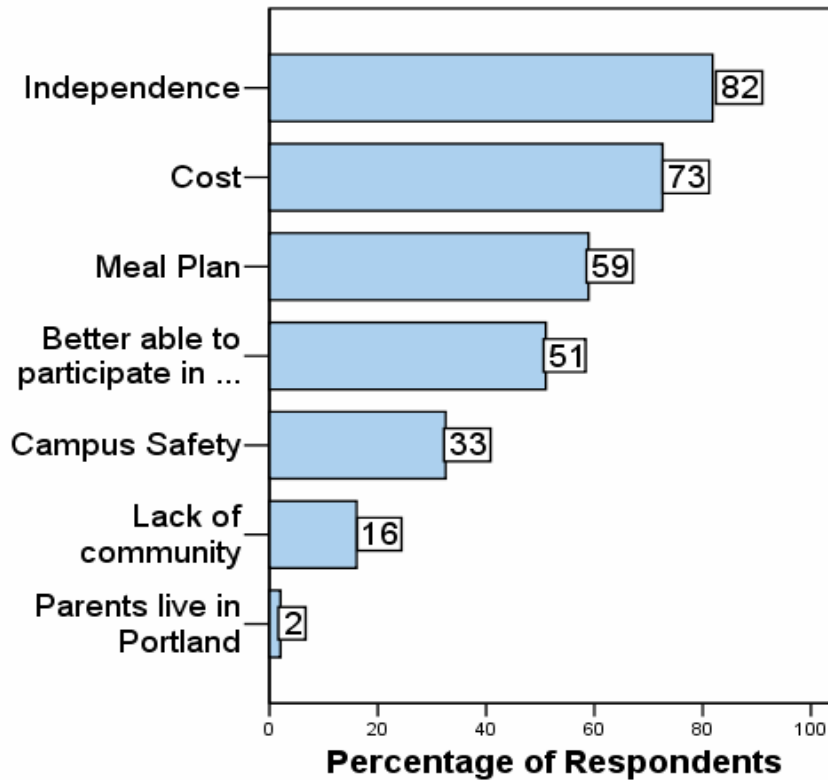
Out of the 629 students who answered the question, 337 (47%) answered yes, 292 (40.7%) answered no.

7. If yes, why?



Most of the reasons students gave for why they chose to live on campus can be lumped into “Convenience” and “Community.” **No commute time** ranked high and could be categorized as a matter of Convenience along with the **Campus shuttle** and **Meal plan**. “Going abroad for one semester and [it is] easier to live in an apartment than to have to find a house”, “Early morning practices”, and other athletic requirements were other Convenient reasons. Secondly, reasons including **Sense of Community**, **Better able to participate in Campus events**, and “easier to meet people [as a transfer student]” were all responses based on Community. Lastly, some students’ financial aid or job as an RA made it necessary to stay on campus for financial reasons.

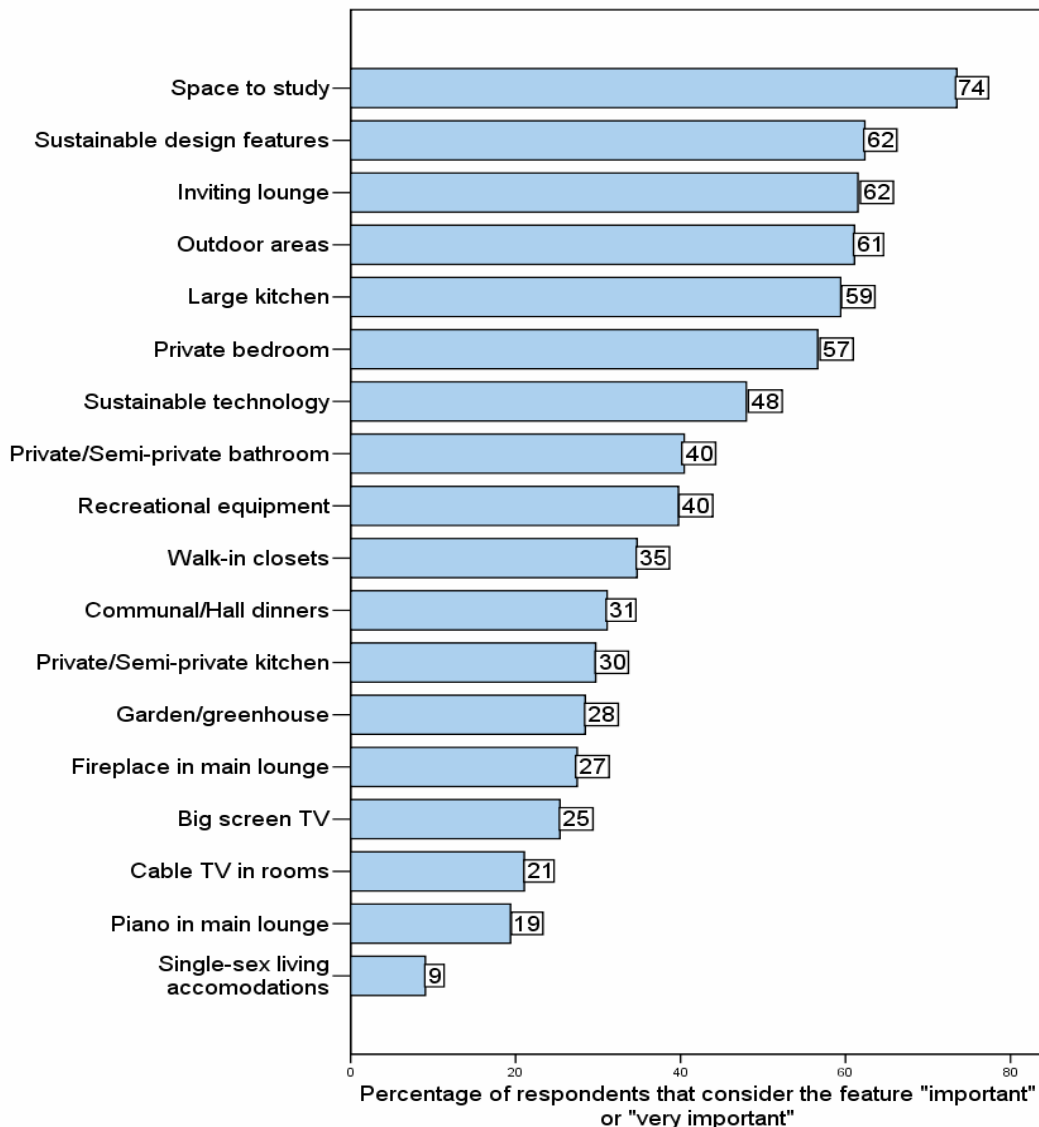
8. If no, why not?



It is generally assumed that Lewis & Clark College attracts “independent” students. Therefore it is no surprise that **Independence** was the biggest reason given why students chose not to live on campus. **Cost**, **Required meal plan**, and the **Ability to better participate in Portland activities** were all significant reasons. In addition, **Campus Safety**, “Frustration with Res life”, wanting to have “home and school separated”, Campus being “insular”, wanting “to live in a house”, and “didn’t get into the apartments” were themes in the reasons students gave for choosing to live elsewhere. In both the survey and Focus Group, students voiced a desire for more responsibility, more “adult-like” living situations, and greater ability to personalize their space. These may play a role in the large **Independence** response.

10. How important to you are the following features in a residence hall?

Features of Residence Halls found to be “Important” or “Very Important”



Students were asked to rate 18 residence hall features or amenities on a 5 point scale. **Space to study** ranked highest and the desire for more study spaces in the dorms was voiced by many students in their survey comments and in the Focus Group: “More study areas should be made in residence halls (for example, Copeland is great in that it has a study area for every wing, but Akin has only one ‘cultural library’ and no study room for the entire dorm.)” **Sustainable design features** like recycled building materials, energy efficient fixtures, and insulation ranked as the second most important feature of residence halls. Quality spaces for communal or private activity (**Space to study, Inviting lounge, Outdoor area, Large kitchen**) ranked as some of the most important features in the residence halls. As was found in the Focus Group, students value comfortable, large communal spaces, study space, private bedrooms, and outdoor areas for lounging.

Amenities less related to structure and programming (such as **Big screen** or **Cable TV** , **Piano in the main lounge**) were found to be “Not at all important.” **Single-sex living**

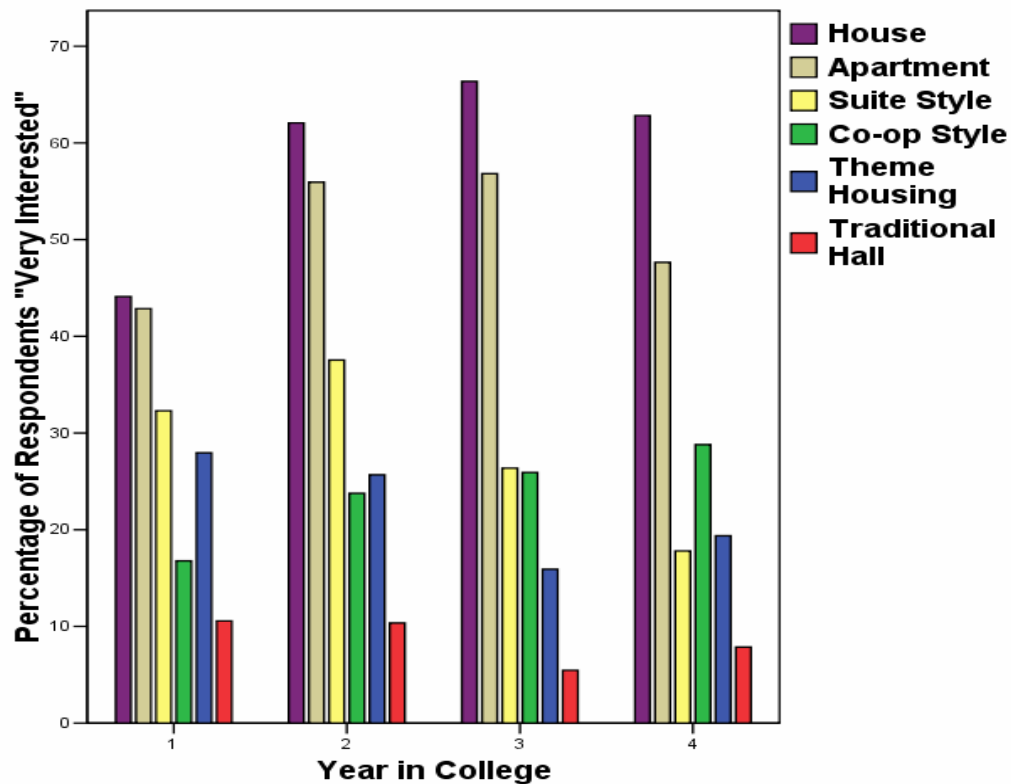
accommodations were found to be the least important feature, but they no doubt are essential for the minority of students that desires them. It is interesting to note that all 5 of the lowest ranking features are currently available in many dorms on the LC campus.

Private bedroom was listed as “Important” or “Very Important” by 57% of respondents. Interestingly, while **Private bedroom** ranked very high, **Private/Semi-private bathroom** and **Private/Semi-private kitchen** ranked considerably lower. Students do not find having their own bathroom or kitchen nearly as important as having their own bedroom.

Other amenities not included in the survey but discussed in the Focus Group and survey comments were exercise machines (ellipticals and treadmills), individual balconies, and gallery space for student artists.

13. How interested would you be in living in this type of housing?

Students ‘Very Interested’ in Various Housing Models³



³ **Housing model definitions provided to survey participants:** *House* – Private bedrooms, many common areas such as dining room, living room, and kitchen. Bathrooms shared. Usually less than 10 residents. *Apartment*- Individual bedrooms, semiprivate bathrooms, shared kitchen and living room. Between 2-6 inhabitants. *Suite style* – Two double rooms share bathroom. Lounge and full kitchen shared by entire hall. *Co-op Style* – Community oriented, often involving shared cooking, housekeeping, maintenance, and similar lifestyle decisions. May include educational component whereby student earns credit for running workshops and activities. *Theme housing* – hall or floor that houses students with similar interests, for example music, foreign languages, or the outdoors. *Traditional Hall*- Combination of singles, doubles, and quads along a hallway with a bathroom, lounge, and kitchen shared by each floor.

Students were asked to express their interest in five housing models (**House, Apartment, Co-op, Suite, Theme** and **Traditional Hall**.) The diagram above shows the percentage of students from each year that claimed to be “very interested” in the various models. Across the board, students are most interested in having campus owned houses at LC. In the Focus Group all students expressed interest in the **House** option, explaining that the independence and “real world” experience would encourage many more students to live on campus. Students were also very interested in the **Apartment** model. Many students voiced satisfaction and interest in the apartments we now have on campus, “Less dorms and more apartments would be nice.” Students expressed the least interest in the **Traditional Hall** model, though as participants in the Focus Group explained, the traditional dorm layout provides a unique and valuable experience for freshmen. This may be why a larger percentage of the freshmen respondents were “very interested” in the traditional dorm model, though it was still the lowest ranking model in all groups.

Suite style, Co-op, and Theme housing appear to interest the different classes at varying levels, but some trends in their popularity can be observed. **Suite style** is more popular with sophomores than any other year, likely because Hartzfeld (LC’s only suite style residence hall) is a sophomore hall and many sophomores will be living there in the following year. Their interest and enthusiasm for this housing model is consequently higher. Apart from sophomores, interest in **Suite** housing declines for upperclassmen, ranking second only to **Traditional Halls** for seniors. Conversely, the percentage of students “very interested” in **Co-op** housing increases with their year in college. Freshmen expressed less interest in **Co-op** housing than in every other model except the **Traditional Hall**, while seniors expressed more interest in **Co-op** housing than in the **Suite, Theme, and Traditional** models. Many students expressed excitement about food and living co-ops and the community they would create here at LC. There is concern though about student responsibility, leadership, and exclusivity as well as administrative restrictions. **Theme housing** also varied highly with year. Generally, interest was highest among freshmen and lower for upper classmen. One respondent claims that “grouping people by common interests and activities would really go a long way towards enforcing a greater sense of community.” During the Focus Group, students expressed concern that **Theme housing** is exclusive or disrupts the greater college community and does not currently work well on this campus.

Question 14: What are some of your ideas to help improve a sense of community in the residence halls?

Out of 998 total respondents to the survey, 420, answered this open response question.

“Its all about the hall activities”

More than a third of the comments focused on the desire for more activities, projects, or events in, and around the residence halls. Some of these ideas included: Open mic nights, gardens, coffee/tea hour, book clubs, poker, pool, and scrabble tournaments, musical events, “painting the walls! And other such decorative group projects,” intramural competitions between floors (“the teams work together and get to know each other in a day or two”), hall parties (some students clarified ‘unsupervised’), and volunteering. Hall dinners, picnics, and bbqs were also frequently suggested and are covered more thoroughly in the “Power of food” section.

There was some apparent disagreement about whether more hall trips could be organized. Some suggestions included beach trips, exploring Portland, retreats, and arranging

carpools to go to “local events and weekend adventures” together. However, there were also respondents that believed that the activities should be “simple and often” instead of “the one trip the hall went on per year [that] wasn’t very uniting ...small frequent activities are better.”

There was also a desire for more student-motivated projects, “encouraging residents to create hall activities and assisting them when they do so would help a lot.” There were also quite a few comments that many of the activities and hall get-togethers focused around the television, junk food, or both.

“I just feel like the hall activities should be more revolved around some sort of education...less on American Idol and cheetos...[for example] hall activities like yoga instructors and the massages set up by appointment in the lounges”

“Never underestimate the power of food when trying to bring people together”

Many of the activity comments were about food. “More hall dinners” and “More opportunities for residents to cook together” were the main types of suggestions. Students wanted community dinners, potlucks, picnics, and barbeques. Some comments were also made that these dinners should not happen just once a semester but on a monthly or weekly basis. In fact, there were some negative comments about the large hall dinners that take place in Stamm at the end of the semester. Inferring from these comments, it seems that by “hall dinners,” students want the opportunity for the residents on the halls to cook themselves.

“Cooking and eating together is essential! There should be communal kitchens in any new housing arrangement.” Many comments stressed the need for communal type eating and cooking as one way for residents to form strong bonds with each other. “The kitchen is a place to socialize.” Given this, many students wanted their kitchens accommodate more students and include more appliances and kitchen utensils. The cleanliness of the kitchens needs to be addressed, as many students voiced their disgust with the present state and management of the kitchens.

Food can also be incorporated into residents’ activities by way of study breaks, which seem to be popular. However, some survey respondents believed the food should not always be “junk food.”

“Promote more integration into the living community through shared living arrangements that allow student to take on more responsibility.”

Ten percent of the comments focused around the idea that communal spaces as well as more resident responsibility for these spaces would help the feeling of community in the halls. Some students seemed to simply desire more communal spaces (lounges and kitchens) that would facilitate more “gatherings.” Other students wanted to see shared ‘chores’ like cooking, gardening, vacuuming, etc. [which] would help make the community seem more functional.”

Some students were so enthusiastic about the need for both more community and more communal spaces, that they believed the entire housing model should be centered with these themes. “Co-op housing rocks! Shared responsibility = community. Eating together = community. Problem solving = community.”

“Make common rooms more common.”

Many opinions were put forward about the actual design of the space. Needing both quality communal and private space was a major theme throughout these suggestions. Comfortable lounge and bigger kitchen were frequently mentioned. Other ideas included:

making the kitchen and lounge one big common space, having lounges that are ok for socializing and separate lounges that are good for studying, and providing a place to dine (“so I can eat what I cook with my friends.”). Outdoor common spaces like porches and patios were proposed. Overall, students wanted the residence halls to be “more easily individualized” and “less institutional (no fluorescent lights!).” Other requested rooms were practice rooms for musicians and “a coffee shop on campus with alcohol and music [to draw the upperclass students.]”

“It all starts with the RAs. If they are not involved with the hall, no one else will be either.”

There is certainly a want from the students who commented on the survey for RAs to be more active, but in a more social and supportive way, and less in their “police role.” In fact some students seem to be very uncomfortable with the “divides” they see being formed with the power disparity between RAs and other students. Some comments seemed to point to a need for RAs to involve their residents more heavily in the planning of hall activities and spending of hall funds.

Lastly, many students do not appreciate the Residence Life policy of requiring students to leave the day following finals. “Students have just spent weeks in the library and cannot even relax before being threatened with outrageous fines if they don’t get off campus NOW! Good way to allow students to affirm their relationships before being separated for 4 months.”

Other criticisms were made about Campus Safety and campus rules, as well as a few comments around Theme housing. A couple of proposals for hall pets were also offered.

15. Other Comments?

This open ended question provided a space for respondents to comment on other aspects of residential living that were not addressed elsewhere in the survey or that they felt needed to be stressed further. Of the 154 responses, about 30% addressed issues having to do with community or privacy, which as we have seen from results to other questions are both very important and not mutually exclusive aspects of Residence Life that students would like to see provided. As one student explained it, “Separate bedrooms are very important for privacy, but good inviting...areas are equally important.” Most of the comments involved good and bad examples of privacy and community currently available on campus.

Nearly 25% of the comments were about the Residence Life program, staff, and the current “housing crunch.” The most often cited issues of concern were problems with RAs, difficulty negotiating with Residence Life staff, and frustration over the prevalence of “triple doubles” and other cramped living conditions freshmen and sophomores were forced to live in last year. Many upperclassmen claimed that they were unaware of the competition to get into the apartments their junior or senior year. Many students also expressed dissatisfaction with the alcohol policy and the degree of independence students living at LC are afforded.

The second largest comment topic dealt with problems with the existing dorms. One fifth of the “other comments?” responses involved facility and amenity issues with specific buildings. 11 of these comments dealt with noise problems, particularly between individual rooms and with certain buildings (like Howard and Platt). Other problems included Copeland, cinder block walls, insufficient natural lighting, and heating/cooling system problems.

As is reflected in question 8, many students also take issue with the required meal plan and cost of living on campus. Other comments focused on spaces they would like to see more of, including kitchens and study rooms. Of course, students also listed off numerous amenities and features they would like to see in the dorms, including pets, walk-in closets,

balconies, barbeques, comfortable furniture, and more storage space. Many respondents commented on their appreciation of the new apartments. Others expressed interest in the housing and co-op models and in the use of green technology in the new dorms.

16. Do you have any interest in further participation with this process as a member of a focus group or planning committee?

207 respondents expressed interest in further participation in the planning process for the next phase of residence hall development. 154 of them are interested in participating in a focus group discussion, and 131 of them are interested in serving on a planning committee. The issue of student housing is of extreme interest and importance to the students of Lewis & Clark College.

Difference in Data for Students Living in the Apartments (East, West, and Roberts Halls)

In order to gauge how the apartments are working and what values and priorities the people who live in them have, we have looked at the 65 responses from people who have lived in the apartments separately. A number of interesting differences are notable. First, the number of people claiming to be “very interested” in various housing models changes slightly from the pattern we observed for upper classmen in general. Residents of the apartments are most interested in the **Apartment** model, followed by the **House** model. This switch in preference likely reflects both the success of the apartments in Roberts, East, and West halls and/or that certain types of people like apartment style living and are having that need met by current campus housing. Interestingly, while apartment residents expressed equal interest in **Suite** and **Theme** housing, they show little interest in **Co-op** housing and the least in **Traditional Halls**. This order likely reflects prioritizing of personal and private spaces by people living in the apartments.

The high value placed on private space is also expressed by apartment resident’s interest in the various amenities listed in question 10. The selected sample ranked features currently available in the apartments (**Private bed, Study space, Large kitchen, Private bathroom, Sustainable design, Inviting lounge, and Private kitchen**) as aspects they found “Important” and “Very Important.” Most different from the trends observed when looking at all respondents as a whole are the high rankings of **Private/Semi-private bathroom** and **Cable TV**, both of which are available in the new apartments but were not considered to be important or very important by most other people polled.

The top 5 reasons why apartment residents live on campus mirror the rest of the populations’: **Convenience, No commute time or expense, Ability to participate in campus activities, the Sense of Community, and the school’s Shuttle service.** Diverging from the observed trends, however, **Cost** ranks as the least frequently listed reason why they live on campus, and **Safety** ranked slightly higher for the apartment dwellers than it did for others. Only 4 students who had ever lived in the apartments had also decided not to live on campus after their sophomore year (the apartments are upperclass housing). Of these four people, half listed **Independence** and **Ability to take part in Portland activities** as reasons why they chose not to, only one cited **Cost**.

Similar to the majority of students polled, residents of the apartments describe the biggest differences in current and ideal use of space to be in the kitchens and lounges. Over 80% of

the apartment residents would like to **Use the kitchens** every day or frequently, while only 56% actually are using them that often. Because the apartments do have private kitchens, the question becomes ‘Why are they not using them?’ It may be that students simply would like to cook more but feel too busy and don’t do it as often as they would like. Comments from the survey and Focus Group suggest two other possible reasons: 1) kitchens in the doubles are small, have inadequate counter space, are lacking an oven, and do not function well and 2) residents of the apartments are still required to have a meal plan, says one respondent: “even the 500 flex is a huge financial burden.”

Similarly, apartment residents would like to **Spend time in the lounge** more frequently than they currently do. While this difference in current and ideal use may again be the result of personal decision making, several comments from the survey and Focus Groups help us to elucidate the source of the discrepancy. Some students pointed to the uncomfortable furniture, “it’s like nobody sat in them before they bought them.” One Focus Group student liked the apartments but thought the hallways and lounges were “sterile.” Lack of community was the most voiced disadvantage of the apartments. One comment in the survey pointed to the fact that “the apartments are isolated” and thus, “do not promote community.”

Difference in Data for Freshmen

The freshmen answering the survey have never lived on campus and thus were not included in much of the data here about current residence life conditions. However, their ideas, expectations, and values are still valid and interesting to look at. The freshman-only data reveals not only the incoming class’s preferences, but also may start to get at how opinions and preferences change once a student does have experience living on-campus.

When survey respondents were asked to rank how important particular features were to them, several differences arose between freshmen data and that of students who have lived on campus. The greatest divergence was for the **Private bedroom**. **Private bedroom** for freshmen ranked much lower than it did for other classes. On the other hand, **Inviting lounge** and **Hall dinners** were ranked proportionately higher for freshman than other classes. These variances can readily be explained by the fact that incoming freshmen are generally looking for many opportunities to meet new people and value amenities that allow them to do so (a.k.a. shared bedrooms, and communal spaces and activities.) In addition, freshman believed that both **Cable TV** and **Recreational Equipment** were important or very important with greater frequency than did the rest of the student body.

The other significant differences were in questions #7 and #8, about the reasons that students choose to live on or off-campus after their sophomore year. Following the general trend, **Convenience** was the biggest reason that freshman believed they would live on campus after their sophomore year. However, **Sense of Community**, **Cost**, and **Meal Plan**, were all proportionately bigger reasons for the freshmen expecting to live on campus than the rest of the respondents. Freshmen also did not rate the reason of **No Commute** as high as sophomores, juniors, or seniors did. The reason for these differences are most likely related again to the lack of experience living on campus. For example, freshmen may not realize how extensive a commute can be from Sellwood.

Conversely, for reasons why freshmen believed they would move off campus after their sophomore year, a greater proportion believed that the **Ability to participate in Portland activities** would convince them to make the move than the proportion of upperclassmen who actually cited that as the main reason. **Cost**, burden of the **Meal plan**,

and the presence of **Campus Safety**, did not play as large a role in freshmen's projection that they would live off campus than the reasons that upperclassmen pointed to.