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A Formative Evaluation Of The 2005-2006 Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Selection Process

Brian O'Neal Johnson
Eastern Illinois University
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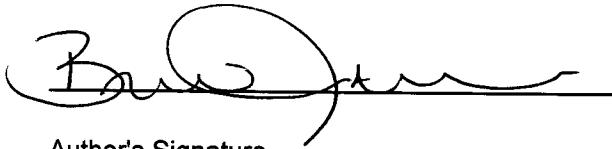
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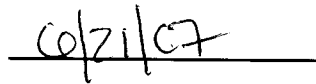
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A Formative Evaluation of the 2005 – 2006 Eastern Illinois University

Resident Assistant Selection Process

(TITLE)

BY

Brian O'Neal Johnson

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2007

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

June 20, 2007
DATE

J. A. Wallace (BMP)
THESIS DIRECTOR

June 20 2007
DATE

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL HEAD

I am extremely fortunate to have a family who believe
in me and show me immeasurably support and love.

This thesis is dedicated to them:

Mother
The Late Ms. Gwendolyn R. Johnson
Rest in Peace, 1996

Grandmother
Lillie R. Johnson

My Aunts
Sandra Johnson (Adoptive Mother)
Marilynn Capers
Cynthia Brewster

My Cousins
Travis Brewster
Shenita Brewster
Tonya Capers
Kayla Capers

And an Uncle that I am proud to call Dad.

Clark D. Capers

I could never come up with the right words to express how much you mean to me.
I love you all!!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted as a formative evaluation of the 2005-2006 Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Selection Process. The purpose of the present project was two-fold: 1) to assess participates' perceptions, candidates and instructors, of the five-week Resident Assistant workshop course; and, 2) to generate potential recommendations from research participants for future resident assistant selection processes. The following research questions guided the present study:

1. What are the candidates' and instructors' perceptions of the overall selection process?

2. Were the goals of the five-week workshop accomplished by the newly hired resident assistants?

The research indicated that candidate's exhibited positive perceptions about the entire selection process. Although the candidates' perceptions were positive, there is opportunity for much improvement of the process. The instructor's perceptions suggest that their thoughts were not congruent with the feelings of the candidates about certain aspects of the process or the entire process. The findings from this group also indicate that there is a huge inconsistency in the qualitative and quantitative data from this group. The research also illustrated that the candidate's perceptions suggest that the goals of the workshop course were achieved by the newly hired resident assistants.

Several recommendations are made for the 2007-2008 Resident Assistant Selection Process.

LIST OF TABLES

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by

Brian O. Johnson
B.S., Coastal Carolina University, 2005

A Thesis Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
Master of Science in Education Degree

Department of Counseling and Student Development
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The state of Illinois currently has nine public institutions on twelve campuses. According to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, fall 2005 enrollment at the state's public universities was 202,236 (Appendix A). Of the twelve campuses, eleven offer on-campus housing (Appendix B). Eastern Illinois University (EIU) has a housing capacity of 5,527 beds. The actual number of students residing on campus in the fall semester of 2005 was 4,721 (occupancy rate of 85%).

Since 1908, the mission of the EIU Housing and Dining Services Department has been to provide students with the conveniences of home. The mission of the EIU Housing and Dining Services Department reads as follows,

> to create an educational and nurturing environment conducive to diverse learning opportunities and receptive to the needs of our students and guests in a manner that is congruent with the overall mission of the University (EIUHD, 2005, p. 6).

The mission of the EIU Housing and Dining is unique. In comparison to three additional state public university mission statements, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Western Illinois University, EIU is the only institution that carters to the needs of students and special guests (e.g., summer conference participants).

In order to successfully implement the goals and objectives of the EIU Housing and Dining mission statement, the department sponsors annual programs, provides support for conference attendance, and offers developmental workshops for its student staff and hall council members (Appendix C). In addition, the department employs full-time professionals as Resident Directors (4), Complex Directors (2), and an Area Director (1); 15 graduate assistants as Associate Resident Directors; and 85 undergraduate students as resident assistants (RAs).

In 1998 Blimling concluded, "...[the] RA is the frontline worker in university housing programs..." (p. 18). In addition to serving as a viable resource for students living in residence halls, RAs have a significant role in developing a living and learning environment beneficial to the academic and personal growth of students living in residence halls (Gohn, Murray, Newgent, & Paladino, 2005).

On most college campuses, the job of the RA requires availability nearly 24 hours a day, often for weeks at a time. RAs often interact with more students on a daily basis than do professional student affairs educators during an entire semester (Caison & Jaeger, 2006). Blimling, Pascarella, and Terenzini (1996) found "the constant and continual demand on the RA's time is necessary to assure residents have positive residence life experiences" (p. 146). RAs "assist students personally or through appropriate referrals with academic, personal, social, and other types of problems" (EIUHD, 2005). The job of the RA is truly remarkable and according Blimling and Miltenberger (1995), "the RA experience in college is uniquely different from that of any other students" (p. 5).

According to Blimling and Miltenberger (1995), "the foundation of almost every residence hall program across the country is the resident assistant (RA) position" (p. *ix*). Housing and residence life practitioners have for decades been selecting and employing students as RAs to assist other students in residence halls. Resident assistants are recognized as student leaders on the campuses of colleges and universities worldwide. They are one of the most critical components in a residence life program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present project was two-fold: 1) to assess the perceptions of candidates' and instructors' regarding the five-week workshop and, 2) to generate potential recommendations from research participants for future resident assistant selection processes. The following research questions guided the present study: (1) What are the candidates' and instructors' perceptions of the overall selection process?; and (2) Were the goals of the five-week workshop accomplished by the newly hired resident assistants?

2005 – 2006 Resident Assistant Selection Process

The 2005 – 2006 Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Selection Process was administered by the Resident Assistant (RA) Search Committee. The search committee consisted of members of the professional housing staff (full-time employees and graduate students who joined the committee during the spring 2005 semester), and current resident assistants who joined during the fall 2005 academic year. Individuals from this committee designed the basic layout and structure of the selection process. Committee members were charged with completing a multitude of tasks, including the formation of a master calendar of the selection process, planning and presenting informational sessions for interested individuals, planning weekly workshop activities, pairing RA mentors with workshop instructors, scheduling RA candidates to a workshop course section, scheduling interview times and locations, and planning the socials.

The five month RA selection process was intensive. One hundred sixty-two (n=162) (see Table 1) students submitted applications (Appendix D) for the thirty-six available positions. Forty-two percent (n=68) of the applicants were male and fifty-eight percent (n=94) were female. Each candidate was required to attend one of four RA workshop informational sessions

and strongly encouraged to also attend an optional resume and cover letter workshop prior to the start of the five week workshop course.

The five-week workshop course was an essential part of the overall RA selection process. During those five weeks, professional staff and RA mentors had the opportunity to interact with and evaluate each candidate. There were approximately twelve workshop sections, each facilitated by two members of the professional staff and two RA mentors who served as instructors for the course. Each workshop section met once a week for a two hour period. Prior to the beginning of the workshop, the candidate pool decreased by 13% (n=21) for various reasons: judicial sanctions, academic problems, and personal reasons.

Each week the workshop instructors and RA mentors presented activities designed to expose potential Resident Assistant candidates and campus leaders to the various components of student leadership. Topics covered in the workshop included: effective communication, diversity, time management, and team building.

Upon completion of the workshop, the goals of the Resident Assistant Search Committee were that candidates:

(1) be able to identify the basic components of effective communication and how to disseminate positive and constructive feedback to others; (2) be exposed to the diversity found on the Eastern Illinois University campus and within the world; (3) be able to develop a preliminary schedule for their personal lives, incorporating many of the elements found in student leadership, and (4) be able to work effectively in groups under most circumstances (Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Workshop Syllabus, 2005, p. 1).

At the close of the five-week workshop, 141 candidates had successfully completed the entire workshop and signed up for a 30 minute interview. All interviews were conducted by full-time staff members, graduate students, and current resident assistants. Each candidate was evaluated on the basis of his or her responses to a multitude of questions focused on campus involvement, leadership characteristics, effective communication, and standards regarding diversity.

During the two weeks following the interviews, members of the professional staff read the file of each RA candidate. Each file contained the candidate's application, a RA Candidate Self-Evaluation (Appendix E), Resident Assistant Candidate Survey (Appendix F), RA Candidate Workshop Evaluation (Appendix G), and copies of the interview evaluations from each professional staff member and current resident assistant who interviewed the RA candidate (Appendix H). Several candidate file folders contained evaluations that identified them as "Ineligible for Hire". Thirteen percent (n=19) of RA candidates interviewed for a position were ineligible for hire due to grade-point averages lower than the required 2.5 minimum. Because these individuals were ineligible for hire for the 2006-2007 academic year, they were placed in an alternate candidate selection pool. As a result, only 87% (n=122) of the RA candidates that interviewed were eligible for hire.

Two weeks after the conclusion of interviews, candidates were invited to one of two RA candidate socials. At the socials, candidates were placed into twelve mix-gendered groups, and in an orderly fashion spent ten minutes talking to each of the hall directors and current RA staff members of a particular building. At the end of the ten minute time limit, a bell rang and the candidates rotated to the next group of residential life staff members. This process lasted approximately one hour until all candidates made their way back to the first table where they

started. The purpose of the social was two-fold: (1) to allow the professional staff to meet the candidates they may not have previously come into contact with; and (2) to allow the candidates to learn the operations of each particular residence hall.

The day following the second RA candidate social, professional staff members selected their new staff members for the upcoming year. This procedure was conducted using a "drafting" process (Appendix I), one for male candidates and one for female candidates. The end of the drafting process resulted in thirty-six (26%) newly hired RAs (Appendix J). Thirty-nine percent (n=14) of the newly hired applicants were male and 61% (n=22) were female.

Once the drafting process concluded, professional staff members assigned alternate pool status to 36, (39%) male and 46 (61%) female candidates. After a very detailed and extensive discussion, 10 candidates were not assigned to the alternate pool, and were subsequently informed that they were no longer being considered for the RA position, due to various reasons.

Limitations of the 2005-2006 Resident Assistant Selection Process

The goals for the 2005-2006 selection process were met with two significant limitations. The most notable limitation was allowing candidates with a GPA lower than the required average of 2.5 to participate in the workshop. Because the selection process officially began early in the fall semester, candidates with grade point averages lower than 2.5 were allowed to enter the process. The ultimate goal of the 2005-2006 process was to hire 36 RAs for the 2006-2007 academic year. Candidates had an entire semester to increase their GPAs to a 2.5 or higher in order to qualify for a RA position. Although a large majority of candidates had a 2.5 or higher GPA prior to submitting an application, the possibility that candidates with GPAs below the minimum requirement did not acquire the minimum GPA by the time of the selection process posed a significant concern for the RA search committee. The second limitation was allowing

Significance of Study

The present study was conducted as a formative evaluation of the 2005-2006 Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Selection Process. Over the course of many years, the RA workshop has gone through various changes in time duration. Since this was the first time the RA workshop had been a five-week course, a formative evaluation was called for. According to Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1978),

> the use of (such a) design during a program's formative period gives the evaluator...a chance to take a good hard look at the effectiveness of the program or of selected subcomponents. This enables the formative evaluator...to persuade the staff to constantly scrutinize and rethink assumptions and activities that under[gird] the program (p. 14).

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the present study, the following terms will apply and are reflective of their use within the institution under study.

1. Resident Assistant (RA) – A trained student leader, within a college or university setting, charged with supervising students living in a campus residential facility. The RA is often referred to as "Student Assistant", "Community Advisor", "Resident Advisor", "Residence Hall Assistant", "Paraprofessional", "House Fellow" and "Peer Group Advisor".

2. Area Coordinator (AC) – full-time, master-level professional staff member. Responsible for the management, administration, operational services, and activities for a single residential housing area.

3. Complex Director – live-in, full-time, master-level professional staff member. Responsible for the management, administration, services, and activities, in a residential building/area consisting

of one or more residential units (buildings or halls). These individuals may also be known as "Area Coordinators".

4. Resident Director (RD) – live-in, full-time, master-level professional staff member. Responsible for the management, administration, services, and activities in a residential building consisting of 300-800 students.

5. Associate Resident Director (ARD) – live-in professional staff member currently working towards a master's degree. Responsible for sharing responsibilities with a full-time staff member [RD] in the areas of hall management, administration, services, activities, and staff supervision.

6. South Quad – community of four residential facilities: Andrews Hall, Lawson Hall, Taylor Hall, and Thomas Hall.

7. Triad – community made up of three residential facilities: Ford Hall, McKinney Hall and Weller Hall.

8. Stevenson Complex – complex consisting of three residential facilities: Douglas Hall, Lincoln Hall, and Stevenson Tower.

9. RA Mentor – members of the current resident assistant staff team who have been selected to assist workshop instructors with facilitating the RA workshop during the selection process.

10. Workshop instructor – professional staff and RA Mentors who facilitate the RA workshop during the selection process (*i.e. instructor*).

11. Candidate – individual currently participating in the RA selection process.

12. RA Wish list – optional list completed by members of the professional staff or current resident assistants providing the names of individuals who embody certain leadership abilities and attributes needed to be a successful RA. Individuals on each staff member's wish list are supplied with information for applying for the RA position.

13. Registered Student Organizations (RSO) – student groups that have completed all necessary paperwork through the Office of Student Life and received recognition as a legitimate student organization.

14. RA Workshop – 5-week "non-credit" course designed to evaluate RA candidates.

15. Alternate pool – candidates that were not hired for the following academic school year.

16. Peer group – a group with whom an individual identifies and from which the person derives a frame of reference for evaluating personal norms, attitudes, values, and behaviors. The peer group can also be referred to as "reference group," "student culture," "membership group," and "friendship groups" (Pilato & Upcraft, 1982).

17. Living Learning Center – a facility which embodies residence and academic components including classrooms, credit courses, and academic support services (Clark, Miser, & Roberts, 1988, p. 7).

18. Drafting Process – a processed designed by the RA selection committee used to hire resident assistants.

19. Workshop Informational Session – a 1-hour workshop session aimed at providing potential candidates with additional information about the Resident Assistant position and the various components of the selection process.

20. Resume' and Cover Letter Workshop – a 1-hour workshop session aimed at educating potential candidates on how to properly write and format a cover letter and resume'.

Overview of the Study

The present thesis presents, in seven chapters, an evaluation of the 2005 – 2006 Resident Assistant Selection Process. Chapter I is comprised of the introduction, role of the resident assistant, highlights of the Resident Assistant Selection Process, limitations of the selection

process, purpose of the present study, the significance of the study, and definitions of applicable terms. Chapter II contains a review of previous studies focusing on residence life and resident assistant selection processes. More specifically, areas covered in the literature regarding residence life and the resident assistants include: impact of the RA selection process on-campus housing. Chapter III provides the research methodology, a description of the process used to identity participants, description of the site, organizational structure of the Housing and Dining department, research instruments, and data analysis procedures. Chapter IV contains a comprehensive presentation of the candidates' perceptions of the selection process as both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter V contains findings related to the instructors' perceptions of the selection process presented as both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter VI compares and contrasts the findings presented in chapters IV and V. Chapter VII contains a discussion of the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn by the researcher for student affairs practitioners and future research in this area.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Impact of Living On-Campus

In order to properly support the purposes of the present study, the significance of living on-campus should be examined. The effects of on-campus living for college students are among factors related to student involvement and development. Blimling and Miltenberger (1995) reported that "residence halls are the intermediate peer environment through which students are introduced to the university community. By living and working together in a residential situation, students are invited to membership in the university or college community" (p. 57). Students living in residents halls become involved in other students' education. They are removed from the day-to-day pressures of living in a family and their original home environment, and are introduced to an environment that is part of the campus community (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1995). Astin (1977) also emphasized the benefits of on-campus living in helping students to become more engaged with the academic environment. In 1999, Astin reported that students living on-campus were more involved in student and recreational activities as compared to students living off-campus. According to Astin, student involvement is "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who…spends much time on campus…and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students" (p. 518).

Astin's theory of student departure was based on his study of college dropouts. In the 1970s he found that students who were involved in their collegiate experiences were less likely to drop out of school than were their uninvolved counterparts (Astin, 1975). The same held true in 1999 when Astin reported that, "living in a campus residence was positively related to

retention…" (p. 523). Also, students living in residence halls were less likely than commuters to drop out and more likely to attain a baccalaureate degree in four years. Astin concluded that, in theory, "the greater the amount of [a] student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (Astin, 1999, pp. 528-529). In 1977, Astin summarized involvement as a critical factor in student retention and satisfaction. He noted that when students involved themselves in the college environment they were committing themselves to their own education. According to Blimling and Miltenberger (1995), "people are more satisfied and more motivated to achieve when they feel a part of what is trying to be achieved. "Involvement requires commitment, and this commitment means that the participants become a stakeholder in its success" (p. 57). In this instance, involvement in residence hall activities and living with other students on the college campus was a form of commitment.

Extensive research exists that compares students who live in residence halls with students who live off campus. Chickering (1974) reported that students who lived in college residence halls exceeded their predicted learning and personal development when considering their previous education, extracurricular activities, community, and family backgrounds; were more fully involved in academic, extracurricular, and social activities; and tended to earn a higher grade-point average. In a subsequent study, Astin (1977) concluded that "students who live in residence halls have more contact with faculty, interact more with student peers…and are more satisfied with their undergraduate experience than are commuters" (p. 46). Astin also stated that "perhaps the most significant impacts of living on-campus versus commuting are on achievement and career development. Living on-campus substantially increases the students' chances of persisting in college [,] aspiring to graduate or earn professional degrees [,] and achievement in extracurricular areas, in particular, leadership and athletics" (p.220).

In a study comparing different forms of on-campus living with off-campus living, Klas and Smallwood (1973) found that students who lived on-campus developed better study habits and were more involved in volunteer programs and social activities, and reported having a greater sense of community with the university. Earlier, Feldman, and Newcomb (1969) theorized the primary advantages for residence hall students were more social interaction and a better chance for academic success. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) stated that "living in a residence hall…appears to increase the likelihood that a student, by the senior year, will express no religious preference" (p.85). In 1974, Chickering concluded that the gap between commuting and residential students would only widen as their collegiate experiences increased. "Access, discovery, and encounter occur much less in commuters and they continue in circumstances that add weights to their preexisting handicaps. Thus, a major consequence of American higher education as it currently functions for commuters and residents are to increase the distance between them…" (p. 85).

Significant research has been conducted concerning the impact of residence hall living on students. Specifically, two variables have been identified as factors associated with increasing the impact of the residence hall experience: peer group influences (Astin, 1993; Blimling & Miltenberger, 1995; Dalton & Petrie, 1997; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Newcomb, 1960) and living-learning centers (Adams, 1974; Arminio, 1994; Blimling, 1989; Chickering, 1969; Clarke, Miser, & Roberts, 1988; Jackson, & Stevens, 1990; Pascarella, 1980).

Peer Group Influences

For over thirty years, research on how college life impacts student development has constantly pointed to the peer group as a major influence. Newcomb (1960) summarized that of all factors that influence student development in college, the student peer group is the most

powerful. According to Blimling and Miltenberger (1995), "students who live in close proximity are generally afforded the most opportunities to interact with other students and eventually form some sort of peer group" (p.52). The residence hall experience heightens this peer-group influence. Because of the similarity of backgrounds, frequent interaction, and similar academic and career goals, residence hall life contributes to this peer group influence. Blimling and Miltenberger further suggested that "classroom instruction, course of study, and association with members of the faculty will not be as important to the student's personal development...and desire to complete college or to go on to graduate school as other students with whom he or she associates" (p. 52). In an article on peer culture and power, Dalton and Petrie (1997) suggested that the influences of peer culture permeate almost all aspects of students' lives and enhance or erode the best educational efforts of faculty and administrators. According to Feldman and Newcomb (1969),

> students have mutual and reciprocal influence on each other. In their interaction they develop consensual and shared sets of expectations regarding each others' behavior and regarding important aspects of their common environment. These consensual and shared expectations...form the basis of the student peer group's power over individual members.

In 1993, Astin examined the following question: "Just how do peer group effects serve to facilitate learning and personal development?" (p. 399). He theorized that peer group influence could be looked at from two perspectives: psychological and sociological. From the psychological perspective, peer groups were "a collection of individuals with whom the individual identifies and affiliates and from whom the individual seeks acceptance or approval" (Astin, 1993, p. 400). From a sociological perspective, Astin defined peer groups as "any group of individuals in which the members identify, affiliate with, and seek acceptance and approval

from each other" (p. 401). In the theoretical discussion of peer group effects, Astin posed several hypotheses that could have served as further research.

Living Learning Centers

Over the past decade or so, there has been a substantial increase in faculty association with students and on-campus residential life programs, mainly through in-house tutoring, teaching in residence halls, and academic advising in residence halls. These are all components of the living-learning concept. Extensive research on living-learning centers has indicated an advantage for students living in academically focused residential units. In 1989, Blimling found that students residing in living-learning centers often performed better academically than their non-living center counterparts who reside in traditional residential facilities. Although academic performance has been found to be the major advantage to students living in living-learning centers, there are other advantages that should be noted. For example, Clarke, Miser, and Roberts (1988) examined the effects of programming variables using living-learning structures, faculty involvement, and academic themes. Results indicated that freshmen residing in living-learning halls were more likely to "change their career choice, value cultural events, [and] make more progress than other freshmen in developing social skills" (p. 9). The study also indicated that students who lived in themed housing usually had greater involvement with other peers. Arminio (1994) conducted an evaluation of the Mary's Language House, a living – learning center created in 1990 at a state-supported mid-Atlantic university. The study revealed that residents residing in St. Mary's were more satisfied with their living experience than residents of non-living learning halls. Arminio stated that the study adds to the body of evidence suggesting that resources used to develop and implement the St. Mary's Language House and other living-learning centers have a positive relationship with college satisfaction.

The concept of living-learning centers presents the opportunity to increase informal contact with students living in the residence halls and faculty members. Chickering (1969) developed an explanatory model of student development which hypothesized that when students and faculty had frequent interactions in diverse situations, informal as well as formal, the students' sense of purpose was fostered. In the 1988 study by Clarke et. al., a portion of the results confirmed that there were significant benefits from bringing faculty members and students together in out-of-classroom experiences. According to Pascarella (1980), "...positive associations exist between [the] amount of student informal, non-class contact with faculty and such educational outcomes as satisfaction with college educational aspirations, intellectual and personal development, academic achievement, and freshman to sophomore year persistence in college" (p. 564).

According to Adams (1974), living-learning residence halls provide students with the opportunity to potentially maximize their residence hall experience without dissociating themselves from the academic culture of the university in which they attend. "The injection of teachers and classrooms as major elements of living... [with] the motivating force of student groups engaged in common enterprise, generates a remarkable new enthusiasm for learning. Student interaction in academic concerns is greatly enhanced and learning becomes a continuous process (p. 89).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that living on campus may be the most consistent determinant of collegiate impact. Both authors stated that

> residential living creates a social-psychological context for students that is markedly different from that experienced by those who live at home or elsewhere off campus and commute to college. ...living on-campus maximizes opportunities for social, cultural, and

extracurricular involvement; and it is this involvement that largely accounts for residential living impact on student change (p. 611).

As prior studies have demonstrated, residence hall living is positively associated with educational achievement of students who live in them and on students' growth compared with students who do not live in residence halls. Much of the academic and personal growth of students in college can be attributed to the decision to live in a residence hall.

Resident Assistants in Residence Life

Fitch and Winston (1993), define a paraprofessional as:

a student who is selected, trained, and supervised in assuming responsibilities and performing tasks that are intended to (1) directly promoted the individual personal development of his or her peers, (2) foster the creation and maintenance to environments that stimulate and support residents' personal and educational development, and/or (3) perform tasks that ensure the maintenance of secure, clean, healthy, psychologically safe, and esthetically pleasing living accommodations (p. 317).

The use of undergraduate students as peer helpers within institutions of higher education can be traced to the early history of American colleges and universities. As paraprofessional programming continued to grow, a number of studies have focused on the effectiveness of this staffing technique. Powell (1959) found that 67% of the respondents used upperclassmen in counseling-type roles. In a subsequent study, Brown and Zunker (1966) found that 65.5% of institutions in higher education were using student paraprofessionals. Brown (1977) compared the results of Powell's (1959) study with those of Brown and Zunker (1966) and noted: "Comparison of the two studies…suggests a developing trend toward using student counselors to provide systematic counseling in the areas of academic adjustment problems and to employ them

on a continuing basis in settings other than residence halls (p.17). Ender and Winston (1988) reported that 72% of all student affairs divisions in higher education provide student-staffed programs.

According to Greenleaf (1974), "more and more campuses across the country are utilizing undergraduate as members of the residence hall staff". Ender and Winston (1988) found that "the most extensive use of paraprofessionals remains in residence halls (81.2%) …". According to Casaburri, Delworth, and Sherwood (1974), "residence hall staffing is often referred to as the most traditional use of paraprofessionals in higher education" (p. 48).

The first use of student staff members in residential life programs occurred during the colonial period. Staffing of students became a natural outgrowth of the expansion of student housing. During the time of rapid expansion, it became apparent to the individuals in charge for managing housing facilities that there were not enough "adults" available to monitor what was happening with students. The only natural solution to this problem was to use older students residing in the halls (Fitch & Winston, 1993). Residents currently are employed to perform a wide range of tasks in housing departments. According to Fitch and Winston (1993),

the most common responsibilities of a student staff member include "managing" a living unit, which may entail performing duties such as inventorying furnishing, reporting needed repairs, enforcing rules, promoting a sense of community, encouraging participation in educational and social activities, communicating information from the professional staff, and offering peer counseling (p. 316-317).

The RA lives and works within college or university residential facilities and has one of the most comprehensive positions in student affairs (Gohn, Murray, Newgent, & Paladino, 2005). According to Caison and Jaeger (2006), "the resident assistant position continues to

expand and increase in complexity" (p. 144). Issues facing these college students [RAs] are more diverse, challenging, and intense today than in the past (Evans & Forney, 2002, as cited in Caison & Jaeger, 2006). According to Caison and Jaeger (2006), more and more students are entering the college and university setting with a multitude of "…learning disabilities, financial concerns, relationship problems, mental illness, personal identity issues, and other significant concerns…" (p. 145), thus creating a more challenging role for the RA.

According to Peterman, Pilato, and Upcraft (1982), the job of a resident assistant was considered one of the most important and valuable learning experiences in college. A 1979 study by Ames (as cited in Peterman, Pilato, & Upcraft, 1982) found that the benefits of the job are "personal growth and development, friends made as a result of being a RA, compensation a RA receives, and experience gained by developing a since of responsibility" (p. 1). The resident assistant job is one that may help students prepare for future careers. According to Peterman, Pilato, and Upcraft (1982), by becoming a resident assistant "[students] will develop and improve leadership skills, management skills, and interpersonal skills, which are essential to success in most fields". The authors concluded that the RA job is on-the-job training for any career that a student may choose to enter after college.

In observing current practices involving the use of undergraduate students as residence hall staff members, responsibilities of these individuals vary immensely. According to Greenleaf (1974), "the responsibilities may range from serving as desk clerk, to serving as a peer student leader, to paraprofessional responsibilities for a unit of twenty-five to fifty students, to paraprofessional counseling responsibilities or in some cases, to being the only staff member living within a hall and thus having responsibilities for full residential living concerns" (p. 182). In 1998, Blimling (as cited in Gohn, Murray, Newgent, & Paladino, 2005) concluded "RAs have

a significant role in developing a living and learning community conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of students living in the residence halls (p. 18). RAs facilitate the development of this community environment through execution of several roles and responsibilities.

The roles and responsibilities that student paraprofessionals assume in housing are related directly to the goals of the program in which they are employed. The skills they learn are usually a direct reflection of their particular residence life program. According to Caison and Jaeger (2006), "RAs face a multitude of daily decisions, many emotional in nature, often arising from the group living situation present in campus housing" (p. 145). In 1994 Amanda (as cited in Jaeger & Caison, 2006) noted,

> the college or university resident hall, which bends together person of many races, religions, lifestyles, and value systems, may represent the most culturally diverse environments in which many of today's college students will ever live. When large numbers of person reside together in concentrated proximity, it is inevitable that interpersonal tensions, misunderstandings, incivilities, and disharmonies will arise; at times reaching serious proportions (p. 145).

On the EIU campus, Resident Assistants (RAs) are an essential part of the residence life program. This particular group of staff members has the most direct and continuous contact with students living in the residence halls. The primary responsibilities of the RA are "to act as facilitator for the residence hall community and to enhance the social, educational, spiritual, intellectual, physical, vocational, cultural, and environmental development of each of their residents" (RA Job Description, 2005). According to the RA job description, six basic roles of a resident assistant are community facilitator, referral agent, team member, administrator, university representative, and educator/programmer. Peterman, Pilato, and Upcraft (1982) also

identified six major responsibilities of the RA position: (1) provide personal help and assistance, (2) manage and facilitate groups; (3) facilitate programs; (4) inform or refer students to appropriate information sources; (5) explain and enforce institutional rules and regulations; and (6) maintain a safe and relatively quiet environment. In a subsequent study, Fitch and Winston (1993) identified four additional roles or areas of responsibility that may be associated with the RA position: (1) being a role model of an effective student; (2) fostering community development; (3) providing system maintenance and control; and (4) supplying leadership and governance.

The Process: Resident Assistant Recruitment, Selection, and Training

The process for RA selection involves the interrelated processes and activities of recruitment, selection, training, supervision, and evaluation (Fitch & Winston, 1993). Three basic issues underlie the RA selection process: who, what, and how (Pilato & Upcraft, 1982). According to Ullom, Werring, and Winston (1984), "...professional staff and administrators, current RAs, and residents...each have a different perspective and a unique relationship to potential staff members; each group can offer insight and expertise to the process, and each group should propose candidates" (p. 56). Klockars (1978) found that peer ratings were valuable when selecting RAs. In 1993, Fitch and Winston concluded, "a principle factor in determination of paraprofessional effectiveness is the identification established through shared characteristics...of paraprofessionals and the students with whom they work. "The RA is like me; therefore, she or he is someone who can understand what is happening to me" (p. 330). For this reason, it is important that the RA staff reflect the demographic characteristics of the resident population. Anchors and May (1990), (as cited in Fitch & Winston, 1993) used the Myers-Briggs Type Indication to study resident assistants at The University of Maine, and concluded that RAs

were dissimilar from the resident population for which they were selected; which made role modeling difficult.

Recruitment

Effective recruitment materials are essential to any RA selection process (Peterman, Pilato, & Upcraft, 1982). According to Fitch and Winston (1993), recruitment should include announcements, notices, personal invitations, and other forms of publicity. All publication materials should clearly spell out the characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds that will be considered in the application and selection process. Other requirements, such as successful completion of a training course, group and individual interviews, role plays, and simulations should also be noted on any recruitment materials. Peterman, Pilato, and Upcraft (1982), also sited "…variables such as culture, gender, and personality difference are important when recruiting for RA selection" (p. 56).

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria are based on a number of things. RA responsibilities should have a positive correlation with the variables examined in the selection process, such as prior experience, references, grades, performance on simulated tasks, and personal characteristics (Fitch & Winston, 1993). According to Ullom, Werring, and Winston (1984), selection criteria should also examine, "…the ability to cope with stress and ambiguity, and ability to accept people with different values and backgrounds" (p. 57). Cassaburri, Delworth, and Sherwood (1974) also concluded that criteria for selecting RAs should include:

Concern for and desired ability to contribute to the academic, social and personal development of peers

Good communication skills

Ability to create an emotional climate that communicates openness and facilitates self-exploration and personal growth

Record of being able to manage one's own academic life successfully

Adequate personal adjustment

Good group facilitation skills

Capacity to learn from training and to apply what is learned with peers

Evidence of ego strength or sense of identity that allows the person to withstand peer pressure

Willingness to spend much of his or her free time in the residence halls

High energy level

History of harmonious relationship with hallmates

Evidence of informal leadership skills among fellow residents

Basic agreement with the goals and philosophy of the housing program

Specific skills, as determined by the position responsibilities (p. 50 - 51).

Selection

According to Caison and Jaeger (2005), "housing and resident life practitioners devote significant time and resources to determine which tools and procedures will be involve in the RA selection procedure…"(p. 147). Students [RAs] are selected on the basis of "…maturity, intelligence, skill, dedication, and empathy" (Bowman & Bowman, 1995, p. 39). Selecting the most qualified students to serve in the RA role is a primary goal of practitioners in the field of residence life (Caison & Jaeger, 2006). According to Pilato and Upcraft (1982), the selection of RAs is focused on the assessment of personality characteristics, interpersonal skills, and relevant experience (p. 18). Selection for RA positions is typically an annual process for colleges and

universities which includes an array of methods for gathering applicant data: "…application

forms, interviews, recommendation letters, role playing, peer ratings, and psychological

testing…" (Deluga & Winters, 1991, p. 546). As a result of the many methods for gathering

applicant data, the RA selection process is often very rigorous. Although the selection of RA

candidates is time-consuming and ultimately determines who will serve in the critical RA role,

research examining the selection process is almost nonexistent (Caison & Jaeger, 2005).

In 1982, Pilato and Upcraft suggested the following selection process for resident

assistants:

> Start the whole process at least eight months before the person will actually assume the
>
> position.
>
> Agree on what the job is all about at your institution, and write a clear and unambiguous
>
> job description. Both candidates and the persons involved in the selection process should
>
> have a common understanding of the position.
>
> Agree on selection criteria, and make sure the candidates and other persons involved in
>
> the selection process have a common understanding of those criteria…
>
> On paper, screen out those applicants with a poor record of academic
>
> achievement…and/or involved in any current or recent disciplinary action…Also screen
>
> out all freshman unless there are extenuating circumstances…
>
> Conduct a preliminary interview…with each screened candidate. A professional staff
>
> member, a student…, and a current resident assistant should do the interviewing…(p. 24).

According to Ullom, Werring, and Winston (1984), "the selection process should obtain

sufficient information about a candidate to allow that individual's potential for the position to be

assessed". Information on candidates can be obtained through an array of methods including:

"individual interview, leaderless discussion groups, role playing, standardized instruments, and participation in training seminars…" (Ullom, Werring, & Winston, 1984, p. 84).

Training

"RA training can be divided into three categories: (1) pre-selection, (2) per-service, and (3) in-service" (Fitch & Winston, 1993, p. 333). After RA selection training is the next most critical component in the development of a successful residence hall paraprofessional program (Ullom, Werring, & Winston, 1984). Oftentimes, RA training is affected by many on-campus factors. As put forth by Muse and Twale (1996), "RA training tends to be multifaceted and depends upon factors such as time and degree of intensity, topics needed to be covered, RA maturity and experiences, and residence life mission and staff attributes" (p. 405). Greenleaf (1974) argued training should consist of an understanding of the philosophical and educational purposes of higher education, the developmental tasks to be met by young adults, and the relationship of environmental factors to student growth. Schuh (1981) identified four dimensions of training: residence hall operation, institutional support, services, human relations, and program advising. According to Muse and Twale (1996), "RAs need to receive special counseling information on interpersonal relationships, sexual issues, substance abuse, alternative life styles, suicide, date rape, diversity, discipline, and eating disorders" (p. 407). Schuh, Stage, and Westfall (1991) recommended that RAs be exposed to student development theories, especially ones that directly impact job related areas.

Winston and Fitch (1993) believed RAs should have per-service training, be closely monitored on the job, and receive periodic in-service training. According to Ullom, Werring, and Winston (1984), "the model choice for training involved intensive pre-service training, preferable for academic credit. Pre-service training should be directed at acquiring basic or core

skills and knowledge that undergird the RA's role and responsibilities" (p. 58). Riessman (1967) recommended that pre-service training be short to reduce the amount of potential anxiety in prospective RAs. Similarly, Casaburri, Delworth, and Sherwood (1974) argued that pre-service training should be brief. Their work covered the ideas and skills RAs must have before they begin their work. According to Blimiling and Miltenberger (1995), RAs who are trained prior to starting the job report less stress, more confidence, and a clearer working knowledge of their positions and its responsibilities. According to Fitch and Winston (1993), during pre-service training, "RAs should be given a handbook or manual that details residence hall policies and procedures, includes copies of forms used and instruction for compiling and processing them, and incorporates a well-organized guide to services and programs about which residents may need information" (p. 335). Additionally, Blimiling and Miltenberger (1995) identified additional skills training that may also be included in pre-service training; training in assertiveness, human relation skills, stress management, wellness, conflict resolution, student skills, identifying and working with students who abuse alcohol and drugs, and educating residents about sexually transmitted diseases and rape.

During per-service training, it is also helpful for RAs to get the opportunity to learn more about each other and their supervisors. According to Schroeder (1976), adventure training has proved to be one means of accelerating the acquaintance process and in developing cohesive work groups. "Off campus retreats, recreational activities, and social events can also serve this purpose, although they are seldom as intense an experience" (Fitch & Winston, 1993, p. 48). One limitation of pre-service training is providing the same experiences for new RAs and returning RAs, which can limit the effectiveness of training because old RAs have 'heard it all before', and frequently get bored or create distractions. According to Casaburri, Delworth, and Sherwood

(1974), "in an effort to combat this issue, returning RAs can be used to help present the material, serve on panels to discuss the issue based on their experiences, give demonstrations, be role players for the new RAs to practice with, or serve as facilitators for small-group discussions with new RAs" (p. 51). According to Ullom, Werring, and Winston (1984), "pre-service training that takes place just prior to the fall term should concentrate on the nuts and bolts of hall opening and operations, on procedures and rules, and on the development of working relationships among hall staffs and supervisors."

According to Fitch and Winston (1993), "in-service training should go on throughout the academic year and is generally most effective when it is problem or issue focused" (p. 336). An in-service program should respond to immediate concerns of both paraprofessionals and professionals, and it should be structured to provide alternative options based on interest, skill level, and special problems (Ullom, Werring, & Winston, 1984). Mule and Twale (1996) revealed that, in general, in-service training focused on more specific problem areas than RAs encountered on a regular or intermittent basis. Heppner and Reeder (1984) stressed more on-the-job training, focusing on proactive problem-solving and application. "In-service training is designed to offer practical solutions to problems that RAs experience during the course of the year..." (as cited in Fitch & Winston, 1993, p. 336).

Training must be viewed as a continuing process, particularly where the residence hall staff is concerned. According to Casaburri, Delworth, and Sherwood (1974), "the generalist functions indicate that training must be wide in scope yet detailed to the points of exploration and understanding" (p. 51).

Chapter Summary

Chapter II focuses on the literature relevant to the present study. The literature review is presented in three major sections: The Impact of Living On-Campus, Resident Assistants in Residence Life, and The Process: Resident Assistant Recruitment, Selection, and Training. The review begins with a detailed discussion of how living on-campus has an impact on students. Researchers have concluded students who live on-campus are more prone to achieving academic success, are more involved in student and recreational activities, and also report having a greater sense of community within their university. In addition, Peer Group Influences and Living-Learning Centers are explored. The impact of living on-campus as resident assistants in residence life explored how these individuals work as paraprofessionals in the housing field. Researchers consistently conclude that the job of a Resident Assistant is one of the most important components in a college or university housing program. These individuals live and work directly with students and are the foremost important members of a residence hall staff. The final section highlights the differing components of the hiring process for Residents Assistants. The section is organized in three major subsections that explored the hiring process for Resident Assistants: recruiting, selecting, and training.

Chapter III

Methodology

The present study was conducted as a formative evaluation of the Eastern Illinois

University 2005 – 2006 Resident Assistant Selection Process. The research design chosen for

this evaluation is the "one-group posttest-only design" that is used "when the researcher can be

fairly certain of the level of knowledge, attitude, or skill of the subjects before the treatment and

can be fairly sure that history is not a threat" (Schumacher & McMillan, 2001, p. 330). Data

were gathered from several sources using mixed methods: two quantitative surveys composed of

several open-ended qualitative questions and Likert-type scale questions, and qualitative focus

groups with the use of a facilitator. In order to reduce the likelihood of internal threats to the

validity of the research design, the mixed methods approach and triangulation of multiple

sources were used. According to Schumacher & McMillan (2001), "different strategies may

yield different insights about the topic of interest and increase the credibility of findings" (p.

408). "Some evaluation questions are more appropriately addressed by quantitative methods and

others are more suited for qualitative strategies" (p. 541). A formative evaluation of the program

was conducted so that the Housing and Dining department could adjust and restructure the

program according to the feedback provided through the mixed method data acquisition

approach. This type of evaluation is useful when identifying small modifications in the manner

in which a program is conducted to enhance the overall effectiveness of the program.

Participants

Participants in the present study were individuals that facilitated or participated in the

2005-2006 resident assistant selection process at Eastern Illinois University. A total of 24

professional staff members and 24 resident assistant mentors facilitated the resident assistant workshop course for 122 candidates.

Of the 24 professional staff members and the 24 RA mentors who participated in the selection process, 14 professional staff and 14 RA mentors completed the Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop Instructor Evaluation survey. In addition, 122 candidates completed the Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop Evaluation survey. The remaining professional staff (10) and RA mentors (10) elected not to complete surveys or participate in the present research beyond their limited involvement in the selection process (i.e., facilitating workshops).

Twelve professional staff members and 11 RA mentors participated in the focus group segment of the present research project. Of the 36 newly hired resident assistants for the 2006-2007 academic years, 11 participated in the candidate focus group session.

The Site

Eastern Illinois University is a state assisted institution located in central Illinois. The 320-acre compact campus is located in Charleston, IL, a community of 20,000 residents. The University is seven miles east of Interstate 57 on State Route 16; three hours south of Chicago; two hours northeast of St. Louis; and less than two hours from Springfield and Peoria, Illinois. The institution enrolls approximately 10,000 undergraduate students, 1,700 graduate students, and 2,000 faculty and staff. Tuition is approximately $7,000 per year for in-state residents and $17,000 for out-of-state residents.

Eastern Illinois University was established in 1895 as the Eastern Illinois State Normal School. Originally a teacher's college offering a two-year degree, it gradually expanded its curriculum to include Baccalaureate and Master's degrees in most of the arts, sciences, and humanities.

Staying constant with the vision of its mission statement,

Eastern Illinois University offers superior yet accessible undergraduate and graduate education. Students learn the methods and outcomes of free inquiry in the arts, sciences, humanities and professions guided by a faculty known for its commitment to teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The University community strives to create an educational and cultural environment in which students refine their abilities to reason and to communicate clearly so as to become responsible citizens in a diverse world (www.eiu.edu).

Present day Eastern Illinois University offers 44 academic majors with a class size average of 22 students per teacher. The University continues to strive for visual diversity in its undergraduate student enrollment. In fall 2005, the male population was 42% and the female population was 58% (Appendix K). Of the overall male and female populations, approximately 15% of all students enrolled at EIU were seeking a Bachelors degree were of the non-white race population; this includes students classified as Non-Resident/Alien and students who provided no indication of racial or ethnic identity. The median age of undergraduate students enrolled at Eastern Illinois University was 20 years old.

The 2005-2006 Organizational Structure of the Eastern Illinois University Housing and Dining Department

The Eastern Illinois University Housing and Dining Services is a unique department in that residence life and dining services operate as a joint partnership. The structure of this department (Appendix L) has several interlocking dimensions; including, facilities management, marketing, Greek life, and dining services. For the purposes of the present study, only the organizational structure of the housing component [residence life] (Appendix M) will be addressed.

The residence life department is a subunit of the Student Affairs division of the University. The Vice-President of Student Affairs oversees the entire division. The Director of University Housing and Dining Services reports directly to the VPSA and is responsible for the

daily management and supervision of the residence life department. Serving directly under the Director of University Housing and Dining Services is the Assistant Director of Residence Life. The Assistant Director of Residence Life is immediately responsible for the operation and management of the 12 residence halls on campus: Andrews Hall, Carmen Hall, Douglas Hall, Ford Hall, Lawson Hall, Lincoln Hall, McKinney Hall, Pemberton Hall, Stevenson Complex, Taylor Hall, Thomas Hall, and Weller Hall. In addition, this Assistant Director supervises one Area Coordinator (AC) and two Complex Directors. .The AC directly supervises four Resident Directors (RDs) stationed in the South Quad and indirectly supervises the four Associate Resident Directors (ARDs) in the South Quad, Pemberton, and Triad communities. The four RDs each supervise one ARD stationed in their respective building and one ARD either in the Triad community or Pemberton Hall; this is dependent on which building the RD supervises. Stevenson Complex and Carmen Hall each have a Complex Director (CD). The CD in Carmen Hall directly supervises the RD stationed in that building and indirectly supervises the two ARDs placed in this [Carmen] community. The RD in Carmen directly supervises the two ARDs in Carmen Hall. The CD in Stevenson Complex directly supervises the three ARDs in the complex. Each of the 12 residence halls is staffed with 4 to 17 RAs (Appendix N). These individuals [RAs] are co-supervised by the RD and ARDs in their respective buildings.

In fall 2005, Eastern Illinois University had 3,471 residents living in the twelve residential units on-campus (see Table 2). Of these 3,471 students, 1,442 were men and 2,029 were women. The University's housing policy includes the requirement that all students with less than 30 semester hours (freshman classification) live in university-operated residence halls. The largest populations of students that live on-campus are white freshmen. The average age for this group of students is 18.

TABLE 2

2005-2006 Residence Hall Demographics (N=3,471)

	n	%
GENDER		
Male	1442	41.54%
Female	2029	58.46%
CLASSIFICATION		
Freshman	2011	57.94%
Sophomore	749	21.58%
Junior	405	11.67%
Senior	291	8.38%
Graduate	15	4.32%
ETHNIC BACKGROUND		
None Listed	138	3.98%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8	0.23%
Black	384	11.06%
Asian or Pacific Islander	51	1.47%
Hispanic	110	3.17
International	20	0.58%
White	2760	79.52%

Data Collection

There were two components to the data collection process in the present study. Both components were used to investigate the selection element of the entire process which includes recruitment and selection. Component one is divided into two parts and consists of the completion of two surveys. Component two of the data collection process consists of focus groups.

Component One – Part One: The Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop Evaluation (Appendix O), the first component of data collection, was distributed to all candidates that interviewed for a resident assistant position. All interviews were conducted on the 3rd floor of the

Martin Luther King, Jr. University Union. As candidates checked-in at the main registration table, each was asked to complete a survey and submit it before proceeding into an interview room. The time frame in which candidates had to complete the survey varied between 5 and 10 minutes. All candidates were asked to arrive at the interview site ten minutes before their scheduled interview time, allowing them enough time to complete the survey. The survey contained five questions related to the participant's perceptions of the workshop and workshop activities. Questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 were open-ended, allowing the candidates to share feedback at great length. Question 3 asked each candidate to rate their overall satisfaction with the nine activities conducted in the workshop class on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1= highly unsatisfied; 2 =unsatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = highly satisfied).

Component One – Part Two: The Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop Instructor Evaluation (Appendix P) was administered to all workshop instructors, professional staff and RA mentors, via e-mail (Appendix Q). The instructors had three days to complete and return the survey by the required deadline. The survey contained twelve questions related to the instructors' overall perception and satisfaction of the 2005-2006 RA selection process. Questions 1 – 7, 9, 12, and 13 were open-ended and focused on different components of the process. Questions 10 and 11 were designed in the form of a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (highly satisfied) (1= highly unsatisfied; 2 = unsatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = highly satisfied). Question 8 was omitted from the study due to improper sentence structure. Participants were unable to understand what the question was asking. Participants were also allotted the opportunity to provide comments or suggestions for each response item.

Component Two – All members of the professional staff, RA mentors, and newly hired resident assistants were solicited to attend a focus group session via e-mail (Appendices R and

S). The correspondence sent to professional staff members asked them to remind their resident assistants who served as mentors about the focus group sessions. There were two sections of focus groups held for professional staff and RA mentors. There was only one section of the focus group for newly hired RAs. Each focus group had its own set of structured opened-ended questions (Appendices T, U, and V) relating to members' perceptions and their experiences as participants in the 2005-2006 resident assistant selection process. Questions 13-17 were omitted from the study because the answers to those questions only provide personal recommendations on how each individual would design there on process.

The focus group facilitators were current members of the resident assistant selection committee. All focus groups met in the Thomas Residence Hall classroom. Prior to the start of the professional staff and RA mentor focus group sessions, participants were divided into their prospective groups. During the first night of the focus group session, seven professional staff members and four RA mentors were in attendance. The second night consisted of five professional staff members and seven RA mentors. As the groups split into different groups, professional staff members stayed in the Thomas Hall classroom; while RA mentors convened in a lounge outside of the classroom. The newly hired candidates were not organized in groups and their session was conducted in the Thomas Hall classroom. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour.

Data Analysis

Open-ended questions and other comments on the survey were analyzed by the researcher. Frequency distributions were tabulated for all Likert-type response set questions.

The data was analyzed by the researcher via listening to the tape recordings, and documenting what were determined to be compelling responses and themes among the

conversations of focus group participants. In addition, the researcher, along with members of the resident assistant selection committee, took detailed field notes during each focus group session. Focus group recordings and field notes served as a method of triangulation for the focus group experience.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III outlines the methods used to conduct the present study. This portion of the research was presented in six major sections: Methodology, Participants, The Site, The Organizational Structure of the Housing and Dining Department, Data Collection, and Data Analysis. The first segment, Methodology, highlights the mixed method approach used to conduct the present study. This section also addresses the need for a formative evaluation of the selection process. The next section, Participants, describes the individuals that facilitated or participated in the selection process. Section three, The Site, offers information about Eastern Illinois University; included in that information is the history of the institution, the Charleston, Illinois community, the University Mission Statement and the 2005-2006 student population. The next segment, the 2005-2006 Organizational Structure of the Eastern Illinois University Housing and Dining Department, describes the E.I.U. Housing and Dining organizational structure. This section identifies the major positions that help form the Housing and Dining Department. This portion of the research document also highlights the 2005-2006 residence hall demographics. Included in the demographics are: resident students' gender, classification, and ethnic background. The following section, Data Collection, illustrates the two components of the data collection process. Component one is comprised of the candidate survey and instructor survey. Component two describes the focus group portion of the data collection process. The

final section, Data Analysis, highlights the methods used to analyze the data for the present document.

Chapter IV

CANDIDATE RESULTS

Findings

This chapter contains the candidate perceptions of the RA selection process. First, the quantitative data from the questions rated on a Likert-type scale are presented. Next, the survey data from the four open-ended questions are reported followed by the data from the focus group.

Quantitative Survey Data

Responses to the Likert-type scale question (Question 3) identified the participants' personal satisfaction level with each activity conducted in the five-week workshop. Responses to the question were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1= highly unsatisfied; 2 = unsatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = highly satisfied) (see Table 3). *You are the RA Scenarios* (Item 9) yielded the highest mean response with a score of 4.69 and illustrated that 68.0% (n=83) of the valid responses indicated respondents rated this activity as 5, highly satisfied. The *Fishbowl Handouts and Activity* (Item 5) yielded the satisfaction rating with a mean score of 3.83; however, no one rated this activity as 1, highly unsatisfied. Participants reported another low mean response, below 4.0, for the *Nonverbal Worksheet* exercise (Item 4), with a mean score of 3.92. Time Management (Item 8) yielded the second highest mean with a mean participant rating of 4.45; indicating that 61.4% (n=75) of respondents were highly satisfied with the activity. There were two items where less than 10% of the subjects indicated a response of 3. For *Values Agree/Disagree* (Item 7), 9.0% (n=11) of respondents were in the middle and for *Wrong Side of the Tracks* (Item 6), 9.8% (n=12) of respondents rated their level of satisfaction as neutral (a value of 3). Items number 1 (*Rapid Fire Questioning),* 3 (*I,*

But, And) and 4 *(Nonverbal Worksheet)* received ratings indicating that no one was highly unsatisfied with either of these activities. Item 2 *(Toxic Waste)* yielded a mean score of 4.18, showing that 35.2% (n=55) of valid respondents indicated this activity was highly satisfying.

TABLE 3

Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop Evaluation Survey Results by Item (N=122)

	Item Number And Content	Total	Response Categories					Mean
			1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Rapid Fire Questioning	528	0.00	0.8	10.6	38.5	50.0	4.32
2.	Toxic Waste	509	1.6	2.4	16.3	35.2	44.2	4.18
3.	I, But, And	525	0.00	2.4	13.9	34.4	49.1	4.30
4.	Non Verbal Worksheet	478	0.00	4.9	24.5	45.0	25.4	3.92
5.	Fishbowl Handouts and Activity	466	0.00	5.7	21.3	54.9	18.0	3.83
6.	Wrong Side of the Tracks	536	1.6	5.7	9.8	18.8	63.9	4.39
7.	Values Agree/Disagree	540	0.8	0.8	9.0	32.7	56.5	4.42
8.	Time Management	539	0.8	3.3	11.4	22.9	61.4	4.45
9.	You are the RA Scenarios	563	1.6	0.00	4.9	25.4	68.0	4.69

Survey Open-Ended Question Responses

The survey contained four open-ended questions relating to candidate perceptions of the five week workshop course; (Question 1) preparedness for future leadership roles, (Question 2) aspects of the workshop that provided information about the role of a Resident Assistant and the Resident Assistant selection process , (Question 4) RA course

activities that were deemed most beneficial throughout the RA workshop, and (Question 5) ideas for activities or topics that should be implemented in future RA workshops (Question 5). The open-ended questions yielded many responses with similar content.

Survey Q1: In this workshop, what prepared you for future leadership roles?

In response to the aforementioned question, candidates stated that enhancement and development of their interpersonal skills helped them better prepare for future leadership roles. One candidate stated, "This workshop taught me how to deal with people a lot better...how to approach different situations [and] how to start a conversation with someone you have just met." Another candidate described the enhancement of their leadership skills thusly, "The workshop showed me how to handle numerous situations, whether being confrontational or in a group atmosphere. It was great to learn how to be an effective leader and I also learned how to manage my time more efficiently."

A few candidates reported that all components of the five-week workshop experience better prepared them for future leadership roles. They also agreed that different components of the workshop course taught them invaluable time management and scheduling skills. "I think the whole experience helped to prepare me for leadership roles...," stated one candidate. While another candidate declared, "The entire workshop taught me many effective and useful techniques for dealing with confrontations and mediation and time management."

Candidates also reported that learning about and working with other people helped better prepare them for future leadership roles. Candidates made the following comments:

"The diversity game opened my eyes to the different prejudices that occur on campus. This will help me be more aware and able to address issues of discrimination more effectively."

"I believe the interaction I had with a diverse group of people and ideas will help me with future endeavors."

Survey Q2: What aspects of this workshop provided you with adequate information about the role of a Resident Assistant and the Resident Assistant selection process?

In regards to the aspects of the workshop that provided information about the role of a Resident Assistant and the Resident Assistant selection process, many candidates really liked the RA panel during the last week of the workshop class. Typical responses to this question were as follows:

"Basically, the last workshop session helped prepare me the most. The RA Panel was able to answer all of my questions and made me feel more confident."

"I enjoyed the RA panel. Seeing some new faces and hearing from RAs outside my building was very comfortable and informing."

Candidates also expressed the perception that some of the activities conducted in the workshop provided them with ample information about the role of the Resident Assistant. Several candidates stated comments similar to the following:

"I learned about life in a fish bowl and I think I learned a lot about confronting others and the best way to do it."

Comments were made directly correlating the RA Panel and the workshop activities as a favorable combination in providing adequate information about the role of the Resident Assistant. Comments, such as "Both the RA Panel and the team building

activities helped me get an accurate view on what it's like to be a RA." And, "RA scenarios and the rapid fire questioning provided me with good information about the role of a RA and the selection process. The RA panel also helped a lot."

Survey Q4: Which activities were the most beneficial to you throughout the RA workshop?

Many group participants commented on the activities they viewed as most beneficial to them throughout the RA workshop. A number of candidates noted that the diversity activity and the I, But, And activity were most beneficial. Comments such as, "The diversity program taught me how to deal with all types of people and how to have a better understanding of how people feel.", "Wrong side of the tracks [diversity activity] and I, But, And were the most beneficial because [they] let me see the diversity of EIU and they [the activities] helped me communicate. Other candidates made the following statements about the diversity activity:

"Wrong Side of the Tracks [diversity activity] helped me to see the stereotypes and misconceptions about people."

"I think the Wrong Side of the Track activity was the most beneficial because it gave me the opportunity to get to know people on an internal level."

There were also a large number of perceptions describing toxic waste and the RA scenario activities. Candidates made the following positive comments about both activities:

"Toxic waste made us work together right away. This activity was fun because it taught us how to work was a group."

"I loved the toxic waste program because all of us were able to work together as a team."

"I love the RA scenarios and wish we did more of that. It gave us a real idea about what it would be like to be a RA. The activity also taught us about different protocols."

"I would say that the most beneficial activity was the one where we got to act out the RA scenarios."

In general the candidates really favored the diversity activity and the activities were they got the opportunity to act as an RA.

Survey Q5: What ideas do you have for future topics or activities that should be implemented in future RA workshops?

Finally, the last open-ended question on the survey (Question 5) asked candidates to provide ideas for activities or topics that should be implemented in future RA workshops. The candidates provided a wide range of new topics. There were multiple suggestions requesting for more team building activities.

"I would enjoy more team building and more activities that focus on making the group closer."

"I would add more team building and relationship building activities. I think that a large part of the RA position has a lot to do with trusting others. More activities such as these would help in the long run."

"I would implement more team building and leadership activities and have less discussion time."

Some candidates would like to implement more in-class discussion time with the Resident Director and the Associate Resident Director workshop instructors. One candidate expressed group consensus when she stated, "I would like to add a Resident Director and an Associate Resident Director panel." Another candidate reported, "It would be nice to have more one-on-one time with the professional staff instructors to ask questions." In addition to more in-class discussion time with the professional staff instructors, candidates suggested more structure in the RA scenario activity. The following were representative of most candidates' comments.

"The instructors need to show us the right and wrong way to handle scenarios. They should have one group show us the wrong way and another group to show us the right way. After we've seen both scenarios, instructors can explain which way is better and why."

"The instructors and the RA mentors should critique the situations. I would have liked to hear what I did right; as well as, what I did wrong in the situation when I acted it out."

Focus Group

The candidate focus group was held in the Thomas Hall classroom. Of the 36 newly hired resident assistants invited to participate in the focus group sessions, 11 choose to do so. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions by the focus group facilitator, and were encouraged to freely respond at their leisure. The focus group lasted for approximately one hour.

Q1: Should there be more team building and ice breaker activities?

In congruence with the findings related to the open-ended questions reported on the survey, focus group participants also suggested that there should be more team building activities. "There should be more team building activities during the workshop process. Because the RA job is primarily composed of working with a close knit staff, we [the candidates] should have more activities focusing on that component." "I really enjoyed all the facets of the workshop. However, building relationships with others seemed to be the main goal of the RA position. I think they should mix it up and do at least one icebreaker or team builder each meeting."

Other focus group members commented:

"...It is important to do team building and relationship building activities during the beginning of each workshop session. The five-week workshop mainly focused on different ways of communicating with other people...more team building activities would make it easier to communicate with total strangers."

"The RA job seems to focus on communicating and building relationships with the residents on your floor...more activities associated with building quick relationships should be a part of the five-week workshop."

Q2: How did you feel about the diversity activity? Q3: Did you feel comfortable sharing during these activities?

Although many participants agreed that they would like to implement more team and relationship building activities into the workshop portion of the process, they expressed mixed opinions about the diversity activity. One participated stated, "I liked the diversity activity. People really got the opportunity to express information about

themselves and their individuality." However, another female participant reported, "[I] did not like having to write down negative feelings or judgments – "slurs" on racial/ethnic attitudes about other people…it [the diversity activity] was intimidating because many people, like myself, felt that they could be judged based on their thoughts or views of other cultures."

Q4: Did you like the activities where you got to act as the RA?

The majority group members enjoyed the RA scenario activities. Many expressed their thoughts on what it was like to be given the opportunity to confront semi-real situations in front the residence hall directors. One of the group members stated, "Getting to act as a RA was good practice… I had the opportunity to get into the role and have immediate feedback from one of the directors." A different group member reported, "I really liked the activity where we got the chance to act as a RA. I wish there were more opportunities for this kind of activity….the activity helped me to clarify why I wanted to be a Resident Assistant.

Q5: How did you like the 5-week long format? Q6: Do you feel you would benefit from a longer workshop?

In regards to the opinions on the length of the workshop course, a large number of participants thought that the weekly sessions should have been shorter and should have met more often throughout the semester. The following recorded comments were representative of these participants:

"The workshop session was a little shorter than I would have liked. It seemed like the instructors were rushing through the material…I would have liked to meet with my group more often."

"The workshop could have been a little longer. We were given a lot of information in a short period of time…it was hard to keep up during some of the harder information."

"There were a lot of people in my workshop section…it would have been nice to get to know them and the instructors a little better. I think the length of the workshop could be extended…maybe if we meet for a shorter period of time, more times during the week.

Although many participants felt that a longer workshop would benefit them as they learned the tools necessary to be a RA, some individuals thought that a longer workshop (seven weeks) would be hard to schedule. One participant stated, "Having a longer workshop may be hard to schedule…my instructors seemed really busy, and as the semester comes to a close more and more students are going to start concentrating on completing last minute class assignments."

Q7: How did you like being in the workshop in the spring semester? Q8: Would the workshop work well in the fall?

Participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on which semester, fall or spring, would be best to conduct the workshop. A large number of focus group members believed that the spring is the best time to conduct the workshop. Participants made comments such as, "Having the workshop in the spring semester really worked well with figuring out housing assignments" and "I liked having the workshop in the spring because I was better able to schedule my classes around the selection process activities and meetings; [however]…the workshop should start the second week of classes so

people are more acclimated to classes. These same participants felt that the fall would not be a good time to conduct the workshop course. One group member reported:

> "…Having the workshop in the fall would be a bad idea for a number of reasons…some people may not be prepared mentally for the workshop session or they may not be sure if they want to be a RA that soon in the school year… freshman students are still getting acclimated to campus and may not fully understand the role of the RA and how important it is to students living on campus."

Another group member stated:

> "Conducting the workshop in the fall will only make the process longer. It could possibly carry on over winter break and into the spring semester. I like the idea of starting the process and completing the process in the same semester…Having the workshop in the fall may conflict with housing deposits for the upcoming school year."

Q9: Did you feel prepared for the interview?

Group members expressed differing opinions about their preparedness for the interview. Many members articulated how they would have liked more information about the interview and more time in class to discuss and prepare for the interview. A female group member reported, "I don't feel as if I was prepared for the interview as much as I could have been. The instructors could have provided more helpful hints for general interviewing." However, another group member commented, "I think that I was prepared for the interview…the instructors did a good job of giving us general information about preparing for an interview."

Other group members commented:

"Some members of my group mentioned that they would have liked to mock interview before the actual interview. Although I felt prepared for the interview, this would have helped out a lot."

"I felt prepared for the interview, but specifically liked the physical set up of the interview location... closeness to the table...it made the interview more intimate and less intimidating."

Q10: How did you like the socials? Q11: How did you react going to all male buildings if you are female?

In addition to providing information about the interviews, group members were also asked to give their overall impressions of the candidate social. A male group member commented, "The social was okay...I think that the groups were way too big...smaller groups with a better male/female mix. The location of the social was dark and very loud. Next years social needs to be in a larger room..." Another group member reported, "The directors made it too obvious as to whom they are really interested in and who they had no interest in at all...Some directors just sat behind the table and took notes. I think the directors need to be in the forefront of this part of the process. If someone has to take notes, then let one of the RAs take them." Other comments reported displeasure and included the following:

"Some directors need to be more professional and approachable...I remember when I was at one table [residence hall name omitted]...the director flirted with some of the male students in my group. I'm not sure if they already knew each other prior to this process, but it made me feel really uncomfortable."

A female candidate reflected,

"The candidate social was a little intimidating for me. Some building brought

their entire RA staff and it was way too overwhelming for me."

Chapter Summary

Chapter V outlined the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data collected from

the candidates. This chapter indicated that candidates genuinely left the process with a better

understanding of the RA position. Candidates expressed a wide variety of views and opinions

each component of the selection process. Some candidates found the diversity activity

developmental and eye-opening; while others were intimidated by use of racial slurs. Candidates

communicated the need for more team building and ice breaker activities in the workshop,

believing the idea was to generate more closeness of the group and to demonstrate more

techniques for relationship building. It was also noted that candidates enjoyed the RA scenario

activity. However, they expressed the need for more feedback from the directors and RA

mentors. With regards to the interview, some candidates communicated the need for more

preparation through workshop discussion and mock interviews. The underlying theme from the

quantitative and qualitative date collected from the candidate was that there are definitely areas

of the selection process that have major room for improvement.

Chapter V

FINDINGS: INSTRUCTORS

Findings

This chapter contains the instructors' perceptions of the RA selection process. First, the quantitative and qualitative data from RA Mentor instructors' responses to questions 10 and 11 are reported. Next, the quantitative and qualitative data from professional staff instructors' responses to questions 10 and 11 are reported. Finally, the qualitative survey data from both participant groups are reported followed by the qualitative data from both focus groups.

RA Mentor
Quantitative Survey Data

Responses to questions 10 and 11 identified the RA Mentor perceptions of the interview day and the candidate socials. Responses to both questions in the quantitative survey for the RA Mentor instructors were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 - 5 (1= highly unsatisfied; 2 =unsatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = highly satisfied) (see Table 4). Question 10 specifically addressed perceptions of the candidate interview day. *Organization* (Item 4) yielded the highest mean response with a score of 4.64; illustrating that 100% (n=14) of individuals responding were satisfied (rating score 4) to highly satisfied (rating score 5) with the organization. Although no participants were highly unsatisfied with the *Preparation of candidates* (Item 2), the phrase yielded the lowest mean response with a score of 3.78, low to mild satisfactions. *Location* (Item 3), yielded the second highest degree percent satisfaction with a score of 4.28. Fifty percent (n=7) of responding individuals rated this phase as 5, highly satisfied. Items 1 (*Preparation of Interviews/Evaluators*) and 5 (*Times*) both indicated that 21.4% (n=3) of

respondents were highly satisfied with the location of the socials. . *Set-up* yielded a mean score of 3.42; indicating that 28.6% of respondents were satisfied with the set-up of the socials.

TABLE 5

Resident Assistant Instructor Workshop Evaluation Survey Results by Item (RA Mentor) Socials (N=14)

Item Number And Content		Total	Response Categories					Mean
			1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Location	50	14.3	7.1	14.3	35.7	28.6	3.57
2.	Set up	48	7.1	14.3	28.6	28.6	21.4	3.42
3.	Signs/Decorations	46	7.1	21.4	28.6	21.4	21.4	3.28
4.	Time	57	0.00	0.00	21.4	50.0	28.6	4.07
5.	Organization of candidates	49	0.00	28.6	14.3	35.7	21.4	3.50

RA mentors expressed many different suggestions and comments in response to the interview day Likert-type scale question. The following positive and negative suggestions were representative:

"Because of the conflict of the Union not having enough room, I felt that the many different locations were a problem."

"It would have been a little easier if we knew ahead of time that we had to pick up the files for each interview."

Along with the above responses regarding the interview day, RA Mentors also shared their perceptions about candidate socials. The following suggestions represent the

thoughts of several participants.

"Better dividing of males and females."

"More decorations."

"I like the station idea, just not as structured. Have the staff in one spot and have the candidates free roaming and let them go to the buildings they want…"

Professional Staff
Quantitative Survey Data

Responses to questions 10 and 11 identified the perceptions of the interview day and the candidate socials. Responses to both questions in the quantitative survey for the Professional Staff instructors were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1= highly unsatisfied; 2 = unsatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = highly satisfied) (see Table 6). Question 10 specifically focused on instructor perceptions of the candidate interview day. *Organization* (Item 4) yielded the highest mean response with a score of 4.14 (Table 6); indicating that 35.7% (n=5) of individuals responding were highly satisfied. *Preparation of Candidates* (Item 2) yielded the lowest satisfaction with a mean score of 3.57; illustrating that 7.1% (n=1) of respondents valued this phrase as highly unsatisfying. Although no participants were highly unsatisfied with the *Preparation of Interviewers/Evaluator* (Item 1), the phrase yielded the second highest response with a mean score of 4.07; indicating that 7.1% of respondents were unsatisfied with the preparation of interviewers/evaluators. *Location* (Item 3) and *Times* (Item 5) both received a mean score of 3.85; indicating that several respondents were highly satisfied with the location and time of the interview.

TABLE 6

Resident Assistant Instructor Workshop Evaluation Survey Results by Item (Professional Staff) Interviews (N=14)

Item Number And Content	Total	Response Categories					Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	
1. Preparation of Interviewers/Evaluators	57	0.00	7.1	21.4	28.6	42.9	4.07
2. Preparation of Candidates	50	7.1	14.3	14.3	42.9	21.4	3.57
3. Location	54	14.3	0.00	14.3	28.6	42.9	3.85
4. Organization	58	0.00	0.00	21.4	42.9	35.7	4.14
5. Times	54	0.00	7.1	28.6	35.7	28.6	3.85

Question 11 focused on instructors perceptions of the candidate socials (see Table 7). *Times* (Item 4) yielded the highest mean response with a score of 3.28; indicating that 50% (n=7) of individuals responding were satisfied to highly satisfied with this component of the event. *Organization of Candidates* (Item 5) yielded the lowest satisfaction response with a mean score of 2.21, indicting that only 14.3% (n=2) of responding individuals were highly unsatisfied with the way the candidates were treated. *Set-up* (Item 2) and *Signs and Decorations* (Item 3) both indicated that 28.6% (n=4) of responding individuals rated these phrases as moderately satisfying. *Set-up* also yielded a mean score of 3.00 and *Signs and Decorations* yielded a mean score of 2.71; indicating that the instructors were highly unsatisfied with the signs and decorations. Item 1, *Location*, yielded a mean score of 2.57; indicating that 21.4% (n=3) of instructors were highly unsatisfied with the location of the socials.

TABLE 7

Resident Assistant Instructor Workshop Evaluation Survey Results (Professional Staff)
Socials (N=14)

Item Number And Content	Total	Response Categories					Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	
1. Location	36	21.4	35.7	21.4	7.1	14.3	2.57
2. Set up	42	14.3	21.4	28.6	21.4	14.3	3.00
3. Signs/Decorations	38	21.4	21.4	28.6	21.4	7.1	2.71
4. Time	46	7.1	28.6	14.3	28.6	21.4	3.28
5. Organization of candidates	45	14.3	21.4	14.3	28.6	21.4	2.21

Professional staff instructors had varying perceptions about the interview day. Specifically, professional staff instructors were highly satisfied with the location and time of the interview. In addition, the professional staff instructors were highly unsatisfied with the *Preparation of Candidates* which received a mean score of 3.57. In response to the question about candidate interviews, the following suggestions were offered.

"...Interviewing until very late in the evening was not the best for energy levels... maybe the committee should consider moving the interviews to a Friday so that we could begin earlier and still go until about six o'clock."

"One thing I would work on is making a distinct effort to make sure that directors are not interviewing individuals from their own halls that they are VERY close to, such as hall council presidents."

"I was very impressed with everything, especially with the organization of the

whole event. It would have been better if they had all taken place on the third floor, but I understand that there were issues with Union availability."

With regard to the question about candidate socials, professional staff instructors expressed the following for improvement.

"I think it would be beneficial if we did a male night and a female candidate night."

"Reserve 3rd floor of the Union to do the socials where each building would get a room to "personalize" and give a sense of the culture of that building. This would help with space and noise."

"I would have liked the chance to personalize the set-up a little more. It would have been nice if we were all given a presentation board to design that represents our hall and then also be allowed to wear our staff shirts..."

"I did not like at all that some of the directors were sitting down at their tables...Some of the candidates said that having the directors sit down while the candidates stood was awkward, hard to hear, et cetera."

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses
By Workshop Instructors

For the purposes of reporting the qualitative comments of the RA mentor instructors and the professional staff instructors, comment of both the groups have been combined, and will thereafter be referred to as the voice of the instructors collectively.

Each survey contained 10 open-ended questions relating to instructors' perceptions of various facets of the overall selection process (Question 1), participation in workshops prior to this year (Question 2), personal satisfaction with the five-week format (Question 3), usefulness of the new website format (Question 4), personal challenges

with the website format (Question 5), level of planning for each activity (Question 6), instructors' level of training for the position (Question 7), well received activities within the workshop (Question 9), future topics or activities that should be implemented (Question 12), level of organization for the selection meetings, and (Question 13) comments about the instructor experience.

Survey Q1, Part 1: Have you participated in the candidate workshop before this year?

The open-ended questions yielded many responses with similar content. In response to question 1, participation in the workshop prior to this year (2006), 14 (50%) of the 28 instructors that participated in the survey portion of the study answered yes.

Survey Q1, Part 2: Do you think there are topics or activities we covered in the past that should have been included this year? Explain.

Depending on the response to question 1, instructors were asked to provide suggestions about topics or activities covered in the past that should have been included in this year's process. The following suggestions were presented for discussion and thought:

"Myers-briggs or some type of strengths/weakness inventory."

"Conversations about the RA position and what it entails."

"Situational problems and issues facing the residence halls. I believe that alcohol is a big part or some halls and should be covered a little more."

As instructors articulated many suggestions recognizing several topics or activities that should have been implemented in this year's process, the amount of time candidates spent in the workshop evoked responses from all instructors. One instructor seemed to voice group consensus when she said, "I think that for it being so much shorter

than the last process, we covered the appropriate amount of topics."

Survey Q2: Did you like this year's 5-week format?

In response to the instructors' personal satisfaction with the 5-week format, many group participants thought the process was too short and could have been a lot longer. One group participant shared the following sentiment: "I personally would have appreciated a little more time to get to know the candidates..." Another group member offered a similar statement, "I feel adding at least one week would be beneficial. Many directors/facilitators felt five weeks really wasn't enough time to get to know the candidates on a level we were comfortable with." Another group participant had the following opinion:

"Should have been at least another week longer. It is hard to get a true feeling of the candidates with only five weeks..."

"Gives more time to allow the participants to grow."

Although many group members thought the workshop could have been a little longer, there were a few participants who expressed opposing thoughts. "I did enjoy being able to meet the students in this format. I am a huge fan of the five weeks." "The five week format worked well with the schedule. I felt that any more would have been overkill for the large amount of people that are not selected to be RAs." Several instructors echoed the sentiments of the entire group; stating that adding more weeks to the workshop would be hard to schedule due to spring housing recruitment and upcoming conferences.

Survey Q3: Did you find the new website format useful? Survey Q4: Were there any challenges you found with the website format?

For the 2006 selection process, the search committee created a new website to help organize the material for the five-week workshop. In response to the instructors' thoughts on the new website format all group participants expressed positive attitudes regarding the website. Everyone found the website helpful in providing directions, helping them understand what activities to plan for in the workshop, and answers to general questions. Group participants shared similar responses: "Yes, we were able to look ahead and prepare. It was easy to just print and it was very user friendly" And "I think the website was very useful as [a] tool to find the different handouts and resources, if necessary…" One group participant shared the following sentiment, "The website was tremendous. [The webmaster] really put his foot in that project. The website is so much better…Awesome idea and less paper is always a benefit!"

Although a large majority of group members expressed positive feedback about the website, some participants found challenges with the system. Typical of all responses is the following comment offered by a male participant: "I have a few thoughts about navigation…there were a few times you had to go "back" to get to the menu bar at the top of the page – which was confusing."

Survey Q5: Did you feel lessons were well planned? Were activities planned for the appropriate weeks? Survey Q6: As an instructor do you feel that you were well informed and trained for the position?

Opinions from the instructors regarding the level of planning for each activity were both positive and negative; although, majority of the participants expressed positive

thoughts about the planning of each lesson. For example, one instructor said, "I liked very much how each week had its own theme (diversity, communication, et cetera). The candidates expressed joy in how each class had a focus…"

Although no one expressed more than minor displeasure in negative comments about the lesson plans for each week, a few members offered the following suggestions: "There should be structured conversations given to the directors. For example, we should all be covering the same topics, even in our "random conversations" in the workshop." And "I thought the activities we very well planned. Week Two (communication) was very handout heavy, and even though the I, But, And activity was interactive, maybe that week needs some work on how to convey the principles of communication without just reading off a handout."

Survey Q7: What activities were well received within your workshop? Survey Q8: Candidates really enjoyed the RA scenarios and requested more time for activities such as this. How did facilitate these activities?

Instructors expressed differing opinions about which activities were well received within the workshop participants. A large portion of group participants agreed that RA Scenarios and Rapid Fire were the top two activities in this year's workshop process. Individuals shared the following perceptions:

"Act as a RA…I was able to see a lot of the natural tendencies through this activity that I feel make or break individuals as a RA."

"In my opinion, Act as a RA was the most liked activity in the workshop. Class participants really liked the opportunity of getting to simulate real RA scenarios."

Survey Q9: Do you have ideas for future topics or activities that should be implemented for future RA workshops?

In addition to offering comments about the most liked activities within the workshop, participants also offered ideas for future workshop topics or activities. Many group participants had facilitated pervious workshop courses either at their previous institutions, or in past years at EIU; most of their suggestions activities that had been conducted in pervious workshops. However, a few of the first time instructors offered different ideas. For example one male candidate said, "We should implement Diversity Circles during the week we focus on diversity...I also think that candidates can benefit from case studies to look at that pertain to issues of diversity and social justice." Other participants commented on time and session evaluations: "New Out of Time activity... We had a lot of candidates, who had a LOT of spare time, and we didn't have enough time to go over that too much..." and "I'd like to see a homework assignment one week...something that could help us evaluate their desire, creativity, and their organizational skills.

Survey Q12: Did you find the selection meeting process to be well organized?

Question 12 focused on the organization of the selection meeting process. Instructors articulated many differing opinions about how this process should be formatted. The majority of the comments were neither negative nor positive, the participants simply offered suggestions on how to improve this overall process. One professional staff member stated, "This format seemed to work better than last year." An additional professional staff member commented, "It should be required that lists are made before the meeting. Some people made their list after others were hung. To solve

this part of the process list would have to be emailed to the chair of the committee the night before and then the emailed lists are then checked with the butcher block lists that are brought to selection and the two lists MUST be identical..." Other participants shared the following comment:

> "There are times when I feel it may be necessary to discuss where a student fits best. Some candidates were high on multiple lists. I think those times may merit consideration about where the candidate prefers and where the dept. feels that they can develop the most."

Along with giving general feedback on certain aspects of the selection process through the use of structured questions, the instructors were allowed to offer any additional comments about their experiences as an instructor or suggestions for the selection process as a whole (Question 13). One instructor stated, "I did enjoy the condensed process. I still heard feedback that it was a long process and I'm not exactly sure how to change that. We could do RA Selection earlier – begin in December." Another instructor offered the following sentiment, "I think it is important to get this survey out closer to the time of the class or shortly after. It was hard for me to reflect back on some things associated with the RA workshop that I would like to comment on (good and bad) and, if I had this earlier, it might help me to provide better feedback to the committee."

Instructor
Focus Group

The instructor focus group sessions were held in the Thomas Hall classroom. Twelve members of the professional staff and eleven RA mentors participated in the focus group segment of the study. During the first night of the focus group session, seven

professional staff members and four RA mentors were in attendance. The second night consisted of five professional staff members and seven RA mentors. Each night, the instructors were asked a series of open-ended questions by the focus group facilitator and were encouraged to respond freely. Each focus group session lasted for approximately one hour.

Q1: What are your opinions about the 5 week long session?

In comparison with the findings related to the open-ended questions reported on the survey, some instructor participants agreed that five weeks was not enough time to truly evaluate the candidates in their workshop classes (Question 1). One participant stated, "I really don't care for the five week long process. I didn't get to know the candidates well and there was no comfort level..." An additional group member offered, "Five weeks (10 hours total) is not long enough...I liked last year's course better [9 weeks]. It was tougher to evaluate students in this shorter time period." Although a few of the instructors agreed that five weeks was too short of a time span to hold the workshop, one expressed an opposing opinion. "I liked the shorter time session because it was flexible with the pro-staff staff spring schedule and other outside commitments." The following support was spoken by other instructor focus group participants:

"I liked how this process wasn't as long as last year's process; however, students weren't as comfortable with one another and the more serious discussions were difficult to facilitate."

"Last year's session was too long. Five weeks is more of a realistic timeline. Also, since the class is not for credit, the session needs to stay five weeks."

Q2: Would it be feasible to have two shorter sessions a week?

In addition to voicing their opinions about the five week long workshop format, instructor focus group participants were asked if it would be feasible to have two shorter sessions a week (Question 2). The instructors did not favor the idea of seeing candidates twice a week. Some thought that it might to overwhelming for candidates, while others looked at this idea from a scheduling aspect. Group participants made comments such as, "It may be hard to schedule both instructors and students for two shorter sessions a week" and "I would rather have added extra weeks than a number of sessions per week." One group participant offered, "This idea may be too much for candidates; however, it may be appropriate for instructors. Candidates may become overwhelmed by a two times per week process and the amount of knowledge that they would have to obtain during the time period."

Q3: Do you feel activities such as the RA scenarios are beneficial to the candidates?

In relation to the five-week process, instructors were asked about the activities conducted during the time span of the process (Question 3). More specifically, they were asked about the RA Scenarios and how beneficial they were to the candidates. Group members expressed a variety of opinions. For example, a few of the instructors perceived that the RA scenarios were very beneficial to the candidates. Their typical responses were, "The RA scenarios are good, but the candidates need to be informed about polices a little first. There were lots of questions about what to do and what they would be trained on." "I think that the RA scenarios were very beneficial. It helped open the candidates to new experiences." Other members of the group did not have the same positive outlook about the RA scenarios. One female instructor stated, "Scenarios can be a little

intimidating and a little scary for reserved or shy candidates…We need to design a better plan for reaching introverted candidates who may not open up as fast as others." A different group member declared, "Individuals did not like the role play activities."

One male instructor considered this process to be a hiring process more than a training course. The following statement contains this participant's perception:

"This is a hiring process, not a training course. We need to be doing more evaluating than training candidates on the official policies and procedures of housing and dining."

Q4: Were the diversity activities effective?

Additionally, group participants were also asked to comment on the effectiveness of the diversity activity conducted during the workshop course (Question 8). A large number of the instructors described the diversity activity as intimidating for a majority of candidates. They also affirmed that the activity was conducted too early in the workshop process. Group members offered comments such as, "Diversity [Week 3] was a tough week. Some of the candidates felt unfinished when the class period ended." And "It was too early to share this sort of information. Candidates were still trying to bond and get a feel for the others in their class." These comments suggest that several group participants questioned the effectiveness of the diversity activity due to the lack of diversity in most of the workshop sections. One member of the first night focus group described the need for diversity among the candidates as follows: "The workshop needed a more diverse population in order for candidates to have a meaningful experience." A different member offered this comment: "I [instructor] felt like I had to self-identity with some of the topics

because there was a lack of diversity among the people in my class. I wanted to show visible diversity:"

Q5: Should there be more team building and ice breaker activities?

Most, if not all, instructors agreed that more ice breaker and team building activities should be infused throughout the overall workshop process. Many instructors expressed support for more ice breakers and team building activities to help build interpersonal relationships and positive building/floor communities. An African American male instructor suggested, "There should be more activities at the beginning of each class."

Q6: Should we have more information about the actual job description of being an RA to prepare them for the job and the department?

In addition to offering comments regarding increasing the number of ice breakers and team builders that should be utilized throughout the workshop, instructors were also asked if more information about the actual job description of being a RA should be applied to the workshop. The majority of instructor focus group members supported the suggestion that more information about the job is needed in the workshop course. Some group members highlighted the use of the RA manual to help facilitate this process, while others thought that a basic outline of the job responsibilities would be helpful. One female group member commented, "Have more discussion about the RA manual. Use the manual to highlight some of the rules, roles and responsibilities of being an RA." A different member declared, "Give the candidates a basic outline of the job so that they aren't surprised about anything in the future."

Q7: How much time was spent in your workshop lecturing? Q8: How much time was spent in your workshop interacting and discussing?

Instructor focus group members were asked to comment on the amount of time they spent lecturing in the workshop versus the amount of time they spent interacting with candidates. A large portion of the group member thought that there was not enough time spent lecturing, although there was not a lot of lecturing this year, as compared to previous years when the workshop was longer. A member of the instructor focus group during the second night declared, "It depended on how the candidates in the workshop interacted with each other. If the class was real active, then the amount of time spent lecturing was small. However, if the class was real timid and quiet, the instructors had to fill gaps in participant interaction with more lecturing." With regard to the amount of interaction and discussion with candidates, some instructors had a difficult time discussing various aspects of the workshop topic with members of their class. Instructor focus group members described difficulties establishing comfort zones and getting candidates to share their feelings. One group member declared, "The discussion was difficult because candidates were not comfortable with one another to talk with the entire class..." and "The discussion was hard because people were not comfortable."

In addition to the aforementioned comments, some instructor focus group participants expressed opinions on the out-of-class activity. The following comments were reported:

"The week where there was no formal class [week 4] was great. I really got to see some of the candidates' personalities. Some workshop sessions played games

during their out of class activity and I really got the opportunity to see the strengths and attitudes of some of the candidates."

"The out-of-class (week 4) activity was awesome. The competition that took place during some of the out-of-class activities showed strengths and weaknesses of candidates."

Q9: Do you feel that candidates were prepared for the interview? Q10: Should the socials be more structured and tailored to each building?

Instructors provided feedback about candidate preparedness for interviews and the candidate socials. When considering candidate preparedness for interviews, some participants expressed thoughts that candidates need to be prepped in the workshop course for interviews. A female instructor focus group participant offered, "Interviews preparation needs to be built into the workshop. At least give them more information about interview etiquette and dress. If they don't learn from the workshop and they are chosen as a new RA, they may not get the chance to get experience." Other instructors expressed similar thoughts regarding African American candidates and their lack of interviewing skills: "African American men struggled during their interviews. Some were not sure how to answer questions..." "Minority candidates may need more prep. They may not be accustomed to interviewing"

Along with comments about candidate interviewing, group participants also provided feedback about the candidate socials. Instructors provided many comments and suggestions about the candidate socials. The following comments are representative of the entire group:

"Males and females should be held on separate nights."

"Some of the tables should not have been next to each other so it would be more mixed. Some residence halls have larger staffs than others."

"Seventh Street underground is not a good location to hold this type of social...the socials should be less structured and more open. Individuals should be able to go to the buildings that they want to see."

Q11: What was the role of the RA Mentor in your class? Q12: What role should the RA Mentor have in the class?

When asked about the role of the RA Mentor, all instructors articulated that RA mentors served as equal facilitators. "The RA mentors should serve as equal facilitators. They helped to facilitate activities; while the directors facilitated discussions. At certain points during the class, RA mentors were at the forefront of the discussions, giving the RA perspective. "It was important to us that the RA mentor serves as a facilitator in all facets of the class." Some members also suggested that RA Mentors should have an outside role in the class as well. "Because some candidates may feel intimidated around professional staff members, it is the RA mentors' job to connect with those individuals." One participant stated, "The RA mentor should be a mentor outside of the formal class meeting. They should e-mail and call the candidates to see how they are doing and to answer any questions that the candidates may be afraid to ask the professional staff instructor." One group participant expressed-, "Candidates felt intimidated by the professional staff instructor, so they are more inclined to go to a mentor to have their questions answered.

Chapter Summary

Chapter V outlined the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the instructors. The instructors reported an array of views and opinions about each component of the selection process. In the qualitative portion of the instructor survey, the length of the process was questioned. A large majority of the instructors thought the process was too short; however, other instructors communicated the exact opposite. The instructor staff also expressed positive attitudes about several of the workshop activities. An overwhelming majority of the instructors agreed that RA Scenarios and Rapid Fire were the top two activities in this year's workshop process. In the focus group segment of the qualitative component of the study, instructors articulated the need for a longer workshop; however, they did not favor the idea of seeing candidates twice a week as a means to get to know each of them on a more personal level.

Aside from the length of the workshop, the diversity activity was another major topic of discussion for this group of participants. A large number of the instructor staff perceived the diversity activity to be intimidating for some of the candidates. The instructors also communicated the idea that more ice breaker and team building activities should be implemented into the workshop process for the purpose of teaching the candidates the importance of building relationships and communities. The overall theme from the instructor focus group was that the selection process needed to be readjusted.

Chapter VI

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

CANDIDATE FINDINGS vs. INSTRUCTOR FINDINGS

This chapter addresses the finding from both participant groups: candidates and instructors. The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast the data collected between the two groups.

The most notable similarity between the two groups is their comments about the RA Scenario activity. Sixty-eight percent (n=83) of the candidates were highly satisfied with the RA Scenario activity, illustrating a 4.69 average mean score. Candidates enjoyed the RA scenario activities because they were given the opportunity to confront semi-real situations in front the residence hall directors. A large majority of the instructors were also pleased with the RA Scenario activity. One instructor stated, "In my opinion, Act as an RA was the most liked activity in the workshop. Class participants really liked the opportunity of getting to simulate "real" RA scenarios."

Although both groups conveyed positive attitudes about the RA scenarios, the diversity activity evoked differing opinions. Several Instructors found that the diversity activity had an intimidating effect on a large portion of the candidates. These instructors offered comments such as; "Diversity (Week 3) was a tough week. Some of the candidates felt unfinished when the class period ended." And, "It was too early to share this sort of information. Candidates were still trying to bond and get a feel for the others in their class..." However, in contrast to the instructor's perceptions of the diversity activity, a number of candidates noted that the diversity activity was one of the more beneficial activities in the workshop. A female candidate shared, "The diversity programs

taught me how to deal with all types of people and how to have a better understanding of how people feel." On the Likert-type scale question rating the candidates' satisfaction of the activities conducted in the workshop, 63.9% (n=78) of the candidates were highly satisfied with *Wrong Side of the Tracks*, reporting a mean score of 4.39; indicating that several of them were highly satisfied with the activity. Even though a large majority of candidates found the diversity activity beneficial, a minor portion of the candidates agreed with the instructors, expressing feelings of intimidation with some of the activities. One candidate reported, "[I] did not like having to write down negative feelings or judgments; "slurs" on racial/ethnic attitudes about other people...it [the diversity activity] was intimidating because many people, like myself, felt that they could be judged based on their thoughts or views of other cultures."

Instructors and candidates agreed there should be more team building activities in the workshop course. Candidates expressed interest in having more of these activities because they felt that teamwork and communication were important components of the RA position. "The RA job seems to focus on communicating and building relationships with the residents on your floor...more activities associated with building quick relationships should be a part of the 5-week workshop." In agreement with the candidates, instructors supported more ice breakers and team building activities throughout the workshop process. Instructors articulated that ice breakers and team building activities help to build relationships, communities, and interpersonal communication skills. "I would have liked to see more team building activities in the 5-week workshop. It is important that candidates understand how important it is to work as a team...[and] understand how to communicate more effectively."

Both groups agreed that the five-week workshop format was a little shorter than they would have liked. Several candidates expressed feelings of being "rushed" through the process. They would have preferred a little more time to get acclimated to the entire process. "The workshop could have been a little longer. We were given a lot of information in a short period of time...it was hard to keep up during some of the harder information." Instructors reported that it was hard to truly evaluate the candidates during this short process. "I feel adding at least one week would be beneficial. Many directors/facilitators felt five weeks really wasn't enough time to get to know the candidates on a level we were comfortable with."

The two participant groups illustrated differing opinions in regard to conducting a workshop course longer than seven weeks or having two shorter sessions a week. A number of the candidates were in favor of having shorter sessions that met twice a week. However, the instructors, in general, did not favor the idea of seeing candidates twice a week. Members thought that it may be hard to schedule and overwhelm candidates. One instructor stated, "This idea may be two much for candidates; however, it may be appropriate for instructors. Candidates may become overwhelmed by a two times per week process and the amount of knowledge that they would have to obtain during this time period"

Regarding candidate preparedness for the interview, both groups offered similar opinions. Several candidates expressed how they would have liked more information about the interview and more time in class to discuss and prepare for the interview. One candidate's opinion was representative of the group. "I don't feel as if I was prepared for the interview as much as I could have been. The instructors could have provided more

helpful hints for general interviewing." Several instructors agreed that candidates need to be prepped in the workshop course for interviews. The general consensus was stated thusly, "Interviews preparation needs to be built into the workshop. At least give them more information about interview etiquette and dress. If they don't learn from the workshop and that are chosen as a new RA, the may not get the chance to get experience." Although many instructors agreed with the candidates in their lack of preparation for the interviews, this trend did not ring true in the results of the Likert-type questions for the instructors. Thirty-six percent (n=5) of the RA mentors were highly satisfied with the preparation of candidates for the interviews. In regards to the professional staff, 47.9% (n=6) rated the activity a 4, satisfied.

The candidate socials yielded similar responses from both the candidates and instructors. Several candidates expressed there distaste for the location in which the socials were held. One candidate reported, "The social was okay...I think that the groups were way too big...smaller groups with a better male/female mix. The location of the social was dark and very loud. Next years social needs to be in a larger room..." In agreement with the candidate participants, instructors had the same perceptions. Fourteen percent of the RA mentors and 21 percent of professional staff members were highly unsatisfied with the location of the candidate social. One instructor stated, "Seventh Street underground is not a good location to hold this type of social...the socials should be less structured and more open. Individuals should be able to go to the buildings that they want to see."

Chapter Summary

Chapter VI outlined the finding from both participant groups: candidates and instructors. The purpose of the chapter was to compare and contrast the finding between both participant groups. The most notable similarity between the two groups was their comments about the RA Scenario activity. Both the instructors and the candidates were highly satisfied with the activity. Although both groups conveyed positive attitudes about the RA scenarios, the diversity activity evoked differing opinions. Instructors found that the diversity activity had an intimidating effect on several candidates; however, a number of candidates noted that the diversity activity was beneficial to their overall development. Although, a large majority of candidates found the diversity activity beneficial, a minor portion of the candidates agreed with the instructors, and expressed feelings of intimidation with some of the activities. Both the Instructors and candidates agreed there should be more team building activities in the workshop course. Both groups articulated that ice breakers and team building activities help to build relationships, communities, and interpersonal communication skills. In addition, both groups agreed that the five-week workshop format was a little shorter than they would have liked. Candidates expressed feelings of being "rushed" through the process, and instructors reported that it was hard to truly evaluate the candidates during this short process.

The two participant groups illustrated differing opinions in regard to conducting a workshop course longer than seven weeks or having two shorter sessions a week. Several candidates favored having shorter sessions that met twice a week; however, instructors, in general, did not favor the idea of seeing candidates twice a week. The overall theme from both participants groups was the idea that the "voices" of both groups need to be heard in

order to design an efficient selection process conducive to the needs of all the parties

invested.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present project was two-fold: 1) to assess the perceptions of candidates' and instructors' regarding the five-week workshop and, 2) to generate potential recommendations from research participants for future resident assistant selection processes. The following research questions guided the present study: (1) What are the candidates' and instructors' perceptions of the overall selection process?; and (2) Were the goals of the five-week workshop accomplished by the newly hired resident assistants?

Research Question #1: What are the candidates' and instructors perceptions' of the overall selection process?

Data collected for the present study yielded some interesting finding. Instructors and candidates offered many similar and dissimilar responses to aspects of the overall selection process. Each group had different perceptions of each component of the overall process.

Candidates enjoyed many of the activities in the workshop, as well as the selection process in general. Candidates were highly satisfied with the *You are the RA Scenario* activity, rating it one of the most liked activities in the workshop. In addition to the *You are the RA Scenario* activity, candidates enjoyed the RA Panel and the *Rapid Fire* activity. Most candidates stated that several activities conducted in the workshop were beneficial and conducive to learning the job of a Resident Assistant. An overwhelming majority of RA candidates expressed that the five-week workshop

experience better prepared them for future leadership roles. They articulated that activities in the workshop helped to enhance and develop their interpersonal skills, and taught them effective and useful techniques for dealing with confrontations and mediation. In addition, RA candidates articulated that participating in the workshop coursed helped with the development of their time management and scheduling skills. Several candidates declared the diversity week as the most valuable during the workshop weeks. Specifically, they communicated learning about and working with different people helped to better prepare them for future leadership roles. Candidates also made several suggestions for activities to be implemented in future workshop courses. A re-occurring suggestion from a large majority of the candidates was the implementation of more teambuilding activities. These individuals believed that a significant factor of the RA position had to do with trusting others, and more team building activities would help to facilitate that process.

Similar to the survey, candidates in the focus group suggested the implementation of more team and relationship building activities. In addition, they also expressed favorable thoughts about the *RA Scenario* activity. Regarding the diversity activity, some candidates found the activity beneficial to their interpersonal development with others; while still others were disturbed by the use of racial insults and antics.

In response to candidates' perceptions on the workshop time and length, a vast majority of candidates admitted they would have liked shorter weekly workshop sections that met several times throughout the semester; rather than, a workshop course that lasted longer than seven weeks. In addition, candidates preferred the workshop to be held in the spring; in preference to the fall semester due to possible schedule conflicts. In addition to

possible scheduling conflicts, focus group members mentioned that individuals may not be mentally prepared to decide if they want to apply for the RA position that early in the school year. The perceptions of interview preparedness suggest that candidates would have preferred more information, and more time to better prepare for the interview during the workshop course.

Overall, the findings from both the candidate survey and the focus groups indicated positive perceptions about the entire selection process. Although the candidates' perceptions were primarily positive, there is opportunity for much improvement of the process. The responses indicate that although the candidates learned a great deal about the Resident Assistant position, they learned more about themselves.

The instructor's perceptions were very different from the candidates' perceptions of the overall selection process. The two most notable disparities between the candidate and instructor data were related to the diversity activity and the workshop length. While the quantitative data from the candidates suggested that 63.9% (n=78) were highly satisfied with the diversity activity in the workshop, the qualitative data of open-ended questions and focus group responses, from the instructors, were in opposition. This could be due in part to the open-ended nature of the qualitative questions. The "voices" of the instructors overwhelmingly indicated that a strong majority of the candidates felt intimated by the diversity activity in the workshop. The instructors were also concerned with the effectiveness of the diversity activity due to the lack of diversity among the candidates in several of the workshop classes. Some instructors felt they had to self-identify in order to provide some sense of diversity in their workshop courses.

In regards to the workshop length, qualitative data from the candidates suggests that a number of the candidates were in favor of having shorter sessions that met twice a week; instead of longer sessions held once per week. However, the instructors' qualitative data suggests that scheduling a session to see candidates twice a week would be overwhelming to candidates; they preferred to extend the workshop another week or two.

In congruence with the candidate findings, instructors from the focus group agreed that *RA Scenarios* and *Rapid Fire* activities were two of the most popular workshop activities among the candidates. In addition, instructors articulated the idea that *RA Scenario* activities gave candidates the opportunity to gain new experiences. Aside from similar responses regarding the most favorable workshop activities, the qualitative data from the instructors also indicated they agreed that candidates' needed more interview preparation in the workshop course. While the qualitative data affirmed the perceptions of the candidates, the quantitative survey data from the same group indicated otherwise. Seventy-seven percent of the instructors (RA mentors (35.7%) and Professional Staff (42.9%) were satisfied to highly satisfied with the interview preparation of the candidates, illustrating a discrepancy between the two methods of data collection for the instructors. There was also a small concern for the minority candidates, specifically African American males, and their lack of interviewing skills.

The underlying theme from the instructor findings was their perceptions or assumptions about what would be best for the candidates. The findings from this group suggest that their thoughts were not congruent with the feelings of the candidates about certain aspects of the process or the entire process. The findings from this group also

indicate that there is a huge inconsistency in the qualitative and quantitative data from this group.

Research Question #2: Were the goals of the five-week workshop accomplished by the newly hired resident assistants?

The goals of the five-week workshop for participants were as follows:

(1) be able to identify the basic components of effective communication and how to disseminate positive and constructive feedback to others; (2) be exposed to the diversity found on the Eastern Illinois University campus and within the world; (3) be able to develop a preliminary schedule for their personal lives, incorporating many of the elements found in student leadership, and (4) be able to work effectively in groups under most circumstances (Eastern Illinois University Resident Assistant Workshop Syllabus, 2005).

The candidate's perceptions suggest that the goals of the workshop course were achieved by the newly hired resident assistants. Candidates articulated how the workshop helped them to development skills in the areas of interpersonal and group communication, diversity awareness, conflict mediation and confrontation, time management and scheduling. Candidates not only learned the essential tools needed to be an effective Resident Assistant, but to be an effective student leader in the present and in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for student affairs practitioners and future researchers based on the findings of the present study.

Recommendations for Researchers

1. Future researchers could use a one-group pretest-posttest research design to evaluate the candidate's knowledge and perceptions of the Resident Assistant position prior to entering the workshop course, and their knowledge and perceptions after the workshop course.

2. Future researchers should design survey questions to compare and contrast the perceptions of the participant groups (i.e., *ask all participant groups the same questions*).

3. Future researchers should conduct a pilot test to help with the development of the quantitative survey instruments.

The 2005-2006 Resident Assistant selection process was evaluated immediately post the initiation of the five week workshop course. Although a program evaluation at this time had certain relevance, it will be helpful to evaluate the program again after it has been in existence for at least three years. Evaluating the recruitment program after three years will allow time for the entire organization to become acclimated to the program and for the changes that often occur in a program's infancy to be included. Because the present document was created following the 2006-2007 RA selection process, the following recommendations are presented for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the 2007-2008 Resident Assistant selection process:

1. Modify the mission, goals, and objectives of the entire Resident Assistant selection process, as well as the workshop portion of the process, to reflect those of a pure selection process; not a leadership course focusing on the development of on-campus leaders.

2. Modify the mission, goals, and objectives of the workshop course to reflect the modified mission of the entire RA selection process.

3. The workshop course should be conducted over a four-week time span. The entire process will began in the fall semester; however, the workshop portion will be conducted shortly after classes have reconvened during spring semester.

4. Implement more team building activities that reflect the modified mission of the workshop course. By implementing activities that reflect the modified mission of the workshop course, the amount of discussion and lecture type activities will be minimized; allowing instructors more opportunities to evaluate candidates on their performance versus educating them on protocol, policies, and procedures.

5. Implement more team building activities focusing on the importance of diversity in the residence halls versus diversity activities that focus on identifying the differences of the individuals participating in the workshop course.

6. The modified version of the process calls for greater focus on a selection process than a leadership development process as instructors should take more time to prep candidates for the interview. Several candidates may not have previously gone through a formal interview process such as this; it would benefit them to get tips on dress, etiquette, and other components of interviewing. The professional staff instructors and the RA mentors should

conduct simulations of interviews in front of the class to give candidates an idea about the questions and the set-up of their own interviews.

7. Interviews should be conducted over a two day time span. This would decrease the amount of fatigue experienced by the professional staff and residence assistants as a result of continuous interviewing for eight hours in one day.

8. Candidate socials should be held in one of the ballrooms in the University Union for spacing reasons. The males and females should be split into two separate groups and each building limited to a maximum of six resident assistants.

9. During the selection process professional staff members should be required to complete their candidate preference lists prior to the selection meeting. A professional staff member on the RA Search committee will collect lists from the professional staff members as they enter the meeting and proceed to hang the lists on a bulletin board for all current staff to review. This may hinder individuals from changing their list after they have viewed the lists of other residence hall directors.

10. In order to provide validity to the assessment of the overall selection process, it is recommended that E.I.U. Housing and Dining department continue with the development of the selection process for "x" number of weeks instead of altering the number of weeks based on participant feedback. It is further recommended that the search committee and the housing department adopt one structure for the process for the next three years. During those three years,

department staff should continuously assess the overall workshop course and its activities without altering the number of weeks for the workshop course.

The above recommendations should be implemented only with the support of the E.I.U. Housing and Dining Department and led by staff members who have both the time and desire to comment to the selection process. Therefore, it is further recommended that the Housing and Dinning Department continue to hire dedicated, responsible, and passionate individuals to facilitate the workshop course and to assist with the overall selection process. Given the level of commitment, attitude towards positive change, and passion that Eastern housing employees have for the selection program, there is no doubt that the selection process will continue to improve indefinitely.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CHARACTERISTICS OF ENROLLMENTS AT ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
FALL 2005

TABLE I-2

CURRENT ENROLLMENT DATA

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENROLLMENTS AT ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BY LOCATION OF INSTRUCTION, LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION, AND ATTENDANCE STATUS, FALL 2005

Institution	Total Enrollment	Off-Campus	Under-graduate	Graduate			Full-Time	Part-Time
				Professional	Other	Total		
Public Universities								
Chicago State University	7,131	290	5,160	0	1,971	1,971	3,867	3,264
Eastern Illinois University	12,129	1,110	10,375	0	1,754	1,754	9,904	2,225
Governors State University	5,405	529	2,632	0	2,773	2,773	1,373	4,032
Illinois State University	20,653	388	17,858	0	2,795	2,795	17,789	2,864
Northeastern Illinois University	12,227	194	9,418	0	2,809	2,809	5,674	6,553
Northern Illinois University	25,208	2,605	18,467	333	6,408	6,741	19,002	6,206
Western Illinois University	13,404	2,127	11,284	0	2,120	2,120	11,083	2,321
Southern Illinois University								
S I U - Carbondale	21,441	2,529	16,697	673	4,071	4,744	17,297	4,144
S I U - Edwardsville	13,460	251	10,945	283	2,232	2,515	10,152	3,308
Total	34,901	2,780	27,642	956	6,303	7,259	27,449	7,452
University of Illinois								
U of I - Chicago	24,812	459	15,150	2,258	7,404	9,662	20,214	4,598
U of I - Springfield	4,517	1,139	2,634	0	1,883	1,883	2,043	2,474
U of I - Urbana/Champaign	41,938	1,344	30,909	1,029	10,000	11,029	38,631	3,307
Total	71,267	2,942	48,693	3,287	19,287	22,574	60,888	10,379
Total Public Universities	202,325	12,965	151,529	4,576	46,220	50,796	157,029	45,296

Source: Fall Enrollment Survey

APPENDIX B
ON-CAMPUS HOUSING STATISTICS FOR
ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING STATISTICS FOR
ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Name of Institution	Housing Capacity	Total Residential Units
Chicago State University	3330	3330
Eastern Illinois University	5527	4721
Governors State University	X	X
Illinois State University	4161	6972
Northeastern Illinois University	X	X
Northern Illinois University	6282	6722
Western Illinois University	5239	8131
Southern Illinois University – Carbondale	5537	1516
Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville	2984	2761
University of Illinois – Chicago	3104	335
University of Illinois – Springfield	860	10251
University of Illinois – Champaign/Urbana	10232	4400

*X – no on-campus housing

*Information taken from the 2006 Association of College & University Housing Officers – International Membership Directory

APPENDIX C
DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PROGRAMMING

DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PROGRAMMING

Annual Programs Sponsored By EIU Housing & Dining

> Beyond Words – Museum of Oppression
> SAP – Student Affairs Prep Program
> Charleston Chew
> Faculty Fellows

Student Conference Supported By EIU Housing & Dining

> IRHA – Illinois Residence Hall Association
> ISRA – Illinois State Resident Assistant Association
> UNI – University of Northern Iowa Conference
> GLACURH – Great Lakes Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls
> NUCURH - National Association of College and University Residence Hall
> Student Affairs 101

APPENDIX D
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY RESIDENT ASSISTANT APPLICATION
(Completed by RA Candidates)

Housing & Dining Services
Eastern Illinois University
Resident Assistant Application for Positions during 2006-2007

To: Potential Resident Assistant

From: The Resident Assistant Search Committee

Date: Today, the day you decided you wanted to make a difference

Re: The Resident Assistant (RA) application process

Thank you for your interest in the Resident Assistant position!

The RA position is one of the best opportunities you can have while you are in college; it is one of the most sought after student leadership positions at Eastern. No other type of position will give you the range of exposure to skill sets that are needed in your job search and future career after college. The RA position provides real-life experiences in working with and helping other people, conflict resolution, team building and many others. Employers are seeking these skills!

The department's hiring process for RAs includes successful completion of a non-credit, spring semester workshop taken *prior* to RA Selection. There is no other "class-like" requirement of this position. It is our hope that you will be better prepared to take on this challenging position after completing the workshop. If you are not selected for the RA position, completion of this workshop provides you with some valuable skills that can make you a better student leader in the future.

Take your time and look over everything. If you look at the information carefully before completing the application, it will help answer many of your questions about the position and the application process. Please take your time when filling out the application and related materials. You will be contacted *after* the application deadline has passed to be informed of your status as a candidate in the process. The application deadline is:

8:00 pm, Friday, November 18, 2005.

This packet includes a checklist that will help you track all the required parts of the application process. Please follow the checklist closely. When you turn in a completed application and related materials, you are placed in the "candidate pool" along with other candidates applying for the position. You will be contacted after the deadline has passed and you will be asked to provide your spring semester class schedule and you will be asked to rank order your preferences for which section of the RA Workshop will fit best

with your schedule. Before the end of the fall semester you will be scheduled for one of the workshop sections. Once you provide your spring semester schedule and RA Workshop section ranking form, it is expected that you will not change your schedule or otherwise create conflicts with the RA Workshop. Once your ranking form is processed it may not be possible to assign you to a different section later.

If you have any questions please consult your hall director. You may also contact Doug Howell, Chair of the RA Search Committee at 217-581-7701 with questions or for further assistance.

Housing & Dining Services

Eastern Illinois University
Resident Assistant Application for Positions During 2006-2007

Full Name (first, middle initial, last)_____ **Last 4 Digits of SSN** _xxx - xx - xxxx_____

Date of Application:_____ Class Rank (check one): FR SO JR SR GR
Cumulative GPA:____

University Address:_____ Phone:_____Cell Phone:_____

Home Address (street, city, state, zip):_____Phone (incl. area code):_____

Primary Email Address:_____Eastern Email Address:_____

Major(s):_____ Minor(s):_____

Credit hours earned to date:__ Credit hours this semester:__Semester and year you should graduate:_____

Including this semester, how many semesters have you lived in Residence Halls: (EIU)__
_____ (Other)_____

How many semesters are you interested in holding the RA position: _____

In what semester and year would you have an internship, study abroad, student teaching, etc. (if any):_____

How did you find out about the RA application process:_____
_____

RAs are hired for their individual skills and talents and are placed in the buildings and floors where those skills and talents can best be utilized. However, if the department needs to take into account anything during the placement process please list it below (i.e. elevator access, smoking floor, other medically necessary consideration). Note: you may

be asked to provide adequate documentation.

_____

_____

Housing References: List below one Resident Assistant and one Hall Director who can serve as a reference for you in your application process. Note: these people must know you and be willing and able to provide a reference for you (ask them in advance).

Name:_____   Name:_____
Title:_____   Title_____

Complete the Checklist and other required items before submitting application!
Resident Assistant Checklist for Positions During 2006-2007

Full Name (first, middle initial, last)_____**Last 4 Digits of SSN** xxx - xx - _____

✓ here

Please check the following. When all items are checked, sign the bottom of this form.

☐ I have read and understand the RA Job Description, the memo at the beginning of the application packet, and other information provided with the application.

☐ I will be a full-time EIU student (registered for 12 credit hours or more) in the spring semester. If hired, I will be a full-time EIU student during my term of employment (note: Lakeland College of Nursing students are not eligible).

☐ I plan to have 27 credit hours by the start of **NEXT** fall semester.

☐ I understand that I must have a cumulative GPA of 2.25 or higher when grades are posted at the end of this fall semester, and if hired, for my term of employment. (NOTE: Applicants with GPAs of 2.24 or lower when fall grades are posted will **not** be considered for employment, or scheduled into an RA workshop.)

☐ I am in good judicial standing with the University. If not, explain:_____
_____

☐ I completed the application form providing full and complete information, to the best of my knowledge, as of the date indicated.

☐ I talked with my two Housing References (one RA and one Hall Director) and they are willing to serve as references for me.

☐ **I completed (typed on a separate sheet of paper) a one page cover letter introducing myself, explaining who I am, why I applied, what I expect out of the position, etc.**

☐ **I completed (typed on a separate sheet of paper) a one page resume detailing**

my work, education and extra-curricular highlights.

☐ I have <u>simply stapled</u> my application packet together in preparation for it to be turned in (**<u>all items are typed</u>**, application form on top, followed by this checklist, then my cover letter and finally my resume – no other items are included).

☐ I have turned in my completed application packed to a Residence Hall Front Desk or the Housing Office by the deadline of **8:00pm, Friday, November 18, 2005**.

Signature _____   Date _____

APPENDIX E
RESIDENT ASSISTANT CANDIDATE SELF-EVALUATION
(Completed by RA Candidates)

RA Candidate Self-Evaluation

RA Candidate Name: _____   Date of Evaluation:

_____

Workshop Instructor Names:

_____

Candidate Strengths:

Candidate Areas for Improvement:

Other Comments:

APPENDIX F
RESIDENT ASSISTANT CANDIDATE SURVEY
(Completed by RA Candidates)

Name: _____   Resident Assistant Candidate Survey

1. Why did you apply for the Resident Assistant position?

2. What excites you most about the RA position?

3. What makes you the most nervous about getting the RA position?

4. What do you hope to gain from this RA Workshop experience?

5. As instructors, what can we do to help you in this process?

6. What are a few things that you believe set you apart from other RA applicants?

APPENDIX G
RESIDENT ASSISTANT CANDIDATE WORKSHOP EVALUATION
(completed by Professional Staff and RA Mentors)

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
R.A. CANDIDATE WORKSHOP EVALUATION
OVERALL GROUP PROCESS

CANDIDATE: _____   **DATE:** _____

EVALUATOR: _____

Your comments about the candidate will be very valuable during the selection process, so please write down any information that you find relevant about the candidate. Please provide a numerical assessment of the candidate.

1- *untrainable, not ready at this time, 2- needs extra assistance and "significant" training, 3-needs the training that we will provide, good potential 4-could start job right now, transition easily, exceeds in knowledge of area.*

COMMENTS ON COMMUNICATION/INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

Listening, eye contact, getting to the point, presentation skills, non-verbals, how they relate to others, involving/inviting they are	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS:

Directness, leader or follower, responsibility, dependability, passiveness, team work	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON OPENNESS AND DEVELOPMENT:

Inclusiveness, approachability, reaction to diversity, maturity of thought.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON CREATIVITY AND INITIATIVE

Willing to provide new ideas, thinking outside of the box, engaging personality, diversity of ideas, accepting of brainstorming	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON COMMITMENT TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION

Responsibilities, realistic view & understanding, time management, ability to work on a team.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON SELF-CONFIDENCE AND ASSERTIVENESS:

Group interaction, confidence, assertive or aggressive, domination of group	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

COMMENTS ON CHARACTER:

Character, Integrity, and Maturity	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

TOTAL SCORE	

Based on Group Process 1 through 3:

	I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE (24-28)
	I RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE (18-23)
	I RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE WITH THE RESERVATIONS STATED ABOVE (13-17)
	THIS CANDIDATE IS NOT READY AT THIS TIME (SEE COMMENTS & OVERALL IMPRESSION) (BELOW13)

Overall Comments:

APPENDIX H
RESIDENT ASSISTANT INTERVIEW EVALUATION
(completed by professional and RA staff)

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
R.A. CANDIDATE INTERVIEW EVALUATION
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

CANDIDATE: _____ DATE: _____

EVALUATOR: _____

Please provide a numerical assessment of the candidate: 1- untrainable, not ready at this time, 2-needs extra assistance and "significant" training, 3-needs the training that we will provide, good potential 4-could start the job right now, transition easily, exceeds in knowledge of area. Your comments about the candidate will be very valuable during the selection process. Write down any relevant information about the candidate gained from the interview.

QUALIFICATIONS	DESCRIPTION	USE DESCRIPTIONS ABOVE TO DETERMINE WHICH NUMBER TO SELECT FOR EACH QUALIFICATION. EVALUATE FAIR & HONEST ACCORDING TO THIS SCALE.			
UNDERSTANDING OF R.A. POSITION	*Duties & responsibilities, time commitment, adaptability, enthusiasm.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
COMMENTS:					
PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	*Creativity, originality, teamwork, assessment of students' needs.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
COMMENTS:					
SELF AWARENESS	*Maturity, knowledge of strengths & limitations, personal development, compassion.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
COMMENTS:					

LEADERSHIP SKILLS & EXPERIENCE	_Dependable, responsible, initiative, professionalism, role model, campus involvement._	_1_	_2_	_3_	_4_

COMMENTS:

DIVERSITY	_Open minded, knowledge of diversity issues, pervious experiences._	_1_	_2_	_3_	_4_

COMMENTS:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	_Confidence, assertiveness, approachability, listening skills, articulation._	_1_	_2_	_3_	_4_

COMMENTS:

OVERALL IMPRESSION	_General opinion of the candidate._	_1_	_2_	_3_	_4_

COMMENTS:

	TOTAL SCORE	

Based on the individual interview:

	I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE (24-28)
	I RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE (18-23)
	I RECOMMEND THIS CANDIDATE WITH THE RESERVATIONS STATED ABOVE (13-17)
	THIS CANDIDATE IS NOT READY AT THIS TIME (SEE COMMENTS & OVERALL IMPRESSION) (BELOW 13)

APPENDIX I
RESIDENT ASSISTANT SELECTION ORDER
2005-2006

RA Selection Meeting Order of Selection

Females

Round 1	Everyone	Candidate Selected
Carman	55.56%	_____
McKinney*	50.00%	_____
Lawson*	50.00%	_____
Ford*	50.00%	_____
Lincoln*	50.00%	_____
Weller*	50.00%	_____
Pemberton*	50.00%	_____
Andrews*	50.00%	_____
Taylor	40.00%	_____

* Tie broken by random draw

Round 2	44.44%	
Carman (2)*		_____

Round 3	37.50%	
Andrews (2)		_____

Round 4	33.33%	
Pemberton (2)* **		_____
Lawson (2)* **		_____
Carman (3)**		_____

* Tie broken by reverse alpha order
** Tie broken by # of picks already made

Round 5	25.00%	
Lincoln (2)*		_____
Andrews (3)*		_____

* Tie broken by # of picks already made

Round 6	22.22%	
Carman (4)		_____

Round 7	20.00%	
Taylor (2)		_____

Round 8	16.67%	
Lawson (3)*		_____
Pemberton (3)*		_____

* Tie broken by reverse of last tied round

Round 9	12.50%	
Andrews (4)		_____

Round 10	11.11%	
Carman (5)		

Males

Round 1	Everyone
Douglas	66.67%
Stevenson*	50.00%
Ford*	50.00%
McKinney*	50.00%
Thomas	37.50%
Carman	25.00%
Taylor	16.67%

* Tie broken by random draw

Round 2	50.00%
Douglas (2)	

Round 3	33.33%
Douglas (3)	

Round 4	25.00%
Thomas (2)*	
Stevenson (2)*	

*Tie broken by reverse alpha order

Round 5	16.67%
Douglas (4)	

Round 6	12.50%
Carman (2)*	
Thomas (3)*	

* Tie broken by # of picks already made

APPENDIX J
HIRE LETTER
2005-2006

February 24, 2006

Rachel Morgan
818 Andrews Hall
Charleston, IL 61920

Dear _____,

Congratulations! On behalf of the Office of University Housing & Dining Services, we would like to offer you a position as a Resident Assistant for the 2006-2007 school year in *name of residence hall*. Your employment as an Resident Assistant is contingent upon:

1. To accept (or decline) the RA position, you must contact me sometime before Tuesday, February 28, 2006 at 10:00AM. I may be reached by calling 581-7701, leave a message if I am not in my office when you call or you can e-mail me at drhowell@eiu.edu. If I do not hear from you by this deadline this offer may be rescinded and the position may be offered to another candidate.

2. At the start of the fall 2006 semester, your EIU cumulative GPA must be 2.25 or higher, and you must have at least 27 credit hours completed toward graduation. You must also be enrolled as a full time Eastern Illinois University student.

3. You will need to complete student worker authorization paperwork as well as sign the RA Contract. More information will be given to you later about this process.

4. You will need to attend the in hall welcoming/training sessions that are arranged by the director staff of your new building. More information will be provided by your new director staff.

5. You must report back to campus on August 6, 2006 for fall semester Student Staff Training. This is a requirement for all Resident Assistants. You will be allowed to return to campus on August 5th, and training will begin on the 6th. More detailed information will be forthcoming.

When you register for classes for fall 2006, you must keep the 3:15-5:00pm time slot on Thursdays open. We will be using this time for staff meetings and departmental staff development. If you foresee an unavoidable class conflict with this time, you will need to talk to your new supervisor as soon as possible.

Your compensation for the RA position is a monthly stipend of $130.00, as well as room and board. Your total package is valued at over $9,400 for the year. Be aware that with our increased occupancy, it is possible that RAs may have a roommate for some or all of the year. If you receive financial aid, we encourage you to talk to a financial aid advisor to determine your financial aid status.

We are excited to have you on the team. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 581-7701 or drhowell@eiu.edu. After you have contacted me to accept the position, I encourage you to contact the director staff in your new building.

Sincerely,

Chair, Resident Assistant Search Committee

APPENDIX K
STUDENT CHARATERISTIC DATA
FALL 2005

TABLE II-9 (CONTINUED)
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC DATA
BACHELOR DEGREE ENROLLMENTS BY GENDER, RACE, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION, FALL 2005

	Black Non-Hispanic		Am.Indian /Alaskan		White Non-Hispanic		Asian or Pacific Islander		Hispanic		Non-Resident Alien		No Indication		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Public Universities																
Chicago State University	1,163	3,294	2	3	84	60	17	20	106	222	14	21	55	99	1,441	3,719
Eastern Illinois University	315	424	10	12	3,685	5,176	61	56	126	133	31	17	159	170	4,387	5,988
Governors State University	199	748	3	4	413	879	12	19	41	112	4	6	80	112	752	1,880
Illinois State University	375	729	21	26	6,427	8,629	124	176	261	337	69	80	304	300	7,581	10,277
Northeastern Illinois University	372	739	10	10	1,618	2,511	412	557	917	1,800	76	90	120	156	3,555	5,863
Northern Illinois University	822	1,474	26	23	6,439	6,700	563	452	563	651	84	62	321	287	8,818	9,649
S I U - Carbondale	1,350	1,384	47	35	6,670	4,846	206	127	341	243	183	135	544	271	9,341	7,041
S I U - Edwardsville	380	722	12	20	4,263	5,035	101	94	93	91	79	55	0	0	4,928	6,017
U of I - Chicago	426	934	14	23	3,250	3,311	1,801	1,878	1,058	1,441	91	119	408	396	7,048	8,102
U of I - Springfield	60	170	5	6	846	1,249	32	36	23	32	12	5	74	84	1,052	1,582
U of I - Urbana/Champaign	797	1,227	48	40	11,066	9,751	2,216	1,676	1,016	947	910	529	372	242	16,425	14,412
Western Illinois University	341	433	11	18	4,714	4,482	94	60	218	210	61	59	352	231	5,791	5,493
Total Public Universities	6,600	12,278	209	220	49,475	52,629	5,669	5,151	4,763	6,219	1,614	1,178	2,789	2,348	71,119	80,023
Independent NFP Institutions																
Augustana College	21	29	2	5	917	1,263	20	33	29	44	9	14	0	0	998	1,388
Aurora University	66	191	1	4	503	859	16	32	58	162	0	2	6	7	650	1,257
Benedictine University	56	103	4	2	376	526	133	179	60	93	8	15	234	355	871	1,273
Blackburn College	26	18	1	1	235	271	2	3	2	4	6	2	15	19	287	318
Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing	0	4	0	1	6	125	1	7	0	1	0	0	7	59	14	197
Bradley University	91	211	2	4	2,055	2,496	74	84	50	76	37	21	82	86	2,391	2,978
Brisk Rabbinical College	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Chicago Baptist Institute	127	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	127	46
Christian Life College	0	2	0	0	14	16	2	7	4	0	10	7	0	1	30	33
Columbia College Chicago	617	826	44	27	3,315	3,216	153	163	446	485	86	87	303	335	4,964	5,139
Concordia University	36	50	0	0	271	478	6	9	21	49	0	0	38	74	372	660
DePaul University	434	1,016	9	34	3,941	4,811	659	668	707	1,241	127	82	425	554	6,302	8,436
Dominican University	26	70	0	1	264	589	8	28	68	182	7	15	35	40	408	925
East-West University	222	430	3	12	11	11	4	6	47	66	61	33	4	5	352	563
Elmhurst College	59	100	1	2	710	1,337	30	58	51	111	10	9	86	127	947	1,744
Eureka College	17	13	1	0	206	277	2	3	6	3	3	6	0	0	235	302
Greenville College	57	34	4	4	441	565	6	2	14	10	9	4	23	42	554	661
Hebrew Theological College	0	0	0	0	56	352	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	352
Illinois Baptist College	3	2	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	20	5
Illinois College	14	18	0	1	437	503	5	3	6	2	9	11	7	14	478	552
Illinois Institute of Technology	68	47	2	7	832	238	222	86	104	47	248	94	170	51	1,646	570

APPENDIX L
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERISTY
HOUSING AND DINING SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW CHART

EIU – University Housing & Dining Services

Vice President Student Affairs
Daniel Nadler

Director, University Housing & Dining Services
Mark Hudson

Housing Administrator II
Janet Werden

Housing Administrator I, Christie Pinnell
OSA II, Susie Nees, (1/2 HO, 1/2 JA)

Director, University Dining Services
Jody Horn, RD

Graduate Assistant

OSSI
Karen Guthridge

Associate Director Dining Services
Susan Giobert

Panther Catering
Kristen Cann, Assistant Director
Karla Drunn, OSA II
Aaron DeRoasse FSAS
Bruce Perrin, FSAS

University Food Court
Sandy Black, Assistant Director
Cook (2), FSW 3 (4), Supervisors
(2), Cash Reg. Op. (2)

Assistant Director of Dining Services
Jamie Buckstead, Sheila Poffinbarger
Brian Schneider, Mary Lou Beals

Clerical
Kathy Murphy, Cheryl Jackson
Administrative Clerks
Carol Ropp, OSAII,
Lisa Hugg, OSAIII

Cooks
Kitchen Laborers (47)

Associate Director University Housing & Dining Services (Facilities) Mark Shaklee

Assistant Director for Business Operations
Sehr Saghir

Accounting Budget
Cathy Frazier - Accountant
Vacant - Chief Clerk
Rose Clapp-Account Tech 1
Sandy Hundley - Account Tech 1

Liaison with Facilities
Planning and Management

Coin Machine Mechanic
Mike Drake

LAN Support Specialist
Cord Hackett

Communication Network
Specialist, Dan Wilson

Building Service Manager
Steve Gilbert

Building Service Supervisors
Kevin Larkin, Val Leonard

Subforman Positions (10)

Building Service Workers
(57)

Facilities/Residential Life
Julia Avalt, OSSII

Assistant Director, Residential Life
Jody Stone

Conference Coordinator
Matt Boyer

Complex Director for
Carman Hall
Bill Kolacek

Terrence Brooks, Resident Director

Associate Resident Directors (2)
Resident Assistants (17)
Vacant/Carman-G.C., HS

Area Director, Amy Price

South Quad - Resident Directors
Julie Kendall, Andrews/Weller Halls
Doug Howell, Thomas/Ford Halls
Tracy Cunningham, Taylor/Pemberton Halls
Quiana Stone, Lawson/McKinney Halls

Associate Resident Directors (8)
Resident Assistants (50)
Betty Easter, Thomas Hall, Sue Carroll, Andrews
Hall, Louise McCrary, Triad, Cindy Sowers,
Lawson Hall, Sharon Curry, Taylor - H.S.'s

Housing Administrator I
Susan Mathews

Complex Director for
Lincoln, Stevenson & Douglas
Michelle Hopper

Associate Resident Directors (3)
Resident Assistants (16)
Lindsey Hunter-LSD H.S.

Assistant Director Apartment & Contract, Administration & Marketing
Kelly Miller

Marketing/Promotions
Chad Franks

University Apartments/
Marketing
Graduate Assistant (1)

Bob Dudolski
Director of Greek Life
Associate Resident Directors (5)
Peer Advisors (4)

Resident Director, Doris Hamilton
Building Mechanic Foreman, Wayne Chism
Building Mechanic, Gary Titus

University Court/Marketing
Graduate Assistants (2)

6/07/05

APPENDIX M
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
HOUSING [RESIDENCE LIFE]

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

HOUSING [RESIDENCE LIFE] SECTOR ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW CHART

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Vice-President of  │
                    │   Student Affairs    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Director of University │
                    │ Housing & Dinning Services │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Assistant Director of │
                    │   Residence Life     │
                    └─────────────────────┘
```

Complex Director Carman Hall	Area Coordinator		Complex Director Stevenson Complex	

- RD Carmen
- RD Taylor
- RD Lawson
- RD Thomas
- RD Thomas

- 2 ARDs

- 1 ARD Taylor
- 1 ARD Pemberton
- 1 ARD Lawson
- 1 ARD McKinney
- 1 ARD Andrews
- 1 ARD Weller
- 1 ARD Thomas
- 1 ARD Ford

- RAs

3 ARDs
Douglas Hall
Lincoln Hall
Stevenson Hall

- RAs

APPENDIX N
EASTERN ILLIONIS UNIVERSITY
RESIDENT ASSISTANT EMPLOYEES BY RESIDENCE HALL ASSIGNMENT
2005 - 2006

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERISTY
RESIDENT ASSISTANT EMPLOYED AND HALL CAPACITY
2005 - 2006

Residence Halls	Normal Capacity	Female RA Staff Members	Male RA Staff Members
Andrews Hall	480 (female)	8	
Carmen Hall	432 (female) / 384 (male)	8	9
Douglas Hall	200 (male)	6	
Ford Hall	72 (female) / 78 (male)	2	2
Lawson Hall	480 (female)	6	
Lincoln Hall	200 (female)	4	
McKinney Hall	72 (female) / 78 (male)	2	2
Pemberton Hall	215 (female)	6	
Taylor Hall	248 (female) / 352 (male)	5	5
Thomas Hall	438 (male)	8	
Weller Hall	72 (female) / 78 (male)	2	2
Stevenson Tower	376 (male & female)	8	

APPENDIX O
RESIDENT ASSISTANT *CANDIDATE* WORKSHOP EVAULATION

**Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop
Evaluation**

1. In this workshop, what prepared you for future leadership roles?

2. What aspects of this workshop provided you with adequate information about the role of a Resident Assistant and the Resident Assistant selection process?

3. Please rate each activity's overall satisfaction:

1 - Highly unsatisfied, 2 – unsatisfied, 3 – unsure/neutral, 4 – satisfied, 5 - highly satisfied

Week 1: Rapid Fire Questioning	1	2	3	4	5
Week 1: Toxic Waste	1	2	3	4	5
Week 2: I, But, And	1	2	3	4	5
Week 2: Non Verbals Worksheet	1	2	3	4	5
Week 2: Fishbowl Handouts and Activity	1	2	3	4	5
Week 3: Wrong Side of the Tracks	1	2	3	4	5
Week 3: Values Agree/Disagree	1	2	3	4	5
Week 5: Time Management	1	2	3	4	5
Week 5: You are the RA Scenarios	1	2	3	4	5

4. Which activities were the most beneficial to you throughout the RA workshop? Explain.

5. What ideas do you have for future topics or activities that should be implemented in future RA workshops?

APPENDIX P
RESIDENT ASSISTANT WORKSHOP *INSTRUCTOR* EVAULATION

Resident Assistant Candidate Workshop
Instructor Evaluation

1. Have you participated in the candidate workshop before this year?   YES   NO

(Please mark by bolding font.)

If no, go ahead to question 2.

If yes, were you a participant or instructor?
Do you think there are topics or activities we covered in the past that should have been included this year? Explain.

2. Did you like this year's five week format?

Comments/Suggestions:

3. Did you find the new website format useful?

Comments/Suggestions:

4. Were there any challenges you found with the website format?

Comments/Suggestions:

5. Did you feel lessons were well planned? Were activities planned for the appropriate weeks?

Comments/Suggestions:

6. As an instructor do you feel that you were well informed and trained for the position?

Comments/Suggestions:

7. What activities were well received within your workshop?

8. Candidates really enjoyed the RA scenarios and requested more time for activities such as this. How did facilitate these activities?

Comments/Suggestions:

9. Do you have ideas for future topics or activities that should be implemented for future RA workshops?

10. The Interview Day
Please rank the following aspects of the interview day, on the 1-5 scale and give feedback about this process.

1 - Highly unsatisfied, 2 – unsatisfied, 3 – unsure/neutral, 4 – satisfied, 5 - highly satisfied

(Please mark by bolding font.)

Preparation of Interviewers/Evaluators	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation of Candidates	1	2	3	4	5
Location	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Times	1	2	3	4	5

Comment/Suggestions:

11. The Socials
Please rank the following aspects of the socials, on the 1-5 scale and give feedback about this process.

1 - Highly unsatisfied, 2 – unsatisfied, 3 – unsure/neutral, 4 – satisfied, 5 - highly satisfied

(Please mark by bolding font.)

Location	1	2	3	4	5
Set up	1	2	3	4	5
Signs/Decorations	1	2	3	4	5
Times	1	2	3	4	5
Organization of candidates	1	2	3	4	5

Comment/Suggestions:

12. Did you find the selection meeting process to be well organized?

13. Additional comments about your experience as an instructor or suggestions for selection process.

APPENDIX Q
CORRESPONDENCE TO WORKSHOP INSTRUCTORS AND RA MENTORS
WITH SURVEY ATTACHMENT

Hello there!

Greetings from the RA Selection Committee!

First of all, thank you for your participation in the RA Workshop. I am so glad you all volunteered. We really appreciate your hard work and all the time you have devoted to EIU's community. You are all wonderful and did a great job!

We would like your feedback about the candidate process and the RA Workshop so we can improve this process. Attached is a survey about the workshop we would like you to fill out.

Please fill out the survey attached and e-mail it back to me by **Friday, March 24th**.

Be honest and detailed, your name is not on the survey. ☐ If you would rather fill this out and turn in a paper copy you can. Please turn paper copies in to my mailbox in the housing office, however e-mail is preferred.

Thank you so much for your time!

Hope you all had a wonderful break!

PS- I also sent a copy of this survey to RAs who served as instructors so please remind any RAs you supervise to check their EIU e-mail accounts. ☐ Thanks!

APPENDIX R
INVITATION TO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION PROFESSIONAL STAFF

First E-mail

Please attend (and remind your RAs who were RA mentors) about the focus groups.

Tuesday OR Wednesday (4/11 and 12) both at 7pm in the Thomas Hall Classroom.

Please RSVP as to which one you will be attending to Mary Kate so we can have an idea of who to expect when. Thanks.

Follow up E-mail

Hi everyone,

We had a good discussion tonight about the RA workshop. If you didn't join us tonight, please be sure to attend tomorrow night (Wednesday) at 7pm in the Thomas Classroom. Encourage any RA Mentors to attend who didn't tonight. Let me know if you have any questions.

APPENDIX S
INVITATION TO FOCUS GROUP
NEWLY HIRED RESIDENT ASSISTANTS

Dear _____,

I am pleased to announce an exciting opportunity for you as a newly hired Resident Assistant for next year. The RA Search Committee will be conducting a Focus Group Roundtable Discussion in an effort to gain feedback from you about the selection process, including the RA Workshop.

Please plan to attend if you are free on Wednesday, April 19, 2006 from 7-8:30pm. The session will be held in the basement of Thomas Hall. I ask that you reply to me so that you can RSVP for this event.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact me at this e-mail address or at 555-5555.

Thanks for your participation in an effort to make the RA Selection process better!

Sincerely,

APPENDIX T
PROFESSIONAL STAFF FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Pro staff Instructor Focus Group

Question Guide for facilitator

Part I   20-30 minutes

1. What are your opinions about the 5 week long session?
2. Would it be feasible to have two shorter sessions a week?
3. Do you feel activities such as the RA scenarios are beneficial to the candidates?
4. Were the diversity activities effective?
5. Should there be more team building and ice breaker activities?
6. Should we have more information about the actual job description of being an RA to prepare them for the job and the department?
7. How much time did you spend in your workshop lecturing?
8. How much time was spent in your workshop interacting and discussing?
9. Do you feel that candidates were prepared for the interview?
10. Should the socials be more structured and tailored to each building?

Part II   30-40 minutes

11. What was the role of the RA Mentors in your class?
12. What role should the RA Mentor have in the class?

"If you were Jody Stone" . . . describe how things should be done from start to finish

13. How would you organize the application process?
14. How would you organize the RA info sessions?
    When would they be?
    Where would they be?

15. How would you organize the workshop?
    Its length?
    The activities we included?
    What would you want to add/take out?

16. How would you plan the socials?
    Where would they be?
    How would they be set up?

17. How would you make the placement meeting better and more fair?

APPENDIX U
RESIDENT ASSISTANT MENTORS FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

RA Mentor Instructor Focus Group

Question Guide for facilitator

Part I   20-30 minutes

1.   What are your opinions about the 5 week long session?
2.   Would it be feasible to have two shorter sessions a week?
3.   Do you feel activities such as the RA scenarios are beneficial to the candidates?
4.   Were the diversity activities effective?
5.   Should there be more team building and ice breaker activities?
6.   Should we have more information about the actual job description of being an RA to prepare them for the job and the department?
7.   How much time did you spend in your workshop lecturing?
8.   How much time was spent in your workshop interacting and discussing?
9.   Do you feel that candidates were prepared for the interview?
10.   Should the socials be more structured and tailored to each building?

Part II   30-40 minutes

11.   What was the role of the RA Mentors in your class?
12.   What role should the RA Mentor have in the class?

"If you were Jody Stone" . . . describe how things should be done from start to finish

13.   How would you organize the application process?
14.   How would you organize the RA info sessions?
        When would they be?
        Where would they be?

15.   How would you organize the workshop?
        Its length?
        The activities we included?
        What would you want to add/take out?

16.   How would you plan the socials?
        Where would they be?
        How would they be set up?

17.   How would you make the placement meeting better and more fair?

APPENDIX V
NEWLY HIRED RESIDENT ASSISTANT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP – RA Panel

1. Should there be more team building and ice breaker activities?
2. How did you like the diversity activities?
3. Did you feel comfortable sharing during these activities?
4. Did you like the activities where you got to act as the RA?
5. How did you like the 5 week long format?
6. Do you feel you would benefit from a longer workshop?
   How about seven weeks?
7. How did you like being in the workshop in spring semester?
8. Would the workshop work well in the fall?
9. Did you feel prepared for the interview?
10. How did you like the socials?
11. How did you react going to all male buildings if you are female? Vice Versa?