

**Report by the Upperclass Experience Task Force
January 18, 2007**

The Question

In May 2006, the Residential Life contract staff met for its annual retreat. At that meeting, the Residential Life Coordinator for the upperclass residence halls made this statement/posed this question: “It doesn’t feel like we are a residential campus. We house upperclass students together, but that’s it. What is our goal – to house friends together, to be developmental, or to foster education?”

That question led to the creation of the Sophomore-Junior-Senior (Upperclass) Experience Task Force.

The Charge

To assess the on-campus sophomore, junior, and senior year experiences and make recommendations for change. We will be considering intentional structural, educational, and social outcomes related to learning, community, retention, and satisfaction.

The Challenge

...to **think broadly, boldly, and courageously** about ways to transform the environment in the upperclass halls from a place where people simply ‘hang their hats’ to a setting that has a developmental living-learning dynamic. Think big: everything will be on the table for consideration.

The Student Affairs mission provided context for our discussions: “Our mission is to engage students in learning, help them answer the question, ‘Who am I?’ and guide them in understanding their place in the world.”

Task Force Members

Students from an array of backgrounds and interests were selected to represent the student body: Blair Boudousquie, Caldwell Collins, Patrick Disney, Katie Hampton, Travis Givens, Evelyn Murillo, Erin O’Donnell, and Rachelle Ware.

Faculty members were chosen to reflect a range of departments across the University: Bob Blystone, Biology; William Burke, Business Administration; John Martin, History; and Diane Persellin, Music.

Staff included Jerry Alexander, Career Services; Mary Kay Cooper, Alumni Office; Crystal Benavides, Alumni Office; Virginia Fraser, Residential Life; Byron French, Development; Twyla Hough, Career Services; Wanda Olson, Residential Life; Ankita Rakhe, Campus & Community Involvement; Becky Spurlock, Campus & Community Involvement; Inessa Stepanenko, International Programs; Cara Taylor, Residential Life; and David Tuttle, Dean of Students/Residential Life Office (chair).

Jennifer Arnold served as an alumni member, and Suzanne Hamilton, also an alumna, served as a parent member.

Process

The Task Force communicated initially through a specially set-up Blackboard web page. The group did a review of literature that included many articles posted on our site, and several members reviewed the monograph, *Visible Solutions for Invisible Students: Helping Sophomores Succeed*, Edited by Laurie Schreiner and Jerry Pattengale.

In addition, the group reviewed programs at other schools, including our peer institutions, as well as information from the “National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition.”

On September 20, 2006, Task Force members participated in the national web conference “Using the Second Year Experience to Enhance Success.”

Initial meetings were designed to discuss the literature, to identify issues at Trinity University, and to discuss what it means for the University to be residential. Subsequently the Task Force brainstormed recommendations and systematically reviewed that list for strategies that would best address the problems identified.

Members of the Task Force conducted focus groups with first year students and sophomores to get a sample of opinions about their residential experiences.

Throughout the process, members of the Task Force met with important constituents to update them about our process and progress to date. These constituents included the Faculty Senate, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Counselor for Study Abroad, the Student Affairs Directors and full staff, Campus & Community Involvement, Greek Council, Residential Life student staff members, and the Association of Student Representatives. The campus newspaper, the *Trinitonian*, also covered some of our work.

History

In 2000-2001 Dr. Gage Paine, Vice President for Student Affairs chaired the Quality of Student Life Task Force (QSLTF). This Task Force presented 14 recommendations to President John Brazil. Five years later, a review of the recommendations, conducted by Dr. Paine, highlighted several recommendations that had not yet been fulfilled and that were raised anew in the Upperclass Task Force.

Recommendation #4

For fall 2002, implement new education methods, incentives, and resources for faculty advisors and the first-year academic advising process.

Recommendation #6

Identify for 2002-2003 model academic advising methods for sophomores.

Recommendation #7

Develop services and programs to meet the specific needs of sophomores and juniors for implementation in 2002-2003.

The five-year review states: This continues to be an area of challenge and is our least successful effort.

Recommendation #8

Implement in 2002-2003 ways to address the residential needs of juniors and senior students living on campus.

The five-year review states: The Community Initiatives program was developed in part to address this recommendation.

Note: The Community Initiative program, which encourages students to live in self-governed upperclass communities based on a common interest, has had continued success and includes about 25% of our upperclass students. Sophomores are the primary members of these communities.

The Review of Literature

By Byron French

The term “sophomore slump” is used widely to describe the trials of a college student’s second year. Lemons and Richmond point to research dating to the 1950s explaining the symptoms of the sophomore slump, notably the student’s dissatisfaction with college and a personal identity crisis as they struggle through decisions that impact their social, academic, and personal lives. Other symptoms of the sophomore slump include attrition rates that can rival that of first year students (Pattengale) and sophomores being the most dissatisfied students on campus (Juillerat).

While most colleges and universities have a program to help first year students make the transition to college, there is not a widely prescribed treatment for what ails higher education’s middle children (Lipka). Most of the literature provides a starting point for discussion of this topic from Arthur Chickering’s seven vectors model. Chickering provided the major areas of a college student’s development: a) developing competence, b) managing emotions, c) developing autonomy, d) establishing identity, e) freeing interpersonal relationships, f) developing purpose, and g) developing integrity. Lemons and Richmond suggest that sophomore students struggle with four of these vectors, which give rise to the sophomore slump. These four are achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose.

Molly Schaller’s research illustrates another key developmental model that provides a perspective with which to view the sophomore slump. Schaller’s model indicates that students move through four stages in their personal, social, and academic lives. These four are random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices, and commitment. While numerous first year orientation programs are structured to give students ample chance for random exploration, not much is done as second year students are pressured to move towards choices and commitment. According to Schaller, sophomores are most in the focused exploration stage and are seeking meaning and direction in life.

Gahagan and Hunter point to the sophomore year as an intersection of the developmental changes taking place in the student and the need for the university environment to provide curricular, cocurricular, and residential life initiatives to aide in the student’s development process. There are numerous themes in the literature to the type of attention that sophomores themselves state they need and what universities are starting to recognize as important.

A comprehensive model for sophomore education provided by Boivin, Fountain, and Baylis is that of Transformational Education. They highlight four features key for the development of sophomores. The first feature they emphasize is character development. They note that education should play a role in the development of conscience, character, citizenship, and social responsibility. The second is scaffolding, that is the sophomore year should be the proper blend of challenge and support. The third is praxis, that we are changed by doing, or finding meaningful out-of-the-classroom experiences. The last is mentoring and discipleship, the role of faculty, staff, or other relationships in guiding the sophomore student.

The literature points to issues that sophomores themselves highlight as most important: campus life, staff services, financial aid, opportunities for intellectual growth, and the approachability of administration and faculty (Juillerat). Sophomores at private institutions, where the student body expects more in general, seek more personalized attention when it comes to registration and advising, residential life, tutoring and career services, and financial aid. Universities are starting to expand first year orientation programs to the second year, adapting the individualized attention to the specific needs of second year students (Lonardo).

Jerry Gaff points to the sophomore’s relationship to the university’s curriculum, that students are often “stuck” at the end of core requirements and getting into classes for their major, and that these classes are seen as fillers, not related to their life’s pursuit, and important to get out of the way.

While there are up to 128 examples of sophomore programs at colleges across the country, most are very specific, such as seminars, retreats, special housing, and extra advising (Lipka). This extra individualized attention for the sophomores ultimately meets one or more of their needs. There are several comprehensive programs that build from an existing first year program. The Sophomore Year Experience at Colgate University is focused on helping residential students through critical academic and personal decisions, which features a great deal of collaboration with faculty to supplement classroom work. See <http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/soph/index.html>. for examples of specific programs.

Emory University has started the Second Year at Emory (SYE) which features programs that fall within the six major learning areas key for sophomores: academic life; leadership, involvement, and service; diversity and multiculturalism; career development and exploration; personal growth and wellness; and traditions and ceremonies.

Based on this literature, the Upperclass Task Force at Trinity was charged with deciding how this research applies to our campus. Trinity has developed a first year orientation program and curriculum that allows students to engage in random exploration, but the question is what Trinity needs to do to engage sophomore students through the rest of their Trinity careers. There are many elements of the Trinity experience that lend themselves to the development of sophomore students – being a residential campus, a strong liberal arts curriculum, a low student-faculty ratio, and ample opportunities for campus, community, and cross-cultural involvement.

Recent Assessment

By Cara Taylor

Quality of Life Survey (QLS) data are excerpted from the responses of over 800 residence hall students divided into two groups: first year (FY) residents and upper-class (UC) residents (sophomores, juniors and seniors). The selected questions ask residents to describe life on campus and to report what we would call “learning outcomes”—lessons they have learned as a result of the residential experience. One major trend emerges from the survey results: first year students are more positive by margins that range from 4% to 27%.

Campus Life

The sense of community, enjoyment, and general satisfaction averages 17 percentage points lower in the upperclass area than the first year area (it hovers around 75% UC versus 90% FY). Their appreciation drops dramatically lower when asked specifically about hall activities and the residency requirement—only 40% of the older students give positive responses to these questions, putting them about 25 points below the first year cohort.

Learning Outcomes

Learning about values, living with others, health, study and time management is reported by first years an average of 7% above the upper-class group. That isn't a significant gap, but it is a logical reflection of their dramatic lifestyle change from high school. However, our programs in the first year area (unlike UC halls) address these developmental vectors directly. The longer students live on campus, educational programs decline or disappear and fewer students feel they are learning about life management. Only 34% of sophomore, junior, and senior residents agree that being on campus helps them mature in terms of health, studying and scheduling. These three questions are the only in the learning outcome section where positive opinion is actually in the minority. What Trinity students do value highly (and at the same rate from first year to graduation) are their relationships—on average 86% see campus as a good environment for learning to live together and forming important friendships.

Retention

From 1995 to 2003, Trinity University retention rates drop between 5% and 9% from the second to the third year.

Analysis

Although the upperclass experience is satisfactory according to this survey, the noticeable decline after the first year merits institutional attention. One area that stays relatively even for all age groups in the campus life question set may provide an idea for a solution—most students enjoy their own residence hall. As noted, they also connect relationally. Structural and programmatic proposals for upperclass halls could focus on these assets.

In the learning outcome question set, the most significant change after the first year is the perception that campus-living no longer helps students learn to become more independent (61% of UC compared to 81% of FY). This should offer a caution so upperclass efforts give students more opportunities to exercise their independence while learning important life skills.

Focus Groups

By Virginia Fraser

Virginia Fraser (Residential Life Coordinator for the Upperclass Area) and Evelyn Murillo (Trinity 08') conducted two focus groups to supplement the group's research and discussion. The focus groups were divided into first years and sophomores. Virginia and Evelyn led the group discussions with questions concerning Residential Life and housing arrangements, Student Affairs and weekend programming, and Academic Advising. Below are the themes that emerged from these focus groups.

Many first year students (Trinity 10') expressed that they appreciated living in the first-year area and the efforts made by REAL LIFE programming, while others generally disliked the idea of having their Resident Mentor being really involved in their lives. None of the first year students seemed excited about the idea of sophomore housing as they are generally looking forward to more independence in their sophomore year. (The idea was raised without detailed explanation of the work done by the Task Force at the time.) It was the general consensus that the University feels barren on weekends and they wanted more things to do such as going to Trinity sporting events, having movie nights, and hanging out in venues such as *Beze Underground*, a public recreational space. In relation to academic advising, good advisors were described as those who knew the student, went to dinner, and asked how they could help the student individually. Perceived poor advisors were those who didn't do any of the previous listed items and were also uninformed about the common curriculum and were not able to answer student questions.

Sophomore students (Trinity 09') expressed differing needs than the first year students. They would appreciate more detailed information on move-in, as some didn't even know how and where to pick up their dorm room keys. Some sophomores prefer the independence and apartment style feel of the upperclass dorms while others miss the tight-knit community they had during their first year at Trinity. No one warmed to the idea of a sophomore housing area, as presented, as they don't want to be segregated from the other classes of students. On the weekends, these sophomore students said they do homework or use it as time to "break out of the bubble." Lastly, in advising, sophomore students tend to be confused about how to actually declare their major. Some students expressed that they could use more guidance from their advisor if they hadn't narrowed down what they wanted to major in.

Future Assessment

Student learning and outcomes have become increasingly important on college and university campuses across the country, in large part due to changes in accreditation and information from the Spellings report. There is mounting pressure to concretely demonstrate student learning via assessment data. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) use the Quality Enhancement Plan as a method to encourage colleges to develop ongoing plans of improvement. The Spellings report seeks to set expectations from higher education. Incorporated into the report is enhanced student learning with a focus on skills valued in the workplace including critical thinking, writing and interpersonal skills. All of this contributes to an environment where accountability and measurement of the value of higher education to society as a whole is being questioned. Parents, employers, and even students themselves are asking colleges and universities what the result of their investment in their education will produce. Because our approach to student learning is broad-based (not just in the classroom), the programs, services, and learning experiences we design outside of the classroom are equally critical to the experience of our students on campus. The link to the full report is as follows:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/pre-pub-report.pdf>

In the recommendations section of this report we address some of the possible assessment measures based on the goal(s) of each recommendation. Whereas many of the recommendations require further study, several assessment measures have already been identified. We will rely heavily on the QLS and the University administered College Student Survey (CSS) and College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ).

All of the assessments will eventually be assessed based on **retention of students, the quality of the developmental and educational experience, and the satisfaction with campus community and life in the residence halls.**

Overview

Currently, Trinity University offers a dynamic first-year residential experience. The Resident Mentor program combines the academic components of mentoring new students academically, with the social and developmental needs as addressed through the student staff member. In addition, the growth of the REAL LIFE program (Trinity's answer to a University 101 survival course) has addressed the important transitional issues our students face. In his article "Student Success and the Building of Involving Educational Communities," Vincent Tinto writes:

A (third) common feature of effective retention programs... is their emphasis on the communal nature of institutional life and the importance of educational community, social and academic, in the learning process. They have come to understand that student learning best occurs in settings that integrate students into their daily life and provide social and intellectual support for their individual efforts.

In the upperclass halls, students from all classes are mixed together, with students reserving rooms based on seniority. Students must have roommates in order to sign-up. The Community Initiative Halls include students in self-selected, self-governed communities. Some examples of this year's communities include two substance-free groups, a sorority, and a political science floor.

The University assumed a responsibility when it undertook a three-year residency requirement and declared in its mission that the campus is residential. In asking the question, "What does it mean to be residential?" the Task Force identified shared aspirations: interaction among students, involvement, shared experiences, and a social setting outside the classroom.

In exploring the challenges of a residency requirement, members of the Task Force communicated as though the requirement was a burden. Some comments from the Task Force: in the first year there is lots of class identity, in the sophomore year there is none; there is a lack of initiative by residents to know one another; there is not a lot of weekend activity as implied; disconnect between what administrators and students think of requirement; we don't feel residential; there are no small dining rooms, no loyalty to halls, campus programs aren't tied to the halls; students see living here almost like a work requirement, then they get away for fun; there is little integration between upper and lower campus.

The residential nature of our campus, however, shouldn't be merely about social life, nor should the requirement be considered a burden. Indeed, we should strive for an environment with a vibrant social scene, lively activities, and educational experiences at every turn, and intentionality toward the developmental needs of our population. It is our responsibility to recommend changes that help Trinity realize aspirations as a true **residential campus** that is a fundamental component of this University that values the liberal arts.

Themes that emerged through our discussions:

1. The blended educational experience

Members of the Task Force believe that the University should strive to create a blended experience between life inside and outside of the classroom. To confine learning to the academic sector of the University alone or development to the co-curricular life of the campus shortchanges students of a truly educational experience. This is consistent with best practices across the nation (NASPA/ACPA: Learning Reconsiders, 2004; Project DEEP: Documenting Effective Educational Practice, 2005). The University is blessed with caring faculty members and outstanding programs, exceptional facilities, and staff members committed to student learning. The Task Force imagines a campus where professors regularly dine with students, conduct programs in the residence halls about their departmental majors and other areas of expertise, and where advising is comprehensive (not just about course selection – see recommendations).

The faculty presence throughout campus, not just in the classroom, is extremely important to students. Students and faculty members are probably not interested in “chummy” relationships, but students can experience benefits by seeing their faculty in other campus settings and interacting with them outside of the classroom. Among those benefits are a sense of connection between students and faculty members and a sense that the faculty value University citizenship.

The Task Force fully understands that our faculty is extremely committed to students and student learning. In blending the campus learning experiences the Task Force does not seek to add to the already crowded agendas of our faculty. Nevertheless, if the opportunities are meaningful for the faculty and our students, then they will have value for both.

2. The Liberal Arts, the Common Curriculum, and the Residency Requirement need continuing acknowledgement

Trinity University is proud of its liberal arts heritage, its common curriculum, and the three-year residency requirement. The Task Force determined almost immediately that these potentially integrated concepts (note, for example, that the goals of the common curriculum and the Student Affairs mission overlap significantly) are virtually ignored institutionally as students, faculty, and staff spend time moving day-to-day without stopping to absorb, reflect, and discuss the common foundations the University community should share.

3. Change starts with the sophomore year

As our study progressed we discovered that improvements in the sophomore year experience would have a ripple effect into the subsequent years to such an extent that junior and senior year improvements were often predicated on improvements in the sophomore experience.

4. Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Proposals

Several of the current QEP proposals reinforce our findings. The proposals that call for students to have an international experience and to identify common themes of study also complement our aspirations for a meaningful and distinctive upperclass experience.

5. Comprehensive versus piece-meal approaches

Trinity needs an integrated and comprehensive approach for the improvement of the upperclass experience. Our review of other institutions' efforts revealed a variety of strategies to affect change. Those programs that seem to have the greatest chance of success were comprehensive in how they addressed the upperclass experience. In order to reach all students, our recommendations are broadly based.

6. Change may not be convenient

The Task Force looked at the long-term horizon and has made some recommendations that we feel are based in sound reasoning because they are developmentally right for our students over time. In other words, some efforts to improve the overall quality of campus life could be different, inconvenient, and to some, even painful, yet ultimately deliver the optimal residential experience. This was clear in our discussions about sophomore housing and the Greek life calendar.

7. Facilities and Costs

Most of our recommendations require few additional resources in staffing, budgets, or facilities. If our recommendations are accepted, they reinforce existing requests to add staffing in Career Services, the Residential Life upperclass area, and to develop a health educator position. The recommendations also reinforce our continuing renovation goals to create public/community space in the residence halls. While the Task Force is eager for the day that apartment-style housing is an option for students on campus, it is not the thrust of our recommendations at this time.

The Trinity Matrix

To bring order to the many theories, concepts, programs, and outcomes associated with our work, the Task Force presents the following matrix:

	<i>Schaller Model</i>	<i>Chickering Model</i>	<i>Trinity Plan</i>
First Year	Random Exploration (Campus mastery)	Developing Competence Managing Emotions	First year housing Independence Successful transition to College
Second Year	Focused Exploration (Community mastery)	Moving from Autonomy to Interdependence Establishing Identity	Sophomore College Major selection Developing Relationships Involvement Clarify values Service
Third Year	Tentative Choices	Developing Purpose	Study Abroad World view Leadership Internships
Fourth Year	Commitment	Developing Integrity	Transitions to life after college (graduate study, professional schools, internships, careers) Becoming Alumni

Recommendations

1. Beginning the year

The Task Force feels that the marked difference for the return of upper-class students in August, compared to first year student arrival, continues to be pronounced. Some small-scale efforts were made to create more fanfare for the opening of the halls following the QSLTF recommendations in 2000 (welcome signs and sidewalk chalk). Nevertheless, the problem remains and the unintended message is clear: we appear indifferent to our returning students. This message can set a tone for all-things-upper-class in the weeks, months, and years that follow.

Goals

There is a general malaise in the upper-class area. The Task Force believes there need to be markers, rites of passage, and celebrations for students as they move ahead in their Trinity experience. In addition, we can utilize this time of year to talk anew with students about the liberal arts, the curriculum, and the residency requirement and reinforce the associated institutional values. For sophomores, we hope to start to help students on their journeys of focused exploration. We hope to help sophomores avoid the sophomore slump.

Specific recommendations

- Sponsor a “welcome week” that includes not just NSO, but events for others, particularly sophomores. Sponsor NSO concert as a welcome week concert.
- Schedule a sophomore move-in day and related activities, such as an opening address from a faculty member, a conference-style program, and social programs. Currently, all upperclass students can trickle in over a period of four days. Permit juniors to move-in the day following sophomore move-in, and seniors thereafter.
- Utilize sophomores to help welcome new students during their convocation and sponsor a related social activity.
- Sponsor class meals upon return: a sophomore brunch following move-in day; a junior lunch the following day; a senior dinner before school begins.

Assessment

Measure, through the QLS and the CSS/CSEQ, changes in student perceptions of their appreciation for the sense of community, their enjoyment of campus life, and their perception of the residency requirement.

Implementation plan and timeline

The Campus & Community Involvement and Residential Life staffs will explore the development of a comprehensive week of events for the fall of 2008. In fall, 2007, Residential Life will coordinate a staggered move-in to work out logistical issues.

Resources needed

Program funding for meals for class move-in events will need to be secured.

2. Class Identity

The Task Force discovered that the desired goal of class identity gets off to a good start in the first year and abruptly stops. While the Task Force believes that stronger class identity can create deeper, richer connections to other students and the institution, the goal is not to isolate students from different years from one another. Great care should be taken to nurture the blending of all students in the classrooms, in organizations, at campus-wide events, and in junior/senior housing.

Goals

Greater class unity will help students feel a sense of connection within a specific cohort that is sizeable enough to find others with similarities, yet large enough to be exposed to those who are different.

To add to the sense of investment or knowledge of the operations of the University, the Task Force is intrigued by the model at other institutions which allows students and faculty representatives as voting members of the Board of Trustees. Such a program would give students a sense of investment and aspirations to represent their classmates as they achieve higher class status.

Specific Recommendations

- Assign a staff and faculty member “marshal” to each incoming class. These people will be primarily ceremonial figures, but may assume important roles: speaking briefly at opening convocation, the last great reception, class meals, and commencement; sending letters of greetings and updates in the summers; and participating in other functions as developed (perhaps becoming “virtual” house masters).
- Develop ceremonies or events for sophomores, juniors, and seniors that mark their movement into new stages of their Trinity experience.
- Involve Alumni in hosting dinners or marshaling classes.
- Utilize local young alumni to mentor juniors and seniors.
- Consider assigning Association of Student Representatives (ASR) Senators by class. This would ensure that the needs of each class are being met and gives each class a voice for issues specific to them.
- Each class should have the opportunity of identifying an off-campus speaker of their choice and arranging for a campus-wide speaker of their choice.
- Develop a College Bowl for seniors, faculty, administration, alumni, and community where seniors compete against other constituents. Consider this as a tradition that unifies the campus and allows seniors to show pride in their education.
- Consider inviting juniors and seniors to sit on the Board of Trustees, with the caveat that there also is faculty representation.

Assessment

Add questions to University-wide surveys about the importance and benefits of class identity and how they affect to connection and satisfaction with the University.

Implementation plan and timeline

Have Academic Affairs and the faculty senate develop criteria for the selection of class marshals to begin roles with the first year class in fall 2007. Develop a similar process with the Student Affairs staff and Alumni Office to determine roles and selection criteria for fall 2007.

Have ASR study the benefits of class representation in their organization and in context of the recommendations in this report.

Students will select a speaker of their choice, perhaps coordinating with the Presidents Office and faculty committees. Request the President’s Office to consider adding student representatives to the Board of Trustees (perhaps from among junior and senior class ASR senators).

Campus & Community Involvement and student committees will develop a College Bowl program (for the spring of 2008) and other ceremonial events with the faculty.

Resources needed

Secure funding for speakers and the College Bowl program (and similar programs as developed).

3. Housing Logistics

Early in our discussions the Task Force considered the possibilities created by housing all sophomore students together. Students report greater satisfaction and community in the first year area and often cite the drastic difference as they are dispersed into the upper-class halls living in small clusters within juniors and seniors who are already very engaged in life beyond the residence halls.

The Task Force wishes to emphasize that while the sophomore housing area could be an excellent extension of the first year area, great care should be taken to not have it feel like a continuation of the first year, but rather a different, more mature experience.

Since we are a residential campus, we have an opportunity for that to mean something for our students beyond their first year. The Task Force is very enthusiastic about injecting more meaning into our residential mission.

Goals

Housing sophomores together will allow us to maintain the momentum and community of the first year area and further develop class identity (see recommendation number two). Juniors and seniors will be afforded greater autonomy.

In addition, the kinds of social, developmental, and educational issues facing sophomores (choice of major, identity, values, involvement) can be more easily addressed through programs, staffing, bulletin board postings, and advising when the students are housed together.

In our review of literature and peer programs the Task Force learned of many programs that offer small programs for self-selected students. We wish to offer a program that is comprehensive and affects all students, rather than a few.

Specific Recommendations

- House sophomore students in sophomore buildings referred to as “sophomore colleges.”
- House juniors and seniors together in other buildings to be determined.
- Integrate Community Initiative floors into the program so they are in proximity to sophomore housing.
- Assign staff to work specifically with Community Initiative floors to ensure that sophomores in all housing areas are exposed to the same quality programs.
- Consider a scaled-back student staff position (perhaps mostly administrative) in the junior and senior areas to create a greater sense of autonomy for our older students.
- The Residential Life staff will continue to encourage and assist with upper-class learning communities, such as language floors and others being proposed (Entrepreneurship, McNair, for example).

Assessment

The QLS asks questions about learning to live with others, values, and independence. We would compare results against past years to measure effectiveness of the housing areas. We would also try to include CSS/CSEQ data.

Implementation plan and timeline

The Residential Life staff will identify a working group, including student staff and students from the ASR in the spring of 2007 to develop a plan for a pilot program for fall 2007. The full sophomore housing area will be implemented in fall, 2008, to coincide with the welcome week activities.

Resources needed

The Residential Life staff continues to be under-staffed in the upper-class area, where one professional oversees nine buildings and over 1,100 students. To be effective in managing a sophomore housing area we would need one additional Residential Life Coordinator to help assist the Assistant Director of Residential Education and manage the day-to-day operations of this living area. In addition, the Residential Life programming fee would need to be increased to accommodate the additional programs in the halls.

4. Advising

Advising was a focus of the QSLTF in 2000 and continues to be an important campus issue as expressed by students and faculty on the Task Force. While some students are most appreciative of the advising that they have received, other students are concerned about being shepherded through a registration process with little attention to their long-term goals and development.

The Upperclass Task Force fully acknowledges the time constraints facing faculty members, the lack of formal support/compensation for managing these important functions, and the unevenness of advising loads. Because of the strong reputation of the faculty, Task Force members value the importance of a faculty-student connection for all students. Likewise, students need to approach the advising system as a special opportunity to develop a crucial advising relationship – and set an important course – for their educational experiences.

Goals

Advising students holistically gives students an opportunity to look at how their changing goals and values mesh with plans to consider activities, internships, and studying abroad. Currently faculty advisors are often relied on primarily to assist students through the technical and logistical maze of fulfilling requirements and registering for courses.

The Task Force supports the many discussions and efforts of the faculty, Academic Affairs, and several committees exploring important advising issues.

Specific Recommendations

- Working with the Senate, the UCC, the Chairs, and the UCC-and ultimately the faculty as a whole, develop an advising model that helps students explore educational, extracurricular, career, graduate study, and life goals.
- Explore resources and compensation for advisors.

Assessment

We are unable to determine assessment unless the advising issue is considered broadly elsewhere across the University.

Implementation plan and timeline

The Task Force strongly asks that the University comprehensively explore the advising system.

Resources needed

The comprehensive review will identify those resources necessary to enhance the advising experience.

5. Faculty Involvement

Our graduates almost always stress that the most important and meaningful part of their education at Trinity is the opportunity to work closely with faculty. While these relationships are fostered on the upper campus, Trinity has not yet found ways to foster the sorts of faculty-student interaction that have traditionally been central to the liberal arts experience. Even our campus ecology – with an academic upper campus and residential lower campus – tends to create an artificial division between residential and aca-

ademic life. Yet, as Trinity aspires to become one of the leading schools with a liberal arts emphasis nationally, it is critical that we find ways to bridge the gap between the upper and lower campus, identifying ways to encourage greater faculty participation in the lives of our students beyond the classroom.

As a general principle, faculty members are heavily involved with students on upper campus and the student/faculty relationship is often cited by students as their favorite part of their educational experiences at Trinity. The Task Force proposes that faculty members are afforded better opportunities to grow those relationships further, outside the classroom (see “Goals”).

Goals

Because being a residential campus is essential to the University mission, the University should strive to enrich the lives of our students outside of the classroom and to reflect a truly blended academic and residential experience.

Classes on lower campus help the students understand that learning isn’t merely an upper campus phenomenon and bridges the upper/lower campus divide. It also helps faculty see the lower campus as accessible to them for other purposes, such as programs and meals.

Engaging with faculty members over meals can lead to a continuation of discussions started in the classroom or during office hours. Educational seminars or programs in informal settings can serve as a way to connect students with faculty who may not otherwise know of shared interests.

Specific recommendations

- Invite faculty to the residence halls to discuss majors. This will give faculty members a chance to discuss majors with students who are preparing to declare majors (or considering additional majors and minors) in the sophomore year.
- Invite faculty to make presentations to students on areas of interest such as on elections, global warming, social issues, and much more.
- Continue to invite faculty members to teach in the residence halls and utilize advising and office space in the Witt Center which has been designed for faculty-student use.
- Develop a common time (one to two hours) during the week that is available for faculty and students to meet and spend time together.
- Subsidize faculty dining in Mabee Hall and designate faculty parking at the curb in front of the dining hall for meal times.
- Explore a virtual college house system as a possible model to connect faculty to certain halls in exchange for a reduced teaching load.
- Support current faculty initiatives under the capital campaign: Interdisciplinary science, East Asian Studies, Spanish and Latin American Studies, Civic Engagement and Leadership, Urban Studies, and Entrepreneurship.

Assessment

The senior exit surveys (CSS/CSEQ) ask about faculty interaction outside of the classroom and may provide useful information.

Implementation and Timeline

Establish a working group of faculty, Student Affairs staff, and Academic Affairs staff to explore these recommendations for implementation in fall 2008.

Resources needed

Immediate resources would be a budget through Academic Affairs or departments for faculty meal allowances.

6. Program emphases for sophomores

Whereas the sophomore college housing area is designed, in part, to ease the delivery of programs to the intended audience, that area is meaningless without substantive program offerings for our students. In the sophomore year, students are expected to declare a major. There are many untapped possibilities for departments to host events in the residence halls with faculty members, senior majors, and local alumni to discuss majors and careers.

Goals

Through our review of literature there were a number of areas identified specifically with the sophomore slump. Offering programs, events, discussions, posting bulletin board information, and sending newsletters on any of these topics is important.

Many of our recommendations interrelate. In the programming area, for example, hosting religion and philosophy professors to the residence halls to lead programs on values clarification or finding meaning in life would be allow us to present meaningful programs AND involve the faculty in student learning outside the classroom.

The Task Force feels that the sophomore year is the best time to explore issues related to majors, to introduce community service into student life, and to prepare for study abroad experiences.

Specific recommendations

- Offer programs related to choosing majors, including the “majors fair” currently offered to first year students, receptions, and panels.
- Create a ceremony for students in declaring their majors, whether University-wide, through newsletters and postings, or within departments.
- Offer leadership training for sophomores before they rise to leadership positions on teams, in organizations, and in the work place.
- Offer programs that assist students in their quest to learn who they are and what they value. Specifically, students often question their own faith and spirituality when they move away from home. The University can offer excellent reflection programs for students as they define their identity.
- Offer programs for the students who intended to enter health professions, but either change their minds or struggle with the courses.
- Offer other programs: gender and relationships, politics, and adjusting to life as former athletes or performers.

Assessment

Much of the assessment of these programs would need to be designed on a program-by-program basis. In addition, though, we can survey students following to determine the impact of these programs on their success.

Implementation and timeline

Many of these programs can be implemented when the sophomore residential college forms. Some prototype programs can be developed in 2007-2008. Some programs are already in place.

Resources needed

Some programming money, through an increase in the “dorm fee,” will be needed.

7. Service

Develop programs in the sophomore residential college to connect residence halls and service projects.

Goals

The Task Force recommends an emphasis on service in the sophomore year because that is when students are developmentally prepared and most available to learn to be engaged in the community. In addition, the experience should extend beyond voluntarism and include meaningful opportunities for reflection.

Specific Recommendations

- Develop a sophomore seminar led by juniors and seniors.
- Utilize the PARE model of Preparation Action Reflection Evaluation.

Assessment

The assessment would be determined later, though it would be ideal to see each student participate in a service experience in the community.

Implementation and Timeline

Refer to Campus & Community Involvement and Residential Life for study through the fall of 2007. Work specifically with the Service Coordinator and TUVAC leadership.

Resources needed

Staff time would be needed.

8. Careers

It is important to the University and its students to develop broad and transferable skills that students can utilize not just in their initial post-Trinity experiences. The Task Force believes that the focus on careers should be a part of the entire Trinity experience, with a formal emphasis on the last three years.

Goals

Trinity students should view career management not just as a function of the senior year, but as a process that is interwoven with academic and extra-curricular experiences from the beginning of their Trinity experience. Our goal is to offer regular programs in the residence halls targeted at specific populations. For sophomores, part of the process may be to explore and declare majors. Other sophomores may be ready to learn how to best access and utilize on-line resources. That process and the identification of internships are important for juniors. Seniors should be preparing resumes, scheduling interviews, and practicing skills for the interview and job search process.

Specific Recommendations

- Utilize a three-year career model: sophomores explore majors; juniors explore careers; and seniors engage in graduate school or job search preparation.
- Offer many programs in the residence halls.
- Continue to place an emphasis on internships and experiential learning.
- Continue *Making Connections* programs, including by interest area
- Continue reviewing Alumni Career Network and other on-line resources for juniors and seniors.
- Assist students not only in career development, but in the exploration of graduate study, service, and callings in ministry and worship.

Assessment

Assessment in this area is at the discretion of the Career Services staff.

Implementation and Timeline

The Director of Career Services offers many residential programs, so much of this is already occurring. By formalizing a sophomore college, it will make it easier to streamline the number of programs offered and to target the residents based on specific needs.

Resources needed

Additional staff members are needed to assist in presentations.

9. Study Abroad

The Task Force values the opportunity for our students to travel abroad. Most students going abroad do so in their junior year.

Goals

The study abroad experience should be presented as a routine and critical hallmark of a Trinity experience. The University continues to express the importance of global perspectives as stated in the curriculum and Student Affairs mission. The experience of applying classroom and life lessons in international settings and different cultures offers students rich life-changing opportunities.

Specific Recommendations

- Emphasize study abroad opportunities can be realized by many in their junior year.
- Tie-in programming more deliberately for sophomores: study abroad expos targeted to sophomores and programs by students returning from abroad to discuss their experiences.
- Sponsor re-entry programs by and for juniors and seniors to process their experiences for one another and to aid in reflection and discovery of commonalities.
- Offer opportunities for students in structured professional and pre-professional programs, perhaps in the summer.
- The Task Force supports the Quality Enhancement Plan that promotes international experiences for all students.

Assessment

Assess the number and quality of programs offered.

Implementation and Timeline

Coordinate efforts between International Programs and Residential Life. Begin programs once sophomore pilot housing is set-up for fall 2007.

Resources needed

No resources needed at this time.

10. Social emphases

The Task Force values the importance of a vibrant social life in our residential community setting. While the University calendar is filled with activities including athletics, lectures, music performance, theater, and more, and the Residential Life staff offers programs in the residence halls, there is more to be done to satisfy students with social options, particularly on weekends.

Goals

Part of the development of our students involves connecting with other students in fun social settings. The Task Force would like to see more options on weekends for students that will give them attractive social alternatives. Examples include more events in the Tigers' Den, bands, dances, comedians, hypnotists, and other entertainment.

While the University enforces its alcohol and risk management policies, it also acknowledges that students will drink and Student Affairs continues to explore options that will allow for the lawful and responsible on campus consumption of alcohol. It is equally important to offer dynamic events and options for those who are not of legal drinking age, or who are not drinkers, and who wish to participate in exciting campus activities.

Specific Recommendations

- Offer more social options with alcohol for those in the junior and senior classes who are 21 or older.
- Offer more weekend programming options.

Assessment

To be determined by Campus & Community Involvement.

Implementation and Timeline

Some steps have already been taken to enhance campus sponsored programming through the reassignment of responsibilities in the Campus & Community Involvement staff.

Resources needed

Additional programming funds through the Student Activity Fee will be required. The proposed increase is to be determined by the Campus & Community Staff in consultation with student groups.

II. Greek Life

The Task Force sees potential advantages to shifting the timing of rush and new member orientation toward early in the sophomore year. On the other hand, for some students the Greek connection is deep and helps them find a cohort group, which improves their experience, keeps them engaged, and may assist with retention.

Goals

Sophomores have mastered the University somewhat, and are developmentally in a better position to stand-up to hazing. They are hopefully grounded academically. The current process disrupts relationships and community on first year residence hall floors. The goal of this shift would be to sustain first year community development, to keep new students focused on educational and developmental challenges associated with the first year, and to provide an exciting social outlet in the sophomore year, just as students are entering into the “slump” period.

Specific Recommendations

- The Task Force asks that the Greek Life staff members and Greek Council explore this issue in detail when the time is right.

Assessment

Assessment would include involvement levels in Greek Life, if membership shifted to the last three years. Also, measures of student satisfaction with campus social life for first year students should be studied.

Implementation and Timeline

A representative from the Task Force met with Greek Council and the Task Force respects the Council’s wishes not to look at this issue in light of many changes occurring in campus Greek Life. The Task Force will ask the staff advising Greek Life to raise this issue sometime beginning the spring of 2008.

12. Health

Do healthy student lifestyles make a difference to the quality of campus life? The Task Force believes the environment on a residential campus demands that attention be paid to student health as students face choices related to sleep deprivation, diet, exercise, alcohol, drugs, and sexuality.

Goals

The University cares about education and development of our students. Our goal is to develop a culture of health in which students navigate through health-related choices, learn about healthy lifestyles, and develop habits they will carry with them for a lifetime.

Specific recommendations

- Work with ARAMARK, the campus food service provider to continue to offer healthy food options and reduce unhealthy choices.
- Explore expansion of the Body Image program sponsored by Dr. Carolyn Becker, Psychology.
- Expand the physical requirement in the curriculum be related more directly to student health than to recreation.
- Address more fully issues related to alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and smoking.
- Offer educational programs on sexuality, and safer sex/contraception.
- Offer educational programs related to women's health issues.
- Offer education on sleep deprivation through Counseling Services.
- Assign a new staff member to oversee health issues.
- Continue the Student Health 101 publication.
- Offer personal services for students to design their own health and wellness regimens.

Assessment

Continue to ask QLS questions about healthy campus lifestyle habits and include information from CSS and CSEQ.

Implementation and Timeline

Set-up a Student Health Task Force through Student Affairs for spring and fall 2007 to include faculty from Physical Education, Health Care Administration, and Biology; staff from Counseling Services, Health Services, Residential Life, ARAMARK, and Athletics; and student athletes and others. Utilize the *Healthy Campus 2010: Making it Happen* guidelines presented by the American College Health Association <http://www.csupomona.edu/~jvgrizzell/hc2010/hc2010cpp.pdf>.

Resources

The Task Force supports the addition of a campus health educator. In addition, the Task Force would like the University to consider offering contracted services for students to consult with dietitians, personal athletic trainers, and masseuses (yes, that's right).

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