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The role of a professional head of residence : a comparison of perceptions.

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THE ROLE OF A PROFESSIONAL HEAD OF RESIDENCE:
A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARJORIE R. HARRISON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1981

EDUCATION

Marjorie R. Harrison

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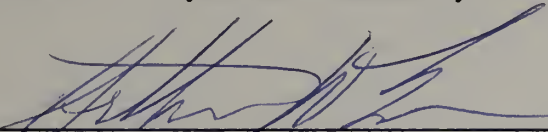
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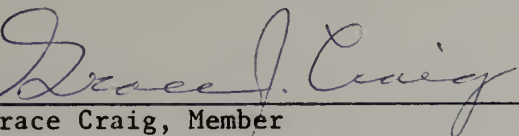
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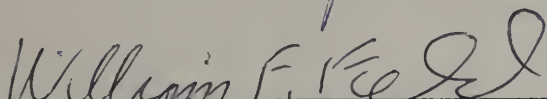
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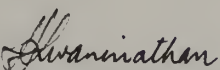
Dr. Arthur W. Eve, Chairperson of Committee



Dr. Grace Craig, Member



Dr. William Field, Member



Dr. Mario D. Fantini, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

To my mother and father: James and Sophie Harrison.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to:

Dr. Arthur W. Eve, the chairperson of my committee, whose unfaltering confidence in me was a continuing source of encouragement;

Dr. Grace Craig and Dr. William Field, committee members, for their consistent help and support;

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My Resident Assistants in Knowlton House: Beth Hennessy, Diane Frey, Carol Cangiano, and Donna Reardon, who not only performed their jobs competently and often beyond the call of duty, but offered personal support and assistance;

Finally, I would like to thank the subjects of my case study, for their general enthusiasm and their willingness to contribute time and ideas.

ABSTRACT

The Role of a Professional Head of Residence: A Comparison of Perceptions

(September 1981)

Marjorie R. Harrison, B.A., Brandeis University
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Directed by: Professor Arthur W. Eve

A recurring theme presented in the literature of student personnel administration is the need for student affairs professionals to examine and clarify their role within the University community. The role of the Head of Residence, an entry-level professional in student affairs, is often unclear and ill-defined. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the various aspects and components of the job of a professional Head of Residence, as perceived by individual Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst.

The study consisted of two parts: 1) a case study of four professional Heads of Residence and 2) a written survey administered to all professional Heads of Residence currently employed at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and to all former Heads of Residence still employed as student affairs professionals within the system. The case study provided the major portion of the data, with the data generated from the survey providing supplemental information. The Heads of Residence who participated in the case study administered four different types of dormitories, representing different combinations of population and physical settings.

The data revealed five major areas which concern Heads of Residence and are factors in their perceptions of their role: 1) a definition of specific components of the work, 2) one's approach and attitude toward the students, 3) one's approach and attitude toward the working situation in general, 4) conflicts and contradictions among the goals and expectations expressed by Heads of Residence themselves, their students, and the supervising agencies, and 5) skill areas. In addition, it was found that an individual's background experience influences his/her role definition, and that an individual's perception and definition of the job change over time.

An examination of the survey data, in relation to the case study data, revealed that most Heads of Residence agree on the importance of the definition of certain aspects of the job such as role-modeling and the training and supervising of student staff. However, on other issues, such as the importance of the development of formal programming in the residence halls, the data revealed a wide range of opinion among the respondents.

Among the conclusions arrived at by the researcher were that Heads of Residence perform their work in relative isolation. They determine for themselves what their priorities in the job are, choosing from a variety of possibilities. The individual's definition of the job is influenced by a number of factors, including the physical characteristics of the building, the needs of the student population, and the personal strengths and experience of the staff member.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

One of the major recurring themes presented in the literature of student personnel administration is the need for student affairs professionals to clarify their role within the university community. Beyond this, there is, more specifically, a crucial need for residential life or housing professionals to reexamine and perhaps redefine their role both within the Student Affairs Division and in relation to the university. The purported function of the residence hall is often indicative of the purpose of the university as a whole.

Housing units often reveal a great deal about an institution, from its attitudes towards students to its emphasis on learning. As these units become more numerous, they are also likely to expose institutional weaknesses more clearly.¹

Similarly, just as the director of a residence hall must be concerned, on some level, with each individual student resident, the university must take notice of each of the components of its system.

An institution dedicated to the pursuit of learning and truth should be concerned with the nature and function of its individual organs such as residences. The results of this attention may shed light on the role of the University itself in today's society. The question is one of academic as well as economic and practical interest.²

¹Harold C. Riker, "The Changing Role of Student Housing," in College Student Personnel Work in the Years Ahead, ed. Gordon J. Klopff (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1966), p. 69.

²Howard Adelman, The Beds of Academe (Toronto: Praxis Books, 1969), p. 7.

One of the few integrative forces on campus is student affairs. . . . While others are concerned with their specialties, the student affairs counselors and advisors must try to articulate, every day, in every conversation, what the institution is and what it stands for.³

However, beyond merely helping the university to define itself, by serving as a reflection of the whole institution,

Student Personnel workers can serve as change agents within the university structure to increase the consistency with which policy and procedure are designed to enhance the conditions that are essential to students' development.⁴

The development of students is often cited as one of the most important goals of higher education,⁵ and Student Affairs personnel are consistently identified as those professionals who most regularly are aware of the students' needs and contribute to their overall development. In particular, residential staff members are in a position to view the student as a whole being, having to respond to the effects on the individual student of all the varying influences in his⁶ life: classroom environment, academic achievement, out-of-classroom activities, conflicts with the bureaucracy, and social, cultural, physical,

³Elizabeth S. Blake, "Classroom and Context: An Educational Dialectic," Academe (September 1979):291.

⁴William M. DiTullio and Gerald G. Work, "Method & Process--A Management System that Models Students' Development," NASPA Journal 15 (Winter 1978):39.

⁵See DiTullio and Work; and William F. Scroggins, "A Course in Personal Effectiveness Skills for Administrators," NASPA Journal 16 (Summer 1978):41-45.

⁶The researcher has chosen to use the masculine pronoun when referring to students and the feminine pronoun when referring to staff members. This in no way indicates the gender of the subject of a sentence: both pronouns have been used in a generic way.

and emotional factors. Historically, on university campuses,

[t]he president and other administrators become more and more preoccupied with the tasks of securing money, recruiting staff, erecting buildings, revising the curriculum, engaging in public service, and developing long-range plans. Faculty members become more and more preoccupied with the increasing demands of teaching, research, publication, and public service. Only by assigning the neglected tasks to specialists such as deans of women, deans of men, and residence hall supervisors was the breakdown of institutional concern for extra-class life averted. [Emphasis added.]⁷

At the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, the importance of the residence hall system as a component in the development of the student is well-acknowledged. In the 1971 Report of the President's Committee on the Future University of Massachusetts, in a section entitled "The University as a Humane Community," it is stated:

Whatever gains flow from implementation of our academic suggestions will be partially nullified if steps are not also taken to make the rest of college life more congenial.

Life in the dormitories at UMA is difficult for many students . . .

The Committee believes that these problems are of sufficient intensity and scope to warrant top priority on the agenda of the Amherst campus community. There are a number of changes that would make dormitory living more compatible with the educational, social, and developmental needs of students.⁸

Yet, despite this statement of commitment to student development vis-à-vis the residence halls, no mention is made in the committee's list of suggestions regarding the role of the professional residence hall staff. There seems to be some confusion over what these staff members should actually do within their job roles. The opening statement of the

⁷Robert H. Shaffer and William D. Martinson, Student Personnel Services in Higher Education (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966), p. v.

⁸Report of the President's Committee on the Future University of Massachusetts (Boston: 1971), p. 76.

University of Massachusetts/Amherst job description for Heads of Residence reads: "Heads of Residence are responsible for assessing the needs of the residence hall and developing appropriate goals that will positively affect the climate and development of the hall."⁹ How this responsibility is actually translated into specific job performance tasks is left for interpretation.

There seems to be a certain degree of confusion about what the role of the residence hall professional is and exactly how the professional should perform this role. Traditionally, the residence hall system was a means of controlling student behavior. There was a serious emphasis on discipline and conduct control.¹⁰ The housemother of the 1950's was typically an older woman, often a widow with grown children of her own, whose responsibilities included the moral and social education of her residents. In the course of the last two decades, the position has evolved sometimes into that of a counselor/advisor (often performed on a part-time basis by a graduate student), sometimes into a faculty-resident position, and other times into a full-time administrative position. Yet, the literature stresses that "the trend and the challenge are to make residence halls vital educational forces on the campus."¹¹ There is clearly a great need to come

⁹Office of Residential Life, University of Massachusetts, "Head of Residence: Job Description," November 1979.

¹⁰Riker, p. 70.

¹¹Robert H. Shaffer, "Issues and Problems in the Organization, Administration, and Development of College Student Personnel Programs in the Years Ahead," in College Student Personnel Work in the Years Ahead, ed. Gordon J. Klopff (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1966), p. 2.

to terms with the ambiguity of the position which the residence halls hold in the university system and with the confusion concerning the function of the professional residential staff within the halls.

Statement of Purpose

The way in which a professional Head of Residence functions in a college or university dormitory varies both from institution to institution and from dormitory to dormitory within an institution. The official definition of the role frequently remains constant, or at least comparable, but in practice may move back and forth along a continuum, influenced by a wide range of factors.

At the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, there are at present thirty-one professional Heads of Residence. The role each one performs is defined by the individual's own interpretation of the official University job description, the individual's own personality, the demographic characteristics of the dormitory (single-sex or coed, location on campus, representation by class), and the expectations of others, including supervisors, students, and colleagues. In addition, each staff member brings to the position a preconceived notion of the role, based on her experiences in a college dormitory, knowledge of the experiences of others in that setting, impressions of the position at the University of Massachusetts, or experiences in a similar job at another school.

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the various components of the job of a professional Head of Residence, as perceived by individual Heads of Residence at the University of

Massachusetts/Amherst. Attention was paid to identifying any similarities and/or points of agreement among the individual perceptions of these components, despite differences among dormitories and differences in professional style.

The initial data were collected by means of in-depth interviews with four Heads of Residence. The subjects were selected to include staff located in an all-male dormitory, an all-female dormitory, and two coeducational dormitories. In addition, two subjects were from the Southwest residential area and two were from the Northeast/Sylvan residential area. All four subjects had spent at least two years as full-time professional Heads of Residence. The interviews were unstructured in nature, but the researcher, using an interview guide, directed the subject to respond to the following categories:

1. each subject's perceptions of the components of the job of a professional Head of Residence;
2. identification of which component(s) was considered most essential;
3. perceived conflicts between the Head of Residence's conception of the job and that of others;
4. identification of skills necessary for effective performance of the job and the manner in which these skills were acquired; and
5. examination of the subject's expectations for self and expectations held by others.

The data collected at this stage of the research, i.e., the case study of four Heads of Residence, assisted the researcher in generating a survey questionnaire which was then administered to other professional Heads of Residence in the University of Massachusetts system. In addition, the survey was distributed to former Heads of Residence who were still serving in other capacities within the Division of Student Affairs.

The purpose of the study, then, was to develop some definitions and descriptions as to the de facto role of the professional residential staff. In this type of formulative or exploratory study, the research serves to provide information about and insights into the particular situation being studied. The researcher sets out to explore the subject and develop hypotheses. While a flexible research design is important in this type of study,¹² the methods which are likely to be especially fruitful in the search for meaningful definitions and insights include ". . . a survey of people who have had practical experience with the problem . . . and an analysis of 'insight-stimulating' examples."¹³

¹²"In the field the research design serves as a place to start, an initial focus of attention . . . In any case, unless it is very general, it is usually transcended, supplemented or left behind as the developing field work suggests new topics and hypotheses. It is important, therefore, that the design be loose enough to allow for developments in the field . . ." Paul Diesing, Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 143.

¹³Claire Selltiz et al., Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), p. 53. For a full discussion of exploratory or formulative studies, see pp. 51-65.

Design of the Study

The first part of the study consisted of a case study of four Heads of Residence. The subjects were selected to represent the different demographic situations among the dormitories on campus:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| single-sex: male, | high-rise: Northeast/Sylvan, |
| single-sex: female, | high-rise: Southwest, |
| coeducational, | low-rise: Northeast/Sylvan, and |
| | low-rise: Southwest. |

The researcher chose three subjects, in addition to herself, to interview in an in-depth manner. Since the researcher was "looking for provocative ideas and useful insights, not for the statistics of the profession . . . the respondents [were] chosen because of the likelihood that they [would] offer the contributions sought."¹⁴ The three subjects were selected on the basis of the researcher's personal knowledge of their interest and ability to provide useful data. The addition of the researcher as the fourth subject was an important aspect of the study. Mooney states that, "Research is a personal venture which, quite aside from its social benefits, is worth doing for its direct contribution to one's own self-realization."¹⁵ Certainly, in a study such as this one, where the researcher was functioning on a daily basis in a capacity equal to that of the other subjects, it would

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁵Ross L. Mooney, "The Researcher Himself," in Research for Curriculum Improvement, in 1957 Yearbook of the Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum (Columbus, Ohio: n.p., 1957), p. 155.

have been unwise to ignore her own insights into the situation under analysis.

A review of the investigator's own experience and a careful examination of his reactions as he attempts to "project" himself into the situation of the subjects he is studying may be a valuable source of insights. After all, the "case" with which the investigator is likely to have the greatest familiarity (though also the most bias) is himself. . . . Here is a source of ideas that ought not to be neglected.¹⁶

The interviews were basically unstructured but centering around the categories previously outlined. The focus was "on the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre-analyzed situation in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation."¹⁷ The object of this type of interview

. . . is not to elicit choices between alternative answers to pre-formed questions but, rather, to elicit from the interviewee what he considers to be important questions relative to a given topic, his descriptions of some situation being explored. . . . Its object is to find out what kinds of things are happening, rather than to determine the frequency of pre-determined kinds of things that the researcher already believes can happen.¹⁸

The analysis of the data--the categorization and comparison--was based on Glaser and Strauss's concept of a "constant comparative method of analysis."¹⁹ This method called for a continual examination

¹⁶Selltiz et al., p. 64.

¹⁷Robert K. Merton, Marjorie Fiske, and Patricia Kendall, The Focused Interview (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), p. 3.

¹⁸John Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971), p. 76.

¹⁹Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967), p. 101.

of the data in order to facilitate the development of insights which were then related back to the ongoing research. "Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research."²⁰

The second part of the study involved a written survey questionnaire, administered to a group of Heads of Residence currently working at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, and to other professionals within the Division of Student Affairs who had formerly worked as Heads of Residence. The purpose of the survey was to collect data from these respondents in order to corroborate and/or refute various impressions, definitions, and descriptions of the role of a professional Head of Residence, as articulated by the four subjects in the case study. The data were used to supplement and refine that data collected from the very personalized, in-depth interviews. As Lofland stresses,

. . . the bedrock of human understanding is face-to-face contact. Statistical sociology serves to amplify and to check on the representativeness, frequency, and correlation of the knowing that is founded on that bedrock. Quantitative studies serve primarily to firm up and modify knowledge first gained in a fundamentally qualitative fashion.²¹

The survey consisted of a series of statements about the role of the professional Head of Residence. The statements, which were derived from the insights into and the definitions of the job expressed by the four case study subjects, fell into several broad categories:

²⁰Ibid., p. 6.

²¹Lofland, Social Settings, p. 76.

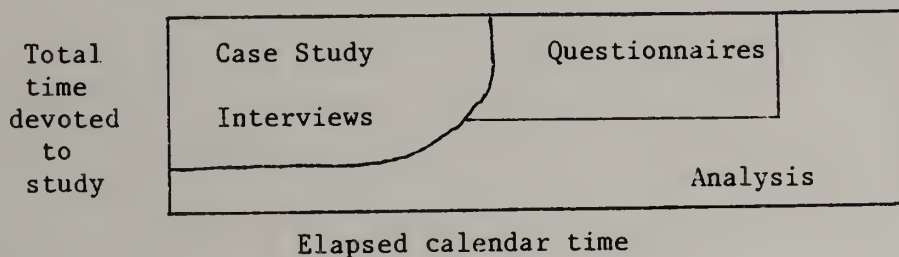
1. personal definition of job components
2. influences on this definition
3. individual priorities in the job and influential factors in determining these
4. role of supervisor(s)
5. conflicts with supervisor expectations
6. personal definition of important skill areas.

The respondents were asked to respond to each of the statements by marking a Likert-type scale,²² indicating their agreement or disagreement with the statement.

The statistical description of these data involved a simple computation of percentages of the frequency of each type of response. These statistics then served to "amplify" the information gained through the case study and added to the overall development of insights into and understanding of the role of a professional Head of Residence.²³

²²Sir Claus Moser and G. Kalton, Survey Methods in Social Investigation, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1972),, pp. 361-366.

²³The process of constant comparative research and analysis can be represented graphically in this way (adapted from Lofland, Social Settings, p. 118):



The analysis of the data began concurrently with the collection of the interview data and continued during the time of the administration of the questionnaire. "The final stage of analysis (occurring after [data

This particular mixture of research methods--combining a case study with a survey questionnaire--is considered to be a reasonable, thoughtful way of conducting a study of a social-human situation. In fact, Douglas states:

If possible, in most settings we would like to begin as a member and then move toward an overt definition of ourselves as researchers, then possibly do in-depth interviews, then recordings, then any questionnaires to get at specific details.²⁴

It is also important to note that Glaser and Strauss encourage the use of different forms of data on the same subject as the comparison of these data facilitates the generation of grounded theory.²⁵

This study does not presume to define the role of any professional residential staff member other than that of the four subjects of the case study. The study was limited to an investigation of those four individuals and their own personal descriptions of their positions. The addition of the questionnaire data served to augment and clarify the information offered by the subjects and can only suggest the application of the definitions to the University of Massachusetts/Amherst Head of Residence population as a whole.

Significance

If Student Affairs administrators are to plan for the 1980's and face the problems which will confront the university in this new

collection] has ceased) becomes, then, a period for bringing final order into previously developed ideas." Lofland, Social Settings, p. 118.

²⁴Jack D. Douglas, Investigative Social Research (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976), p. 32.

²⁵Glaser and Strauss, p. 18.

decade, it is crucial that we are clear on who we are and what we do now. In order to reevaluate our mission as educators and redefine our position in the university structure, we must first understand what our position is at present.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the present-day function and purpose of professional residential staff members. If the residential Student Affairs professional is to be a positive educational force in the university community, it is essential that there be a clear understanding of how that staff member performs her job. After we determine where we want to go in the future, only by reviewing and clarifying where we are now can we begin to proceed toward our goals.

Organization

The study is presented in five parts:

Chapter One: An overview of the study, including an introduction to the problem, statement of purpose, design of the study, and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: A review of the relevant literature on the role of the professional Head of Residence and changing perceptions of that role.

Chapter Three: A detailed description of the design of the study and the methodological processes involved, both qualitative and quantitative, including a review of the literature relevant to the methods used.

Chapter Four: An analytic presentation of the data collected from both the case study and the survey questionnaire, including a description of how the two types of data correspond.

Chapter Five: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviews the current literature dealing with the role of the professional residential staff person. Included in this discussion is that literature which examines the general role and function of the residence hall. The function of the residential system within the university structure is manifested and demonstrated by the function of the residential staff within the individual residence hall itself.¹ Also considered briefly is the role of the upper-level student personnel administrator as it relates to the coordination of the residential system. More specifically, the researcher will review that literature which addresses areas of concern corresponding to those topics raised during the collection of the research data. These include: varying perceptions of the role of the professional residential staff member, the specific components of that role, estimations of which of these components are the most essential, conflicting views regarding the importance of one aspect of the job over another, and conflicting expectations regarding the priorities set in the job.

¹See Howard Adelman, The Beds of Academe (Toronto: Praxis Books, 1969); and Harold C. Riker, "The Changing Role of Student Housing," in College Student Personnel Work in the Years Ahead, ed. Gordon J. Klopff (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1966).

The Role of the Residence Hall

It is repeatedly asserted in the literature that ". . . residence halls are a vital part of the college learning process."² Housing is provided for undergraduate students at most universities not only to accommodate out-of-town students, but to provide a setting where the process of education can continue beyond the classroom.³

The hall may be viewed as one means of complementing the academic program by providing opportunities to put into use materials assimilated in the formal academic setting, as well as providing outlets for expression.⁴

The importance of the educational function of the residence halls is widely reported⁵ and, in fact, Chickering,⁶ in his now classic work Education and Identity, makes specific recommendations concerning the

²Kenneth E. Zirkle and George Hudson, "The Effects of Residence Hall Staff Members on Maturity Development for Male Students," Journal of College Student Personnel 16 (January 1975):33. See also Robert H. Shaffer and William D. Martinson, Student Personnel Services in Higher Education (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966).

³See Kate Hevner Mueller, Student Personnel Work in Higher Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), chap. 8.

⁴Marla Campbell and Rosanda Richards, "The Residence Halls as an Integral Part of the Educational Process: An Approach," Journal of NAWDC (Fall 1964):39.

⁵See Mueller; E. G. Williamson and Donald A. Biggs, Student Personnel Work: A Program of Developmental Relationships (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), chap. 12; and A. W. Eberle and Ray A. Muston, "The Role of the Chief Personnel Administrator and the Residence Hall: Locus of Conflict," NASPA Journal 7 (October 1969).

⁶Arthur W. Chickering, Education and Identity (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969). See also Riker, "Changing Role of Student Housing."

design and construction of dormitories with just this objective in mind.

Traditionally, the residence halls were thought of as the boarding halls of the university, and the place where the student's behavior was monitored and controlled. Women's residence halls were also presumed to offer training in the social skills and "gracious living." The housemother, typically a widow, middle-aged and motherly, was responsible for the moral guardianship of her charges.⁷ Historically, men's and women's halls fell under the aegis of the Dean of Men or the Dean of Women, respectively, and focus placed on that aspect of student life was a reflection, in part, of the inclinations and values of the particular Dean in charge, his or her interpretation of the stated needs of the university,⁸ and of the presumed needs of the society at large.

Feldman and Newcomb,⁹ while not discussing the role of the personnel who are responsible for the residence halls, examine the "impact of residence groupings" on the student population. Their discussion includes an analysis of the effect which students have on each other in various types of residential arrangements.¹⁰ Much

⁷See Helen Reich, The College Housemother, 2nd ed. (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Publishing Co., 1968).

⁸See Ruth Barry and Beverly Wolf, Modern Issues in Guidance-Personnel Work (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1957).

⁹Kenneth A. Feldman and Theodore M. Newcomb, The Impact of College on Students (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969), p. 196.

¹⁰See also Williamson and Biggs, Student Personnel Work, and Chickering.

attention is paid to non-university controlled housing such as fraternity and sorority houses. Eurich, in his speculations on the structure and nature of the dormitory on the campus of the 1980's, predicted that the "future" student would have a wide variety of residential arrangements from which to choose.¹¹

The educational aspect of the residence hall system has a number of different dimensions and may be organized in a variety of ways. Riker describes three different types of "Centers" which may be located within a residence hall: 1) Centers for Living and Learning, 2) Centers for Community Development, and 3) Centers for Student Services.¹² The "living-and-learning centers," or "residential colleges" as they are sometimes called,¹³ provide academic courses taught within the residential setting by regular faculty members. The second type of focus--"community development"--involves programs which help establish and foster leadership skills, cross-cultural awareness, and a sense of group responsibility. These may include special orientation programs and student government activities. In 1969, Adelman said:

The crisis of the university is a crisis of fragmentation, specialization, impersonality, and alienation. While the universities act as service stations for society, they claim neutrality in affecting its goals and values. The prime

¹¹See Alvin C. Eurich, ed., Campus 1980 (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968).

¹²Riker, "Changing Role of Student Housing," p. 73.

¹³Marjorie Peace Lenn, "A Study of Residence Hall Development: Shifting Organizational Patterns and Roles of Residence Hall Staff from 1961-1976" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1978), p. 48.

purpose of a residence is the creation of a community and a sense of social responsibility. If this is understood, architects and administrators must see that these goals and the planning of residences have a central focus in planning the university and the function of residences within it.¹⁴
[Emphasis added.]

Through these programs directed toward the goal of community development "the students are seen, and soon come to see themselves, as individual citizens in a miniature community."¹⁵

The third aspect of the educational, developmental role of the residence hall is the inclusion of student services within the residential setting. This includes programs offered within the residence halls sponsored by various campus agencies such as the mental health clinic, vocational guidance centers, and administrative offices.¹⁶ These programs sometimes include a series of one-credit or no-credit courses, taught by the resident students themselves, the professional residential staff, the undergraduate student staff, or outside resource people from the university and/or community.

In reviewing the literature describing the various experimental and innovative projects being conducted in universities throughout the country among student personnel agencies, it is clear that there is a strong movement to increase the educational and personal development aspect of residence hall living. Numerous projects involve community building efforts, efforts to provide services in the residential

¹⁴Adelman, p. 52.

¹⁵Mueller, p. 181.

¹⁶See Riker, "Changing Role of Student Housing"; and Mueller.

setting by non-residential staff, programs focusing on small-group interaction, increased responsibilities in the area of student development for student staff members, and projects which involve groups of students who both attend the same academic class and live together as a unit.¹⁷

The Role of the Student Personnel Administrator

Very often the only individual discussed in reference to the residence halls as having decision-making interest and authority is not the residential staff member, but an upper-level administrator in charge of the residential life agency. This person may carry the title of Dean of Students, Director of Residential Life, or Chief Housing Officer, among others.¹⁸ This chief personnel administrator in charge of the residence halls, who is in a focal position to establish policy governing the residential system, needs to respond to questions such as: what is desirable to have happen in the residence halls, and what is not desirable? What is the purpose of the residence halls in relation to the university's goals, and what type of residences are most conducive to achieving this purpose?

In addition, because the residential staff person is essentially an entry-level professional in student personnel administration, it is important to discuss briefly the role of the student personnel worker in general. The literature which deals with the field of student

¹⁷See Arthur L. Tollefson, New Approaches to College Student Development (New York: Behavioral Publications, 1975).

¹⁸See Eberle and Muston.

personnel administration--or student affairs, as it is also called--often characterizes this particular aspect of university work as that which is concerned with the whole student.

People in the student affairs area are often the ones who know the students best, who are--or should be--alert to changes and who should even try to anticipate them whenever possible.¹⁹

It is the student personnel professional who is concerned with the development of the student as an individual,²⁰ and thus is interested in all of the factors which affect the student's life, including academic achievement, classroom environment, extra-curricular activities, and social, physical, and emotional influences.²¹

The student personnel staff has a perspective on the college student in higher education which encompasses the student's membership in the residence and academic community.²²

Scroggins writes of the need for "confluent education" which would integrate the affective and cognitive components of what the university desires to teach the student. The goal is ". . . to

¹⁹Elizabeth S. Blake, "Classroom and Context: An Educational Dialectic," Academe (September 1979):290.

²⁰Jane Fried, "Images of the Future: Tomorrow is Now," paper presented to the Maine College Personnel Association, 11 March 1976, pp. 1-2.

²¹Robert H. Shaffer, "Issues and Problems in the Organization, Administration, and Development of College Student Personnel Programs in the Years Ahead," in College Student Personnel Work in the Years Ahead, ed. Gordon J. Klopff (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1966), p. 2.

²²Donald V. Adams, "Living and Learning Centers," in New Dimensions in Student Personnel Administration, ed. Orley R. Herron, Jr. (Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Co., 1970), p. 138.

develop the student's personal and professional effectiveness to the maximum degree."²³ It is the student personnel professional who strives to "improve the educational effectiveness of the academic community."²⁴ Shaffer outlines several objectives which these professionals need to address, including: helping to clarify the university's objectives and to unify various campus factions in order to meet these objectives; helping students to understand the relevance of their education and to assume responsibility for themselves; and fostering independence, creativity, and resourcefulness among the students.²⁵

Newton and Richardson conducted a survey of student affairs practitioners as to the significant entry-level competencies necessary for effective performance in the field. Their results demonstrate that the highest priority is given to maturity in interpersonal relationships.²⁶ This finding certainly has relevance when one considers the importance of this skill in relation to the student personnel professional's role as "the faculty which teaches the applied behavioral sciences and the various associated life skills [e.g., life-planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and

²³William F. Scroggins, "A Course in Personal Effectiveness Skills for Administrators," NASPA Journal 16 (Summer 1978):44.

²⁴See Shaffer, "Issues and Problems," p. 5.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 1-4.

²⁶Fred B. Newton and Robert L. Richardson, "Expected Entry-Level Competencies of Student Personnel Workers," Journal of College Student Personnel 17 (September 1976):427.

assertiveness training]."27 In the context of this role, and also in view of the student personnel administrator's position as a role-model for the student,28 the staff member is

forced to deal with ethical issues. He cannot avoid value judgements, nor the assumption of a personal, ethical stance, or at least an attempt to develop a philosophical frame of reference.29

The task of interpreting institutional policies and "translating [these] policies into practice necessarily includes the individual's personal value system."30

There is a growing concern among writers in the field that student personnel administrators are vulnerable in terms of their survival within the university, and consequently need to reevaluate their position and adapt their roles to changes in the university and in the student body.31

If the student personnel profession wishes to have significant input and influence on student development patterns in the future, its staff members are going to have to revise their own self-perceptions and the perceptions that others have of them. . . .

The most profound reason for those professionally concerned about student development--i.e., student personnel workers--to

27Jane Fried, "Images of the Future," p. 10.

28Ibid., p. 9.

29John E. Patterson, "Ethics and the Student Personnel Administrator," NASPA Journal 11 (July 1973):57.

30Ibid.

31See Frederick R. Brodzinski, "The Next Twenty Years: A Futuristic's Examination of Student Affairs," paper presented at the NASPA Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 1977.

seek a new role is for the better fulfillment of their espoused goal of developing the whole student.³²

Clearly, further consideration of the goals and objectives of student personnel work is called for.

Student personnel workers can serve as change agents within the university structure to increase the consistency with which policy and procedure are designed to enhance the conditions that are essential to students' development.³³

One aspect of this would be a reevaluation of current pre-service and in-service training programs.³⁴ "Professional preparation programs must begin to supply our effective and experienced practitioners with the variety of individuals they need to meet the complexities of today's campuses."³⁵ If an examination of existing programs and professional roles is to be fruitful, the place to begin is with the individual student personnel workers themselves.

It seems important that further delineation of student affairs competencies should come from the practitioner, the person who works daily with the actuality of student affairs work.³⁶

³²Robert D. Brown, "Student Development and Residence Education: Should It Be Social Engineering?" in Student Development and Education in College Residence Halls, ed. David A. DeCoster and Phyllis Mable (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1974), p. 42.

³³William M. DiTullio and Gerald G. Work, "Method and Process-- A Management System that Models Students' Development," NASPA Journal 15 (Winter 1978):39.

³⁴Newton and Richardson, p. 429. See also Shaffer, "Issues and Problems."

³⁵Mary Evelyn Dewey, "The Student Personnel Worker of 1980," Journal of NAWDC (Winter 1972):63.

³⁶Newton and Richardson, p. 427.

But, before the chief personnel administrators can determine whom they want to have staff the residence halls, they need to examine what it is they want that staff person to accomplish. "It is important . . . that the college define in detail what is seen as the purpose and function of residence hall life in the total educational experience."³⁷ "Objectives [of the residence halls] must be clarified in order to place primary emphasis upon those concerns which should be dominant."³⁸ Williamson and Biggs reiterated this in 1975:

The lack of clear, consistent, and operational objectives for residence hall programs has continued to be a major reason why they have not achieved their appropriate role in higher education.³⁹

It is crucial that the university be able to articulate clearly its goals for the residential system, and to support--with recognition and finances--the projection of the educational mission of the university into the residence halls.

Once these goals are formulated, the next consideration is the nature of the staff who will actually implement these ideas: who will make certain that what the university wants to have happen in the residence halls does, in fact, happen?

Regardless of the method used to staff the halls, the quality of the people is second in importance only to the basic institutional philosophy of the role residence halls play in the total educational program.⁴⁰

³⁷Dorothy V. N. Brooks, "Where and How Students Live," in Student Personnel Work as Deeper Teaching, eds. Esther Lloyd-Jones and Margaret Ruth Smith (New York: Harper Bros., 1954), p. 187.

³⁸Shaffer and Martinson, p. 60.

³⁹Williamson and Biggs, p. 328.

⁴⁰Shaffer and Martinson, p. 64.

The Residential Staff Member

Despite the increased awareness of the educational potential of the residence hall, there is a limited recognition of the role which the residential staff member plays within the residence hall system. It is important that there be an appreciation of the significance of this role, particularly because of the isolation inherent in the position. The residential staff member of a dormitory works virtually autonomously in many cases, in that much of the activity in a dormitory--much of the educational programming and counseling and community building--occurs after the end of the traditional work day, i.e., after the majority of non-residential student personnel workers have left campus for the day.

Until now, most of the focus has been on the residence hall environment, and very little emphasis has been placed on the role and effect of the staff member on various aspects important to overall development.⁴¹

Arbuckle, although stating that "there is an increasing realization among college educators of the potentialities of college housing as an integral and even major factor in the total education of the student,"⁴² indicated that there was a lack of recognition of the role of the residential staff in this aspect of the educational life of the student. One of the few authors who identified residential staff personnel specifically as having a vital role in the student's education,

⁴¹Zirkle and Hudson, p. 33.

⁴²Dugald S. Arbuckle, Student Personnel Services in Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953), p. 207.

Arbuckle went on to say:

If the philosophy of the institution is such that its purpose is to serve the student and to help him to become an intelligently critical citizen, then it is obvious that the personnel workers in the college residences are in a key position to aid in the attainment of that goal.⁴³

Barry and Wolf recognized the significance of the residence hall as a place where the student's educational and personal development would continue outside of the classroom, and, in fact, wrote:

During the last five years this aspect of college personnel work [i.e., residence hall work] has received more attention than ever before. Residence halls are now viewed as practice grounds for democratic living and integral parts of the total educational process.⁴⁴

However, they do not specifically mention the residence hall personnel. Rather, in their discussion of guidance-personnel work among university students, they refer to the counseling or mental health center clinicians, or to the chief student personnel administrator.

Similarly, Miller and Prince discuss the importance of the residential environment and the need for thoughtful, careful management of this environment, and yet the staff mentioned in connection with this is the student development worker. The authors make no mention of a residential staff in particular--or at least make no distinction between the role or function of non-residential staff in contrast to the residential staff.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., p. 213.

⁴⁴Barry and Wolf, p. 141.

⁴⁵Theodore K. Miller and Judith S. Prince, The Future of Student Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Jossey-Bass, 1977), chap. 6.

Yet, within the residence hall community there needs to be someone--whether full-time professional staff, part-time graduate student staff, or undergraduate student staff--who will assume the responsibility for the educational nature of the environment.⁴⁶ If the residence hall is not staffed, it is then essentially a boarding house, with a minimal amount of opportunity for directed interaction among the residents.

. . . [T]he residence community, peer relationships, and perhaps most importantly, the role of the residence educators and student development specialists perform a vital function for the integration of the total college learning experience.⁴⁷

In a national study of the requirements for the position of head of residence conducted in 1947, one university described the requisite duties as follows:

Work with student government, organize social program to develop responsibility, increase participation and promote social amenities. Administration of office. Organize material for weekly staff meetings. Hold six weekly meetings with the medical doctor. Counsel transfer and foreign students. Keep cumulative records of counseling load. Write recommendations for seniors for occupational bureaus. Sit at head table twice a week. Check general cleaning of building and supervise maids. Check students' rooms. Give out light bulbs. Close house at midnight. Serve as hostess and chaperone.⁴⁸

Four years later, in 1951, the National Vocational Guidance Association summarized the responsibilities of an "educational personnel worker" in this way:

⁴⁶See Riker, "Changing Role of Student Housing."

⁴⁷David A. DeCoster and Phyllis Mable, eds., Student Development and Education in College Residence Halls (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1974, p. 25.

⁴⁸Arbuckle, p. 209.

Renders individual counseling and group guidance services to students in a dormitory relative to problems of scholastic, educational, vocational, and personal-social nature. Supervises dormitory activities, and interprets and enforces dormitory regulations. Coordinates and directs work of student counselors in dormitories. Consults with and advises deans relative to specific dormitory problems. May have charge of all university housing accommodations. Performs related duties. This job is performed in a college or university.⁴⁹

While the role of the professional residential staff member in the hall is sometimes ignored, when it is mentioned it is often misunderstood, discussed in terms of official job descriptions (which may or may not be realistic), or evaluated in terms of what "should" be done, rather than according to what is being done. A great amount of attention has been paid to the selection, supervision, function, and role of the undergraduate student staff member,⁵⁰ but there is a limited amount of literature on the professional worker in the building. There has been, however, in recent years, a growing awareness of the need for research in this area--research, in fact, that could be carried out by the residential staff themselves.⁵¹ The Head of Residence is the best resource person for information about the nature and function of the residential system.

⁴⁹National Vocational Guidance Association, Job Analysis of Personnel Workers, quoted in Arbuckle, p. 213.

⁵⁰See, for example: Zirkle and Hudson; John L. Shelton and Harold V. Mathis, "Assertiveness as a Predictor of Resident Assistant Effectiveness," Journal of College Student Personnel 17 (September 1976):368-370; and Richard T. Wotruba, "Can Residence Hall Staff be Selected Scientifically?" NASPA Journal 7 (October 1969):107-111.

⁵¹See Florence Louise Phillips, "Achieving Professional Status for the Position of the Residence Hall Director," Journal of NAWDC (Fall 1964):33-36.

Two studies carried out during the 1960's on the subject of the role and status of Heads of Residence, although recognizing the importance of the role which the staff member plays in the residence hall system, dealt with the opinions and evaluations of professionals other than the residential staff. Kilbourn, in 1960, studied the factors relating to the existing and preferred nature of the Head of Residence and the residential job.⁵² The respondents were those administrators to whom the Heads of Residence reported on their respective campuses. These staff people included deans of women, directors of housing, directors of residence halls, and the like. The topics addressed included: title used to identify the residential staff person, age, marital status, educational background, faculty status, and salary. In addition, the respondents were asked to respond to questions about areas for which the Head of Residence should be expected to take responsibility. Most of the housing administrators agreed on the administrative and counseling responsibilities for the Head of Residence, but there was some disagreement on the role of the Head of Residence as a disciplinarian. The respondents "wanted her to have some authority for enforcement of the regulatory process, but for what and to what extent was not determined." No reference is made to what is now known as the programming component of the job of a Head of Residence. The programming in the residence halls is that element which is most directly related to the educational objectives of the university. Kilbourn

⁵²Donald W. Kilbourn, "The Status and Roles of Head Residents," Personnel and Guidance Journal (November 1960):203-206.

states that while the residence hall is accepted as having great potential as an educational force, and while 65 percent of the respondents agreed that Heads of Residence should have faculty status, "considerable confusion exists concerning the functions of residence halls in the over-all goals of higher education." There is, in fact "considerable disparity . . . between what top level administrators say about the functions of residence halls and what they actually do." In many cases, although the supervising administrators verbalize support for the educational goals, they are "unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to raise the educational standards of residence hall operation."⁵³

In 1964, Campbell and Richards described the approach to education in the residence halls developed at DePauw University, which involved an orientation program for first-year students. In their description of the residential system at DePauw, they explain that:

Each hall is staffed by a full-time resident counselor who is a member of the dean of students' staff and who is actively involved in the determination of policies and procedures initiated through the dean of students' office. The counselor lives in the hall and is primarily responsible for program planning and implementation, advising student government within the hall, individual counseling, and participating in the development of an orientation program for freshmen. Resident counselors hold the faculty rank of instructor . . .⁵⁴

The status and role of the residential staff person at DePauw University was an exception during the 1960's. Lenn states that her research revealed that the general trend for Heads of Residence in

⁵³Ibid., p. 205.

⁵⁴Campbell and Richards, p. 37.

the mid- to late 1960's, although away from a primary role of maintaining student control and supervising conduct and toward a position involving more advising and counseling, was still essentially administrative in nature. It was not until the early 1970's that there was "a significant shift in residence staff roles from that of primarily administrator to that of educational programmer."⁵⁵ In a 1965 study, Keller reported that "the amount of time consumed by managerial tasks seems to have been reduced [during the preceding decade]. With a shift in emphasis, programs and student contacts have been increased."

Keller goes on to state that:

while the literature in the field indicates a recognition by college administrators that the professional person in residence should be given faculty status if she meets the educational qualifications, these data reveal that few directors have been so honored."⁵⁶

In contrast to this data collected during the 1960's, Reich, in her 1968 edition of The College Housemother, describes the characteristics of a successful housemother, including suggestions on how to dress and speak.⁵⁷ The book is specifically directed toward

women who are approximately forty-five to sixty in age, who are without family responsibilities, and who are looking for a new life. It is directed particularly to women who are widowed and whose children are grown.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Lenn, p. 106.

⁵⁶Barbara Y. Keller, "Status, Role, Training, and Salary of Residence Hall Directors," Journal of NAWDC (Summer 1965):180-181.

⁵⁷Reich, pp. 14-27.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 1.

Curiously, three years earlier, Keller had stated: ". . . there is a trend toward younger persons assuming greater responsibility for large residences."⁵⁹

It is important here to mention the considerable amount of research produced within the last ten years which is concerned with the status and role of the undergraduate student staff person.⁶⁰ Sometimes called "resident counselor," or "resident assistant," these para-professionals have been studied and evaluated to determine the best procedure for selecting them, the most accurate way of predicting their success, and the varying types of effect they may have on the students in their dormitories. For example, in 1975 Zirkle and Hudson determined that resident assistants who were trained in and oriented toward a counseling role had a better effect on the development of maturity in their residents than those resident assistants who were oriented toward an administrative role.⁶¹

If it is true that "the head resident who provides overall supervision of the housing program in a particular residence hall has become a key person in the implementation of an effective housing program,"⁶²

⁵⁹Keller, p. 181.

⁶⁰In addition to Zirkle and Hudson; Shelton and Mathis; and Wotruba, see Laurie Renz, "The Learning Curve for Retaining the Facilitative Helping Conditions as a Predictor of Residence Hall Advisers' Job Performance," Journal of College Student Personnel 17 (May 1976):215-219.

⁶¹Zirkle and Hudson, p. 61.

⁶²David E. Hutchins, Michael W. Yost, and David E. Hill, "A Comparison of Undergraduate and Professionally Trained Head Residents," Journal of College Student Personnel 17 (November 1976):510.

then clearly it would seem important for professionals in the field to reevaluate what they expect the staff member in that position to accomplish.

There is a need to identify the essential skills and competencies needed by successful residence educators and to find better ways for facilitating individuals to both internalize the initial learnings and keep abreast of future learnings which will be demanded by our dynamic and changing field of endeavor.⁶³

Lenn stated that during the late 1960's

. . . those who worked with the residence halls [were] forced to consider [the fact] that phenomenal change would continue to take place in higher education, that the residence halls would take on a new (and powerful) significance in campus life, and that the roles of those working with the residence halls would have to radically alter in response to the change.⁶⁴

It would seem productive, then, to reexamine and reestablish objectives relevant to the current residential system, since

[t]he clarification of philosophical statements and assumptions, the identification of limits, and the establishment of general goals provides a tone and direction for a residence hall staff and its program.⁶⁵

Mueller spoke of three main "patterns" of emphasis in residence halls: an emphasis on the encouragement of student leadership and healthy group dynamics (community building), an emphasis on counseling and advising the individual student, and an emphasis on social and personal development. She advocated a combination of these three for

⁶³Theodore K. Miller, "Professional Preparation and Development of Residence Educators," in Student Development and Education in College Residence Halls, eds. David A. DeCoster and Phyllis Mable (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1974), p. 166.

⁶⁴Lenn, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁵Williamson and Biggs, p. 333.

an effective, productive residential environment.⁶⁶ Expressing this in somewhat different terms in 1975, Williamson and Biggs reviewed a study conducted in 1964 surveying 107 colleges and universities which concluded that "the duties of residence hall staff were likely to include order and control, educational and personal counseling, and advising student government activities."⁶⁷

A primary focus of residential personnel, as stated by a number of writers in the field, is that of counseling. Often this is expressed in terms of the unique relationship the staff member is able to establish which facilitates the student's development.

The house counselor would be a participant in the group-living process . . . [and] would probably have a much more intimate relationship with the students than would the counselor in a clinic. The example that he would set would, as a result, be of much importance, and he would be on the job at all hours of the day.⁶⁸

. . . His skills include counseling or advising. He serves as a behavior model by practicing his own value system. His concern is not primarily with problems . . . his concern is with growth and development so that his approach is action-oriented and geared to the student's achievement of potential.⁶⁹

Sometimes the counseling referred to involves disciplinary counseling, the goal of which is student awareness of responsible behavior.

⁶⁶Mueller, pp. 180-183.

⁶⁷Williamson and Biggs, p. 329.

⁶⁸Arbuckle, p. 218.

⁶⁹Harold C. Riker, "The Role of Residence Educators," in Student Development and Education in College Residence Halls, eds. David A. DeCoster and Phyllis Mable (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Assoc., 1974), p. 155.

The objectives of the disciplinary counselor are to help the individual to gain some insight into the sources of his misbehavior and to aid him in changing his behavior so as to become a more acceptable and effective member of the university community and of society at large.⁷⁰

However, other than disciplinary counseling, which occurs as a result of the staff person responding to a violation of a regulation, much of the counseling which takes place in the residential setting is a mixture of counseling, advising, and teaching.

As residence educators--counselors and teachers--we must constantly focus attention on what the student is experiencing and not worry about some predetermined event, goal, result, program, activity, or any other "end product" that we somehow feel would be a good experience for him.⁷¹

. . . [R]esidential counselors should cultivate the teaching role of stimulating free and open discussion of the sensitive and controversial issues which divide the campus from time to time . . .⁷²

While the literature reveals that there is a variety of responses to the issues concerning the staffing of residence halls, there does seem to be a consensus that the residential professional needs to address the goal of enhancing student development and contributing to the education of the population.

⁷⁰Lynn Gometz and Clyde C. Parker, "Disciplinary Counseling: A Contradiction?" in College Student Personnel: Readings and Bibliographies, eds. Laurine E. Fitzgerald, Walter F. Johnson, and Willa Norris (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 104.

⁷¹DeCoster and Mable, p. 22.

⁷²E. G. Williamson, Student Personnel Services in Colleges and Universities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 222.

Goals and Objectives for Residence Hall Personnel

One of the issues frequently dealt with in the literature is the problem of conflicting--indeed, sometimes opposing--perceptions of what the goals and objectives of the residential system should be as held by different factions both within and outside of the university community. There is a

. . . paradox in administrative ends or objectives for the housing set-up. On the one side we consider our housing assets as capital, and we superintend our "barracks" and "mess halls" so that profit will accrue to the institution. . . . The contradictory element in our situation is that through the years we have claimed that student housing is a tool whereby we can contribute to the educational objectives of the institution.⁷³

This conflict is observable both on the policy-making and planning level of the chief administrator of student personnel, and in the day-to-day job performance of the staff member in charge of an individual residence hall.

. . . [T]he student personnel administrator is destined to experience role conflict and frustration because it is impossible to express the goals of all interested groups.⁷⁴

The goals of students, faculty, administrators, board [of trustees], and public, differ. . . . unfortunately, many may only have considered the goals of providing a place to sleep.⁷⁵

⁷³Ellen Fairchild, "Evaluating Residence Halls Through Trifocals," in College Student Personnel: Readings and Bibliographies, eds. Laurine E. Fitzgerald, Walter F. Johnson, and Willa Norris (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 198.

⁷⁴Eberle and Muston, p. 93.

⁷⁵Ibid. See also Arbuckle for additional comments on this.

It becomes the task of the student personnel administrator, then, to coordinate these various expectations, in order to develop realistic, effective policies for the residence halls.

Because the operation of residence halls involves an unusually wide variety of specialized and often partisan interests, the varied perceptions of a good residence hall must be considered in establishing policies and programs.⁷⁶

It is important that these policies be clearly defined and articulated to alleviate the confusion and conflict among the front-line staff.

Administrative uncertainty about housing programs inevitably leads to difficulties in defining staff functions and, therefore, in selecting personnel, because the nature of the program determines the requirements for the staff. Yet, programs are often planned only after the staff arrives, and duties tend to be based on habits of the past. As these programs are well organized in support of established objectives, staff functions will be clarified and appropriate personnel sought for employment.⁷⁷

One of the conflicts that arises as a result of differing perspectives on the role of housing within the university and the consequent confusion over the role of the residential staff person within the residence hall is the distorted emphasis on goals which may be secondary among the overall stated goals of the university. For example: ". . . the emphasis on discipline has done much to obscure teaching opportunities in housing and to limit the educational effectiveness of the staff."⁷⁸ While it has been established that the concept of the purpose of residence halls has changed, job descriptions

⁷⁶Shaffer and Martinson, p. 61.

⁷⁷Riker, "Changing Role of Student Housing," p. 74.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 80.

and expectations of residence hall personnel have not evolved concurrently. ". . . [M]ost residential institutions continue the questionable practice of juggling administrative--counseling--disciplinary functions under the rubric of residence hall director."⁷⁹ The focus of the role of the residential staff member has changed from that of a monitor of student behavior and chaperone to one of educator, and yet, still, residence staff is occupied with secondary tasks of "student control, recreational and social activities, and other routine procedures."⁸⁰

Another perspective on this problem is that as a result of the confusion of the administrators over the role of the residential staff people, the residence hall personnel themselves, rather than merely feeling unable to meet the desired goals of the residential system, may have an unclear or limited view as to what their role actually is.

Residence halls have become isolated from classrooms because staff members have had a limited concept of their role as educators. . . . Residence halls are also isolated because faculty and administrators have a restricted view of the work of residence personnel.⁸¹

Because of the lack of status and/or experience of residential staff people, their efforts are sometimes inadvertently misdirected.

⁷⁹Harold W. Beder and Scott T. Rickard, "Residence Hall Regulations and Staff Roles: A Substitute Model for In Loco Parentis," NASPA Journal 9 (July 1971):57.

⁸⁰Shaffer and Martinson, p. 61.

⁸¹Williamson and Biggs, p. 331.

Housing personnel are creative; they do have ideas, yet, because they perceive some of their ideas as secondary rather than primary to their role, these ideas are never developed.⁸²

They are sometimes

unnecessarily burdened with "supervisory" responsibilities; are viewed as "junior" staff; are inadequately trained and have the least amount of experience of other members in the smaller academic community [i.e., the residence hall as an educational center].⁸³

They are "too often preoccupied with directing experiences and 'programming students' under the guise of a 'student-centered' approach to human development."⁸⁴

Surely it becomes the responsibility of the administrators who oversee and coordinate the residential system to clarify the role of the residential personnel and provide them with the information, resources, and support necessary to meet the goals of their position.

A particularly difficult challenge lies in the area of stimulating the personal growth of individuals on the staff. Problems of meeting daily stresses and strains arising from close and often conflicting human relations, adapting to changing roles, learning and accepting new skills, procedures, and functions, budgeting time and energy to meet a myriad of demands, and meeting individual personality needs are all problems that can interfere with an individual's effectiveness professionally, rob him of needed job satisfactions, or disturb him emotionally.⁸⁵

⁸²Janice Abel, "Housing Personnel: Misplaced Persons," Journal of NAWDC 35 (Summer 1972):170.

⁸³Adams, p. 137.

⁸⁴DeCoster and Mable, p. 26.

⁸⁵Shaffer, pp. 6-7.

The discussion in the literature which addresses the question of what residence hall staff should do--what their approach to the task of contributing to the educational and personal development of the residential student should be--ranges from broad statements, such as: ". . . the residence educator should be accessible--physically, mentally, and emotionally,"⁸⁶ to detailed listings of the many varied qualities and skills which an effective residence hall staff member should possess.

Miller, in his article on the preparation necessary for successful job performance of residential staff people outlines eight "propositions" for professional training programs. The residence educator:

- 1) must be innovative and creative as a leader, flexible in approach;
- 2) must have a personal value system and a professional code of ethics;
- 3) must be highly competent in communication skills and consultation skills, both for working with individuals and with groups;
- 4) must have a clear understanding of the administrative tasks involved with residence hall operations;
- 5) must have competent programming skills;
- 6) must be able to evaluate competently student development and program effectiveness;
- 7) must have expertise in helping students achieve their potential; and
- 8) will learn skills and acquire knowledge more effectively through a well-planned, continuing educational experience.⁸⁷

Miller states strongly that

The residence educator definitely has . . . the potential to take action toward accomplishing the student development

⁸⁶Riker, "Residence Educators," p. 162.

⁸⁷Miller, pp. 167-177.

objectives involved. This cannot be achieved, however, unless residence educators initially qualify themselves with the skills and competencies essential to meeting the task and then strive to improve on those learnings throughout their careers.⁸⁸

Brooks said simply that the Head of Residence should possess "intellectual vitality, cultural interests, and civic awareness."⁸⁹

Regarding hiring procedures for residence hall staff, Shaffer and Martinson stated that during the selection process: "the institution should make a clear statement of the contribution residence halls are expected to make toward the achievement of its educational objectives."⁹⁰ In addition, the job description should:

[emphasize] the relationship of positions to one another.
 . . . [It should pay] more attention to cooperative effort, educational expectations, and should exemplify institutional values and ideals rather than merely stating mundane duties.
 . . . [It is] important that [the applicant] have the clearest possible picture of the job.⁹¹

There has been a movement on some campuses toward specialization among residence hall staff. Buckner discussed the Northern Illinois University program for the restructuring of the residential system. There the professional staff shared, rather than duplicated, job functions. For example, those staff members who were to specialize in programming were relieved of management responsibilities, and those who performed the management duties were no longer involved in

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 179.

⁸⁹Brooks, p. 184.

⁹⁰Shaffer and Martinson, p. 64.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 65.

program development.⁹² Greenleaf described the residential system in the coeducational halls at Indiana University, where the staff divided the responsibilities involved into four major areas: 1) programming, 2) advising student staff, 3) liaison work with faculty, and 4) planning activities. By only focusing their efforts in one area, the staff seemed better able to utilize their time and energy.⁹³

The more typical arrangement--that of one staff person being totally in charge of one residence hall--may have serious ramifications in terms of the relationships formed with students:

The residence hall director personifies the myth of the ubiquitous student personnel generalist who does all things for all students. A most unholy trinity occurs when counseling, landlord, and disciplinary functions are combined. Many students perceive the role ambiguities as threatening, and prefer to live with problems rather than seek help.⁹⁴

Yet, in spite of this objection, and despite some attempts at restructuring the residential system to allow division of responsibilities among the professional staff, most universities still employ staff members who are individually responsible for the total administration of a residence hall.

⁹²Donald R. Buckner, "Restructuring Residence Hall Programming: Residence Hall Educators with a Curriculum," Journal of College Student Personnel 18 (September 1977):390.

⁹³Elizabeth A. Greenleaf, "Coeducational Residence Halls: An Evaluation," in College Student Personnel: Readings and Bibliographies, eds. Laurine E. Fitzgerald, Walter F. Johnson, and Willa Norris (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 205.

⁹⁴Beder and Rickard, p. 60.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the varying perspectives on the position of the residence hall within the university system, the position of the professional staff member within these residence halls, and the relationship of the student personnel administrator to the residential system. It is important to consider the differences in outlook toward the role and function of the professional residential personnel in order to provide a basis for examining what individual staff members themselves identify as the focus of their work.

C H A P T E R I I I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

As every researcher knows, there is more to doing research than is dreamt of in philosophies of science, and texts in methodology offer answers to only a fraction of the problems one encounters. The best laid research plans run up against unforeseen contingencies in the collection and analysis of data; . . . unexpected findings inspire new ideas. No matter how carefully one plans in advance, research is designed in the course of its execution. The finished monograph is the result of hundreds of decisions, large and small, made while the research is under way and our standard texts do not give us procedures and techniques for making these decisions. . . . social research being what it is, we can never escape the necessity to improvise. . . . It is possible, after all, to reflect on one's difficulties and inspirations and see how they could be handled more rationally the next time around. In short, one can be methodical about matters that earlier had been left to chance and improvisation and thus cut down the area of guesswork.

--Howard S. Becker¹

Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the design of the study. Included is a review of relevant literature, focusing on the principles of qualitative research design and methodology, particularly the case study approach utilizing in-depth interview techniques.

The study was divided into two distinct parts. The first part consisted of a case study of four professional Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The method used was individual

¹Howard S. Becker, "Review of Sociologists at Work," Philip E. Hammond, ed., American Sociological Review 30 (August):602-603, quoted in Norman K. Denzin, The Research Act (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970), p. 314.

in-depth interviewing² with each of the subjects and a final group interview/discussion among the four. The second part of the study involved a written survey, which consisted of statements describing different aspects of the role of the professional Head of Residence. The survey was administered to other professional Heads of Residence and former professional Heads of Residence still employed within the University system.

The Case Study Approach

The decision to construct a case study using in-depth interviewing as the primary method of collecting data was made after considering the nature and circumstances of the topic being investigated. The purpose of the study--to describe and define the role of the professional Head of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, as perceived by individual Heads of Residence--called for a research design which would explicitly allow for the discovery of these perceptions.³ In the literature dealing with qualitative research methodology, there is a considerable amount of discussion on the importance of

²The method used is identified in a variety of ways in the literature: "the focused interview" described in Robert K. Merton, Marjorie Fiske, and Patricia L. Kendall, The Focused Interview (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956); "the nonscheduled standardized interview" described in N. K. Denzin, The Research Act (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970); and "the detailed and conversational interview" described in Howard S. Becker and Blanche Geer, "Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison," in What We Say/What We Do, ed. Irwin Deutscher (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman Co., 1973), pp. 166-174.

³Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, chap. 1.

choosing a method or mixture of methods which is appropriate to both the subject and the circumstances of the study.⁴

. . . different kinds of information about man [sic] and society are gathered most fully and economically in different ways, and . . . the problem under investigation properly dictates the method of investigation.⁵

The researcher must choose and develop a method of doing research which fits the nature and intent of her study.

The issue resolves largely into personal preferences of the [researcher], the intent of the investigation, the available resources, and the [researcher's] decision concerning what "type of interaction" he desires.⁶

Since the purpose was to discover how Heads of Residence themselves perceived their role, it was logical to ask them directly.

. . . qualitative methodologies [which] refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words, . . . allow us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definition of the world. . . . Qualitative methods enable us to explore concepts whose essence is lost in other research approaches.⁷

The technique for this study, intensive interviewing with an interview guide, referred to as "a flexible strategy of discovery" by

⁴See: Jack D. Douglas, Investigative Social Research (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976); Ray C. Rist, "On the Means of Knowing: Qualitative Research in Education," New York University Education Quarterly 10 (Summer 1979):17-21; and Denzin, Research Act.

⁵Martin Trow, "Comment on 'Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison,'" in Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement with the Social World, ed. William J. Filstead (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1970), p. 143.

⁶Denzin, Research Act, p. 132.

⁷Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), pp. 4-5.

Lofland,⁸ seemed the most effective means of providing "a framework within which respondents [could] express their own understanding in their own terms,"⁹ and offer to the researcher the insights they had acquired through their experiences in their work.¹⁰ Participant observation,¹¹ another method used to collect qualitative data, was deemed not appropriate in this situation. Much of a Head of Residence's job involves unanticipated encounters with individual students, many of which would not take place--or would be significantly different--if there were another person present. Also, since the job is, in many respects, a 24-hour-a-day position, with no particularly representative time of the work-day, participant observation would not have been a viable choice of a data collection technique.

The preparation for the first part--the case study--was twofold: a careful selection of subjects¹² and the development of an interview guide.¹³

⁸John Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971), p. 76.

⁹Michael Quinn Patton, Qualitative Evaluation Methods (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), p. 205.

¹⁰Claire Selltiz et al., Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), p. 55.

¹¹See Bogdan and Taylor or Lofland, Social Settings, for a description of this.

¹²Bogdan and Taylor, p. 102.

¹³Patton, p. 198.

Selection of the Subjects

The selection of the case study subjects was based upon several different factors. No attempt was made to choose the subjects randomly; in fact, the subjects were chosen quite specifically because of their ability to aid in the development of insights concerning the role of the professional Head of Residence.¹⁴ An ability to articulate clearly their perceptions and opinions was a crucial criterion in their selection. Bogdan and Taylor, in their discussion on choosing a subject, state,

People simply do not have an equal ability and willingness to make vivid the details and meaning of their lives. And while a good interviewer may be able to bring out the best in subjects, he or she cannot perform miracles on people who are not free with their words.¹⁵

Another important criterion was the demographic and physical make-up of the dormitories represented by the subjects. The varying architectural designs of the buildings, their location on campus, and the composition of their populations were all part of this consideration. Each of these characteristics, the researcher believed, had its own effect on the "personality" of the dormitory, and consequently on the role of the residential staff.¹⁶ For example, in a tower, or

¹⁴Selltiz et al., p. 55.

¹⁵Bogdan and Taylor, p. 102.

¹⁶Based on her own experience as a Head of Residence in a small, all-male dormitory on the east side of campus, in contrast to what she knew of the experiences of her colleagues in larger, all-female, or coeducational dormitories, or in dormitories in another part of campus, the researcher began this study with a sense that these factors were critical influences in the day-to-day performance of the job.

high-rise dormitory, the Head of Residence resides on a floor separate from the students. Her apartment is somewhat removed from the student rooms. By contrast, in the low-rise buildings, where the Head of Residence's apartment is often situated on a floor near or adjacent to student rooms, or on a well-traveled corridor near the front door, the Head of Residence regularly has students stopping in to talk while they are literally passing by the apartment. The difference affects the type of casual contact the staff member has with the students, which in turn affects the type of community development work the Head of Residence may perform. Another aspect, the population, varies from all-female or all-male to coeducational, and from less than one hundred and thirty to more than four hundred and fifty students in one dormitory. Both the factors of gender and number of students under a staff member's jurisdiction have some influence in the daily interactions between students and staff.

The University of Massachusetts at Amherst has three large residential areas--so divided primarily for administrative purposes. Two of these areas staff their dormitories with Heads of Residence. The third area (Orchard Hill/Central) has a different organizational structure and a different job description and title for its residential staff people. Since the study involved the role of the professional Head of Residence, the population with which the researcher was concerned was that of the two residential areas employing staff whose official title was "Head of Residence."¹⁷

¹⁷Other residential staff people at the university who were not included in the study were the non-professional student Heads of Residence and the Tower Coordinators, all of whom worked in the Southwest Residential Area.

The pool of potential case study subjects, then, represented two separate residential areas: Northeast/Sylvan and Southwest. The dormitories within each of these areas included high-rise (tower) buildings and low-rises; coeducational, all-male, and all-female buildings. The Northeast/Sylvan residential area consisted of three high-rise buildings, all coeducational, and nine low-rise buildings, five of which were coeducational, two all-female, and two all-male. The Southwest residential complex consisted of nineteen dormitories staffed by professional Heads of Residence: eight low-rise buildings including one all-male, three all-female, and four coeducational dormitories; and four high-rise buildings divided into eleven dormitories including two all-male, one all-female, and eight coeducational.¹⁸ The researcher's goal was to select subjects who together would represent a high-rise building and a low-rise building in each of the two areas, and also represent a coeducational and a single-sex dormitory in each area.

Beyond these issues of the demographic and physical characteristics of the dormitories represented and the individual's ability to be an articulate, thoughtful contributor to the study, it was the researcher's concern to select subjects who would take a sincere interest in the questions addressed. In addition, the researcher sought subjects who would be willing to commit the necessary time to the project.¹⁹

¹⁸The high-rise buildings in Southwest, each of which housed a population of about six hundred students, were divided into two or three separate administrative units each, designated "Lower," "Middle," and "Upper." Thus, four buildings actually constituted eleven dormitories.

¹⁹Bogdan and Taylor, p. 102.

Taking these factors into consideration, the researcher chose three Heads of Residence and herself as the four subjects of the case study. At the time of the initial interviews three of the four were completing their second year as professional Heads of Residence and the fourth had been in the position for two and one-half years. The types of dormitories represented, according to the demographic and physical categories discussed above, were:

- one all-male low-rise dormitory in Northeast/Sylvan;
- one coeducational high-rise dormitory in Northeast/Sylvan;
- one all-female low-rise dormitory in Southwest; and
- one coeducational high-rise dormitory in Southwest.

The decision of the researcher to include herself as a subject in the case study is related to her initial motivation to conduct the study. The researcher's interest in the topic of the role of the professional Head of Residence as perceived by individuals in that role developed out of a personal need to define and clarify her own position vis-à-vis that role within the dormitory, within the division of Student Affairs, and within the University at large. The role often seemed more ambiguous than not, and this ambiguity--particularly in relation to other University agencies with which a Head of Residence must interact--resulted in a high level of frustration and a feeling of isolation from both colleagues and superiors.

In determining the methods to be used to conduct the study, and in deciding on the case study-intensive interviewing format as the primary method of collecting data, it seemed most efficacious to include the researcher herself as one of the subjects. A considerable

amount of the literature dealing with qualitative research methodology stresses the importance of the researcher becoming a part of the group under investigation. Diesing states that the researcher's "first and continuous task is to become part of the community or group he is studying."²⁰ Only in this way will the researcher really be able to understand the data which is gathered.

In qualitative methods, the researcher is necessarily involved in the lives of the subjects. . . . And even more than this involvement, the researcher must identify and empathize with his or her subjects, in order to understand them from their own frames of reference.²¹

Since the researcher's involvement in the group was a pre-existing situation, it seemed that to ignore her ability to contribute directly to the raw data of the study would have been at variance with the purpose of the study: to compare individual perceptions of the role of professional Heads of Residence. To attempt a neutral stance in the process of data collection would have been to deny the researcher's deep involvement in the group and could have negatively affected that collection process. Argyris states that, "It is difficult to see how the researcher will uncover underlying problems if he tries to be 'neutral.' A neutral researcher runs the risk of being alienated from his subjects."²² In fact, the inclusion of the researcher's own experience is

²⁰Paul Diesing, Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 144.

²¹Bogdan and Taylor, p. 8.

²²Chris Argyris, "Creating Effective Relationships in Organizations," in Human Organization Research, ed. R. N. Adams and J. J. Preiss (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1960), p. 115.

a desirable procedure to follow:

. . . it seems to me that since the subject matter . . . is the social life in which we are all involved, the ability to make imaginative use of personal experience and the very quality of one's personal experience will be important contributors to one's technical skill [in doing research].²³

Douglas, in Investigating Social Research, discusses at length the advantages of studying one's own group.

Some of the best field research is done by people who are already members of the settings they study. In those cases, . . . the beginning is not that much of a problem and they are able far more easily to tell what mixture of methods is likely to work best.²⁴

Unfortunately, pressure from groups advocating more traditional modes of research have caused many researchers to downplay their own personal knowledge of the population being studied, when in fact this first-hand participation contributed greatly to their findings.

The Interview Guide

After selecting the four subjects for the case study, the next step was the preparation of an interview guide.²⁵ This involved examining the situation under investigation and developing an outline of issues to be explored with each subject. "The interview guide simply serves as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered."²⁶ The procedure followed in

²³Howard S. Becker, Sociological Work (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970), p. 22.

²⁴Douglas, p. 36, note 5..

²⁵Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 3.

²⁶Patton, p. 198.

the development of the guide was essentially the one recommended by Lofland.²⁷ The researcher began by "brainstorming" ideas, i.e., making note of as many issues pertaining to the role of the professional Head of Residence as came to mind. Another part of the procedure, as described by Lofland,²⁸ was to talk with and listen to other people, both Heads of Residence and others whose work is connected with the field of residential life.²⁹ The researcher then drew up a list of concerns and questions about the role of the Head of Residence: the frustrations, sources of satisfaction, conflicts, ambiguities. Some of these ideas came from the researcher's own feelings about the job; some came from conversations with others. The list of concerns was sorted and categorized. Themes emerged and the interview guide was formulated, focusing on several broad categories, including:

1. individual perceptions of the separate components of the job;
2. individual emphasis in the job;
3. conflicts between individual perceptions and that of others;
4. personal expectations versus what others expected of the individual Head of Residence;

²⁷Lofland, Social Settings, pp. 76-85.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 76-77.

²⁹Merton, Fiske, and Kendall refer to this stage of preparation as "situational analysis." The researcher identifies the hypothetically significant elements in the situation, and, based on this, develops the interview guide.

5. skills necessary for effective performance.

(See Appendix 2.)

The purpose of the guide was to insure that the significant topics were covered with each of the subjects.³⁰ However, since

with this approach [i.e., using an interview guide within an unstructured interview situation], the interviewer will often find that interviewees will raise important issues not contained in the [guide], or will even summarize entire sections of the [guide] in one long sequence of statements,³¹

it was important that the interview guide remain just that: a guide to the interview, flexible in nature, and not impose a rigid structure on the interaction. The design which the researcher chose allowed questions to be raised and dealt with by the subjects in the course of the interviews, and resulted in more data being generated than would have been if the only questions addressed were those determined by the researcher. "As is generally recognized, one of the principal reasons for the use of interviews . . . is to uncover a diversity of relevant responses, whether or not these have been anticipated by the inquirer."³²

³⁰Patton, pp. 200-201.

³¹Denzin, Research Act, p. 124.

³²Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 12.

The Interviews

After selecting the subjects and preparing the interview guide, the researcher approached each subject and presented an overview of the purpose and intent of the study, explaining how the subject came to be selected, her role in the study, and finally, soliciting her participation. The subject was assured that her identity would be obscured in the final report of the data and that any confidential information would be excluded from the report.³³ Each subject agreed to take part in the study and expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity to discuss her own feelings and perceptions about her job and what it entails.³⁴ The researcher and subject then agreed on a time and place when the initial interview would occur.³⁵

The first interview began with an explicit description of the research study including an explanation of the overall format of the

³³Lofland, Social Settings, pp. 86-87. See also Bogdan and Taylor, pp. 104-107.

³⁴One subject said that she felt quite flattered to have been asked to participate and looked forward to exploring the questions addressed by the study, and to the opportunity to compare her own ideas with those of her colleagues.

³⁵The care with which the time and location of the interview should be arranged is frequently mentioned in the literature dealing with the techniques of interviewing. It is important to select a time and place which is convenient for the subject, appropriate to the nature of the interview, comfortable, and relatively free from distraction for both the researcher and the subject. See Patton, p. 249; Bogdan and Taylor, p. 107; and John Brady, The Craft of Interviewing (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 154.

interviews.³⁶ This provided the subject with a more complete understanding of the project, which was a necessary element in her motivation and served to solidify the sense of rapport.

The interviewer can do much to establish the tone of the interview by clarifying, at the outset, the purposes of the inquiry and by defining his role as well as that of the other interviewees. It is for him to set the stage so that others will have genuine interest in playing their parts.³⁷

If the subject felt she would benefit from the results of the research she would be more willing to expend the time and care to make thoughtful contributions to the data.

The researcher is [dependent on] the subjects' perception of his research as a primary motivating factor in inducing them to report valid information. Thus the research itself must somehow be perceived as need-fulfilling. The subjects . . . must perceive the research as helping them to gain something which they desire; to explore problems hitherto not understood and unsolved. They must feel they are contributing to something whose completion will be quite satisfying to them.³⁸

The importance of establishing rapport with the subject is well-documented and considered to be integral to the success of the in-depth interview.³⁹ "In general, rapport with interviewees is contingent on

³⁶Bogdan and Taylor, p. 107.

³⁷Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 171.

³⁸Argyris, p. 114.

³⁹For example, see Myron Glazer, The Research Adventure: Promise and Problems of Fieldwork (New York: Random House, 1972); Rosalie Wax, "Reciprocity in Field Work," in Human Organization Research, ed. R. N. Adams and J. J. Preiss (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1960); and Bogdan and Taylor.

their understanding of the objectives [of the interview]."⁴⁰ However, in this situation, because the researcher already had a relationship with each of the subjects--both a collegial relationship and a friendship--a basic rapport already existed. To some extent this rapport was dependent on the motivation of the subject to participate in the study, which in turn was dependent on the relevance of the research for the subject. In this case many of the goals of the researcher were shared by the subject. The problems and dilemmas faced by the researcher as a Head of Residence, problems which had prompted her to conduct the study, were equally experienced by the subjects. Just as the research study was designed to meet certain needs of the researcher, it would also serve to meet similar needs of the subjects.

A great deal of understanding of the field-work process can be gained by conceiving of it as frequently involving a reciprocal exchange between two persons--a research worker who wants to get data, and a respondent who has certain gratifications as his aim.⁴¹

It is important to establish rapport in order to insure a high degree of honesty on the part of the subject.⁴² One of the considerations in the selection of the subjects for the case study was the extent to which the researcher felt a given individual would be honest in her responses. The researcher consciously chose subjects whom she

⁴⁰Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 172.

⁴¹Joseph R. Gusfield, "Field Work Reciprocities in Studying a Social Movement," in Human Organization Research, ed. R. N. Adams and J. J. Preiss (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1960), p. 99.

⁴²See Brady, chap. 3.

felt were confident about their own job performance and with whom she already had some rapport. In this way, the researcher felt that the subjects would be comfortable expressing their own opinions, even if those opinions were in disagreement with the researcher or with each other.

The researcher asked the subject for permission to tape-record the interviews, explaining that it was the most efficient, accurate way of recording the information. It would also permit the researcher to concentrate on the interaction with the subject, rather than on the arduous task of note-taking. Lofland states that, "for all intents and purposes it is imperative that one tape record. . . . if conceivably possible, tape record. Then one can interview."⁴³ Although two of the subjects expressed some self-consciousness about being recorded, all understood the reasons for it and agreed.⁴⁴

Following the interview guide, the researcher conducted the initial interview, urging the subject to speak freely and to introduce new topics as she desired, however tangential they seemed. The subject was encouraged to be introspective and reflect on experiences in her work which were characteristic of her performance in the role of a Head of Residence.⁴⁵ The interview frequently evolved into a discussion between two colleagues concerned with the same issues affecting their

⁴³Lofland, Social Settings, p. 89.

⁴⁴Patton refers to the tape recorder as "indispensable." Patton, p. 247. Bogdan and Taylor "advise the interviewer to use a tape recorder whenever possible." Bogdan and Taylor, p. 109.

⁴⁵See Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, chap. 2.

professional lives, "a collaboration which encourage[d] the interviewee to continue his self-exploration of an experience until some measure of clarity [was] attained."⁴⁶

The researcher was careful to remain flexible in the ordering and wording of the questions, considering it more important to allow the conversation to follow its own course, rather than to be concerned with a set of pre-determined topics.

[Regarding] this technique of fitting questions to the experience of the respondent . . . We advocate a rather loose and liberal handling of a questionnaire, [i.e., guide], by an interviewer. It seems to us much more important that the question be fixed in its meaning, than in its wording. This new emphasis places the responsibility on the interviewer for knowing exactly what he is trying to discover and permits him to vary the wording in accordance with the experience of the respondent. This . . . is the principle of division. It consists in adapting the pattern of our questionnaire to the structural pattern of experience of the respondent from whom we are seeking our information.⁴⁷

The first interview lasted about one-half hour and touched upon a number of issues which had not been included in the guide. Also, there was a developing sense of which issues included in the guide were, in fact, relevant to the subject's perception of her job, and which issues had little significance to the subject. This was a beginning step in the analysis of the data, following Glaser and Strauss's model of constant comparative analysis. According to this model it was

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 13. Also, Powdermaker stresses the importance of this and emphasizes that this two-way communication is essential to this type of research. Hortense Powdermaker, Stranger and Friend (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1966).

⁴⁷Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Qualitative Analysis (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972), p. 193.

important to begin the examination of preliminary data while still in the process of gathering it.⁴⁸

The interview with the fourth subject--the researcher herself--was conducted in essentially the same manner and under the same conditions as the other three. The researcher/subject utilized a tape recorder to record her own responses to the questions included in the interview guide, allowing herself the freedom to recount anecdotes and examples as they came to mind.

After having the tapes transcribed, the researcher reviewed the data, both the recordings and the transcriptions.⁴⁹ This gave her the opportunity to look at the data, in addition to listening to the tapes. Both of these were important. Having a written record allowed the researcher to locate pieces of the data easily and quickly. The aural record supplied the nuances of the tone and inflection of the human voice, and gave the researcher a sense of the meaning and significance of the interview as a whole.⁵⁰ This review of the data was done both in order to prepare for the second interview, and to continue the ongoing comparative analysis already initiated in the course of the interviewing. The researcher had begun to formulate "categories of

⁴⁸See Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967), chap. 5.

⁴⁹The services of a professional typist/transcriber were utilized.

⁵⁰Lofland, Social Settings, pp. 90-91.

analysis" and to "compare incidents applicable to each category."⁵¹ Using this technique, recurring thematic ideas began to emerge from the data. This procedure is the basis of Glaser and Strauss's method for generating grounded theory, i.e., theory which is based in the data.⁵²

The topics covered in the interview were compared to those included in the guide; areas which were not addressed or which needed further exploration were noted.⁵³ A summary of the interview was prepared, along with a revised guide for the second interview. This new interview guide was designed specifically for each subject, since the range of topics discussed in each initial interview varied. In addition, some issues were raised by only one of the subjects, and the researcher was interested in having the other subjects address the new topics.

Armed with this individualized, revised interview guide, the researcher conducted the second set of interviews. These interviews took place from six to eight months after the first, partly due to logistical problems, but also because of a desire to have a distance of time between the first and second meetings with each subject. The researcher was interested in collecting information that would be a more accurate reflection of the situation and the professional role of

⁵¹Glaser and Strauss, p. 105.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 35-43.

⁵³"After any one interview session the interviewer would compare the data actually obtained in the interview to the data desired as specified in the guide in order to begin planning for the next interview." Patton, p. 257.

the subject, than of the time that the interview was conducted. Data collected at different times reflect changes which may have occurred and in this way the researcher can guard against mistaking a time-related observation or perception for one which is more constant over time.⁵⁴

The second interview, lasting approximately one hour, began with the researcher summarizing the points made and the topics covered during the initial interview. Care was taken to include in this summary any particularly personalized view of an issue. This step gave the researcher a chance to verify the data collected from the previous interview and to begin to confirm her understanding of the subject's perception. Since the researcher had already begun to evaluate and analyze the data, this was an opportunity to compare her perceptions of what had been said with what the subject had meant to say. It was also helpful in bridging the gap in time between the two interviews. The subject was able to review and reconsider her impressions of six to eight months earlier and to clarify or qualify the opinions expressed at that time. Once again, as during the first interview, the researcher employed the interview guide as an aid to a free-flowing discussion and encouraged the subject to address questions which came up spontaneously.

The interview progressed successfully, with a growing sense of partnership between researcher and subject. Many of the problems which generally arise in intensive interviewing were absent because of the pre-established relationship between researcher and subject. Diesing

⁵⁴Becker, Sociological Work, p. 54.

states that, ". . . in case studies, the personality of the investigator and his relations with the people he is studying are an essential source of understanding."⁵⁵ The researcher maintained a mood conducive to the sharing of ideas, and although she sometimes expressed her own ideas in response to an issue raised by the subjects, she was careful to be nonjudgemental, expressing no disagreement with or disapproval of the subject's opinion.⁵⁶ If the goal of the interview is to evoke insights, an important element is "the attitude of the investigator, which [should be] one of alert receptivity, of seeking rather than testing . . ."⁵⁷

Being a member of the group being studied, the researcher was able to avoid or at least anticipate and prepare for problems which traditionally beset the interview situation. Becker and Geer, in their article discussing the pros and cons of participant observation versus intensive interviewing as research techniques, mention the difficulties a researcher may have in communicating with subjects.⁵⁸ "Learning the native language"⁵⁹ can be a serious barrier to successful research, whether literally, in the case of a researcher who is not fluent in the language of the population she is studying, or figuratively, when

⁵⁵Diesing, p. 147.

⁵⁶Bogdan and Taylor, p. 113.

⁵⁷Selltiz et al., p. 60.

⁵⁸See Denzin, Research Act, pp. 128-132, and Becker and Geer, pp. 166-174.

⁵⁹Becker and Geer, p. 167.

researching a group which uses familiar language but within its own social/cultural frame of reference. Denzin refers to a "tacit assumption of understanding" as the first error in interviewing, and goes on to say:

All interview forms are susceptible to this error and unless the investigator can become firmly entrenched in a group's way of life, he has no assurance that he fully understands what is communicated.⁶⁰

This was clearly not a problem in this study because the researcher was an active member of the same group as her subjects.

Another problem which can interfere with the communication between researcher and subject is that of a fear on the part of the subject that she may place herself in a vulnerable position by articulating openly her opinions about her position. If her views are published she may discover that she has alienated her superiors. This problem becomes an ethical question: does the researcher include in her report all the relevant, interesting information to which she has access, even if that information may jeopardize the professional standing of one of the subjects?⁶¹ Being part of the same professional group, the researcher, along with her subjects, was in a comparable position of having to maintain her professional reputation. Also, again because she was a member of the same group, the researcher was better able to identify material which needed to be kept confidential. Becker has said that ". . . the interviewer's manner and role can

⁶⁰Denzin, Research Act, p. 130.

⁶¹See Merton, Fiske, and Kendall; Gusfield; and Glazer.

strongly affect what the interviewee chooses to tell him, as can the situation in which the interview is conducted."⁶² In this study, the researcher's manner was collegial and her role included that of professional peer. The subject could trust the researcher to be sensitive to the need for confidentiality, and astute in identifying that information which would have negative repercussions if publicized.

Once again, after completing the individual interviews, the researcher conducted a self-interview, and then obtained transcriptions of all four interview sessions. While reviewing this material, she was "constantly redesigning and reintegrating [her] theoretical notions,"⁶³ and testing and revising her interpretations in a continuous process.⁶⁴

The next step was to prepare for the group interview. Merton, Fiske, and Kendall discuss the advantages of the group setting at length.⁶⁵ In a group situation, the participants tend to encourage each other to share their personal feelings and to relinquish their inhibitions. Also,

[g]roup interviewing has the advantage of allowing people more time to reflect and to recall experiences. Something that a given person mentions can spur memories and opinions in others. . . . And, too, people may not agree with one

⁶²Howard S. Becker, "Interviewing Medical Students," in Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement with the Social World, ed. William J. Filstead (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1970), p. 104.

⁶³Glaser and Strauss, p. 101.

⁶⁴Diesing, pp. 145-146.

⁶⁵Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, pp. 139-147.

another on matters of opinion, providing instances of interchange between contrasting perspectives [emphasis added].⁶⁶

"This feature [of triggering forgotten details] of the group interview serves an activating function not readily duplicated in the private interview."⁶⁷

A review of the tape recordings and transcriptions of the second interviews yielded information which led to the development of an interview guide for this final interview. The second interviews were compared with their respective guides, and any major areas which had been neglected were included in the new guide. At this point in the study definite themes were recurring, and the researcher was beginning to develop a more precise understanding of what these four individual Heads of Residence perceived that they did in their professional capacities. Again, some categories for analysis considered relevant at the outset remained so while other categories lost some of their significance for the problem as the data were reviewed.⁶⁸

Since "informality and group interaction are prerequisites for an effective group interview,"⁶⁹ the researcher felt it was important to create an atmosphere where the subjects would discuss their ideas unself-consciously. She decided to invite the three subjects to a

⁶⁶Lofland, Social Settings, p. 88.

⁶⁷Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 147.

⁶⁸"[The researcher's] inquiry is constantly in the process of reformulation and redirection as new information is obtained." Selltitz et al., p. 60.

⁶⁹Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, p. 140.

brunch on a Sunday morning, and was careful to arrange the meeting room in "a circular pattern in which the interviewer [was] symbolically placed as one of the group, [since this arrangement] has been found most conducive to full and spontaneous reporting."⁷⁰ This interview, with the researcher acting as both facilitator and full participant, lasted two hours. At its conclusion the subjects all expressed their appreciation at having been invited to participate in what they considered to be more of a forum to discuss their views than an interview with data generation as its goal.

The Survey

The completion of the group interview signaled the end of the first phase of the data collection. The interviews had provided the necessary data for generating some theoretical ideas about the de facto role of the professional Head of Residence. The group interview in particular had helped to formulate ideas for the second phase of the data collection: the survey questionnaire.

The scope provided by the group interview makes it especially useful as a preliminary step to developing a questionnaire or response schedule to be administered to a large sample, for it elicits a greater variety of otherwise unanticipated responses than an individual interview and thus affords a basis for ensuring a more adequate coverage of responses in the questionnaire.⁷¹

The researcher examined the interview data and categorized the various pieces of information. Each statement was compared with

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 139.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 146.

the opinions and reactions of the other subjects. Focusing on the themes which, by this stage of the study, had very clearly established themselves as significant, the researcher formulated a set of statements about the role of the professional Head of Residence. After a lengthy review of these potential survey items, a final series of forty-four statements evolved (see Appendix 5). These statements covered the categories initially thought to be important, but with some variation in emphasis. As a result of the preliminary evaluation of the interview data, some categories emerged as having a greater significance than had been anticipated by the researcher at the outset of the study. For example, the notion of specific skill areas being important to one's success in the job proved to have less application to the topic than the idea of the attitude which one possesses toward the job--both in terms of performing the necessary tasks and in terms of one's interactions with the student population. Establishing a mood in the dormitory, having a positive approach to dormitory life: this was expressed as a more relevant factor contributing to success and satisfaction on the job.

It was decided to design the survey as a fixed-choice instrument, using a three-point Likert-like scale: "Agree," "No opinion," or "Disagree."⁷² A five-point scale, adding "Agree Strongly" and "Disagree Strongly" to either end of the scale was considered unnecessary, because it would not add any significant information to the results.⁷³

⁷²Sir Claus Moser and G. Kalton, Survey Methods in Social Investigation, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1972), pp. 361-366.

⁷³Consultation with Dr. William C. Wolf, Jr., Professor, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, September, 1980.

Since the purpose of the survey was simply to compare the opinions and perceptions of the case study subjects with those of the rest of the Head of Residence population, and not to offer an in-depth description of the opinions of that population, it was not important to determine the extent of the respondent's agreement or disagreement with a particular statement.

In addition to the forty-four fixed-choice items, there were also four open-choice items and three items concerning biographical information. The open-choice items were included to enable the respondents to contribute their own personal viewpoint to the qualitative data collected from the case study interviews.

Thus, the data collected from the interview sessions had provided the researcher with the material from which to generate a survey instrument. The purpose of the survey was to augment the information gathered from the interviews, substantiate the speculations and conclusions the researcher had begun to form--or challenge them.⁷⁴ Sieber discusses four kinds of contributions which survey data can make to the analysis of qualitative fieldwork data, including "the verification of field interpretations" and "the casting of new light on field observations."⁷⁵ Often survey data help to explain some piece of qualitative data that had initially seemed inexplicable.

⁷⁴"Quantitative studies serve primarily to firm up and modify knowledge first gained in a fundamentally qualitative fashion." Lofland, Social Settings, p. 6.

⁷⁵Sam D. Sieber, "The Integration of Fieldwork and Survey Methods," American Journal of Sociology 78 (1973):1335-1359.

The surveys were administered to all current Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, and to all former Heads of Residence still employed with the Student Affairs division of the University. The procedure followed by the researcher to administer the survey was to request time at each of the weekly staff meetings which involved professional Heads of Residence. These consisted of the Northeast/Sylvan Area meeting and two of the three weekly meetings held in the Southwest Area.⁷⁶ At each meeting, the researcher briefly explained the nature of the study and the intent of the survey. The surveys were then distributed and the respondents were asked to complete them while the researcher waited. The time required for this was approximately thirty to forty-five minutes. (In only one case did a respondent request more time. She retained the survey, to finish it at her own pace, and later returned it to the researcher by mail.)

The former Heads of Residence were identified by inquiring among people who had worked for the residential life office for a number of years and who were familiar with personnel histories. There were fourteen former Heads of Residence in all. Surveys were distributed to this group by mail and included an additional cover letter, which served as a "mail-back" form to be used to track returns (see Appendix 4). The respondent was asked to mail back the survey to the researcher, and at the same time to sign and mail the return form. In this way, when the completed survey and the return form arrived, the researcher was able to note which respondent had completed the survey.

⁷⁶This was arranged by talking with the respective area administrators and obtaining their approval and support.

At the same time, she was able to maintain the respondent's anonymity, since there was no identifying information included with the survey itself. The rate of return for the survey was 100 percent.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has described the overall design of the study, consisting of a case study and the administration of a written survey. A review of the relevant literature on qualitative methodology and the research techniques utilized in the study has also been included.

The study has involved a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques, providing the researcher with different types of data. These data will be presented and described at length in the following chapter. The information collected from the interviews with the case study subjects will be presented first, followed by a description of those items from the survey which have particular relevance to the major themes which emerged during the interviews.

C H A P T E R I V
PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter the data collected from the interviews with the four case study subjects will be presented. The data were evaluated and examined utilizing the principles of constant comparative analysis as described in Chapter 3. This method resulted in the classification of the information into several categories. The organization of the data is based on these categories. The data are further divided into two sections: the primary data presented are those collected from an examination of the interviews and the supplemental data originates from the results of the surveys.

In addition, the researcher presents an overview of the hiring process followed at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst to select professional Heads of Residence, and the orientation program attended by these new staff people at the outset of their employment. Also included in this chapter is a summary of the official University job description for professional Heads of Residence.

The Generation of Grounded Theory

The generation of grounded theory involves the formation of conceptual categories. This refers to the identification of categories of information which are based on the data (i.e., grounded in the data). Even if the facts applicable to a particular category vary as

the analysis progresses, the concept which the category expresses, if truly relevant to the data, remains appropriate to the study.

[T]he concept itself will not change, while even the most accurate facts change. Concepts only have their meanings respecified at times because other theoretical and research purposes have evolved.¹

"[I]n generating theory it is not the fact upon which we stand, but the conceptual category (or a conceptual property of the category) that was generated from it."²

The conceptual categories which emerged from the study of the data are categories which are clearly significant elements in the individual's description of her role as a professional Head of Residence. They represent aspects of the job which evolved as important factors contributing to the individual's perception of herself in the role.

These categories include:

1. delineation of the different components of the job
2. the Head of Residence's approach or attitude toward the students in the dormitory
3. the Head of Residence's approach or attitude toward the job in a general way, i.e., toward the working situation
4. specific skill areas important to successful job performance
5. areas of conflict and contradiction within the job realm, affecting personal role definition, including the influence of personal expectations.

¹Glaser and Strauss, p. 23.

²Ibid.

Correlated with these five categories are two factors which emerged as important dimensions of three or more of the categories.

They are:

1. changes in the subject's perception of the category over time, and
2. the influence of the subject's previous experience on her perception of her role.

These are the five areas and the factors which influence them which will be discussed in the presentation of the data.

Official Job Description

It is important for the reader to have a basic understanding of the official University job description for the position of professional Head of Residence, in order to appreciate how the subjects' individual descriptions and perceptions of the job compare. The official description serves as an introduction to the job for the applicants, at least for those applicants who are new to the University of Massachusetts residential system. In the case of the four subjects involved in this study, none of them had had any more than a superficial experience with the University of Massachusetts system, and so formed their initial impressions, at least partly, on the basis of the information contained in this official description. (See Appendix 1 for the complete document.)

The job description begins with the statement that:

Heads of Residence are responsible for assessing the needs of the residence hall and developing appropriate goals that will positively affect the climate and development of the hall.

It then continues, elaborating that "this basic task" will be implemented by the Head of Residence working with the various student groups in the house, serving as an advisor and resource person, and supporting the establishment of various programs which would be carefully designed to meet the needs of all members of the community. The Head of Residence is also responsible for carrying out the necessary administrative work and serving on "relevant task forces and committees as required from time to time."

In several sub-sections, the description then details examples of specific duties concerning the hiring, training, and supervising of student staff, counseling individuals and groups, consulting on and supporting house activities, and "maintaining" university and student government regulations. A final section outlines "administrative duties involved in running a residence hall."

The Hiring Process

Most Heads of Residence receive their first concrete information about the position of the professional residential staff during the two day-long interview process. During this process the candidate participates in a number of formal and informal discussions, and is interviewed by at least one committee. Each of these sessions offers the candidate additional information--or at least an additional perspective--on the role of the professional Head of Residence.

The initial meeting usually includes an overview of the hiring process and a small discussion group led by an experienced Head of Residence. This discussion utilizes a question-and-answer format and

candidates are encouraged to explore the issues and problems particular to a situation where one's living space and working space are one and the same. In this setting, candidates are exposed to the views of one or two current Heads of Residence and one or more residential life administrators. The views expressed may or may not coincide, as the position varies from situation to situation and all staff members lend their own perspective to it.

The first full day of the hiring process focuses around an interview with a centralized committee--centralized in that it is composed of students and staff representing both residential areas on campus. Each candidate is asked questions designed to get a sense of their abilities and experience in the areas of administration, supervision, educational programming, counseling, and familiarity with the age group. In addition to the interview, each candidate has an opportunity to meet informally with other candidates and with staff people to share questions and impressions about the university and the residence halls.

If evaluated positively by this centralized committee, the candidate is then invited to be interviewed by one or two other committees, each composed of students and staff of one or both of the two residential areas. Again, the candidate is asked a series of questions and presented with hypothetical situations to determine his or her suitability for the position of Head of Residence. Once approved by these area committees, the candidates are placed in an active "pool," from which a final selection of staff is made when a vacancy occurs in a dormitory.

Throughout this entire process, the candidate begins to form opinions about the role of the professional Head of Residence, based on contacts and interactions with staff, students, and other candidates, some of whom may have had direct experience with the University residential system previously. The interviews themselves create a definite impression for the candidates about what the priorities in the job are. Since the entire hiring process is, of necessity, a carefully coordinated one, the candidate is exposed to a fairly coordinated picture of the residential system at the University and the role of the professional staff person in that system. This is not to imply that the picture presented is not an accurate one, but merely to suggest the possibility that it does not make explicit enough the many variations of the job which may actually occur.

New Staff Orientation

The Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst work under the aegis of the Office of Residential Life. This agency is responsible for coordinating the activities within the dormitories, including counseling, educational programming, recreational programming, and discipline. In addition, the Heads of Residence are expected to carry out a number of duties which are the direct concern of another agency: Housing Administration. This office is responsible for overseeing the assignment of individual students to rooms, the coordination of janitorial services in the residence halls, the repair and maintenance of the buildings, and the disbursement of the budget.

The orientation in which the new Head of Residence participates is designed to supply an overview of the job and to communicate the information crucial to the immediate opening and operating of the dormitory. This program, which takes place during the two weeks immediately preceding the opening day of the University, focuses on that information which the staff person needs to know in order to efficiently and successfully deal with the tasks and problems of the first several weeks of the school year. These are not necessarily the same tasks and problems with which the Head of Residence will be concerned during the duration of the semester; however, they are the ones which have the most immediate relevance.

Issues of staff training and development, counseling techniques and problems of referral, working with House governments, and developing creative programming in the dorm are raised and considered, but the immediate concerns are opening the dormitory for occupancy and housing assignments. A considerable amount of attention is paid to the management and record-keeping aspect of the work of a Head of Residence.

Selection of the Case Study Subjects and Data Collection

The selection of the four subjects for the case study was based on a concern that each of the two residential areas employing Heads of Residence and the four major types of dormitories be represented. In addition, the researcher considered the potential of the subjects to contribute meaningful data to the research. This process is described in detail in Chapter 3. The individual interviews took place in the subject's own apartment and were all tape-recorded. The final, group

interview took place in the researcher's apartment, and was also tape-recorded. The interview guide which was utilized by the researcher provided a framework for the dialogue between researcher and subject. Each subject was encouraged to reflect on her own perceptions of the job and to consider what had influenced her to arrive at her own definition of the role.

The initial interviews each began with a question about the different components of the job and a comparison of the subject's own delineation of the components with that of the University's official description. The subjects, on their own, had each expanded the definition of the job beyond the officially designated components to include other elements of the work such as role-modeling as a distinct aspect not specifically included in the University's description. Each interview covered the topics outlined in the guide, but also dealt with issues that arose spontaneously as the interview progressed. Several major themes, or categories, developed. The subjects responded thoughtfully and carefully to the researcher's questions, and provided considerable data on the role of the professional Head of Residence.

Definition of Components

The first issue which the researcher explored with the subjects was the delineation of the job of the professional Head of Residence into components. How does the job break down into identifiable segments of work? Or does it? The researcher wanted to look at both the respondent's perception of the official University job description and how that document describes the various components, and the respondent's

own version of those components, as she describes the job she performs.

The official job description, as summarized above, defines the job as consisting of three primary areas of focus: administrative work, educational programming, and counseling. In addition, the Head of Residence is described as the individual in the residence hall who supervises dormitory groups, such as the House Council (elected by the residents), and selects, trains, and supervises a student staff of Resident Assistants.

Each of the case study subjects mentioned in her delineation of the components of the job the three primary areas described in the official University job description: administration, counseling, and programming. In addition, each one expanded that description in her own way, to encompass the aspects of being a Head of Residence which she felt were "not adequately articulated" in the official document. These areas included selection, training, and supervision of student staff, discipline, role-modeling, crisis intervention, and professional interaction and development.

The subjects felt that the official description was, at best, "inadequate," and at worst could be seen as "misleading" to new staff people. The job as described in the official papers implied that there were some clear distinctions among the various tasks which Heads of Residence are expected to accomplish, and, in that sense, implied that one would have some control over when and how those tasks were completed. Yet, the subjects seemed to feel that the day-by-day activities of the job could not easily be categorized as one component of the role or another.

It's really hard to delineate them [the things we do] into different components of the job because they all roll one into the other and it's not like you can be a counselor from eight to ten at night and then you're going to do discipline from ten to midnight and then you're going to do paperwork, or whatever, at a different time, too.

This was not seen as a source of frustration, but rather simply a fact of the job. Although the components outlined in the official description were deemed accurate, it was felt that one could not really describe the job adequately in terms of a clear-cut division of tasks into those aspects of administration, counseling, or programming. The various activities in which a Head of Residence is involved are often not easily definable tasks which can be placed in a specific category. They more often than not involve an interaction or a relationship with a student. This is true even in terms of seemingly unimportant tasks such as providing information about a deadline for filing a University form. This very brief interaction could, in fact, set up a pattern for a relationship with a student, which could then lead to one or more counseling sessions dealing with issues of great importance to the student.

. . . it's good that you have to do administrative things because you wander in with something administrative like, "Where's your inventory?" and wind up finding out a whole lot more about what's going on.

One subject identified community maintenance and development as the focus of her work, stating that this took into account all the various components. She believed that most of the components of her work were, in some way, an aspect of community development.

When I think about the job I've had for two years and think about what I have done in that job--how I would define it--the phrase "community maintenance" is what comes to mind. . . . when I

think about what my responsibility is in this job, what I see my role as, I see it as the person who attempts to maintain the community . . . and that covers everything to me. . . .

I approach the job as a whole thing--a gestalt approach. I don't see it broken down into various parts. Everything becomes a part of everything else. Everything comes under this feeling of community maintenance and development.

Another subject defined the overall work she did as "interacting" and "building relationships." She felt this description encompassed all the various parts of her job. "Education" was another way of describing the role of the Head of Residence in a way that included all other aspects.

Everything I do is really educational, whether it's working with R.A.s or--it's educational. Even the administration is educational, because usually I develop a system which I will use again and again.

Education was defined as "supervision plus administration." This particular Head of Residence viewed her work as primarily involving training her student staff to carry out the majority of the counseling and programming, while she concentrated on training them to do their jobs well. She emphasized her feelings that it was unrealistic to try to work with all the students in the house on an equal basis, and so she focused on working with her staff in order to prepare them to work with the others.

Each of the subjects mentioned the administrative aspect of the job as being a significant component of the position. This involved the completion of a myriad of administrative tasks, some of which were short-term and took relatively little effort, and some of which were ongoing, in that they continued throughout the semester, requiring attention on a regular basis. The subjects each viewed the administrative

aspect of the work as having an importance beyond simply the smooth operation of the building and the tracking of residents.

One thing that I really stress is the maintenance of this building and I spend a lot of time trying to follow-up on work orders, . . . because I feel, how can you deal with anybody's needs unless you can deal with having their living space be acceptable?

Two of the subjects specifically spoke of their feeling that this part of the job was definitely the most time-consuming, and the most immediately demanding.

. . . the administrative work of seeing that the dorm is being taken care of physically, people are in the rooms where they want to be and there's a record of where people are in the dorm, . . . that was an aspect of the job that I found to be really where great demands were made on me.

This subject expressed some frustration about this, and consequently realized that she needed to establish an organizational system which would address these tasks before she could devote any time or energy to other aspects of the job. As a result, this became a primary focus of her work.

[Setting up an organizational system] was really something more than I think the job asked for on paper, while at the same time it was what I saw the job requiring.

The administrative work sometimes was approached as a means of accomplishing other objectives of the job. Paper work which required that the staff person meet with each resident to obtain signatures, or get information for the Housing Assignments Office records, provided an opportunity to make contact with a student with whom the staff person might not have spent time previously. These tasks, in effect, offered a means of access to the students, in a way which was non-threatening and informal. Delivering a package or checking on a maintenance request

often developed into an informal counseling session for the student. Many students feel hesitant about approaching a Head of Residence, for a variety of reasons ranging from simple shyness to reluctance to actually begin to confront a personal problem. Yet, when their Head of Residence comes to them--for whatever reason--they sometimes are able to overcome their initial discomfort in seeking advice or counsel.

Another dimension of the administrative aspect of the job is that it is sometimes seen as part of another component of the job, in combination with other aspects. For example, discipline was identified as a separate component of the role of a professional Head of Residence, but was, at the same time, defined as being a combination of administration and counseling. The subjects felt discipline was, unfortunately, essentially administration, with some attempts at counseling incorporated into the discipline process. In most cases the staff person felt that they functioned as and were perceived of as administrators in the disciplinary situation, and the students were not always open to establishing a counseling relationship with them in that context.

. . . you can do a lot of counseling through discipline, provided you can keep some kind of objectivity, you know, all the way through there, and try to work with the person on why these kinds of things happen. But you are still stuck in the role of the administrator--in the administrative sense: "administrative action will be taken" . . .

Ideally the occasion for discipline provides an opportunity for counseling and/or community education, but more often than not it fails in this objective.

It [discipline] can be made counseling, but I think sometimes it's hard for it to get to that point. . . . it's kind of hard to get past the reaction to the person who's become disruptive to the other people in the dorm . . . to get past that initial reaction of

having to respond to that in some way that immediately eliminates, removes the problem--to a point where you're really seeing that individual who's subject to the discipline as a client also, and providing some counseling for that person.

Discipline is seen in a somewhat positive light as part of the overall definition of the job as community development.

In a very real sense I see discipline and maintaining order as a very big component of the job in the dorm--a major focus of my attention, my time, my thoughts, my planning. . . . Discipline . . . is really a part of this larger approach of community maintenance and community development. . . . Maintenance in terms of order, calm, safety, physical repair; development in terms of personal growth, interrelationships, human dynamics. . .

One of the significant components of the job, not clearly stated in the University description, but mentioned by all four subjects, is that of role-modeling. This was seen as a major component of the job, something which these Heads of Residence felt was a crucial aspect of their job which became, in effect, an aspect of their lives. They expressed the belief that the concept of role-modeling was something which was an integral part of every other aspect of the work. Because of the nature of the situation, i.e., one Head of Residence in each house representing authority, representing "the older and therefore more mature person,"

[y]ou definitely are in a role-model position. You are an adult. In the eyes of the students, you graduated from college, or at least had life experiences that measure up to a degree.

* * * *

A lot of programming takes place in the form of role-modeling. Role-modeling of attitudes. Role-modeling of responses to other people. Role-modeling of honesty of feelings. There were times when my feelings were very much on the surface, when I was very obvious about how I was feeling and I expressed that and I think it becomes a learning experience for the students to see that this adult person is honest and straightforward about her feelings.

One of the subjects spoke of role-modeling in terms of its being an expectation of the students: that the Head of Residence is, by definition, an older (if only slightly) more mature person who sets standards of behavior--and sometimes attitude--by personal example. This expectation was there despite protests to the contrary. The subject felt that students insistently would deny that this role-modeling was important to them, but in fact expected it and anticipated it.

I think they really look for a role-model--someone who has been through it. Not someone who is going through it--feelings of insecurity, etc.

One of the very real considerations for a Head of Residence in terms of being a role-model to the residents of her building is that of the extent to which she becomes a friend and social companion to the students. The question of the depth of personal involvement which a Head of Residence allows to develop is one which each staff person must answer herself, and answer almost immediately. Patterns are established quickly in a residence hall--patterns of interaction between people which are difficult to change. A new Head of Residence invites a considerable amount of curiosity on the part of the residents. This results in a high degree of speculation about her personal life. If the residents observe that the staff person has a relationship with one of their peers--or with a group of them--that relationship, as with virtually everything else about the Head of Residence's life, becomes a topic of much conversation. The question of what is appropriate behavior and what is not is a much deliberated one. The subjects felt very

critical of the University administration for its inadequate guidance concerning this issue.

Well, something they don't tell you in the job description is-- well, I feel a lot of what you're doing is role-modeling, in a lot of different ways and that's stressed when you get the job. You know you are a role-model. That's why there are professional behaviors that you should adhere to.

One subject remembered that the only advice which was offered on the topic of relationships with students was not to become sexually involved with residents in one's own dorm. Beyond that, little was said. The subject was surprised, and somewhat insulted, by the University administration's need even to mention something which she felt should automatically be understood by anyone in a position as a Head of Residence.

Another aspect of social involvements with students which was discussed by the subjects was the question of drinking alcohol. This activity is another one for which each staff person must establish her own guidelines out of necessity, since the University does not supply any guidelines of its own. The lines drawn ranged from having beer with Resident Assistants during a staff dinner, to joining in at a party, to going out to a bar with one or more students or student staff members. Some staff people felt that participating in a party situation with students in fact provides yet another opportunity for positive role-modeling, in that it can be a time when the students are able to observe responsible drinking behavior.

In discussing these matters, one subject articulated the issue as being a matter of defining one's personal role in relation to the students. This definition encompasses the same issues as that of the

other subjects when they spoke of being a role-model in general and developing an approach to dealing with and relating to the students.

Attitude/Approach toward Students

Another perspective on the role of the professional Head of Residence is the individual's attitude or approach toward the students. Again, as with the view of the working situation in general and in defining the job in terms of separate components, the issue of role-modeling was emphasized by the subjects.

My approach to the students is primarily in terms of a role-model. I see myself setting an example in everything I do. That is not to say that I only set good examples. I know that sometimes the students see me reacting in a way that I wish I hadn't, but that's also a part of life.

The problem of resolving the question of relating to the students on a peer level or a non-peer level is one element of this. For those Heads of Residence who are quite close to the student age, this issue has different dimensions than for those staff members who are a considerable number of years older. Whether or not to socialize with the students becomes a consideration in terms of forming much-needed alliances in the dormitory. It is difficult to function in the role without a group of visible allies who will assist the dorm staff when extra personnel are needed, and on whom the staff can depend to act in a cooperative and responsible manner.

I think that . . . one of the ways that some Heads of Residence are able to succeed is by . . . building a peer rapport, being one of the students, basically--which I can't do because I'm not one of the students. And if you're not going out drinking with them on Friday then the way you get them to help you do security on Saturday is very different.

Resolving this issue can be a major factor in defining one's role and becoming comfortable in that role:

. . . working out how you are comfortable as a Head of Residence relating to people in the dorm on a social basis can really be a key part of the adjustment to the job, in a formal way.

One subject viewed her approach to the students as one of trying to deal with the whole community--and with the whole student as a member of that community.

Working toward building a responsible community and encouraging the dormitory residents to accept their role as community members was where she placed considerable emphasis. Another subject felt that this approach was common to all staff people:

. . . to me it seems that that's what most Heads of Residence really sort of strive for. . . to be teaching people to be responsible and to be aware of their actions . . . and you have to be very much aware of your actions and how you interact with people and the relationships that you're building.

As a Head of Residence, one is dealing with the student as a whole being, more so than other staff people with whom the student comes into contact. The faculty know only the academic side of the student. The financial aid officer knows only about the student's ability to pay the tuition bill. But the residential staff is

the only group of people who views the student in a wholistic approach. . . Everything is so specialized and we're not specialists. We're generalists.

One consequence of this approach--this notion of the relationships established with students being key to one's role--is that every interaction becomes part of one's method and manner of performing the job.

. . . how socially involved you get with the students, whether you smoke dope with the students, whether you have your door open all the time and invite them into your apartment, whether you have set office hours--all those things are sort of strategies for responding to something.

Attitude toward the Job/the Working Situation

Another category of data which emerged was that of the subject's attitude toward the working situation in general. This was something distinct from the individual's approach to dealing with the residents in the dormitory. It involves the view which the individual Head of Residence has of herself in the role of the professional staff person in the house, and the notion of what constitutes professionalism and what does not.

One recurring theme expressed by the subjects was that of their feelings of professionalism and what those meant in relation to their job performance. One subject defined it in terms of appropriate behavior. She felt very strongly that it was important to determine what one's standards of behavior were in relation to interactions with the students in the dormitory. This process of actually determining one's own standards involves a combination of developing a sense of what is appropriate for a particular situation and applying standards of professionalism an individual staff person might bring with her from previous experiences.

There are conflicts on all levels of my job and there are also limitations. There are limitations that people impose upon me, as well as limitations that I have imposed upon myself. I guess a good example is, take a student interaction of a student coming into my apartment and asking me a question and I respond

to the question . . . so you set up one interaction--sort of helping--information. Then you build up that relationship with the student and then at some point that student wants to include you with six friends going to a bar. Okay, where do you draw the professional limitation there? . . . I know myself. I impose limits just because I don't feel it is really appropriate to be doing a lot of that stuff. [What was appropriate] was what felt right for me . . . what I felt to be professional.

There are no well-defined standards for Heads of Residence, and so the subjects agreed that it is crucial for each individual to thoughtfully establish her own standards.

You have no guidelines on what makes a good Head of Residence.
You have no guidelines on what makes a bad Head of Residence.

Each subject believed that being a Head of Residence involved more than just "having a job," in the traditional sense, and working in the dormitories, rather than an office.

After I was here for about a month I decided this is not a job. This is a different life style that you choose to live . . .

The fact that the position is a live-in one means that the way one lives and the way one performs the job are tied in together. One subject stressed that the professional live-in situation meant that a Head of Residence is constantly in a position of being a role-model, whether or not she wanted to be.

I've always felt being a Head of Residence is choosing to live a different lifestyle. Sometimes I lose that because I think you do lose your perspective and you do lose your good attitude going into the job, but I think you do get them back if they're still there within you. . . .

When I took the job I accepted the fact that this job, which is live-in, means that there are restrictions on my personal behavior, like, what is appropriate? what isn't appropriate? and I think we all set our own standards according to our ethics and our own morals.

Performing the job includes enforcing her own values, which are expressed, however subtly, in how she lives her life. In this sense she is always "working," since her values are manifested in everything she does. She felt she was always setting an example for the students-- whether it was good or bad. In fact, the transmission and enforcement of values was an unarticulated component of the job.

So much of being a Head of Residence is enforcing your own values, I guess. And in a way that's what I was hired by the University to do. The University trusted my values. They hired me and basically said, "Your values are in line with our values and therefore we're sending you to that dorm to enforce those values."

Another dimension of the working situation about which the subjects expressed concern is

. . . the dilemma of trying to find a balance between too much involvement with the daily problems in the dorm and feeling too much ownership and responsibility toward the building and its residents, and the other end which is not being involved enough.

There was strong feeling expressed about the need to achieve this balance between too much and too little investment and involvement in the dormitory. This is clearly a factor resulting from the live-in nature of the position. One subject felt that in order to "survive" in the job, i.e., in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the demands made on her by students, staff, and University agencies, and to achieve a sense of having one's own life outside of the dormitory situation,

. . . some significant degree of detachment, sort of professional detachment is helpful--real helpful.

It is sometimes very difficult for a staff person to remember to separate herself from the residents and to remember to "take time for [her]self." "Taking personal time" was one of the few pieces of advice offered consistently by the supervisors. One subject felt that

this was not, in fact, stressed enough, while the other three subjects all felt angered by their supervisors' insistence on reminding them of this. Rather than being encouraged in the performance of the positive aspects of the work, such as educational programming, or successful crisis intervention, Heads of Residence are warned about doing too much work, "getting burned out," and not taking "enough" time off. They are advised to "take a weekend off," "go to a movie," or to "get away from the dorm." While the subjects acknowledged the importance of this, they felt frustrated that administrators seemed to be insensitive to their individual needs and unresponsive to the idea that different staff people have different personal needs for surviving the pressures of the job.

The expectation even from supervisors is to take time for yourself.

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I think people don't understand. I mean, taking time [off] is a very personal thing and everybody does it differently.

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That's the only advice I've ever gotten from my supervisor after two years--"take time for yourself."

Skill Areas

The subjects responded to the question of which skills are necessary for effective performance in the job in a way not anticipated by the researcher. Rather than a description of specific behavioral skills dealing with the administration of the dormitory, teaching educational workshops, and counseling students on personal and social

problems, the subjects talked about broader skill areas, such as the design of an organizational system for the management of the house, developing strategies for analyzing situations in the house, and establishing a supervisory network to work with student groups. The researcher had expected that the subjects would refer to more specific skills, more oriented toward the completion of definite tasks, such as record-keeping, establishing goals and objectives, listening skills. Although these types of behavioral skills were mentioned, they were not considered with any depth. The subjects preferred to concentrate on less task-oriented skill areas, such as supervision, and the definition of one's role in the house.

. . . the skills involved--the skills in the traditional sense that one usually thinks about skills--are really not that much a part of [the Head of Residence job]. They are a part of it, but what's more crucial is an approach and an attitude.

Skills, in the strict sense of being techniques for doing something, describable in behavioral terms, were considered important in the context of their relation to other aspects of the work.

I think the administrative stuff does definitely take some skills. . . . It is very possible to fail at getting them done accurately if you don't develop a good system. And it is really possible to affect someone's life dramatically by not doing the administrative things correctly. . . . Developing a system is a crucial part of this job.

Among the skill areas which were emphasized by the subjects was organizational development: devising and implementing a system to insure the efficient accomplishment of the administrative tasks.

A major skill area stressed by the subjects and considered crucial to successful job performance was supervision.

Certainly a big skill is the skill of supervision--the skill of balancing this multi-faceted relationship to the staff members of friend, counselor, advisor, and supervisor. . . . in the second year I learned better ways of expressing things . . . I learned the skill of expressing my expectations.

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The skill--I guess I'd summarize the skills as saying supervisory skills. . . . maybe I'm talking about a style of supervision.

These skills were viewed as among the most constantly and consistently utilized.

I think the isolation of our position really emphasizes that we are the boss. I think that we are called on--certainly in our local hierarchy we are probably in the position most called upon for carrying out supervisory skills, because we are right there, doing it, at all hours of the day. . . . we're closest to the people we're supervising, and the most distant from the people we are working with as colleagues and the people who are supervising us. I think [this] emphasizes the supervisory role.

Many of the aspects of the job named by the subjects as skill areas were also defined as components of the job. For example, "balancing the demands of the job" and "setting priorities" were felt to be significant parts of the job which required some definite skills. Yet it was difficult for the Heads of Residence to describe these skill areas in terms of behavioral skills. They seemed to attribute the notion of a learned--or learnable--skill to those aspects of the work which they considered integral to being a successful Head of Residence.

. . . trying to establish your own approach and being really unclear on past approaches and being met with a lot of input and trying to sort out from students really their expectations--which of those are really based on the past, which are wishful thinking, which are reasonable and which fit in with your personality and what you bring to the job, your schooling and general approach: that seems to me to be a real skill in itself . . . the skill of defining your role in relation to the task to be done and in relation to the individuals who have been in the organization longer than we have.

Another subject drew a connection between skills on the job and personal lifestyle:

. . . maybe it's a skill of just developing who you are and being comfortable. . . . you should be accountable to yourself and be comfortable with your lifestyle. . . . [This] is a position that affords you a lot of latitude to try lifestyles because you have a lot of freedom, but it is also one that doesn't afford you the opportunity of making mistakes with them. You are not afforded those kinds of mistakes here. There are too many people watching.

Similarly, various personal behavior traits and attitudes were classified as skills, in that the subjects viewed these traits as particular ways of acting or being in relation to the role of Head of Residence.

In terms of the skills--assertiveness was a very big one. Consistency is important, and I think that is a skill, because it is the skill of being thoughtful. Being thoughtful is both an attitude and a skill.

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There has to be a level of consistency with you as a person, as far as I think your temperament, your mood swings, how you approach students, how you approach your job.

Conflicts and Contradictions

Each subject expressed considerable dissatisfaction and frustration at the confusion of demands and expectations which she faced in her job. Although each Head of Residence had essentially resolved these issues during her first year, there remained some very strong feelings about the lack of clarity with which she began her work.

The beginnings of this confusion about the true nature of the job of a Head of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst were present in the hiring process.

We mislead people by the hiring process because we ask questions about racism, sexism, and we mislead them into thinking that's important [to the students in the dorm]. . . .

I think the misconception lies in the implication that it is important--that it's consciously important--to the people living in the dorms.

Particularly for those staff people who had had no experience with the University of Massachusetts system, their initial view of the job was formed at that time.

. . . the impressions that you came away with over that hiring process are really significant, at least to me, my expectations of myself, and the job.

The realization that those impressions were not accurate caused considerable resentment on the part of at least one subject.

I can remember just being totally devastated that they told me I would be working with adults. I'm working with children! They told me that people were into social issues. If you can find them, bring them to my door!

Another subject expressed some frustration at discovering that

all the kinds of tasks referred to in the job description can't be done with real depth and completeness.

Conflicting expectations as to what the Head of Residence would or should do was an area of great concern. The Head of Residence's own view of what her role entailed was sometimes very different from the view held by the students. The students' perceptions and expectations were sometimes at odds with those of the administrators, and the various agencies with which the Head of Residence had contact often differed in what each expected the residential staff person to accomplish.

One factor influencing these conflicts and contradictions was that the Heads of Residence felt that the expectations which the

administrators of the Office of Residential Life (the agency which supervised Heads of Residence) held for them were not well articulated.

The expectations are not clear enough that they say whether or not I am meeting them.

There was a sense that the administrators were not fully aware of what a Head of Residence actually did in her job.

I don't think that anybody conceptualizes what you actually do in the dorm, with the exception of that you are there.

--and this lack of real understanding contributed to a lack of clarity concerning the agency's expectations. There was a confusion about what the Office of Residential Life expected would be the main focus of the Head of Residence's job.

I'd say that what was most encouraged, by not particularly my supervisor but by the branch of the university that my supervisor works for, were things like programming and counseling. That was sort of the image presented of what should be the bulk of the job.

In contrast to the staff person's feelings of uncertainty about how the Office of Residential Life perceived her role, she understood very clearly what the Office of Housing Administration expected. Housing Administration was responsible for the physical maintenance of all the dormitories, the assignment of students to the buildings, the control of such items as furniture and keys, and the allocation of space in the buildings. This agency's requests were direct, involving record-keeping, reports, and accurate, up-to-date listings of people and things. There was relatively little confusion as to how to meet these requests, however time-consuming the tasks might be.

I felt as though my boss, when I came here, was not the hierarchy that appears on the job chart, but it was Housing Administration. That hierarchy. Those were the people who were communicating with me most regularly, in the most concrete terms about expectations.

One of the subjects spoke at length about her efforts to set up an organizational system to meet the needs of Housing Administration. It confused her that there was no existing system in effect and she wondered how the job had been performed by her predecessors. Her initial information on what was most important in the job came from the students.

. . . while the University doesn't seem to pass on a very definite system within the dorm, there are student expectations based primarily on whatever happens to have happened with the last few people who preceded. . . .

So it was in response to not only my need to think things were operating well, but also comments of the students about their needs.

The other subjects also expressed the opinion that the expectations of their students were a significant influence in their job performance, even more significant for two of the subjects, than the opinions of their immediate supervisors.

The expectations [which I dealt with when I came] were from the students. They differed from my expectations. . . . The student expectations were different from my own. My supervisor has never really entered into it at all.

Even in those cases where the students' demands conflicted with the staff person's own view of her role--or with the administration's view--the students' perceptions required a response.

I think that the student expects the Head of Residence to do all the things that an "ideal" parent would do: be there whenever the student wants you, take care of anything that's broken, make sure the place is clean, answer all questions, love them even if they're bad, maybe scold them a little when they do something wrong. . . .

Administrators expect you to respond in situations in one way and students have an expectation that you are an advocate for them and that you are working on their behalf.

The students represented an influential force in the dormitory, because of the size of their population, the volume of their articulated needs, and the fact that they were the people with whom the staff worked day by day, minute by minute. Even more importantly, however, this was the population whose needs the Head of Residence is hired to meet. This is the population with which a Head of Residence is interested in working and this interest presumably is a primary motivation for accepting the job. Often the staff person found that the demands made on her by various groups in the dormitory and by individuals and agencies outside the dormitory were in conflict. There was an expectation on the part of the administration that the staff person would assume certain responsibilities in terms of committee work and staff development work. The subjects felt some resentment about this, since they seemed to feel that these demands showed a lack of sensitivity toward their responsibilities and obligations in the dormitory itself.

. . . everybody's pulling at you! Students are pulling at you. Your staff is pulling at you. Your dorm government is pulling at you. The area's pulling at you to be on another committee. . . . I think the other areas negate the amount of time you need to spend in your dorm, and I think that time is the most important time for your job.

One of the elements affecting the different demands which the students make on an individual Head of Residence is the physical design of the dormitory. Residents in different types of buildings express different types of needs. In a building where the residential staff person is easily visible because of the location of her apartment, the issue of staff availability and the problems of being able

to communicate with the Head of Residence may not be as serious as in a building where the staff person lives on a floor separate from the residents. The arrangement of student rooms and the availability of space for common use have considerable effect on the development of a sense of community among the residents and consequently on the degree of responsibility which individuals assume for their living area. These considerations became a major concern for the research subjects, particularly so because there was little institutional recognition of the ramifications of different dormitory "personalities."

[Another] thing that bothers me is the difference in dormitories and how there are different expectations of the dorm set by students as well as the physical environments.

After examining the interview data, it seems that the varying needs and demands expressed by the many different agencies and individuals or groups of individuals to whom the Head of Residence has some degree of responsibility are often in conflict. All the possible dichotomies among the views of these various agencies and individuals seem to exist to some extent and are a matter of genuine concern for the subjects in their professional roles. These conflicts (or contradictions) include:

- students demands vs. the Head of Residence's own perception of the job,
- Office of Residential Life's expectations vs. other agencies' expectations,
- what is desirable to accomplish in the job vs. what is immediately necessary,
- official institutional expectations vs. what is realistic,
- institutional and administrative expectations vs. student expectations,

- Head of Residence's own goals and objectives vs. those of the student staff, and
- Head of Residence's expectations for her supervisor vs. supervisor's perception of own role.

Influence of Background Experience

Another significant area discussed during the interview sessions was the influence of the individual's previous professional or para-professional experience on her approach to the job. Each subject had clearly responded to the ambiguities of her present role by relying on skills and attitudes formed in previous work situations. This was partly due to the necessity of adjusting to the job of a Head of Residence quickly, and partly a factor of there being insufficient guidance in regard to the less easily articulated aspects of the job, such as the notion of professionalism and the problems of dealing with so many different individuals at once in a live-in situation.

One's former job experience had an effect on a number of different elements of the role of the Head of Residence, including the attitude toward the job, the approach toward the students, and the component of the job which the individual chose to emphasize. One subject talked about how she concentrated on establishing an organizational system during her first year as a Head of Residence.

It [the administrative work] wasn't stressed in the job description . . . and probably the fact that . . . the background that I brought had to do with organizing administrative programs . . . led me to probably devote even more time to that than some other people.

She spent most of her time on administrative tasks and felt a strong need to set up a system so that the administrative aspects of running

the dormitory would be taken care of in the most efficient manner. Yet, the subject herself questioned whether this was really a need which she perceived existed--and therefore attempted to meet--or did she emphasize this, and in fact define this as a need to be met, because the idea of an organizational system was one with which she was familiar, and an area where she had some skills. Since she felt she had received very little direction in terms of how to approach the job, she reflected on the possibility that her initial emphasis in the job may have been a result of wanting to use those skills and competencies with which she felt most confident.

Another subject spoke of her previous work experience in a dormitory as a Resident Assistant, and her relationship to her own Head of Residence:

I had a role-model, so in that I learned a lot of what I do in the job now from just observing.

Apart from professional or para-professional experience in a residence hall, the subjects also discussed their memories of their own dormitory experiences as undergraduate students. These recollections had influenced their outlook on their present role, and had, in fact, been a significant factor in their interest in the position in the first place.

I had really enjoyed [living in a dorm]. I think I had preconceptions of active and interesting places where students take a lot of initiative in activities and in running the dorm, from a social point of view. . . . I had a positive feeling about what dorm life would be like.

The subjects felt, in general, that the way in which they approached their jobs, the role they defined for themselves, and the

standards to which they subscribed were directly related to standards of behavior, skills, and knowledge which they had when they were first hired for positions as Heads of Residence.

Guidelines [on what is appropriate] had been defined for me prior [to this job]. It was probably something I brought with me.

Relating these standards and skills to what one assesses to be the needs of the population and the requirements of the job is what defines the job for the individual staff person.

I do think, overall, [there is an] accommodation between what you bring to the job and what you find there and what and how you resolve those things and, personally, what you can provide to the setting, how you can constructively change things to be more suitable to what you can provide--and then how you can seek out supplementary things--resources for things that you can't directly provide.

Changes Over Time

In this section the researcher presents the data concerning how the feelings, attitudes, and the subjects' individual approaches to the position of the professional Head of Residence changed over the course of two years. Along with the confusion which these Heads of Residence felt because of the lack of clarity concerning the nature of the role, the ambiguity surrounding the position provided an opportunity for each individual to develop and grow within the vague boundaries of what the job officially entailed.

Each of the subjects spoke enthusiastically of how she had grown professionally and personally during her first year as a Head of Residence. There was a sense of satisfaction connected with her realization of how much she had learned.

[When I came to the job] . . . I thought that I knew something about the dorms but now I realize that I knew almost nothing about them.

As the practical aspects of the work were mastered, each subject felt more confident about her role in the dormitory and more secure in her own definition of what she did. During these first two years as Head of Residence each had developed her own sense of what was needed, determined how to achieve it, and had begun to acquire the necessary skills.

I became more sure of who I was. I became more in touch with what I felt needs of the students were versus what were needs that I perceived in the beginning.

* * * *

I kind of refined my perception of the job--set limits on what I was doing, set limits on how much I was doing, and set direction as to what I was doing.

One subject went so far as to redefine her job to reflect what she felt her personal focus was:

. . . in my second year I redefined--or rather renamed--what I was doing as "community maintenance and development." This seems . . . to encompass all the many facets of work in the dorm. . . .

I felt somewhat skilled at what I was doing, began to see the effects--i.e., the positive effects--and I guess I wanted to give those skills a name to help myself view my work as part of what I had skills in.

Some of the changes which occurred during the first year were changes in outlook:

The second year I think that the perspective is much different. It [the administrative paperwork] is all little garbage stuff, that the first year just seems overwhelming and the second year it's just garbage and you just do it.

and some were more deliberate changes in working style.

This year what I'm trying to do is meet these goals by setting specific objectives with the different groups . . . as opposed to last year when I looked at: I have to combat racism, sexism, and gay oppression. I have to serve as chief administrator. I have to do all the paperwork. . . . Last year . . . I just thought I had to implement all these things and I really saw equal weight placed on a "normal" student, and then a student who was elected or selected. This year I see working with those groups as key and then if there's time working with specific students.

The subjects were also aware of changes in how they related to students and in the way the students perceived them.

What is probably happening in my thinking now is that I have gradually realized and feel fairly comfortable with the fact that I'm not going to be seen in a real peer relationship with most of the people in this building.

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There's a whole lot to be said about once you've been in the dorm for a while--people who have been there sort of explain you to the other people and explain that, "This is what she does." . . . and I think that testing period sort of gets done with the first year.

Each subject agreed that she had grappled with feelings of confusion and sought ways of resolving that confusion and affecting change on her own, in relative isolation. The nature of the position--i.e., that of a live-in staff member functioning autonomously--does not allow for ease of consultation with either colleagues or supervisors. "So much of the job is just as the situation arises, you deal with it" that one is often unable to consider with any forethought how to respond to a situation. This also inhibits consultation with others, except in an after-the-fact fashion.

I think the job isn't planned out. You're alone in your job. You're very much alone in it. You do have a supervisor, but you're isolated.

By the second year the subjects had gained more control over the job, and were able to

. . . rearrange the job so that time could be given to these other aspects--particularly counseling and programming--while at the same time setting up systems that could take care of the administrative things that are such a requirement of energy.

One subject discussed how she had learned to be more selective in how she expended her time and energy on the job. In addition to limiting the activities which took her out of the dormitory, such as Residential Life committee work and staff development projects, she had changed her working style within the house as well.

Last year I was more prone to make sure I got on a floor at least once a week. This year I know myself that if I'm not in the mood to go down and socialize I'm better off not to because people will pick up on it. So I don't do things I don't really want to. . . . Now it's more when I do something I really want to do it and I have a good cause.

One of the most significant changes which the subjects observed was in the caliber of student staff members (Resident Assistants). During the first semester, and usually throughout the second semester, a Head of Residence is supervising a staff hired by someone else--a predecessor--whose standards for performance and professional objectives may have been very different from her own. But

[b]y the third or fourth semester you should have a staff that is reflective of your expectations, and therefore you don't have that conflict [of working under the last person's expectations] and you don't have that testing.

In addition, by the second year, not only has the professional staff member hired her own staff, but she has adapted the Resident Assistant

training program to reflect her goals for the staff and to stress what she considers most important.

This year my R.A.s . . . use good counseling/listening skills. So, this year I can just rid my life of doing a lot of that minor counseling stuff and the R.A.s do it. . . . What I will have to be doing is to provide role-modeling for those students who are just basically a mess and confused and just need somebody to sit down, who's an older person, to talk to them more in depth. Whereas last year, I was talking to everybody at all times. . . . It has been a really good progression for me because that frees me up to do other stuff. And just getting a more competent and sophisticated staff has really helped me to redefine the role. . . . So that has really been a change.

Each of the subjects felt very positive about the professional growth she had experienced over the course of two years. Despite the vagaries of the initial impressions of the job, and the frustration involved in attempting to define one's role while living it, the Heads of Residence expressed satisfaction with their own performances to date, and optimism about how to proceed and continue to effect more change.

Over a period of two years there are always some words that come back to me constantly as a Head of Residence and that's consistency, responsibility, accountability . . . and over two years that's been established. . . . And so over two years there's been sort of an improvement, as far as my being more self-assured on how I am doing the job.

* * * *

I now am thinking again in terms of working in democratic ways with people on a collegial basis--just kind of based on a little better understanding of where they are and where I am and what the positions are.

* * * *

I sort of see maybe an evolution in my own experience from where the predominant feelings went from "Gee, this looks interesting and there'll be a lot to do." . . . going from that feeling of enthusiasm and interest to an attitude of survival . . . then

maybe to a point of a kind of selective intervention where you can really be productive in the job . . .

The Survey Data

The purpose of the survey was to collect data from all the current and past professional Heads of Residence in the University of Massachusetts/Amherst residential system in order to supplement the data collected from the interviews conducted with the four subjects involved in the case study. The researcher was interested in using this data to corroborate or refute the impressions, definitions, and descriptions of the role of the professional Head of Residence, as articulated by the interview subjects.

The survey was administered to all the current professional Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and to former professional Heads of Residence who were still employed within the University Division of Student Affairs. This involved thirty-one current residential staff members, including the four who participated in the case study, and fourteen former Heads of Residence. The return rate for the surveys was 100%.

In this section, the survey data will be presented in part. Those data which are significantly in agreement or disagreement with the interview data will be described. In addition, those survey items which elicited a wide range of response which are of particular interest in relation to the case study data will be noted here. The complete set of data from the surveys will be included in table form in

Appendix 6. The data will be discussed according to the same categories which were utilized in the presentation of the case study data.

Definition of the components. The subjects involved in the case study had each expressed some reservations about the adequacy of the official job description in defining the role of the professional Head of Residence. Each had felt the need to expand the description to include aspects of the work which she felt the official document had failed to articulate. Of the survey respondents, 68.9% agreed that the official description was inadequate. The major areas of work which the case study subjects felt were neglected were role-modeling and training and supervision of the resident assistants. Role-modeling in particular they viewed as a crucial aspect of the job, becoming, in a sense, part of one's life. The survey respondents, as noted below, overwhelmingly agreed.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 25. I consider a primary function in this job to be that of modeling responsible behavior. | 88.9% | 2.2% | 6.7% |
| Q 27. Being a role-model to the residents in my dormitory is only important in terms of my professional life, not my personal life. | 17.8% | 6.7% | 75.6% |
| Q 37. Training and supervising my R.A. staff to assume leadership responsibilities is one of the most important parts of this job. | 88.9% | 2.2% | 8.9% |

Two other aspects of the job which the case study subjects emphasized in their interviews were the administrative work and discipline. The administrative work, although often the least interesting, was often the most time- and energy-consuming component of the job. These responsibilities were considered to be very important to the successful functioning of the dormitory. The survey respondents were in agreement.

| | <u>Agree</u> | No <u>Opinion</u> | <u>Disagree</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Q 41. Administrative tasks are important because those physical details keep the dormitory running smoothly. | 88.9% | 4.4% | 6.7% |

Regarding the disciplinary aspect of the job, the case study subjects saw discipline as primarily a part of the administrative component, but also partially a type of counseling, at least in some instances. They felt their role as disciplinarians was sometimes confusing and they were not always comfortable in that role. The responses of the survey respondents reflected these mixed feelings toward the issue of discipline, as indicated below.

| | <u>Agree</u> | No <u>Opinion</u> | <u>Disagree</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Q 45. I consider disciplinary issues to be more a part of the: | | | |
| a) counseling aspect of the job----- | 13.3% | . . . | . . . |
| or | | | |
| b) administrative aspect of the job----- | 28.9% | . . . | . . . |
| or | | | |
| c) both----- | 37.8% | . . . | . . . |
| or | | | |

| | No | | |
|---------------|-------|---------|----------|
| | Agree | Opinion | Disagree |
| d) other----- | 20.0% | . . . | . . . |

Attitude/approach toward students. During the interviews with the case study subjects, the Heads of Residence emphasized their feelings that a staff member's attitude toward students, as expressed through her relationships with the dormitory residents, was a key element in her performance of her role in the dormitory. Two-thirds of the survey respondents agreed that one's attitude toward the students was significant.

| | No | | |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| | Agree | Opinion | Disagree |
| Q 30. The single most important aspect of being a Head of Residence is one's attitude toward the students. | 66.7% | 11.1% | 22.2% |

However, the case study subjects also identified a dilemma which they felt was necessary to resolve before successfully defining one's relationship with the students: the extent to which one would develop genuine friendships with the residents. The issue of professional distance versus personal involvement was one which each interview subject felt she had consciously deliberated. The data collected from the surveys revealed a similar sentiment. The majority of Heads of Residence agree that professional relationships with students are important, while at the same time it is also important to develop personal friendships.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 28. Building personal friendships with students is more important than maintaining a professional distance. | 24.4% | 20.0% | 55.6% |
| Q 33. It is important to me to maintain a professional relationship with the students. | 82.2% | 6.7% | 11.1% |

Several respondents wrote explanatory comments in response to these two questions which further verify the need to achieve a balance between professional and personal relationships with students. In response to Question 28, one respondent noted:

I have formed several close friendships with students, but do not actively seek to do so. Although friendships form, when necessary I am able to remain/become "HR" and act upon that role.

Another commented, "How about 'professional friendships?' Often one can be more effective professionally if a personal friendship is established." In response to Question 33, one respondent wrote the following addition to the survey statement: "[It is important to me to maintain a professional relationship with the students,] but not to the exclusion of a personal relationship as well."

Attitude toward the job/the working situation. The case study subjects gave considerable thought to the concept of a professional attitude toward the job of a Head of Residence and the issue of what constituted professional behavior. They spoke of developing standards of what they felt was appropriate behavior in view of their position in the residence

halls. This involved the notion of being a constant role-model to the students. It necessitated evaluating one's personal values in order to achieve a reasonable balance between too much and too little involvement in the dormitory community. The case study participants felt very strongly that each individual Head of Residence had to determine for herself the way in which she would approach her role as the professional residential staff member in the dormitory.

The survey data agreed with the interview data on the issues of determining one's own role in the dorm and on the effect of the residential aspect of the job on the personal life of the Head of Residence.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 4. I have determined for myself what the priorities are in my job as a Head of Residence. | 95.6% | 2.2% | 2.2% |
| Q 19. I feel an individual Head of Residence can choose from a wide variety of possibilities as to how to approach this job. | 86.7% | 6.7% | 6.7% |
| Q 16. Being a residential staff person means that there are necessarily restrictions on my personal life. | 95.6% | 2.2% | 2.2% |

However, while the case study subjects all felt that, because of the residential nature of the position, a Head of Residence's interaction with a student was always an aspect of her professional role, the survey data indicated a range of opinion on this issue.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 29. Every interaction I have with students is part of my job. | 42.2% | 11.1% | 46.7% |
| Q 44. Even when I am only watching television with students, I feel that I am in a counseling or teaching relationship with them. | 53.3% | 6.7% | 40.0% |

One respondent, who agreed with Question 29, qualified her answer by inserting the word "almost" in front of the statement. Another who disagreed with the idea that every interaction with students is part of the job, added: "If it is, your [sic] in trouble."

Skill areas. The skill areas emphasized by the case study subjects included organizational development, supervision of student staff, and the personal skills of defining the parameters of one's own role in the job. They also discussed the need to develop assertiveness skills and the skill of being consistent in one's interactions with students. In addition, the interview subjects expressed the idea of developing a sense of how to respond to situations in the dormitory as a skill area.

The survey data clearly support the case study data in all of these areas except that of the primacy of supervisory skills. On that issue, only about half of the survey respondents agreed with the case study subjects.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 23. Determining the best action to take in a given situation is just something I developed a sense for as I did my job. | 91.1% | 2.2% | 6.7% |
| Q 24. Defining my own limits--determining what I myself could successfully accomplish in this job--was an important skill to acquire. | 91.1% | 4.4% | 4.4% |
| Q 31. Consistency in the way I respond to situations in the dormitory is an important part of how I do my job. | 95.6% | 4.4% | . . . |
| Q 36. The primary skill area I utilize on this job is that of supervisory skills: both in relation to the R.A. staff and in relation to other groups in the dorm. | 55.6% | 15.6% | 26.7% |

Question 47, which required that the respondents completed a statement on what they considered to be the skills necessary for effective job performance, elicited a wide variety of responses. The most common answers included:

- administrative/organizational skills: 27 entries
- interpersonal skills: 13 entries
- counseling skills: 11 entries
- leadership skills: 9 entries
- communication skills: 9 entries

Conflicts and contradictions. The case study subjects expressed considerable frustration concerning what they felt was a lack of clearly articulated guidelines as to how they were expected to do their job. Often they felt the demands made on them by their supervisors, administrative agencies at the University, and students were in conflict.

The process of determining for themselves "how to be a good Head of Residence" involved some degree of self-analysis, assessment of student needs, and a consideration of students' expectations. In addition, the case study subjects stressed the significant influence which the physical characteristics of a building and the particular personality of the residence hall had on the nature of the role of the Head of Residence in any individual dormitory.

The survey respondents all agreed with the statement concerning the effect of physical qualities and personality characteristics of a dormitory. However, the responses to the statements concerning the clarity of supervisor expectations, the level of understanding of standards of good job performance, and the need for individualized job descriptions due to different dormitory populations revealed a full range of opinions on these issues.

| | No | |
|---|---------|----------|
| | Opinion | |
| | Agree | Disagree |
| Q 20. The physical characteristics of a particular dormitory and the personality characteristics of the population greatly influence the job of the Head of Residence in that dorm. | 100% | |

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 18. In general it would be difficult for me to articulate my supervisor's expectations. | 20% | 13.3% | 66.7% |
| Q 6. My supervisor(s) articulated his/her/their expectations very clearly and helped me to define my role. | 51.1% | 15.6% | 28.9% |

Two survey respondents modified Question 6 into two statements, and responded separately to each one: each disagreed with the statement that the supervisors had articulated their expectations clearly, but agreed that her supervisor had helped her to define her role.

| | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------------|----------|
| Q 10. The standards for competent performance in this job have always been very clear to me. | 28.9% | 6.7% | 64.4% |
| Q 15. No clear guidelines have been communicated to me as to what constitutes a good Head of Residence. | 8.9% | 4.4% | 84.4% |

Additional comments on Question 15 noted by survey respondents included one from a respondent who disagreed with the statement but added: "But, only gradually has this [i.e., what constitutes a good Head of Residence] become clear." Another respondent, who agreed with the statement, added: "One gets a sense after being here a while, but it is rarely articulated."

| | <u>Agree</u> | <u>No Opinion</u> | <u>Disagree</u> |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Q 21. Because of the diversity of dormitory populations, each Head of Residence should have an individualized job description, in addition to a general University job description. | 55.6% | 22.2% | 22.2% |
| Q 22. My emphasis in the job is a reflection of what the residents demanded of or expected from me. | 40.0% | 13.3% | 44.4% |

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data collected from in-depth interviews conducted with four subjects of a case study. In addition, portions of supplemental data collected from a survey were discussed. The survey data included in this chapter were those items of particular interest in relation to the primary, case study data.

C H A P T E R V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The role of the professional Head of Residence is a multi-faceted one, varying by definition from institution to institution, and varying within an institution from individual dormitory setting to dormitory setting. Heads of Residence are the student personnel professionals who have the most contact with individual student needs. They are in a position to respond to the effects of all the different influences in the student's life: classroom environment, academic achievement, out-of-classroom activities, conflicts with the bureaucracy, and social, cultural, physical and emotional factors. The way in which a Head of Residence carries out this role is often left to the individual professional, with the institution frequently failing to articulate clearly what job it expects its residential staff to perform.

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the various components of the job of a professional Head of Residence, as perceived by individual Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. At the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, there are at present thirty-one professional Heads of Residence. The role each one performs is defined by the staff person's own interpretation of the official University job description, his or her own personality, the demographic characteristics of the dormitory (single-sex or

coeducational, location on campus, representation by class), and the expectations of others, including supervisors, students, and colleagues.

Summary

The design of the study. The study was divided into two distinct parts. The first part consisted of a case study of four professional Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. The research method utilized was individual in-depth interviewing with each of the four subjects and a final interview/discussion among the four. The second part of the study involved a written survey, which consisted of statements describing different aspects of the role of the professional Head of Residence. The survey was administered to all professional Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and to former professional Heads of Residence still employed within the University system.

The case study. The selection of the subjects for the case study was based upon several factors. No attempt was made to choose the subjects randomly; in fact, the subjects were chosen quite specifically because of their ability to contribute to the development of insights concerning the role of the professional Head of Residence. An ability to articulate clearly their perceptions and opinions was a crucial criterion in their selection.

Another important criterion was the demographic and physical make-up of the dormitories represented by the subjects. The varying

architectural designs of the buildings, their locations on campus, and the composition of their populations were all part of this consideration. Each of these characteristics, the researcher believed, had its own effect on the "personality" of the dormitory, and consequently influenced the role of the residential staff. Taking these factors into consideration, the researcher chose subjects who together represented a high-rise building and a low-rise building in each of the two residential areas employing Heads of Residence, and also represented a coeducational and a single-sex dormitory in each area.

In determining the methods to be used to conduct the study, and in deciding on the case study format using intensive interviewing as the primary means of collecting data, it seemed most efficacious to directly include the researcher herself as one of the four subjects. A considerable amount of the literature dealing with qualitative research methodology stresses the importance of the researcher becoming a part of the group under investigation. Since the researcher's involvement in the group was a pre-existing situation, it seemed that to ignore her ability to directly contribute to the raw data of the study would have been at variance with the purpose of the study: to compare individual perceptions of the role of professional Heads of Residence.

The interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview guide, formulated from an examination of the situation being studied and a determination of the relevant topics to be covered during the sessions with the case study subjects. The purpose of the guide was to insure that these significant topics were broached with each of the subjects, i.e., that there was a degree of consistency among the

interviews. However, it was important to the design of the study that the interview guide remain flexible, and not impose a rigid structure on the interaction between the researcher and the interview subject.

Following this guide, the researcher conducted the initial interviews urging each subject to speak freely and to introduce new topics as she desired, however tangential they seemed. The subject was encouraged to be introspective and reflect on experiences in her work which were characteristic of her performance in the role of a Head of Residence. These initial interviews lasted approximately one-half hour each and did, in fact, touch upon a number of issues which had not been included in the guide.

The interview with the fourth subject--the researcher herself--was conducted in essentially the same manner and under the same conditions as the other three. The researcher/subject utilized a tape recorder to record her own responses to the questions included in the guide, as she had with the other three subjects. In this way she was able to afford herself the freedom to recount anecdotes and examples as they came to mind.

Having completed the first set of interviews, the researcher reviewed the data at length. This was done both in order to prepare for the second interview, and to continue the ongoing comparative analysis already initiated in the course of the interviewing. Following the method of analysis advocated by Glaser and Strauss, the researcher had already begun to categorize the information and to compare pieces of the data. Using the technique described by Glaser and Strauss, recurring themes had begun to emerge from the data, themes

which would provide the basis for the analytic conclusions grounded in the data itself. These thematic ideas also provided the researcher with the information with which to design interview guides for the second set of interviews. These second interviews lasted approximately one hour each. The researcher included during these sessions a review of the initial data, in order to verify the information and to begin to confirm her understanding of the subjects' perceptions. These interviews were also tape-recorded.

A review of the tape recordings and transcriptions of the second interviews yielded information which led to the development of an interview guide for the final, group interview. The second interviews were compared with their respective guides, and any major areas which had been neglected were included in the new guide. At this point in the study definite themes had emerged, and the researcher had begun to develop a more precise understanding of what these four individual Heads of Residence perceived that they did in their professional roles.

The group interview, which the participants themselves described as more of a forum for the expression of their views than an interview, signaled the completion of the first phase of the data collection. The interviews had provided the necessary data for generating some theoretical ideas about the de facto role of the professional Head of Residence. The group interview in particular had helped to formulate ideas for the second phase of the data collection: the survey.

The survey. After examining the data, and categorizing the various pieces of information, the researcher formulated a set of statements about the role of the professional Head of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. These statements covered the categories which had emerged as having some degree of significance in relation to the topic being studied. The survey was designed with a three-point Likert-type scale. In addition to the forty-four fixed-choice items, there were four open-choice items and three items concerning biographical information. The purpose of this survey was to augment the information gathered from the interviews, substantiate the speculations and conclusions the researcher had begun to form--or challenge them.

The surveys were administered to all current professional Heads of Residence at the University, and to all former Heads of Residence still employed within the Division of Student Affairs at the University. There was a total of thirty-one current professional Heads of Residence and fourteen former Heads of Residence. The rate of return was 100 percent.

Review of the literature. The survey of the literature relevant to a study of the role of a professional Head of Residence indicated several pertinent themes. These themes included: the role of the residence hall within the university structure; the role of the student personnel administrator in general in relation to the issues concerning the role of the residence halls; the varying definitions of the role of residential staff; and the confusing, often conflicting, views of the goals and objectives for residential personnel.

Role of the residence hall. The residence hall is considered to have a vital part in the educational process of the university. In reviewing the literature describing the various projects being conducted in universities throughout the country among student personnel agencies, it is clear that there is a strong movement to increase the educational and personal development aspect of residence hall living. These efforts involve community building programs, attempts to bring various student support services provided by non-residential personnel into the residential setting, programs focusing on small-group interaction, increased student development responsibilities for student para-professional staff, and projects which involve students both living and learning together as a unit.

Role of the student personnel administrator. The direction in which the residence hall system of a given university moves is often determined, or at least profoundly affected, by the policies established by the division of student affairs, staffed by student affairs--or student personnel--administrators. It is the student personnel professional who is concerned with the development of the student as an individual, and thus is interested in all of the factors which affect the student's life, including academic achievement, classroom environment, extra-curricular activities, and social, physical and emotional influences. Those administrators who are in a position to establish policy governing the residential system need to respond to questions such as: what is desirable to have happen in the residence halls and what is not desirable? What is the purpose of the residence halls in relation to the

university's goals, and what type of residences are most conducive to achieving this purpose? It is crucial that the university be able to articulate clearly its goals for the residential system, and to support--with recognition and finances--the projection of the educational mission of the university into the residence halls. This need for clarity of purpose was a recurring theme throughout the literature.

The residential staff member. Despite this increased awareness of the educational potential of the residence hall, there is a limited recognition of the important role which the residential staff member plays within the residential system. Within the residential community, in order to insure the effective achievement of the goals which the university sets down for its residence halls, there needs to be capable staff who will assume the responsibility for the educational nature of the environment. If the residence hall is not appropriately staffed, it is then essentially a boarding house, with a minimal amount of opportunity for directed interaction among the residents.

While the role of the professional residential staff member at the university is sometimes ignored, when it is mentioned it is often misunderstood. It may be discussed in terms of official job descriptions (which may or may not be accurate or realistic), or evaluated in terms of what "should" be done in the dormitories, rather than according to what is being done. Much of the research that has been conducted concerning the role of residence hall staff deals with the opinions of and evaluations by professionals other than the residential staff members themselves, and therefore could be considered somewhat speculative

as to the true nature of the position. The studies reveal a variety of attitudes toward the actual role of the residential professional, from a view of the staff person as the administrator, concerned with operational matters, to an assumption and an expectation that the residence personnel will essentially deal with any matter that arose in the hall. There is some disagreement on the role of the Head of Residence as a disciplinarian. The extent of the individual's authority in a disciplinary situation, and the relationship of the counseling role to discipline is often a point of question. Different studies revealed that varying emphases were placed on the function of residential personnel, often depending on the orientation of the particular institution.

A primary focus of residential personnel, as stated by a number of writers in the field, is that of counseling. Often this is expressed in terms of the unique relationship the staff member is able to establish which facilitates the student's development. Sometimes the counseling referred to involves disciplinary counseling, the goal of which is student awareness of standards of responsible behavior. While the literature reveals that there is a variety of responses to the issues concerning the staffing of residence halls, there does seem to be a consensus that the residential professional needs to address the goals of enhancing student development and contributing to the general education of the undergraduate population.

Goals and objectives for residential personnel. One of the issues frequently dealt with in the literature is the problem of conflicting

perceptions of what the goals and objectives of the residential system should be, as held by different factions both within and outside of the university community. This conflict is observable both on the policy-making and planning level of the chief administrator of student personnel, and in the day-to-day performance of the staff member in charge of an individual hall. It is important that policies and objectives be clearly defined and articulated in order to alleviate the confusion and conflict among the residence hall personnel. Often, as a result of the confusion indicated on the part of the supervisory administrators, the residential personnel themselves, rather than merely feeling unable to meet the desired goals of the system, may have an unclear or limited view as to what their role actually is. Surely it becomes the responsibility of the administrators who oversee and coordinate the residential system to clarify the role of the residential staff and provide them with the information, resources and support necessary to meet their goals.

The data. The information collected from the case study of four professional Heads of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/ Amherst indicated that the themes revealed in the review of the literature were applicable to the residential system being studied. The repeatedly articulated need for clarity of goals and objectives for personnel working in the residence halls was reiterated by the research subjects. In each of the categories of data, there was a recurring theme expressed by the subjects of a need to define and specify a clear delineation of

the various aspects of the role of the professional residential staff member.

Definition of components. The first category of data dealt with a description of the different components of the job and the extent to which the subjects' own definitions agreed with or expanded the official university job description. The subjects felt very strongly that a significant aspect of the job was role-modeling, and that this particular element was not adequately articulated or emphasized in the official description of the job. Role-modeling was, in fact, such a major component of the job of a Head of Residence that it became, in a sense, a component of one's life. Role-modeling was a part of the educational aspect of the staff person's role, and was integrated with the student development purpose of the residential system.

The other aspects of the job emphasized by the subjects were those included in the official job description: administration, counseling and programming. But, although the components outlined in the official description were deemed accurate, it was felt that one could not really describe the job adequately in terms of a clear-cut division of tasks into one category or another. The various activities in which a Head of Residence is involved are often not easily definable tasks. They more often than not involve an interaction or a relationship with a student.

As the current literature in the field indicated, the role of the Head of Residence as a disciplinarian is one which exists amidst some degree of confusion. Whereas in some institutions the residential

staff may be expected to perform many of the disciplinary functions, in other systems the exact extent of the authority which the individual Head of Residence may exercise is unclear. The University of Massachusetts residential staff members who participated in the case study felt that, ideally, discipline was a combination of counseling and administration. However, they each regretted the difficulty they had experienced in actually incorporating the counseling aspect into the disciplinary process.

Attitude/approach toward students. The second category of information identifiable in the case study data was that of the staff person's attitude or approach toward the students. Again, the issue of the role-modeling function of the residential professional was emphasized. Associated with this concern of being a role-model, is the question of the level of personal, peer relationships which a staff member forms with students. Resolving this particular issue can become a major factor in defining one's role and becoming comfortable in that role. The case study subjects felt very strongly that each staff person had to consider this issue of peer versus non-peer relationships within the dormitory and resolve it personally before developing a clearly defined professional role in the residence hall. The nature of one's relationships with the residents in the hall was seen as perhaps the most significant element in the staff person's conception of her role in the dormitory. One consequence of this approach--this notion of the relationships established with students being key to one's role--is that

every interaction becomes part of one's method and manner of performing the job.

Attitude toward the working situation. Another category of data which emerged was that of the subject's attitude toward the working situation in general. This was something distinct from the individual's approach to dealing with the residents in the hall. It involved the view which the individual Head of Residence has of herself in the role of the professional staff person in the house, and the notion of what constitutes professionalism and what does not.

The case study subjects expressed a belief that a definition of professionalism would include a determination of what standards of behavior would be considered appropriate within the context of the role of the professional Head of Residence. Since there were no well-defined standards of professionalism communicated to Heads of Residence at the University, the research subjects agreed that it was crucial for each individual to thoughtfully establish her own standards and guidelines. There was also considerable emphasis placed on the need to achieve a balance between too much and too little investment and involvement in the dormitory. This was clearly a factor resulting from the live-in nature of the position.

Skill areas. The data concerned with skills which a Head of Residence needs in order to perform the job effectively indicated that rather than specific behavioral skills, the subjects were concerned with broader skill areas. These included the design of an organizational system for the management of the house, developing strategies for

analyzing situations in the house, and establishing a supervisory network to work with student groups. Also, various personal behavior traits and attitudes, such as assertiveness, thoughtfulness, and consistency of temperament, were classified as skills, in that the subjects seemed to view these traits as particular ways of acting or behaving in relation to the role of the Head of Residence.

Conflicts and contradictions. The final category of data collected from the case study reiterates one of the major themes of the literature: the confusion and lack of clarity which exists concerning the role of the residential professional. Each of the case study subjects expressed considerable dissatisfaction and frustration at the confusion of demands and expectations which she faced in her job. The Head of Residence's own view of what her role entailed was sometimes very different from the view held by the students. The students' perceptions and expectations were sometimes at odds with those of the administrators, and the various agencies with which the Head of Residence had contact often differed in what each expected the residential staff person to accomplish. Compounding the conflict was the additional factor that those demands and expectations which were expressed were often not well-articulated.

One element affecting the different demands which the students made on an individual Head of Residence was the set of physical characteristics of the dormitory. Residents in different types of buildings expressed different types of needs. For example, the arrangement of student rooms and the availability of space for common use had

considerable effect on the development of a sense of community among the residents and consequently on the degree of responsibility which individual students assumed for their living area.

Conclusions

Heads of Residence perform their work in relative isolation, with a great degree of autonomy. They have little or no opportunity to evaluate themselves in comparison with their professional peers. This results in highly personalized, individualized ways of performing the job. Essentially each Head of Residence determines for herself what the priorities in the job are. Affecting the individual staff person's definition of the position are a variety of factors, including student needs--both professed and perceived, institutional needs, personal needs, and the effects of a given dormitory structure on the function of the professional in that building. Consequently, the de facto role of the professional Head of Residence may vary dramatically from residence hall to residence hall within the University.

This personal definition of the role is developed over time, through a process of assessing situations as they arise in the residence halls, responding to them, and then evaluating how effective and appropriate a particular response was. The skills involved in this process are affective skills, acquired out of experience. As fewer and fewer situations are "new," the Head of Residence develops a sense of confidence in her ability to perform the job, and becomes more confident about the appropriateness of her own definition of the role. What becomes the important determinant in achieving success in the job is

not skill acquisition, but rather this sense of confidence and the development of an attitude of professionalism and competence.

Another significant aspect of the residential staff member's definition of her role is her attitude toward the students with whom she works. The Head of Residence functions as a role-model for the students. This is a component of the job which, to some degree, permeates all other components of the work. A staff member's position as a role-model is related to the manner in which she defines her relationship to the students, taking into consideration the issue of personal versus professional involvements, and how she eventually balances the role of friend and confidante with the role of authority. A Head of Residence's feelings of success in her work are related to--or at least affected by--how comfortable she is with the nature of these relationships with students.

As with the establishment of priorities, the Head of Residence determines for herself what form her relationships with students will take. Each individual staff member chooses from a range of possible styles and approaches and essentially makes her own decision about what her emphasis will be. The role of the supervisor is ambiguous, and not always consistent. This seems to be a factor of the isolating nature of the work of a Head of Residence, rather than a reflection of the nature of the work of the supervisors. The supervisor's demands and expectations are a much less significant influence on the Head of Residence's approach to the job than the demands and expectations expressed by the students. In many instances, the supervisor has very

little direct, daily contact with what actually takes place within the dormitory.

In summary, the conclusions drawn from the data are as follows:

1. Heads of Residence determine for themselves what their job will be, responding to their own individual needs, the needs and expectations of their students, and the needs determined by the particular physical characteristics of the building.
2. Heads of Residence arrive at this definition of their job over time, developing it in the process of responding to situations which arise in their own residence halls.
3. Experience in handling different situations is a more significant factor in performing the role of Head of Residence successfully than the acquisition of specific skills.
4. Role-modeling is a crucial component of the job of a Head of Residence, and involves achieving a comfortable balance between personal relationships and professional relationships with students.
5. The role of the supervisor is not as significant in determining the role a particular Head of Residence will have in a residence hall as are the needs of the students, both those needs articulated by the students themselves and those perceived by the staff member.

Recommendations for Further Study

If Heads of Residence are to be effective administrators of residence halls which are to serve as a vital and positive force in the development of the university student, there are a number of issues which need to be addressed. What function do the universities of the 1980's want their residential systems to perform? How will the changing needs of the college-age population affect the role of residence hall administrators? How can these residential personnel most effectively become trained to meet these needs?

The researcher would like to suggest the following areas of study which might provide useful information for student affairs professionals concerned with these questions:

1. An examination of individual residence halls, their physical and demographic characteristics and the needs and expectations of their particular student populations. The purpose of this study would be to develop more realistic, individualized job descriptions for the personnel staffing these halls.
2. An examination of the needs of college-age students and how these needs may best be served by different styles of residence hall administration.
3. An examination of the role of the supervisor in relation to professional residential staff. The purpose of this study would be to identify the means of improving the interaction

and communication between Heads of Residence and their supervisors.

4. An examination of the concept of professionalism and how this concept relates to and affects the functioning of residence hall personnel.

Recommendations for a Training Program
for Professional Heads of Residence

This final section, while based on information collected during the course of the study, also incorporates ideas developed by the researcher during three years of personal experience as a professional Head of Residence at the University of Massachusetts/ Amherst. These recommendations result from a reflection on the researcher's own needs for initial training and an awareness of her own and her colleagues' needs for on-going professional staff development.

A comprehensive training program for professional residential staff members should include training in the following skill areas:

1. administrative skills, specifically those skills necessary for the effective development of an organizational system;
2. supervisory skills, specifically geared to the selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of part-time, para-professional staff;
3. human relations skills, including counseling skills, assertiveness training, and crisis intervention and management skills;

4. program development skills, including skills pertaining to the assessment of the needs of a population, teaching skills, and community development skills.

In addition to training in these various skill areas, there is a need to provide an opportunity for new residential staff to address the following questions:

1. How can an individual staff member expedite the process of arriving at a personal definition of the role of a Head of Residence?
2. What are the personal concerns and issues with which a Head of Residence has to cope, and what are the options for resolving these concerns? Among these issues might be included: lack of privacy and time for personal needs, balancing personal involvements and professional relationships with students, and defining one's own limits in relation to the setting of priorities in the job.
3. How does one assess personal style and individual needs relative to dealing with a variety of crisis situations? Among these issues might be included: the various alternatives for dealing with crowds, personal abilities to confront abusive individuals, and balancing the role of student advocate with the role of university administrator.

A final recommendation. Throughout the course of this research study, the case study subjects reiterated their appreciation to the researcher for the opportunity to discuss the issues addressed in this report.

Similarly, a number of the survey respondents remarked that their participation in the project had been a worthwhile experience for them, and had provided them with the chance to give serious thought to a number of concerns which previously they had considered only briefly. This is perhaps where the true value of the project rests. A final recommendation for training and staff development for professional residential staff is that there be a formal opportunity for residential personnel to address these issues, with each other, at the outset of their employment as Heads of Residence, and then periodically after that, perhaps on an annual basis. Ideally, these sessions could be tape-recorded, solely for the staff person's own use, in order to document one's own personal and professional growth and change over time.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS/AMHERST, HEAD OF RESIDENCE JOB DESCRIPTION

A. Official Title: Head of ResidenceFunctional Title: Head of Residence

General Statement of Duties: Heads of Residence are responsible for assessing the needs of the residence hall and developing appropriate goals that will positively affect the climate and development of the hall. The Head of Residence shall implement this basic task by working with student staff and house government in the following general areas: -providing guidance and support to the house staff; facilitating the work of elected officers and committee chairpersons, serving as a resource person, and discussing University expectations with them; support the establishment of diversified academic, cultural, recreational, and social programs; insures that dorm programs meet the diversified needs of the entire community: Third World, Women, Gay, and Handicapped Students, etc.; carries out administrative responsibility associated with the operational aspects of the house; attends weekly staff meetings; participates in staff training; and serves on relevant task forces and committees as required from time to time.

Supervision Received: Receives professional and supportive supervision from the Director of the Residential Area. May be directly supervised by an Assistant or Associate Director.

Supervision Exercised: Exercises close and supportive supervision over part-time undergraduate residence hall staff: e.g. Assistant Heads of Residence, Resident Assistants, Security Staff.

Examples of Duties:

STUDENT STAFF

- Supervises student staff, and delegates to them administrative responsibilities in carrying out operational functions of the residence hall.
- Serves the student staff in an advisory capacity, in helping them to solve individual and group problems within their units:
 - assists in referring students to the appropriate agency for help with problems beyond the staff's capacity;
 - notifies Area Director of any referral of an uncommon nature.
- Assist in on-the-job training of student staff and house government.
- Reviews and evaluates the services of student staff members at designated periods during the year and discusses with Area Director cases in which a student staff member must be removed from the payroll.
- Directs and coordinates the selection of student staff members, with input from current staff, house government and residents. The H.R. is ultimately responsible for hiring all House staff.

INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

- Counsels individual students and refers those who need more extensive assistance to other University services with particular sensitivities to the needs of special groups, such as Third World, Women, Gay, Handicapped and foreign and new students, etc.
- Takes appropriate action in meeting emergencies, which will generally entail notifying the appropriate University agency.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES: (Continued)

-2-

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Serves as a consultant to house government for advice or information.
- Encourages students' responsibility for their own house programs.
- Actively supports student/university agency interaction in house programming

MAINTENANCE OF UNIVERSITY AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

- Informs students of regulations and encourages responsibility on their part in maintaining them.
- Takes appropriate action in situations in which students blatantly disregard necessary regulations, which entails working with/notifying appropriate University agencies.
- May quote University policy and student code of conduct (handbook) when requested, but refrain from any written statements to students, parents, etc., of University policy on disciplinary action.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

The following list outlines the administrative duties involved in running a residence hall. The Head of Residence may delegate routine duties to members of the student staff.

- coordinates security program in house.
- provides for carrying out of house opening and closing procedures at vacation time and at beginning and ending of academic year;
- communicates information or directives from various agencies to residents of house;
- under direction of Housing Office, coordinates room selection process;
- supervises student staff inventory of rooms;
- reports damages and is generally aware of the physical condition of the house;
- works collaboratively with appropriate agencies on matters of health and safety.

Qualifications:

1. Bachelor's Degree or related equivalent experience.
2. Ability to work effectively with diverse populations.
3. Ability to perform basic administrative tasks such as record keeping, budgeting, and inventory.
4. Demonstrated ability to develop and implement programs.
5. Ability to deal effectively with conflict resolution and crisis intervention.
6. Supervisory experience preferred.
7. Experience working in complex organizations preferred.

APPENDIX 2

CASE STUDY INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. COMPONENTS OF THE JOB

What are the different components of the job of Head of Residence?

Are these the components as delineated in your official job description?

Do you consider any one of these components more important than the others? (more essential?) Have you prioritized these components?

What do you focus on in your performance of the job?
(What do you emphasize?)

Is this your choice? The choice of your supervisor? Some other administrator?

Has your focus changed as you've become more familiar with the job?

Do you perceive any conflicts among the various aspects which you define as being part of the job?

Is your definition in agreement with the expectations of your students?

II. (ADMINISTRATIVE) COMPONENT OF THE JOB

(Insert aspect of job defined by subject as most important.)

What does this involve?

What tasks are involved in this aspect of the job?
(Examples.)

What decision-making functions are involved? (Examples.)

What skills are necessary for the effective completion of this part of the job?

(How do you do these things?)

Where did you learn these skills?

(on the job? on a previous job? in a training program?)

Interview Schedule (continued)

From whom did you learn these skills?

How did you learn these skills? (Examples.)

by asking?

by observing others in the job?

by being told what to do?

Has your method of accomplishing this part of the job changed over time?

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY COVER LETTER A

September 1980

Dear Head of Residence:

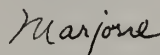
I would like to enlist your help in a research study I am conducting on the role of the professional Head of Residence. The purpose of the study is to begin to develop some definitions and descriptions of what we Heads of Residence actually do. I want to identify the various aspects of the job and the way in which we determine how to perform each of those aspects.

Attached to this letter is an opinion survey. It consists of a series of statements about the job of a professional Head of Residence. I would like you to respond by indicating whether you agree with the statement, disagree with it, or have no opinion. In addition, there are some statements that I would like you to complete with your own words.

Your responses to this survey will remain completely anonymous and no response will in any way be identified with an individual. Please be assured that your anonymity will be protected.

I appreciate your assistance in this and look forward to being able to share the information I gain with all of you. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,



Marjorie Harrison
Head of Residence
Knowlton House

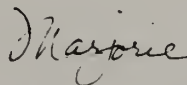
APPENDIX 4
SURVEY COVER LETTER B

Dear Former Head of Residence:

In addition to all current Heads of Residence, I am asking all former Heads of Residence who are still working in the University system to participate in my survey. I would like you to respond as a Head of Residence---i.e., as you remember your opinions were when you were working in that capacity.

Please complete the survey (it will take about twenty to twenty-five minutes) and return it to me via campus mail as soon as it is convenient (hopefully by October 16, 1980.). In order to assure your anonymity, and still keep track of which surveys have been returned, please write your name on the bottom of this sheet, fold and staple it, and mail it back to me separately, but at the same time that you return the survey.

Thank you in advance for your help. Your perspective on a number of issues may be different from that of the current residential staff people and that information will be an important addition to my data. Thanks again for your cooperation. I appreciate it.



Marjorie Harrison
Head of Residence
Knowlton House

I have completed the survey and mailed it back to you.

NAME _____

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY

PLEASE READ EACH STATEMENT AND RESPOND BY MARKING THE SCALE APPROPRIATELY

A - AGREE

N/O - NO OPINION

D - DISAGREE

1. The official job description realistically and adequately describes what I do in my job as a professional Head of Residence. A---N/O---D

2. When I was hired and began this job, I had a reasonably accurate idea of what the job entailed. A---N/O---D

3. My own definition of the job is very different from the official University job description. A---N/O---D

4. I have determined for myself what the priorities are in my job as a Head of Residence. A---N/O---D

5. It is important to develop and refine one's own job role in isolation, without comparison to others. A---N/O---D

6. My supervisor(s) articulated his/her/their expectations very clearly and helped me to define my role. A---N/O---D

7. My emphasis in the job is primarily a result of what my supervisor expects me to do. A---N/O---D

8. My expectations for myself in this job have changed dramatically since my first year. A---N/O---D

9. Sometimes what I decide to do in my job is in disagreement with what my supervisor has advised. A---N/O---D

10. The standards for competent performance in this job have always been very clear to me. A---N/O---D

11. University agencies other than the Office of Residential Life (ORL) make their expectations of me much clearer to me than ORL does. A---N/O---D

12. I rely on my colleagues for advice more than on my supervisor(s). A---N/O---D

13. The supervision and advice I received from area administrators my first year were important factors in my success. A---N/O---D

14. In general, the only interactions I have with my supervisor(s) center around disciplinary actions. A---N/O---D
-
15. No clear guidelines have been communicated to me as to what constitutes a good Head of Residence. A---N/O---D
-
16. Being a residential staff person means that there are necessarily restrictions on my personal life. A---N/O---D
-
17. My supervisor seems more concerned with my ability to cope with the negative aspects of the job, rather than with my ability to perform the positive aspects of the job. A---N/O---D
-
18. In general it would be difficult for me to articulate my supervisor's expectations. A---N/O---D
-
19. I feel an individual Head of Residence can choose from a wide variety of possibilities as to how to approach this job. A---N/O---D
-
20. The physical characteristics of a particular dormitory and the personality characteristics of the population greatly influence the job of the Head of Residence in that dorm. A---N/O---D
-
21. Because of the diversity of dormitory populations, each Head of Residence should have an individualized job description, in addition to a general, University job description. A---N/O---D
-
22. My emphasis in the job is a reflection of what the residents demanded of or expected from me. A---N/O---D
-
23. Determining the best action to take in a given situation is just something I developed a sense for as I did my job. A---N/O---D
-
24. Defining my own limits---determining what I myself could successfully accomplish in this job---was an important skill to acquire. A---N/O---D
-
25. I consider a primary function in this job to be that of modeling responsible behavior. A---N/O---D
-
26. Maintaining one's own personal choice of lifestyle is important despite the residential aspect of the job. A---N/O---D

27. Being a role-model to the residents in my dormitory is only important in terms of my professional life, not my personal life. A---N/O---D
-
28. Building personal friendships with students is more important than maintaining a professional distance. A---N/O---D
-
29. Every interaction I have with students is part of my job. A---N/O---D
-
30. The single most important aspect of being a Head of Residence is one's attitude toward the students. A---N/O---D
-
31. Consistency in the way I respond to situations in the dormitory is an important part of how I do my job. A---N/O---D
-
32. Individual interactions with students are a more important part of my job than teaching workshops. A---N/O---D
-
33. It is important to me to maintain a professional relationship with the students. A---N/O---D
-
34. When I started this job I had the skills necessary for the job. A---N/O---D
-
35. The skills I consider the most important on this job are skills I learned after I had started working. A---N/O---D
-
36. The primary skill area I utilize on this job is that of supervisory skills: both in relation to the R.A. staff and in relation to other groups in the dorm. A---N/O---D
-
37. Training and supervising my R.A. staff to assume leadership responsibilities is one of the most important parts of this job. A---N/O---D
-
38. I define programming as organizing and/or teaching colloquia and courses. A---N/O---D
-
39. Organizing formal workshops is a crucial part of the job for me. A---N/O---D
-
40. Administrative tasks are important because they provide a way of interacting with students. A---N/O---D
-
41. Administrative tasks are important because those physical details keep the dormitory running smoothly. A---N/O---D

42. I thought, when I began this job, that counseling students would be a major part of the job, but I find that I do very little counseling.

A---N/O---D

43. Most of the counseling I do is within a fairly formal context: i.e. a student requests to see me to discuss a specific problem.

A---N/O---D

44. Even when I am only watching television with students, I feel that I am in a counseling or teaching relationship with them.

A---N/O---D

45. I consider disciplinary issues to be more a part of the:

a) counseling aspect of the job

A---N/O---D

or

b) administrative aspect of the job

A---N/O---D

or

c) _____

46. In addition to the official designated areas of the job: counseling, administration, and programming, I would consider _____ to be of equal importance.

47. The skills most necessary for effective job performance as a professional Head of Residence are:

48. What determined the priorities in the job for me was/were:

49. I was already familiar with the University of Massachusetts residence hall system when I was hired.

YES-----NO

50. I was familiar with a residence hall system other than the University system when I was hired.

YES-----NO

I was/have been a Head of Residence for ___ years from 19__ to 19__ / Present.

APPENDIX 6

TABLES

TABLE 1
 SURVEY DATA--ALL RESPONDENTS
 (N = 45)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. official job description-realistic | 20 | 11.1 | 68.9 | ... |
| 2. had accurate idea of job | 55.6 | 6.7 | 37.8 | ... |
| 3. own definition - different | 51.1 | 11.1 | 37.8 | ... |
| 4. determined for self - priorities | 95.6 | 2.2 | 2.2 | ... |
| 5. develop own job role in isolation | 31.1 | 6.7 | 57.8 | 4.4 |
| 6. supervisor's expectations clear | 51.1 | 15.6 | 28.9 | 4.4 |
| 7. emphasis - result of supervisor | 15.6 | 4.4 | 80 | ... |
| 8. expectations for self have changed | 62.2 | 15.6 | 22.2 | ... |
| 9. sometimes disagree with supervisor | 48.9 | 13.3 | 37.8 | ... |
| 10. standards always clear | 28.9 | 6.7 | 64.4 | ... |
| 11. other agencies' expectations clearer | 26.7 | 22.2 | 48.9 | 2.2 |
| 12. rely on colleagues for advice | 42.2 | 11.1 | 44.4 | 2.2 |
| 13. advice from administrators important | 55.6 | 11.1 | 33.3 | ... |
| 14. interactions with supervisor | 8.9 | 4.4 | 84.4 | 2.2 |
| 15. no clear guidelines | 42.2 | 13.3 | 44.4 | ... |
| 16. restrictions on personal life | 95.6 | 2.2 | 2.2 | ... |
| 17. supervisor concerned with negative | 13.3 | 11.1 | 75.6 | ... |
| 18. supervisor's expectations | 20 | 13.3 | 66.7 | ... |
| 19. variety of possibilities | 86.7 | 6.7 | 6.7 | ... |
| 20. physical characteristics of dorm | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 21. individualized job description | 55.6 | 22.2 | 22.2 | ... |
| 22. emphasis - reflection of residents | 44.4 | 13.3 | 44.4 | 2.2 |
| 23. best action - developed a sense | 91.1 | 2.2 | 6.7 | ... |
| 24. defining own limits - important | 91.1 | 4.4 | 4.4 | ... |
| 25. primary function - modeling behavior | 88.9 | 2.2 | 6.7 | 2.2 |
| 26. maintaining lifestyle - important | 80 | 11.1 | 6.7 | 2.2 |

TABLE 1 (continued)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 27. role-model in professional life | 17.8 | 6.7 | 75.6 | ... |
| 28. personal friendships more important | 24.4 | 20 | 55.6 | ... |
| 29. every interaction - part of job | 42.2 | 11.1 | 46.7 | ... |
| 30. important - attitude toward students | 66.7 | 11.1 | 22.2 | ... |
| 31. consistency is important | 95.6 | 4.4 | ... | ... |
| 32. interactions more important part | 73.3 | 13.3 | 13.3 | ... |
| 33. maintain professional relationship | 82.2 | 6.7 | 11.1 | ... |
| 34. had the skills necessary for job | 64.4 | 6.7 | 28.9 | ... |
| 35. important skills I learned | 37.8 | 15.6 | 46.7 | ... |
| 36. primary skill - supervisory skills | 55.6 | 15.6 | 26.7 | 2.2 |
| 37. training R.A. staff - leadership | 88.9 | 2.2 | 8.9 | ... |
| 38. programming - teaching colloquia | 35.6 | 8.9 | 55.6 | ... |
| 39. formal workshops crucial for me | 26.7 | 20 | 53.3 | ... |
| 40. administrative tasks - interacting | 35.6 | 15.6 | 46.7 | 2.2 |
| 41. administrative - keeps dorm running | 88.9 | 4.4 | 6.7 | ... |
| 42. very little counseling | 40 | 4.4 | 53.3 | 2.2 |
| 43. counseling - within a formal context | 35.6 | 8.9 | 55.6 | ... |
| 44. watching T.V. - counseling, teaching | 53.3 | 6.7 | 40 | ... |
| 45. disciplinary issues: a) counseling | 13.3 | ... | ... | ... |
| b) administrative | 28.9 | ... | ... | ... |
| c) both | 37.8 | ... | ... | ... |
| d) other | 20 | | | |

TABLE 2
 SURVEY DATA--CASE STUDY SUBJECTS
 (N = 4)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. official job description - realistic | ... | 75 | 25 | ... |
| 2. had accurate idea of job | 25 | ... | 75 | ... |
| 3. own definition - different | 50 | 25 | 25 | ... |
| 4. determined for self - priorities | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 5. develop own job role in isolation | 50 | ... | 25 | 25 |
| 6. supervisor's expectations clear | 25 | 25 | 50 | ... |
| 7. emphasis - result of supervisor | 25 | ... | 75 | ... |
| 8. expectations for self have changed | 50 | ... | 50 | ... |
| 9. sometimes disagree with supervisor | ... | 25 | 75 | ... |
| 10. standards always clear | 25 | ... | 75 | ... |
| 11. other agencies' expectations clearer | 50 | ... | 25 | 25 |
| 12. rely on colleagues for advice | 50 | ... | 25 | 25 |
| 13. advice from administrators important | 50 | ... | 50 | ... |
| 14. interactions with supervisor | ... | ... | 75 | 25 |
| 15. no clear guidelines | 75 | ... | 25 | ... |
| 16. restrictions on personal life | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 17. supervisor concerned with negative | 25 | ... | 75 | ... |
| 18. supervisor's expectations | ... | 25 | 75 | ... |
| 19. variety of possibilities | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 20. physical characteristics of dorm | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 21. individualized job description | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 22. emphasis - reflection of residents | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 23. best action - developed a sense | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 24. defining own limits - important | 100 | ... | ... | ... |

TABLE 2 (continued)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 25. primary function - modeling behavior | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 26. maintaining lifestyle - important | 50 | 50 | ... | ... |
| 27. role-model in professional life | ... | ... | 100 | ... |
| 28. personal friendships more important | ... | 25 | 75 | ... |
| 29. every interaction - part of job | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 30. important - attitude toward students | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 31. consistency is important | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 32. interactions more important part | 75 | 25 | ... | ... |
| 33. maintain professional relationship | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 34. had the skills necessary for job | 75 | 25 | ... | ... |
| 35. important skills I learned | 25 | 50 | 25 | ... |
| 36. primary skill - supervisory skills | 75 | 25 | ... | ... |
| 37. training R.A. staff - leadership | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 38. programming - teaching colloquia | 50 | ... | 50 | ... |
| 39. formal workshops crucial for me | 50 | ... | 50 | ... |
| 40. administrative tasks - interacting | 50 | ... | 25 | 25 |
| 41. administrative - keeps dorm running | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 42. very little counseling | 25 | ... | 50 | 25 |
| 43. counseling - within a formal context | ... | 25 | 75 | ... |
| 44. watching T.V. - counseling, teaching | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 45. disciplinary issues: a) counseling | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| b) administrative | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| c) both | 75 | ... | ... | ... |
| d) other | 25 | ... | ... | ... |

TABLE 3
 SURVEY DATA--NON-CASE STUDY RESPONDENTS
 (N = 41)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. official job description - realistic | 22 | 4.9 | 73.2 | ... |
| 2. had accurate idea of job | 58.5 | 7.3 | 34.1 | ... |
| 3. own definition - different | 51.2 | 9.8 | 39 | ... |
| 4. determined for self - priorities | 95.1 | 2.4 | 2.4 | ... |
| 5. develop own job role in isolation | 29.3 | 7.3 | 61 | 2.4 |
| 6. supervisor's expectations clear | 53.7 | 14.6 | 26.8 | 4.9 |
| 7. emphasis - result of supervisor | 14.6 | 4.9 | 80.5 | ... |
| 8. expectations for self have changed | 63.4 | 17.1 | 19.5 | ... |
| 9. sometimes disagree with supervisor | 53.7 | 12.2 | 34.1 | ... |
| 10. standards always clear | 29.3 | 7.3 | 63.4 | ... |
| 11. other agencies' expectations clearer | 24.4 | 24.4 | 51.2 | ... |
| 12. rely on colleagues for advice | 41.5 | 12.2 | 46.3 | ... |
| 13. advice from administrators important | 56.2 | 12.2 | 31.7 | ... |
| 14. interactions with supervisor | 9.8 | 4.9 | 85.4 | ... |
| 15. no clear guidelines | 39. | 14.6 | 46.3 | ... |
| 16. restrictions on personal life | 95.1 | 2.4 | 2.4 | ... |
| 17. supervisor concerned with negative | 12.2 | 12.2 | 75.6 | ... |
| 18. supervisor's expectations | 22 | 12.2 | 65.9 | ... |
| 19. variety of possibilities | 85.4 | 7.3 | 7.3 | ... |
| 20. physical characteristics of dorm | 100 | ... | ... | ... |
| 21. individualized job description | 51.2 | 24.4 | 24.4 | ... |
| 22. emphasis - reflection of residents | 34.1 | 14.6 | 48.8 | 2.4 |
| 23. best action - developed a sense | 90.2 | 2.4 | 7.3 | ... |
| 24. defining own limits - important | 90.2 | 4.9 | 4.9 | ... |

TABLE 3 (continued)

| | Agree | No/Op | Disagree | Other |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 25. primary function - modeling behavior | 87.8 | 2.4 | 7.3 | ... |
| 26. maintaining lifestyle - important | 82.9 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 2.4 |
| 27. role-model in professional life | 19.5 | 7.3 | 73.2 | ... |
| 28. personal friendships more important | 26.8 | 19.5 | 53.7 | ... |
| 29. every interaction - part of job | 36.6 | 12.2 | 52.2 | ... |
| 30. important - attitude toward students | 63.4 | 12.2 | 24.4 | ... |
| 31. consistency is important | 95.1 | 4.9 | ... | ... |
| 32. interactions more important part | 73.2 | 12.2 | 14.6 | ... |
| 33. maintain professional relationship | 80.5 | 7.3 | 12.2 | ... |
| 34. had the skills necessary for job | 63.4 | 4.9 | 31.7 | ... |
| 35. important skills I learned | 39 | 12.2 | 48.8 | ... |
| 36. primary skill - supervisory skills | 53.7 | 14.6 | 29.3 | 2.4 |
| 37. training R.A. staff - leadership | 87.8 | 2.4 | 9.8 | ... |
| 38. programming - teaching colloquia | 34.1 | 9.8 | 56.1 | ... |
| 39. formal workshops crucial for me | 24.4 | 22 | 53.7 | ... |
| 40. administrative tasks - interacting | 34.1 | 17.1 | 48.8 | ... |
| 41. administrative - keeps dorm running | 87.8 | 4.9 | 7.3 | ... |
| 42. very little counseling | 41.5 | 4.9 | 53.7 | ... |
| 43. counseling - within a formal context | 39 | 7.3 | 53.7 | ... |
| 44. watching T.V. - counseling, teaching | 48.8 | 7.3 | 43.9 | ... |
| 45. disciplinary issues: | | | | |
| a) counseling | 14.6 | ... | ... | ... |
| b) administrative | 31.7 | ... | ... | ... |
| c) both | 34.1 | ... | ... | ... |
| d) other | 19.5 | ... | ... | ... |

