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A national set of competencies for paraprofessionals in residential college or living/learning programs

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A NATIONAL SET OF COMPETENCIES FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS IN RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE OR LIVING/LEARNING PROGRAMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by

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May, 2004
DEDICATION

With great pride I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my "Grandma,
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to the individuals whose guidance, support and encouragement assisted the development and completion of this dissertation. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to my Committee Chair, Dr. Ed Holton. Any quality contained in this study owes itself in large part to the expertise, wisdom and encouragement of Dr. Holton's advisement. Similarly, I thank my committee members including Dr. Michael Burnett, Dr. Donna Redmann, Dr. Sharon Naquin and Dr. Christine Distefano for the support and professional insight they provided at each step of the process. Working with my entire committee and, indeed, studying in the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development has been a quality professional and educational experience.

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ABSTRACT

A competency model, for supporting student learning, was developed for the paraprofessional position (R.A., Community Assistant, etc.) in residential college or living/learning programs. The researcher developed the model through a two-stage process. In the first stage, the critical incident technique was applied utilizing the experiences of paraprofessionals at 15 different universities to develop an initial set of competencies and related tasks. In the second stage, the Delphi Technique was used to allow faculty and staff from 17 universities to refine and validate the competencies and related tasks. The final competency model includes twelve competencies related to linking hall community programs and activities to learning community curriculum, serving as a subject-matter resource, providing students opportunities to interact with faculty, connecting students with academic resources, assisting in registration/class selection processes, motivating academic success, guiding the application of academic survival skills, establishing a sense of community, providing emotional support, communicating and collaborating with faculty, role modeling, and establishing an environment that facilitates diversity. The competency model supports the notion that a set of competencies, different from those utilized for traditional housing paraprofessional positions, is needed for paraprofessionals in residential college or living/learning programs to support their students’ learning.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It may appear obvious that the American college and university should serve as a center of “learning.” However, a review of the historical focus of higher education would reveal other priorities. These priorities include research and teaching in academic areas and personal development in the out of class lives of students. While these are certainly worthy pursuits, contemporary pressures on the university are driving a new emphasis on learning and, with it, changes in the traditional roles of faculty and staff.

Many contemporary institutions of higher education are pursuing and developing initiatives which will add another dimension and/or shift the focus to “learning.” It is important to note that this pursuit of a more “learner centered” campus is not just a movement for those in the classroom; the movement requires other areas of campus life to contribute as well. In fact, in the arena of student affairs, and particularly student housing, administrators are responding to the call to place “learning” at the center of their activities. Some might argue that this is nothing new and that the traditional role of student affairs has always been about “learning.” Kuh (1994) reminds us that, “student affairs professionals—when they are doing their jobs well, are often invisible, working behind the scenes to create settings in which students take responsibility for their own lives and seize learning opportunities inherent in residential settings” (Kuh, 1994, p. 116).

The type of learning Kuh (1994) describes, which serves as the thrust of Student Affairs work, relates most strongly to the student’s personnel development. The wide variety of out of class activities and experiences provide a solid framework for this learning. However, the new learning paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995) calls for learning that is holistic and seamless. Under this paradigm, “classroom” learning is supported by out of class experiences and vice versa.
Providing seamless learning experiences is transformational for the campus requiring changes in policies, processes, organizational structures, and personnel. Learner centered approaches may require changes in classroom methods for faculty. Examples include integration of courses or providing application to the out of class lives of students. At the same time, student affairs practitioners can no longer rely only on the theories and models of student development which once supported their practices. If they are now expected to be facilitators of learning, they must practice and have preparation for new methods and models which suggest a means for linking the curriculum to “life.” Moreover, student affairs practitioners must not only inspire learning, they must also design environments and experiences which link out of class experiences to the curriculum.

One of the most important environmental design elements is the framework provided for students’ interaction with peers. The importance of peers to the growth and development of students has had widespread recognition for personal development. In fact, the recognition of the potential of peers has led to an increasing use of paraprofessionals on campus. Currently, paraprofessional staff members serve in a variety of campus roles including, and perhaps most prominently, the role of the paraprofessional, most often referred to as the Resident Assistant (R.A.) in residence halls. The paraprofessional is a critical component in most housing departments and on campus because these students have potential to influence the lives of many other students.

While persons in the paraprofessional role have been able to make use of research, which highlights the influence of peers on the personal and social development of students, a growing body of research indicates that peers can also provide a positive influence on the academic development of students.
As an increasing number of colleges and universities are moving toward a learning paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995), they are finding that the concept of living/learning environments and/or residential colleges provides great potential for supporting seamless learning. These residential college initiatives raise interesting questions for housing staff roles including that of the paraprofessional. The importance of academic peer influence suggests that this student-staff position may have greater potential and use for supporting integrated learning. However, as with any personnel position, its value can only reach fruition if the “potential” is converted to clearly articulated competencies and skills which can then be used as a basis for training and supervision. Unfortunately, there is a lack of knowledge and research in this regard.

This study, therefore, identified the competencies needed for paraprofessionals serving in residential colleges or living/learning programs. In fact, because living/learning programs and residential colleges are a national movement, the study sought to identify these competencies on a national level.

In order to provide a framework for the study, historical and background information is provided regarding driving forces behind the “learning” movement; the trend towards living/learning programs; and historical and contemporary descriptions of residential colleges. Background information is also provided regarding historical models and theories, which currently support the use and preparation of paraprofessionals. The purpose of the background information is to provide a context for the paraprofessional position as it currently is.

In order to better understand the needed enhancements to the paraprofessional role, the literature review explored the research regarding the impact of living/learning programs and that of peer influences. It will review literature which identifies current R.A. roles, qualities, competencies and training programs.
The results of the literature review highlighted the need for new research to support the development of new competencies in keeping with new expectations and needs.

**Rationale for the Study**

A review of the history of higher education approaches to instruction and learning is helpful for understanding the contextual changes and institutional priorities driving changes in student affairs and student housing which are, in turn, driving changes in the paraprofessional position.

The field of student affairs, often referred to as “student personnel” developed as the separation of students’ academic and non-academic lives became more pronounced. Originally basing their practices on the idea of *in loco parentis* (in the place of parents), the field later anchored itself in psychosocial theory adopting a “developmental” approach to practices, programs and policies. The developmental approach emphasizes the development of the whole student.

The “developmental” approach continues to influence student affairs practices. Similarly, the framework for the collegiate experience continues to separately address the student’s academic and personal growth. However, a reform movement is now underway which calls for colleges and universities to focus on “learning” as an outcome. This reform movement is driven, in part, by desires for a greater sense of campus community and stronger evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes.

The renewed focus on “learning” requires academicians to shift their focus from “instruction” to “learning”. Similarly, student affairs is asked to shift its focus from “personal development” to learning. The two areas are then encouraged to integrate efforts to focus on the holistic experience of “seamless learning.” The bifurcation of the students’ academic experience which was solidified in the 1960’s, served as the
predominate model until the 1990’s when, the residential college or living/learning movement began to capture the attention of college campuses. However, as Ryan (1995) declared, “The Collegiate Way”, it seems, it beckoning again” (p. 8).

In order to meet the challenges presented by an integrated approach, Student Affairs must respond by demonstrating an ability to contribute to student learning. Within the field of student affairs, on campus housing presents one of the most promising venues for integrating experiences and supporting learning. Some critics suggest campus residences have long held potential for impacting the educational experience but have failed to pursue it.

Colleges and universities are now mining this potential by returning to and developing an old idea—the residential college. Today’s residential colleges reflect the model of college housing originally developed at Oxford and Cambridge in England and later in the colonial college.

In a residential college, students engage in a cohort experience. In the more traditional college experience, students go to class with different people from those with whom they live in close proximity. In contrast, in the residential college there is a shared curriculum component and greater involvement with faculty. There may also be a greater effort to connect residence hall programs and policies to the specific curriculum component.

Responding to the call to emphasize learning through the development of residential colleges and living learning programs is requiring housing departments to examine all aspects of their operations from facilities to programming to staffing. “With a shift to the learning paradigm comes a change in roles for virtually all college employees” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 24).
A number of professional staff roles become important to the residential college experience in college housing but so do student staff members. The movement towards living/learning programs is expanding the use of and opportunities for paraprofessionals. “The residential component also means more opportunities for upper division students, second and third generation learning communities participants to be involved with new cohorts of learning communities student” (Shapiro & Levine, 1999, p. 33).

In fact, student staff members may have equal or more potential for several reasons. The first reason relates to sheer numbers. Housing programs utilize more students in paraprofessional roles than most other campus agencies. (Winston, Ullom & Werring, 1984) The second reason relates to their peer influence. The importance of peer influences to the learning process dictates that one of the most important staffing positions is that of the Resident Assistant (Upcraft & Pilato, 1982, p. 324).

The role of the R.A. has long standing use in college housing systems. According to Winston & Anchors (1993), the “first use of student staff members in residential life programs cannot be established precisely but probably occurred during the colonial period” (p. 316). As the faculty role in the out-of-class lives of students and in living environments diminished in the 19th century, the student staff role increased. (Upcraft, 1982) “However, faculty were slowly being replaced by other students, so that by the twentieth century, employing students to supervise students was a primary way of enforcing rules and regulations and carrying out colleges character building mission” (Upcraft, 1982, p. 3).

Today, the paraprofessional is typically an upper-class student who resides on a floor or in a house and maintains responsibilities in the areas of administration, policy enforcement, counseling and programming. The quality and performance of the paraprofessional staff is generally believed to reflect the values, strategy and theoretical
foundations of any housing department. “Housing directors and student personnel administrators generally agree that the quality of residential life is directly related to the character and quality of the residential life staff (R.A.s)” (Posner & Brodsky, 1993, p. 300).

Paraprofessionals are important both because of their peer relationship and also because they often interact with their fellow students more than do student affairs professionals. Sifford (1950) contends they are the most important “link in the whole chain” of university to student. Because paraprofessionals maintain such a “weighty” (Boyer, 1987) responsibility for a floor, “house” or area, their role in creating an educational environment becomes critical (Upcraft & Pilato, 1982). Paraprofessionals fill the void left by the distance college administrators and faculty often have from students (Boyer, 1987).

Unfortunately, housing programs may not be fully benefiting from the important contribution the paraprofessional position could make to learning communities such as residential colleges. Schroeder (1994) contends that few residential life programs have been designed to take full advantage of all that is known about the centrality of peer influence. “Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons for this neglect reflects traditional housing staff assumptions about students and learning” (Schroeder, 1994, p. 183). Schroeder (1994) goes on to present the first call for modification to the paraprofessional role. “The development and supervision of resident assistants also stress the obligation to focus on individual student development. Perhaps their title should be changed to community development assistant and their role changed to that of facilitators of group development” (Schroeder, 1994, p. 184).

Schroeder and Mable (1994) sound a similar call for housing staff to re-align their roles in keeping with a change in higher education’s emphasis. They contend that
housing staff must begin to make student learning and development a priority. In order to do so, they will have to move away from the idea that the acquisition of knowledge and development of intellectual skills can only occur in the classroom (Schroeder & Mable, 1994, p. 301). “We must be willing to challenge our prevailing assumptions about our roles and purpose and focus our energy on the primary goal of higher education, promoting student learning” (Schroeder & Mable, 1994).

If roles are to change in regards to the R.A. position, then so too must training and preparation programs and the competencies upon which they are built. Training has expanded in general recently (Delworth, 1978) for paraprofessionals including R.A.s. “More extensive use of paraprofessionals in student services has also added to the need for training programs. In many situations, paraprofessionals are provided with extensive pre-service training as well as regular in-service programs” (Delworth, 1978, p. 2). Delworth (1978) goes on to affirm that student staff members need certain kinds of knowledge skills and attitudes.

A more specific review of R.A. training programs and competency sets would reveal their consistency with the student development model. Utilization of this model was completely appropriate when the developmental approach guided student affairs values, approaches, and work. But the call for and now movement toward strategies that emphasize holistic learning should dictate a change in training for R.A.s, which, in turn, requires identifying new competencies.

For living/learning programs to be successful, student affairs needs to be willing to re-examine roles and develop relevant competencies. “Frequently, position expectations are uncritically adopted year after year without regard to changing student populations, staff interests and expertise, and institutional or departmental goals” (Winston & Fitch, 1993, p. 319). Such may be the situation as it relates to the R.A. role.
where competencies have not been established to advance the position’s potential to contribute to the integrated learning environment.

While the R.A. position has come into focus as a part of the re-defined mission of student affairs divisions on many large campuses (Shapiro & Levine, 1999), there appears to be a lack of research as to how the re-defined mission translates into a re-defined role and a new or enhanced set of competencies.

**Problem Statement**

Information and research exists which can support the design, development and operation of residential colleges. For example, one can establish that there is a reform movement on college campuses and within college student housing which re-positions “learning” as a priority for the institution. Furthermore, one can establish that this movement finds answers in the re-development of the historically established concept of a residential college. Information exists which discusses the potential positive impact of such programs. Information also exists which touches on the programs, policies and personnel and changes needed therein to support such programs.

Running parallel to this body of information is research which confirms the importance of peers to the academic and social development of students and the importance of the paraprofessional position to the housing program.

What is missing is the link between the two tracks of research and/or literature. How can or does the paraprofessional role support a Residential College or Living/Learning Community? Moreover, while there is literature addressing the competency and/or training needs of faculty, professional and graduate staff, a lack of research remains regarding the paraprofessional role in this new environment and the competencies required.
Purpose of the Study

To assist answering the gap in literature, the purpose of this study was to identify a set of competencies required for paraprofessionals in residential colleges or living/learning programs. Most paraprofessional training programs are based on student development models and theory. While these models continue to have relevancy, they may be incomplete in programs where paraprofessionals are also expected to be facilitators of learning.

Delineation of the Research Problem

This research study is bordered by several limitations. Although the literature is weak in terms of the identification of competencies for paraprofessionals in general, this study focused on the identification of competencies for paraprofessionals in residential colleges or living/learning programs only. Furthermore, although these competencies should be utilized as a basis for selection, training, education, and supervision, the study does not explore possibilities in those areas. Similarly, the research study did not focus on graduate or professional positions though research is needed in these areas as well.

Statement of the Research Question

The hypothesis for this study was that, for paraprofessionals in residential colleges or living/learning programs, different competencies are required than those which have traditionally been established for the R.A. position. These competencies are required due to the academic nature of the living environment.

Therefore, the research question for the study was “what competencies are required for paraprofessionals in residential colleges or living/learning programs to be successful?” Success for the paraprofessional in the residential college or LLC entails effectively supporting their residents learning or establishing a community which focuses on learning.
**Importance of the Study**

This study provides important information for a number of reasons. First, the paraprofessional position remains an important staff role both in light of the literature affirming the importance of peer influence and from the viewpoint of practicality (it would be impossible to provide the ratio of professional staff to students required).

Research (Murray, et al, 1999) has demonstrated that training programs can positively influence paraprofessional performance. Establishing a set of national competencies provides housing programs important primary information for developing training programs that enhance the paraprofessional’s performance.

It then follows that, because the paraprofessional role is so important to the overall environment, enhanced paraprofessional performance will offer institutions the means to enhance the overall performance of the residential college.

Second, the information gained through this study contributes to the overall need for research which assists universities in transforming and/or developing the infrastructure required to support these programs.

**Definition of Terms**

Paraprofessional-For the purposes of this study, typically an upper-class student with responsibility for administration, policy enforcement, counseling, and policy enforcement for a hall, floor, or area in college student housing. Typically termed a Resident Assistant or R.A.

Residential College or Living/Learning Program-On campus living environment in which students share a curriculum experience and which also involves the presence of live in faculty and/or faculty offices.

Traditional Residence Hall-Entire building or area within a building housing undergraduate or graduate college students. In addition to providing “house”
accommodations, traditional residence halls are typically characterized by the presence of a full time staff member (often with a master’s degree in college student personnel). Traditional residence halls encourage development of community and offer a wide variety of programs often based on the wellness model of programming.

**Summary**

At many institutions, college student housing is aligning itself with university movements to facilitate holistic learning. In the ideas of the residential college and living/learning program they are finding an effective means for integrating student’s curricular and co-curricular experiences, which, in turn, supports learning.

As university administrators design the residential college and living/learning environments to maximize learning potential, the paraprofessional role presents rich opportunities for supporting the intent of the residential college. Said differently, the paraprofessional has the potential to enhance the college’s overall performance.

The paraprofessional’s greatest contribution comes when his or her own performance is maximized. Performance is always enhanced by the establishment of clear expectations and a well-designed job role. To do that, one must begin by answering the question, “what does a paraprofessional in a residential college or living/learning program need to be able to do?” The set of competencies derived from answers to this question will lay the foundation for education, training, and supervision.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several sets of literature suggest that the paraprofessional position has a contribution to make to the residential college / living learning movement if designed correctly. These research sets first suggest that colleges and universities are adopting an expanded emphasis on learning. They also support the concept that residence halls are already environments for learning, that “environment” is important to learning and that the paraprofessional plays a critical role in the environment. Moreover, while research which would establish competencies for paraprofessionals in residential college or living/learning environments has not been completed, there is research, which indirectly relates to the question.

Literature framing the question of paraprofessional competencies can be divided into two categories: that which addresses the movement towards living learning and/or residential colleges as well as the various roles in the environment. And, experience and literature related to existing paraprofessional competencies and training. A review of this research and literature will facilitate an understanding of the need for the development of a national set of competencies.

History of Student Affairs

In their early years, American colleges provided integrated learning environments “under the supervision of the same mentors” (Caple, 1996). As colleges and universities evolved in America the “integrated” environment dissolved as the co-curricular and curricular came under the responsibility of different areas in the university. Each area developed its own values and focus. Professional roles and approaches to work were also developed accordingly.
For the student affairs professional, the new emphasis on learning is not a complete departure from traditional student affairs core values. However, it may involve, according to Rhoads and Black (1995), “reconceptualizing” the work. They outline the evolution in the foundations of student affairs work. The field’s first foundational theories revolved around the concept of “in loco parentis” (Rhoads and Black, 1995). The idea behind “in loco parentis” is that when a parent brings their student to college, university officials will stand in the parent’s place. Under in loco parentis the emphasis is on student conformity to social custom (Rhoads and Black, 1995).

Student affairs professionals at many institutions began to move away from the idea of “in loco parentis,” primarily in the 1970’s, as a result of campus unrest. The field then adopted a new set of theories and approaches identified as “developmental” (Boland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996; Rhoads & Black, 1995; Winston et al, 1984). Developmental theory is derived from psychosocial theory (Rhoads and Black, 1995; Winston et al, 1984). For the student affairs practitioner, a developmental approach means educating the whole person; understanding the developmental sequences students experience and how they grow and change; and creating opportunities and conditions that encourage their development and realization of their full potential (Winston et al, 1984; Evans, 2001). Student development theory not only replaced “in loco parentis”, it redefined the student-college staff relationship and remains the core theory of the profession today (Rhoads and Black, 1995; Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Rhoads and Black (1995) go on to identify a third theory base which came on top of developmental theory called “critical cultural” (Rhoads and Black, 1995). From this perspective, the goal is for students to develop a critical consciousness. “The role of student affairs practitioner is to work alongside students and other faculty and staff to transform college and university settings…” (Rhoads and Black, 1995, p. 420).
Once again, all three of these models and theory bases have been pursued by the field most widely known as student affairs. It was a recognition of the need to support student’s lives outside the classroom that gave rise to the field of student affairs (Winston & Creamer, 1997). The result on most campuses has been a clear divide between the in and out of classroom lives of students and ensuing separate roles for college staff and faculty. “On most campuses, faculty accept responsibility for cognitive development through the curriculum; student affairs educators accept responsibility for psychosocial and character development through student services and the co-curriculum; and students are left with the responsibility of achieving a unified education by garnering what they can from the curriculum, students services and elsewhere in their lives” (Creamer & Shelton, 1988).

Reform Movement

A bifurcated approach to student life and learning may have served as the prevailing approach in institutions in the past. However, re-thinking priorities within higher education is at the heart of a reform movement, a movement mounted in response to internal and external pressures which challenge the climate of higher education (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Shapiro and Levine (1999) characterize the pressures as “a growing public dissatisfaction with the attention faculty give to undergraduate learning.” In other words, at colleges and universities with institutional missions which include both teaching and research, the concern is that research receives the greater focus to the detriment of the undergraduate learning experience.

Similarly, Barr and Tagg (1995) characterize the changes as a “paradigm shift.” The old paradigm, they state, placed emphasis on instruction. “A college is an institution that exists to provide instruction”(Barr & Tagg, 1995, p.13). The new paradigm, they contend, places emphasis on learning. “Subtly but profoundly we are shifting to a new
paradigm: A college is an institution that exists to produce learning” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p.13).

Barr and Tagg (1995) contend this paradigm shift changes the dynamics on the campus and its fundamental mission. They suggest that under the instructional paradigm, the college’s aim is to deliver knowledge from faculty member to student. “In the learning paradigm, on the other hand, a college’s purpose is not to transfer knowledge but to create environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p.15).

The change in purpose brings with it a change in the role of staff. According to Barr & Tagg (1995) under the “instructional paradigm”, “staff serve/support faculty and the process of instruction.” Whereas under the “learning paradigm,” “all staff are educators who produce student learning and success.”

Drivers of the Reform Movement

In addition to dissatisfaction with the undergraduate experience, there are other drivers of reform including a desire for more community and collegiality on the college campus (Alexander, 1998, Ryan, 1995). “If there was a need to revive a sense of community in the universities of the 1920’s, there is an even greater need to do so in the much larger, more disparate, and certainly more impersonal institutions of the higher learning today” (Ryan, 1995, p.12). Still other reasons include an interest “by larger universities to create smaller, more successful learning communities; attempts by prestigious private institutions to gain a marketing advantage in tight economic times; and efforts by state colleges to offer safe, academically oriented, compact communities in a non-urban setting to prospective students from metropolitan areas” (Smith, 1994, p.259).
Another external force for change comes from higher education’s constituents who call for a greater emphasis on learning. “Compounding the fiscal challenges facing higher education, the academy is also confronted with a resounding and recurring call from students, families and other important constituents including state legislators, accreditation boards, and the public in general---to increase campus opportunities for student learning and to demonstrate learning outcomes” (Ender, Newton, & Caple, 1996, p. 5).

Regardless of the reason for change or reform, colleges and universities appear to be focusing on the idea that the answer, in part, may lie in an emphasis on learning in all aspects of the student’s life. It appears that the most beneficial learning experiences come from complimentary academic and student life practices (Kuh, 1994). Not only can the integration of these important experiences provide the most enhanced learning it may also increase the students’ overall satisfaction (Light, 2001). Brown (1997) affirms that integration is necessary if higher education really desires to be a “learning organization.” “Fifth, we would set as the highest priority for institutional strength the designing of structures that require learning across many disciplines, or departments or boundaries” (Brown, 1997, p. 9).

**The Need for Student Affairs to Respond and Support the Reform Movement**

Like the institution in general, Student Affairs is being called to refocus its mission and purpose to support integrated experiences. The criticism is that the student development model, so characteristic of many programs, is too narrowly focused to encompass academic learning. “Unfortunately, the student development model failed to address the university’s central educational mission and its cardinal values which embody intellectual and academic development” (Boland et al, 1996, p. 218.).
Other criticism suggests that Student Affairs may not be responding quickly enough. Schroeder (1996) says that higher education is in a major transformation with reports citing the need to connect undergraduate experience with student learning. He maintains though reform has been urged, “the student affairs field has not fully responded to the call by re-emphasizing student learning and personal development as primary goals” (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996, p.115).

Similarly, Ender et al. (1996) say that student affairs must demonstrate its ability to contribute to learning by changing the foundational model. They describe three philosophical models for student services. The models highlight both the “as is” and “should be” of student affairs. The first, they describe as the “Student Services Model.” “Under this model, the primary purpose of student services is to support the academic mission of the institution by providing the numerous adjunct services” (Ender et al., 1996, p. 8). Among those services named, was housing. Ender et al. (1996) identify the second model as the “Student Development Model.” Under this model, student affairs practitioners “focus on the developmental phases or tasks that students experience as they pursue a college education” (Ender et al., 1996, p. 8). The third model, they identify as the “Student Learning Model.” According to Ender et al. (1996), this is the model student affairs practitioners must now adopt in order to fully support and participate in the campus wide movement for learning. Ender et al. (1996) contend this model “places its emphasis on shared efforts with other educators, faculty and administrators to achieve a more integrated or seamless experience” (Ender et al., 1996).

What does “seamless learning” experience mean in practice? On a specific level, Kuh (1996) provides an excellent example: the orientation programs, which he states place too much emphasis a “social experience” over an “ethos of learning.”
In the face of the criticism, new more comprehensive models are emerging for student affairs which provide guidance for a more comprehensive vision. They also embrace the potential of the existing forum to support the paradigm shift. In 1999, Blimling et al. developed seventeen strategies derived from “Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs.” One principle he noted was to increase the intellectual content of student affairs activities. “Student affairs educators can seize opportunities to generalize learning from a variety of out of class activities by thinking through what they want students to learn from the experiences they are structuring...” (Blimling, Whitt, & Associates, 1999, p. 189). Boland et al. (1996) echoed the idea that student affairs has a unique forum from which to contribute to both student learning and personal development.

**The Need for Residence Halls to Respond and Support the Reform Movement**

In many student affairs divisions, campus housing serves as a key department. And, like the division in which they serve, residence halls have been targeted for restructuring to support learning. In fact, as far back as the late 1970’s and beyond, authors have suggested that campus housing has an obligation to focus attention on academics and learning. Some criticism revolves around the idea that the student affairs field as a whole places too much emphasis on personal and cultural development. The result in the case of residence halls is that they have failed to “exploit” their educational potential (Astin, 1978). “Considering that dormitory residents are a kind of captive audience, administration of residence halls offers an excellent opportunity to enhance significantly the student’s total educational experience” (Astin, 1978, p. 259).

In fact, the movement towards an emphasis on learning is highlighting the potential of residence halls to be the place where the in and out of class lives of students
can be more fully integrated. To explore this potential is requiring college personnel to re-think what it means to live on campus. “One of the most pressing initial challenges—for student affairs educators and faculty alike—is to examine prevailing assumptions about the nature of the residence halls” (Schroeder, 1998, p. 7). According to advocates for specifically designing learning environments such as Blocher (1979), as far back as the 1970’s we had knowledge to support environmental design which supports learning. “What is important is that we now seem to have knowledge with which to begin to specify the conditions required within a learning environment represented by a college campus to render that environment potent in terms of the ability to produce personal and cognitive growth” (Blocher, 1978, p. 20).

A variety of authors are emphasizing what residence halls have to offer student learning. Whitt and Nuss (1994) state that where students live and with whom contributes to learning and thus residence halls can make a significant contribution to learning. Blimling and Alschuler (1996) outline the places students learn, one of which is the residence halls. Furthermore, (Kalsbeek (1994) suggests that residence halls can serve the important role of integrating agent and “bring relevance and coherence to the undergraduate experience. “

More than twenty years have passed since Ostroth (1981) predicted that residence halls would demonstrate their ability to provide an educational environment. “In the 1980’s and beyond,” he said, “it will not be enough for residence halls to merely provide basic student needs. Rather, residence halls must increasingly provide an educational environment as an integral part of the central teaching function of the college” (Ostroth, 1981, p. 65).

Despite Ostroth’s (1981) twenty-year-old prediction, there is some suggestion that even as late as the mid 1990’s, how student residence environments would respond to the
renewed emphasis on learning was still at question. “The issue of how housing and residence life professionals will respond to the challenges presented as a result of the focus on student learning remains to be seen” (Johnson & Cavins, 1996, p. 73.)

**Description of Residential Colleges**

One method for supporting the reform movement or paradigm shift may be a residential college or living/learning program. While some reformers advocate consideration of the residence hall as a classroom (Kalsbeek, 1994; Smith, 1994), the idea of living/learning communities and/or residential colleges is gaining new interest and development. The hope is that these special living programs have the potential to more fully integrate the students’ experiences and enhance community. “Successful Residential Colleges have the potential to reinvigorate higher education” (Mills, 1998, p. 239).

“Renaissance” serves as an appropriate description for the living/learning or residential college movement. Changes in housing and teaching which reflect this approach actually signal a return to the concepts of living and learning evidenced at Oxford and Cambridge in England where they most elaborately developed (Ryan, 1995). These two colleges served as the benchmark for residential colleges which developed in the United States in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s (Alexander, 1998). “The founders of Harvard, then conceived of their college as a place of both residence and instruction, and that was the model for independent colleges subsequently founded throughout the colonies and the young American nation” (Ryan, 1995, p. 14).

According to Alexander (1998), these colleges achieved early success at Harvard and Yale but there was never widespread acceptance of a residential college system. “It soon became clear, however, that they could not re-create the British system in which colleges were autonomous units of instruction” (Ryan, 1995, p. 14).
Still, there were and are pockets of use. The actual Harvard “House” system was inaugurated in the 1930’s (Sanford, 1962). The idea of the residential college was picked up again in California in the 1920’s when Claremont and Pomona colleges developed “collegiate clusters” to once again reflect the English model (Alexander, 1998).

The original Oxford/Cambridge model was that faculty and students would live and learn together (Winston & Fitch, 1993). By bringing together students and faculty for both housing and instruction, the Oxford/Cambridge model directed efforts toward the education of the whole student. This was true of the colonial colleges as well as where the faculty were concerned for the whole student. “There was unity of curriculum and extra-curriculum” (Boland et al., 1996, p. 217.)

According to Blimling and Alschuler (1996), the residential college was the “main vehicle for learning” in colonial colleges. Unfortunately, in the United States this concept was largely abandoned in developing colleges for a couple of reasons. First, the German model with its emphasis on research gained prominence in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Boland et al., 1996; Winston & Fitch, 1993). Second, according to Upcraft (1982), some colleges found that housing faculty and students together did not work and thus students began to reside in residence halls rather than “colleges.”

Residence halls witnessed further departures from the academic core of campus, and perhaps its mission, by the 1960’s. “The 1960’s brought dramatic changes to the American campus. Rules were weakened. Residence halls became coed and often were almost off limits for administrators at the college” (Boyer, 1987, p. 179).

Despite the clear departure the American college took from the residential college model, its description, though hundreds of years old, matches well with the needs of the new “learning environment.” The problem for American higher education is that its
organizational infrastructure is designed to support the bifurcated approach. A change in institutional approach from instruction to learning will require changes to the university’s infrastructure including faculty and staff roles.

The Living/Learning Experience

Research which supports the importance and impact of residence halls and the potential of residential colleges places the role of the paraprofessional within the context of this greater campus wide initiative: the initiative to integrate living (out of class experiences) and learning (in class experiences). At the core of living/learning programs stands the idea that the most powerful learning experiences arise from the integration of students’ in class experiences and out of class experiences. Paraprofessionals have traditionally been trained and prepared to guide and support students "out of class” experiences during their college years. Thus, the paraprofessional role has been to develop the interpersonal relationships and program efforts which meet their fellow students’ social, community and adjustment needs as well as the students’ overall personal development.

However, changes in roles and expectations for the paraprofessional position are now occurring as a result of the movement for integrated experiences. To better understand the change in the paraprofessional position it is helpful to first understand the changing mission of college student housing and the catalysts for the movement toward integrated living/learning environments.

Impact of Living in the Residence Halls

According to Ryan (1995), the interrelated aims of “ethics, community, citizenship, instruction, co-curricular programming, and peer learning” have a home in campus housing. These are not necessarily new concepts. Furthermore, as Ryan (1995) states, “they are by no means dependent on residence. But along the way residence has
been seen, in one way or another, as a means of enhancing them” (Ryan, 1995, p.16). Said differently, living on campus has been viewed as offering opportunities for valuable impacts during the college years.

Some researchers have attempted to quantify and/or highlight more precisely the actual impacts. Therefore, the question of overall impact of living in the residence halls has served as the focus of a fair amount of research. More specific research has targeted the impact of living in the residence halls on academic performance as measured by a variety of factors. For example, Blimling (1989) engaged in a comprehensive examination of this subject when he conducted a meta-analysis of the influence of residence halls on academic performance. According to his findings, living in residence halls offers no distinguishing influence. “But, for residence halls generally, the best assessment may be that they do not exert a major influence on students academic performance compared with living at home” (Blimling, 1989, p. 306.)

In contrast, Schroeder and Griffin (1976) found a positive relationship between living in a specialized living/learning unit when the research question focused on the important indicator known as “persistence.” “Residence in this special living unit has been positively related to persistence in engineering, persistence in the residence halls, academic achievement, and differential perceptions of the living unit” (Schroeder and Griffin, 1976, p. 161).

Recent research from Astin et al. (1999) demonstrates interest in the idea of student involvement. He defines student involvement as the “amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1999). As he studied college students from this perspective, he found that living on campus provided several positive influences. First, living on campus increases student’s chances of persisting and aspiring to a graduate or professional degree (Astin, 1999). Second,
Astin (1999) found that students who live on campus are more likely than commuting students to express satisfaction with their undergraduate experience. He went on to say this is true “particularly in the areas of student friendships, faculty-student relations, institutional reputation and social life” (Astin, 1999).

**Integration of In and Out of Class Experiences**

The recent movement towards residentially based living/learning programs arose, in part, from studies regarding the benefits of integrating in and out of class experiences and its impact on learning. An example of this research comes from Springer, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nora (1995) who studied the effects of out of class experiences on students’ learning for “self-understanding.” The researchers attempted to estimate the influences of academic and out of class experiences on the orientation of students toward learning about themselves. “In this study, we sought to estimate the relative importance of students curricular, classroom, and out of class experiences on learning related attitudes and values after taking into account certain of the pre-college characteristics of new students including initial levels of interest in learning” (Springer et al., 1995, p. 6).

Springer et al’s (1995) research data comes from a small sample of students at one institution where a relatively low percentage of students lived on campus. Springer et al. (1995) found that both in class and out of class experiences made statistically “significant and unique contributions to explanations in variations in learning.” For the purposes of those developing living/learning programs, the researchers made an important second finding. They found that the two variable sets (in and out of class) might exert a slight joint effect (Spring et al, 1995, p. 15). To sum up the importance of this finding they write, “This study offers further evidence supporting the long held theory that college’s effects on student learning are holistic—that students’ learning is shaped both by formal and class room experiences and out of class ones” (Springer et al., 1995, p.15). Springer
et al.’s (1995) recommendation, based on this research, supports programs such as residential colleges, which are designed to integrate experiences.

Springer et al. (1995) say the holistic nature of college learning suggests the need for closer collaboration between academic and student affairs in “delivery of educational programs and services” (Spring et al, 1995, p. 16).

In 1980, Pacarella and Terenzini confirmed that integrated environments have an indirect affect. According to the findings of these two researchers, the power of integrated environments is in the framework they provide for developing interpersonal relationships. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) studied the impact of living in a specially designed living/learning environment on interpersonal relationships (student-peer, student-faculty); the main and interaction effects of this special living arrangement on “a range of freshmen year outcomes”; and, the extent to which the “structural or organizational influences” of the living arrangement are mediated by the distinctive quality of the interpersonal relationships. “Because the LLR (Living Learning Residence) was designed to foster an environment that facilitated the growth of a distinctive, influential, interpersonal relationships among students and, in particular, between students and faculty, it was expected that participation in the LLR would be positively associated with a number of desirable outcomes” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, p. 346)

Based on the results of Pascarella & Terenzini’s study, they concluded that the actual structural arrangements in college residence had minimal, if any, direct influence on educational outcomes. Instead, what appears to be important is the framework living/learning residences provide for the development of interpersonal relationships and the value those relationships, in turn, have for influencing educational outcomes. “Rather, this investigation suggests that the structural arrangements of experimental
undergraduate living-learning residences provide an organizational context in which a distinctive set of influential relationships with faculty and peers is more likely to develop. It is the quality of these interpersonal relationships with the agents of socialization that, in turn, has a direct mediating influence on college outcomes” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1980, p. 352).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) go on to call for research which links organizational characteristics to patterns of social interaction fostered to specified organizational outcomes. Their recommendation has direct relevance for those establishing roles in the residential college and developing positions including the paraprofessional position. “By providing greater understanding of the social-psychological basis for the associations found between residence arrangement and student development, such investigations would permit administrations to be more purposeful and informed in the organizational design of college residences” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, p. 352)

A final study by Pike (1999) supports the overall value of living/learning environments. Pike (1999) studied the educational gains that might emerge from living in an RLC (residential learning community) versus a traditional residence hall. His findings bode well for living/learning communities. For example, Pike (1999) found that students in RLC’s demonstrated higher levels of “involvement, interaction, integration.” He also found that RLC’s had an indirect positive influence on student learning and intellectual development.

**The Importance of the Paraprofessional Position**

If colleges and universities continue to pursue integrated living/learning environments, what contribution can staff and, in particular, paraprofessionals make to the environment? In other words, how important is the paraprofessional role to the idea
of an integrated approach to learning? The answer, in part, relates to the frequent, almost dominant, interaction with peers which takes place during the college years. As the following literature demonstrates, peers are key to the learning process. Recognition of this fact has led to the prolific use of peers on campus including in the paraprofessional position. Not only does the literature reflect an increased use of peers, it suggests peer roles are changing. It, therefore, becomes important for paraprofessional training preparation programs to align themselves with the changes in the roles these student-peers, most particularly those that paraprofessional are playing in housing.

**The Influence of Peers**

Several research studies and pieces of literature confirm the importance of peers for the overall collegiate experience. For example, Ryan (1995) contends that the relationship of peers to learning is integral to various aspects of learning. “Implicit in many of these goals of collegiate life is the notion that students have much to learn, sometimes, even the most to learn---from one another” (Ryan, 1995, p. 115).

The influence of peers noticeably appears at the pre-collegiate level. Astin’s (1999) research at the pre-collegiate level links peer influence to commitment to academic work. He maintains that at the pre-collegiate level, a student’s commitment to academic work can be “strongly influenced by peers.” “It would be useful to determine whether similar relationships exist at the post secondary level and, in particular, can be consciously used to enhance student involvement in the learning process” (Astin, 1999, p. 528).

On the collegiate level, Springer et al.’s (1995) research highlighted the role of interpersonal relationships in supporting as it relates to self-understanding. “The evidence in this study further suggests that administrators, faculty members & student
peers have important roles in shaping the interests students have in learning” (Spring et al., 1995, p. 17).

Likewise, Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) relate peer relationships to socialization. They maintain that, on the collegiate level, peers (and faculty) play an important role in the socialization of students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

Overall, Kuh’s (1994, 1996) research has shown that interpersonal relationships, including the peer relationship, are key to learning. In 1994, he drew a direct linkage between peers and learning when he wrote, “peers are the most influential group on campus in terms of student learning” (Kuh, 1994, p. 123). Later in 1996, he noted that the “most powerful source of influence on student learning appears to be students’ interpersonal interactions, whether peers or faculty (and, one suspects, staff members) (Kuh, 1996, p. 158).

Kuh (1995) also studied “out of class experiences” and their association with student learning and personal development. His research produced four tentative conclusions about “the relationships between various kinds of out-of class experiences and learning and personal development outcomes” (p. 145). One of these “out of class experiences” was the peer relationship. He found that peers provided critical influence in several areas. “Peers were the single most important influence in the areas of Humanitarianism, Interpersonal Competence, and Cognitive Complexity, especially for traditional age students who live in residences” (Kuh, 1995, p. 146).

Schroeder and Griffin (1979) found that peers specifically played a role in the retention of students to an Engineering living/learning center. In light of this finding, they lamented the fact that peer influence is often left to chance. “That their impact on students is left mainly to chance is particularly unfortunate since research has consistently demonstrated that peer group influences, and not formal academic experiences, are
directly responsible for behavioral change in the majority of college students” (Schroeder and Griffin, 1976, p. 161). If, as this research suggests, peers can influence self-understanding, humanity, interpersonal competence, cognitive complexity, and retention, it becomes essential to maximize the potential of the peer relationships within living/learning environments such as residential colleges.

**Use of Peers as Paraprofessionals**

Although the importance of peers has been stressed recently in regards to learning, it is the long-standing recognition of their importance that has sustained the development and use of peers as paraprofessionals on college campuses for many years. “A strong rationale for students functioning as paraprofessionals is the powerful impact peers have on one another” (Ender, 1983, p. 325). In fact, paraprofessionals are utilized in areas throughout campus including the residence halls, career centers and learning centers (Caple, 1996).

In 1975, Zunker sought to identify trends in the use of college students as paraprofessionals and also to identify where on campus they were utilized. Zunker (1975) then compared these results with a study conducted in 1963. Zunker (1975) found that residence halls provide the most pervasive use of undergraduates as paraprofessionals. He also found that, in institutions of with enrollment over 8,000, the majority provided over 20 hours of training to these undergraduates. Finally, he reported that faculty seemed supportive of the paraprofessionals use. “The respondents reported very little negative reaction from faculty members to student paraprofessionals” (Zunker, 1975). This is an important finding for residential colleges where faculty experience a higher level of involvement.

A study by Carns and Carns (1993) also indicated that the use of paraprofessionals was rising. They conducted a study to compare the use of students as
paraprofessionals in 1992 versus the study conducted by Zunker (1975). They not only discovered an increase in the use of undergraduates since 1974, they found the roles are changing. “In addition to the overall increase in the use of undergraduates as paraprofessionals, they way in which the paraprofessionals are working with other students is changing” (Carns & Carns, 1993, p. 362).

Carns and Carns (1993) went on to note that the changes, in part, relate to group work. They acknowledged that paraprofessionals are now working more with groups than individuals. “The implications are that training and supervision should include and emphasize group dynamics and effective utilization of group process” (Carns & Carns, 1993, p. 362). The researchers also found that, in terms of activities conducted by paraprofessionals, they saw an increase in the amount of educational program planning. Although this study was conducted among all categories of paraprofessionals on campus, residence hall personnel generally make up the largest category within that number.

Overall, the study by Carns and Carns (1993) indicated a recognition of the importance of paraprofessionals. “The fact that this study documents an increase in the reported use of paraprofessionals suggests that undergraduate paraprofessionals play a significant role in student development programs and ultimately in the lives of individual students, both the paraprofessionals and those of the student consumers” (Carns & Carns, 1993, p. 362).

With specific regard to the paraprofessional position in housing, it would appear that it is not only university administrators and faculty who have some sense that the peer role is important, the paraprofessional’s themselves appear to have confidence in their ability to “make a difference” according to a study by Denzine and Anderson (1999). They conducted a study, which, among other items, considered the “nature and structure of self-efficacy for current R.A.’s.” Denzine and Anderson (1999) found that the
“majority of R.A.’s in this sample had a positive sense of self-efficacy regarding their ability to positively influence the development of students” (Denzine & Anderson, 1999, p. 254).

**Peer Staff Positions in Living/Learning Programs**

Bringing together the concepts behind these bodies of research (impact of living/learning environments, importance of peers and use of paraprofessionals) we find descriptions but not research. The role that peers play in actually facilitating academic success is addressed through descriptions of programs at specific institutions. These descriptions indicate that paraprofessionals have a variety of roles and responsibilities. For example, Terenzini et al. (1996) describe the FIG (Freshmen Interest Group) program at the University of Missouri. In doing so, they highlight the collaborative role of peers. “Peer advisors, community advisors (resident assistants), and hall directors work collaboratively with faculty and associate deans to integrate various educational experiences” (Terenzini et al., 1996, p. 180). In fact, at the University of Missouri, peer advisors assist in teaching the "pro seminar class," a for credit course which is a requirement of the program.

Meanwhile, R.A.s in the Collins Living/Learning Center at the University of Indiana perform duties directly related to the living/learning nature of the program (Winston et al., 1984). According to Winston et al. (1984) R.A.s in this program carry out the traditional duties of R.A.s but with an added dimension and a different name, Resident Fellow (RF). “In addition the RF fulfills a number of group advising roles, academic advising functions, and tutoring” (Winston et al., 1984, p. 607) The RF’s duties include advising three Living Learning Center clubs; acting as a tutor for students in their academic major; organizing one center and two academic programs; and participating in the center’s one-hour credit course, “Residential Learning Workshop.”
Additional information regarding the use of paraprofessionals in living/learning environments comes from Schroeder and Griffin (1976) who studied this type of environment designed for engineering students. The special nature of this program was built into the selection process for R.A.s “Specific staffing considerations were employed in selecting resident advisors for the living-learning center. Since entering engineering students must adjust rapidly to the demands of their curricula, outstanding upper-class engineering students were selected as resident advisors” (Schroeder and Griffin, 1976, p. 160). In short, the R.A.s were selected, in part, for their commitment to the field of engineering, their academic achievement, skill in dealing with people, and their enthusiasm for living in the new center (Schroeder and Griffin, 1976).

The Paraprofessional’s Role in Advancing Learning

These descriptions of paraprofessional roles provide some insight as to what paraprofessional’s can do and should do. Unfortunately, there remains a lack of higher definition as to what paraprofessional’s can and should do to facilitate the core concept of living/learning programs, which is “learning.” While there is some research which specifically addresses this topic, understanding can be enhanced by first examining how and what living/learning communities do to advance learning.

What Residence Halls Should Do to Advance Learning

In tandem with the literature which supports the importance of peers to the learning process, literature also exists which describes learning. Equally as important, this literature offers strategies for fostering learning in the residence hall environment.

For example, Strange and Banning (2001) link Maslow’s theory to learning. They categorize Maslow’s theory as a model of human development and motivation which emphasizes the importance of meeting basic needs before “self actualization can occur.” “Ultimately the goal of learning might be seen as the merging of personal identity,
values, beliefs, knowledge and skills, and interests toward a purposeful end point of fulfillment and human actualization” (Strange & Banning, 2001 p. 108).

Kuh (1994) moves the concept of learning to a more strategic level emphasizing the importance of learning styles. He stresses the importance of linking strategy, activities and learning styles. “Active, collaborative learning strategies encourage students to develop more time and energy to educationally purposeful activities and result in higher rates of learning. Similarly, institutional agents who match instructional approaches with student learning styles also produce higher rates of learning” (Kuh, 1994, p. 113).

Emphasizing a point that has high relevancy for residential college or living learning programs, Kuh (1994) goes on to stress that, in order to create “the conditions that foster student learning,” all “institutional agents” must have specific knowledge in the following areas. First, he says they must know “how’ students learn. Second, Kuh (1994) writes that institutional agents must become “familiar with the out of class conditions that encourage students to take advantage of learning and personal development opportunities” (p. 117).

Keeping the focus on understanding learning styles, the conditions outlined by Kuh (1994) are directed toward personnel in various roles within the institution. However, Kuh also provides specific direction first to Student Affairs and second to those working in the residence halls. In regards to those in Student Affairs, he writes, “If student affairs professionals are to more fully realize their espoused educator function, they must use effective teaching techniques such as active learning strategies that take into account such student characteristics as learning styles, social class, and culture of orientation” (Kuh, 1994, p. 124).
In regards to the residence halls, Kuh (1994) provides three specific applications for “effective teaching approaches.” First, he says that students have to be taught how to take advantage of learning resources. Second, residence hall staff should utilize active, collaborative learning strategies that encourage students to apply what they are studying in class to their out of class lives. Finally, he suggests that students should be taught how to “disagree while aspiring to higher ground.”

Pike (1999) suggests that residence halls can assist “learning” by providing opportunities for “integration.” He recognizes that the need for integration in learning must be paired with differentiation. He refers to Chickering’s (1993) model which holds that student learning and intellectual development requires both ‘integration’ and “differentiation.” “Differentiation can be fostered by introducing students to a variety of academic disciplines supplementing academic content with rich out of class experiences and providing students with an opportunity to interact with people different than themselves” (Pike, 1999, p. 269).

Meanwhile, Pike (1999) describes “integration” as the ability to see relationships among diverse experiences and draw on those experiences in different combinations to solve complex and varied problems.” (p. 270) In general, he says that residence halls currently provide opportunities for differentiation but not integration.

King and Magolda (1996) argue as well for “integration” in order to promote learning. However, in their model this involves blending cognitive and affective processes. “From this integrated perspective, the cognitive and affective dimensions are seen as part of one process; dimensions as seemingly distinct as knowledge construction, meaning making, and awareness of self are presumed to be integrated within the developing human being” (King & Magolda, 1994, p. 163). Presumably then, student
affairs and residence halls with their emphasis on personal development can offer opportunities for this integration.

Just as King and Magolda (1996) and Pike (1999) affirm Kuh’s (1994) call for integrated learning, Whitt, Edison, Pacarella, Nora, & Terenzini (1999) echo the need for active engagement of learners as a means for promoting learning. “The accumulated evidence of the importance—even the necessity of involvement for student learning is so strong that any efforts to foster and enhance learning (inside or outside the classroom) must incorporate plentiful opportunities for active engagement and involvement” (Whitt et al., 1999, p. 72).

On a more specific level, what then can staff in the residential environment do to promote learning? Schroeder and Mable (1994) attempt to answer this question when they offer a “mandate for action” in the book Realizing the Educational Potential of the Residence Halls. In doing so, they refer to Stamatakos’ 1991 model for the student-institution relationship. “In this model, the student is viewed as a transactive learner and staff relate to the student as a friend and mentor who encourages active involvement in a variety of educational activities and experiences. The central role of staff is to help students engage in self-managed learning with a life-centered focus” (Schroeder & Mable, 1994, p. 306).

Schroeder and Mable (1994) go on to outline 15 strategies for advancing “the residence hall curriculum.” They summarize their suggestions this way: “To enhance the academic and social success of residence hall students, recruit upper-division students to serve as peer educators. These highly trained students would be members of ‘student success teams’ that include professional staff from academic advising, career planning and placement, and the learning skills center. Peer educators would serve as mentors, providing assistance in academic and career planning, study skills enhancement, tutoring
and other support services to students on their floors” (Schroeder & Mable, 1994, p. 314-315).

An example from the University of Maryland regarding training for teaching assistants or peer leaders outlines interesting topics for training to support learning strategies in out of class environments. In fact, these topics are taken from a special course for a group of peer mentors. The course includes the following topics: “Best and worst teachers; setting goals; the purposes of education; the craft of teaching; building a framework for planning and teaching; learning styles and teaching styles; critical thinking and development theory; types of levels and questions; assignments and classroom activities; planning for instruction: consideration of goals, methods, assessment and reflection; cooperative learning: role of lead teacher, UTA, students, managing groups; classroom climate and culture considerations; evaluating and responding to student work” (Shapiro & Levine, 1999, p. 99).

**How Paraprofessionals Can Advance Learning**

Based on this information it appears that the residential environment provides both opportunities and models for stimulating learning. Literature and research also exist which suggest what the paraprofessional’s role can be. As an example, Magolda (1999) suggests that in order to engage students in active learning, paraprofessionals must themselves be engaged through training. She cites the example of the Resident Assistant Institute, which, she maintains, demonstrates the characteristics of active learning. Returning to the theme of integration, Magolda (1999) writes that, “Staff training can be a place to connect learning to one’s life” (Magolda, 1999).

The role of the paraprofessional can take on interventionist overtones as well. Through a discussion of how to design learning environments that integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences, Schroeder and Hurst (1996) outline three interventions that
support characteristics of optimal learning environments. In doing so, they describe core conditions. “A cornerstone of any learning environment is the presence of role models functioning in a specified area at a level more advanced that that of the novice learner” (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996, p. 175).

**Competencies/Training/Preparation of Paraprofessionals**

The literature clearly indicates that peers are influential, the use of them is increasing and they have an important, collaborative role to play in facilitating learning. Springer et al. (1995) outlines the specific personnel on campus who should be involved in the collaborative effort of integrating in and out of class lives. Among this group, Springer et al. (1995) specifically note faculty staff and “peers.” If it is the case that these three areas of personnel play major roles in the development and support of living learning programs, what competencies and/or preparation should be provided to those fulfilling these roles. The literature provides very little information regarding faculty and staff and virtually no guidance regarding the paraprofessional position.

**Traditional Roles of the Paraprofessional**

In order to better understand changing needs, expectations, roles and responsibilities for the paraprofessional in a living/learning community, it might be helpful to examine research which has attempted to identify and/or prioritize the roles of paraprofessionals in more traditional residence hall environments.

Winston and Fitch (1993) outline traditional roles of the paraprofessional which include being a role model, fostering community development, providing maintenance system and control, supplying leadership and governance, acting as a facilitator and helper. They also describe an area they refer to as “contributing or assisting with educational programming.” As they describe this area of responsibility it is, “(1) promotor of attendance at programs and workshops in the halls or elsewhere on campus;
(2) sponsor of programs led by faculty or staff members that are important to the living unit (3) adviser to hall government groups or hall residents interested in developing programs (4) planner and executor of programs for hall residents (these may be the packaged programs” developed by the professional staff that paraprofessionals are trained to present or original programs developed by individual paraprofessionals)” (Winston and Fitch, 1993, p. 329).

In another study, Schuh, Kuh, Gable, Friedman, Stipanovich, & Wegryn (1982) attempted to identify paraprofessional roles by soliciting the opinion of stakeholders. Interestingly, they found very little consensus. “While there is general agreement that resident assistants (R.A.s) play significant role in the general success of residential living experiences, it is difficult to find consensus regarding the specific role of the R.A.” (Schuh et al., 1982, p. 13).

The intent of the study conducted by Schuh et al. (1982) was to examine the perceptions of several different groups regarding the key responsibilities of the R.A. position. “More specifically, the study was conducted to (1) determine the RA role, perceptions of students, parents, faculty and administrators, full time professional residence life staff, and resident assistants; and (2) compare the various constituent groups’ perceptions of the RA role” (Schuh et al., 1982, p. 14)

Their findings suggested that students, as compared with other groups, perceived the R.A. responsibilities to be less important. Their parents appeared to emphasize the R.A.’s role in promoting retention as opposed to what R.A.’s can do to enhance the learning environment. Residence life staff, in contrast, considered the R.A.’s roles as a disciplinarian to be most important (Schuh et al., 1982).

However, for the faculty, the R.A.’s promotion of an academic environment rose to the top of the list for faculty. “Faculty from the campus on which this study was
conducted have expected residence life staff to maintain a living-learning atmosphere conducive to academic pursuits. Yet faculty respondents apparently did not recognize the link between such an environment and the R.A. disciplinarian role” (Schuh et al., 1982, p. 17).

**Qualities/Competencies for the Paraprofessional Position**

In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s several researchers and authors appear to have taken on the task of identifying traditional roles, competencies and training required for the R.A. position. In 1978 Rickgarn addressed the need for manuals in residence life. In doing so, the researcher also outlined the areas of R.A. responsibility which should be included in any such manual. “We present ten basic subjects or activities in which trainees are to become competent, along with the roles their competence would help fulfill:

1. paraprofessional counseling (counseling and discipline)
2. problem solving (counseling and discipline)
3. conflict resolution (counseling and discipline)
4. values clarification (counseling and programming)
5. assertiveness (counseling and discipline)
6. cross-cultural awareness (counseling and programming)
7. human sexuality (counseling and programming)
8. vocational (counseling and advising)
9. social interaction (counseling, advising and programming)
10. interpersonal relationships (all roles)” (Rickgarn, 1978, p. 53-74).

While Rickgarn (1978) offered these ten specific areas, in 1981 Schuh recommended that staff be trained in several areas, which included residence halls, institutional support services, human relations, programming/advising and team building.
In the same manner in which it is important to examine literature related to roles of paraprofessionals in traditional residence hall environments, it is important to examine literature, which attempts to identify qualities and/or competencies. A few authors have attempted to address the qualities required for the RA position. For example, Ostroth (1981) indicated that working in residential life required a broad range of competencies for professionals at all levels. “Both resident assistants and professionals will need a broad range of skills, from competencies in practical administrative detail to the more sophisticated aspects of instruction, consultation, and milieu management” (Ostroth, 1981, p. 65).

Denzine et al. (1999) also focused on the identification of “qualities.” They indicate that an R.A.’s belief system is an important characteristic. They further highlight the importance of "self-efficacy" which is a belief about one's own capabilities.

Meanwhile, Supton, and Wolf (1983) outlined three fairly narrow sets of responsibilities. First, they indicated that “good” R.A.s need to be approachable, accessible, and visible. Second, Supton, and Wolf (1983) said that R.A.s need to be sensitive to student moods, and watch for signs of stress and unhappiness. Finally, they indicated that R.A.s need to possess listening skills, referral skills and be able to identify “alternative solutions.”

Ender, Newton, and Caple (1983) outlined a set of “goals” for the R.A. position, which reflected a student development orientation. These goals include, “serving as an ombudsman in regards to campus resources, understanding developmental stage and task theory for particular age groups, and utilizing goal setting and assessment strategies in their own levels as well as in their work with others” (Ender et al., 1983, p. 327). Interestingly, despite the rarerity of living learning programs in 1983, Ender et al. put forth a set of competencies that begin to move the orientation of the paraprofessional
position away from an exclusively student development approach and into the academic realm. “The paraprofessional is expected to perform educational, advising and preventative services rather than focus on intensive counseling or remedial concerns” (Ender et al., 1983, p. 327).

Winston et al. (1984) specified seven areas of responsibility for the R.A. position. “Resident assistants fulfill seven roles: model of effective student, peer helper, information and referral agent, socializer, leader and organizer, clerical worker and limit setter, and conflict mediator” (Winston, 1984, p. 58). This group of researchers then took this set of responsibilities and translated them into a set of skills and knowledge for R.A.s:

1. understanding of the R.A. as a peer helper and other roles and responsibilities
2. goals and philosophy of the housing program
3. concept of role modeling
4. an understanding of student development theory and especially as it applies to oneself
5. interpersonal and human relations skills
6. ability to be an active listener and to give interchangeable responses
7. “an understanding of one’s own values and of values and attitudes of prominent subcultures or subpopulations within the residence halls”
8. informal needs assessment techniques and goal setting strategies
9. basic study skills
10. knowledge of campus and community agencies
11. referral techniques and other strategies (Winston et al., 1984, p. 58-59)

Regardless to which list one adheres to, the literature suggests the paraprofessional position encompasses a wide range of responsibilities. Winston and
Buckner (1984) said that the breadth of roles requires a specific set of personal characteristics. “These multiple roles and sometimes conflicting expectations (such as enforcing rules and providing counseling) make the R.A. position one that requires maturity, intelligence, skill and dedication” (Winston and Buckner, 1984 p. 431).

While all of these authors contribute to the knowledge base regarding paraprofessional qualities, Delworth and Yarris (1978) are among the few authors to address the qualities and skills needed for paraprofessionals in terms of “competencies.” They define competencies as “a combination of ‘cognitions,’ ‘affect’ and ‘skills.’” In fact, Delworth and Yarris (1979) state that the first step in the development and implementation of training is to identify competencies. “Identify the kinds of competence and expertise that are necessary for adequate performance of each task or role” (Delworth and Yarris, 1979, p. 3.)

Clearly, thinking in terms of competencies is a foundational step toward the development of the education, training and supervision, which will support the residential college’s or living/learning paraprofessional’s highest performance. The paraprofessional’s performance is important because the overall performance of the residential college or living/learning program is dependent on the performance of staff members.

**Paraprofessional Training and Preparation**

For the paraprofessional in a traditional residential environment, training is not an area of neglect. In fact, in many housing programs it is a significant annual or bi-annual event.

The need for and importance of training for paraprofessionals has been addressed by authors such as Ender (1983) and Delworth and Yarris (1978). For his part, Ender (1983) maintains that the length and quality of training, which in many cases is
significant, reflects the high expectations campus professionals have for paraprofessionals. Ender (1983) goes on to describe the two-stage training utilized at many institutions. In the first stage, pre-service, the paraprofessional is provided the opportunity “to gain information pertaining to the role, participate in personal growth opportunities and learn specific helping skills” (Ender, 1983, p. 328.) At the second stage, he suggests, the paraprofessional is provided more job functional training.

Because of its importance, the paraprofessional training itself has served as the topic of research. Some literature suggests how training should be conducted. For example, training programs based on the wide range of responsibilities and goals noted earlier can be time consuming. Therefore, Upcraft and Pilato (1982) suggested focusing R.A. training goals more narrowly. “We conclude that if the R.A.s are not interpersonally skillful both individually and in groups and knowledgeable about students all other goals are unattainable” (Upcraft & Pilato, 1982, p. 26).

Another area of study regarding the R.A. position and training focuses on its effectiveness. Recognizing that a good deal has been written about how to conduct training but “surprisingly little is known about the actual outcomes of such interventions,” Murray, Snider, & Midkiff (1999) studied the effects of training on R.A. job performance with results that support training programs. “The findings of the study suggest that even short-term training interventions can bring about favorable outcomes in R.A.’s behavior on the job” (Murray et al., 1999, p. 746). It should be noted, however, that this study was conducted at only one institution in the mid-Atlantic region of 3,400 students. Another interesting study, conducted by Schuh, State, and Westfall (1991), considered residence hall paraprofessionals’ knowledge of student development theory and the extent to which training facilitated the use of knowledge and of student development theory. More specifically, the study addressed the application of student
development theory in the residence hall setting. As outlined by its authors, the study had three goals:

1. “To develop a measure to gauge paraprofessionals’ knowledge of a specific student development theory.

2. To determine whether designing training around a specific theory helped R.A.s to recognize instances for possible application.

3. To determine whether there were significant differences in the ability to recognize opportunities to apply theory among R.A.s trained using different theoretical perspectives” (Schuh et al., 1991, p. 272).

The study was conducted at a large public residential institution in the Midwest. The authors developed an instrument in which paraprofessionals matched the appropriate aspect of a particular vignette to the approach feature of a developmental theory. The researchers then compared their responses at the beginning of the year and at the end.

This study indicated that training in a specific theory is retained by paraprofessional staff members. "The next step might be to determine whether theory-specific training helps them in practice” (Schuh et al., 1991, p. 216).

The results of the study by Schuh et al. (1991) were supportive of using student development theory as an aspect of training. “Finally, it appears that student development theory was useful as an educational tool for training R.A.s.” (Shuh et al., 1991, p. 216).

While this research is helpful, affirming the potential of training to improve performance, it may be inadequate. “Because of the weighty responsibilities placed upon R.A.’s, it is especially important that further research be conducted in order to ascertain their ability to translate mastery of training content into improved job performance” (Murray et al., 1999, p. 744).
Lack of Information Regarding Paraprofessional Competencies to Support Residential College Living/Learning Programs

While these limited studies have been conducted to examine paraprofessional training in general, there are few, if any, models to guide their role and training in living/learning communities. The lack of attention to the paraprofessional position as it pertains to living/learning programs is evidenced in the book, Residential Colleges: Reforming American Higher Education by Alexander and Robertson (1998). The book is based on a “round table” conducted in 1997 “to discuss the re-emergence of the residential college model as an essential element of American higher education” (Alexander and Robertson, 1998). The result of the round table discussions is a compendium of papers presented at the round table “where representatives from public and private institutions discussed recent initiatives, emerging problems and other important issues pertaining to residential college development on American campuses” (Alexander and Robertson, 1998, p.vii). The discussions may well have focused on important issues, but once again the issue of the role of staff and/or the competencies required to support the re-emerging residential colleges, appears to have been overlooked.

If attention and research regarding the paraprofessional role is absent in discussions of the larger picture of residential colleges, it continues to also lack attention in more specific discussions regarding preparation programs for paraprofessionals. In 1982 when Upcraft and Pilato wrote Resident Assistants in College, they outlined responsibilities for the RA position. A responsibility for promoting learning and/or delivering educational programming was not among their list of responsibilities.

A similar lack of attention can be found in what is perhaps the most widely utilized guide for R.A. preparation, which is the book, The Resident Assistant, by
Blimling (1998). This textbook is utilized in R.A. preparation courses typical of many housing programs. Blimling’s (1998) textbook’s most recent version follows suit with previous editions in providing support for education and training in areas that range from residence hall history to educational philosophies to a review of student development theory. Blimling’s (1998) textbook also covers areas related to skill development such as peer counseling, confrontation and crisis management, mediation and suicide intervention.

Finally, Blimling (1998) provides R.A.’s with background information related to social issues such as food abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, sexuality and race and gender. All of these areas represent areas traditionally associated with the R.A. position. Thus, Blimling (1998) continues to provide important background knowledge to support the traditional role of the R.A. in a college student housing program. But what information does this highly utilized text provide in regards to supporting the preparation of R.A.s assigned to living/learning programs? In fact, Blimling’s text does not appear to address this area in any depth. While his text does include a chapter on “educational programming,” the information in this chapter supports “programming” (activities) based on a wellness model. In other words, there is no specific attention directed towards living/learning competencies or background information.

Oversight of the role the RA position can play in living/learning programs fails to be noted or identified in the work of other authors as well. For example, Whitt and Nuss (1994) described living/learning programs at a Earlham College, Stanford, Michigan State and the University of Maryland at College Park. Their descriptions described the role of faculty and student affairs staff members for each program but failed to mention the role of paraprofessionals. Similarly, Kalsbek (1994) failed to reference the
paraprofessional position but did reference the linkage between educational programming and entry-level staff preparation programs.

**Faculty/Staff Training/Preparation to Support Integrated Experiences**

While literature regarding competencies is silent in regards to the paraprofessional position, slightly more information is provided for faculty, staff and graduate preparation programs.

In regards to faculty, Love and Love (1995), have provided recommendations for faculty at four-year institutions where learning serves as a focus. “We also recommend that four year institutions adopt a strategy similar to that of several community colleges which require all new faculty to take a set number of classes or workshops in student learning and experience (for example, teaching strategies, cognitive development, student socialization, pedagogy, student assessment and learning styles) after they are hire” (Love & Love, 1995, p. 97). In regards to student affairs staff, Love and Love (1995) recommend “the same thing.” In fact, they recommend that faculty and student affairs staff be trained together in these areas.

While Love and Love (1995) have provided recommendations for faculty training, Lawrenz et al. (1992) described training for teaching assistants (T.A.). “This paper reports the results of a two-year evaluation designed to monitor and improve a teaching assistant training program” (Lawrenz, 1992, p. 106). Their findings suggested that teaching assistants need training in problem solving and “how to conduct a the cooperative group.”

The Journal of Excellence in College Teaching describes features of cooperative learning. The first critical feature is “positive interdependence.” This means “all members of the learning team are responsible for the learning of others.” The second feature is “individual accountability” whereby only a small percentage of the grade
depends on the group work. The third feature involves appropriately assigning students to learning teams. The fourth feature calls for the instructor to serve in a facilitator rather than a teaching role. The final feature involves, first, “explicit” attention to social skills (no criticism, active listening) and face-to-face verbal problem solving. To develop student affairs professionals preparation programs based on Lawrenz (1992) recommendations would create another dimension to what might be considered more traditional training for this level of staff.

Another set of competencies for student affairs comes from Komives and Woodward (2001). They outline competency areas for the student affairs professional which include: leadership, teaching and training, counseling and advising, consultation and mediation, multi-culturalism, program development and group advising, assessment, evaluation, and research.

Competency areas such as those identified by Komives and Woodward (2001) might serve as the basis for more traditional graduate programs like those in College Student Personnel. These programs produce many students’ affairs administrators across the U.S. But proponents of a return to the focus on learning such as Kuh (1996) link the success of learner centered college experiences to enhanced graduate preparation programs. Said differently, to achieve successful learner centered experiences, graduate preparation programs should move beyond traditional topics. Kuh (1996) suggests that student affairs graduate training programs should prepare professionals to “integrate and apply theories and research on learning, systems and environments and student development in order to promote student learning intentionally” (p. 144).

Love and Love (1995) more specifically call for the enhancement of student affairs graduate preparation programs through a focus on learning theory. They recommend that graduate programs:
a. “include liberation theory, constructivist pedagogy, and collaborative learning”

b. “teach from a critical cultural perspective”

c. “incorporate learning theory into the curriculum”

d. “incorporate the expectation of adopting a holistic learning perspective in internship and assistant ship experiences.” (p. 95)

Summary

The literature suggests there are changes occurring on many college campuses. These changes call for a renewed emphasis on “learning.” The literature suggests that one important means for emphasizing learning is to approach it from a more holistic perspective. Said differently, colleges and universities must find strategies that integrate the student’s total life.

In fact, the framework of the modern college is set up to do exactly the opposite. As established through the literature review here, colleges and universities have long since separated the curriculum from the out of class lives of experiences. The result has been that two sets of professions and para-professions have grown up on the campus. Each set maintains its own methods, practices and foundational theories.

In the case of student affairs, responsible for the out of class lives of students, the literature presents foundational theories and training practices consistent with an approach known as “developmental.” The literature further establishes that encouraging the developmental growth of students rests in large part on peers employed as paraprofessionals on campus. The most prominent of these peer positions is that of the Resident Assistant or R.A.

In the literature, the residential college and living/learning imitatives and the potential of peer influence, suggest that the paraprofessional position is poised to advance the new campus “learning” agenda. However, the literature clearly demonstrates that
paraprofessionals are currently prepared based only on student development theory and models. While the personal developmental needs of students remains an important emphasis for colleges and thus for the paraprofessional position, it is an incomplete model where the “learning” agenda is in place in the form of residential colleges.

Colleges and universities should now ask the question, “what can and should paraprofessionals do to enhance the performance (advance learning) in a residential college?” Moreover, what preparation is required to support their highest performance in this regard?

To answer these questions, this study established competencies for paraprofessionals who are now also expected to be facilitators of learning. The next chapter will outline the study, which attempted to fill this gap in the literature by using those paraprofessional’s already in the position and a group of experts to establish a set of national competencies.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The lack of research regarding competencies required for paraprofessionals to support and advance residential college or Living/Learning Community (LLC) programs provides unique research opportunities. The following section describes the research design used to address the lack of information by establishing a set of national competencies based on the experiences of those working in well-established residential college or LLC programs.

Overview of Research Methodology

In order to identify a set of national competencies, the researcher employed a two-stage process. In the first stage, the researcher used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). Stitt-Gohdes, Lambrecht, & Redmann (2000) describe the CIT as “a tool used in qualitative research that can capture the complexity of job behavior in terms of the job’s social context.” Stitt-Gohdes et al. (2000) go on to describe three different approaches to analyzing job requirements. The second approach is referred to as the “professional model” which, they state, captures the complexity of jobs where workers have more discretion. This description matches well with the needs of identifying competencies within the residential college/LLC paraprofessional position. Stitt-Gohdes et al. (2000) go on to say that the CIT can be an effective method for gathering information “about events that are rich in work requirements.” Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the researcher used the CIT to develop a set of tasks which were clustered and then developed into a set of competencies.

In the second stage of the study, the researcher utilized the Delphi Technique to validate and refine the set of competencies identified through the use of the Critical Incident Technique. According to Strauss and Ziegler (1975), the Delphi Technique is a “systematic solicitation and aggregation of informed judgments from a group of experts
on specific questions or issues.” Strauss and Ziegler (1975) also outlined characteristics of the Delphi Technique which include the following:

1. To obtain information, the Delphi Technique utilizes a panel of experts.

2. The Delphi Technique is conducted in writing.

3. The Delphi Technique produces a consensus of opinion through a system and the use of controlled feedback. In other words, the first set of opinions are narrowed through successive rounds in which opinions are evaluated by participants.

Both the Delphi Technique and the Critical Incident Technique provided particularly attractive matches for the needs of this study. Because they could be conducted via e-mail (Dunham, 1996), these techniques allowed the study to solicit expert opinion from individuals at a diversity of institutions and in remote locations (Strauss & Zeigler, 1975). Moreover, using both techniques allowed for the solicitation of opinions from a variety of residential college/LLC roles including part time student (paraprofessional), professional staff, and faculty. Thus, the final competencies developed represent a diversity of perspectives on competency requirements for the paraprofessional position.

Sample Selection Criteria

The sample for this study involved the selection of participants on two levels: the institution and the staff and faculty position within the institution.

In order to develop competencies based upon expert opinion, it was important to involve programs which have had an opportunity to develop and operationalize their programs. Therefore, the original criteria for participation was set for programs with 25 years or more in longevity for "residential college" programs. A list of twelve universities meeting this criteria was identified based on descriptions contained in the
North American Directory of Residential Colleges and Living/Learning Centers (Smith & Raney, 1993). However, closer investigation revealed the difficulty of obtaining all twelve institutions originally identified. One institution was unable to participate due to a rigorous university process for approval of any research involving university faculty or staff (Michigan State). Two institutions, University of Michigan and Northwestern University, were unwilling to participate (although one faculty member at University of Michigan would later agree to participate). Two universities, Rice and Yale, while providing residential college programs of sufficient longevity, upon further investigation did not utilize the paraprofessional position in the same manner as the majority of institutions. Therefore, it was agreed they would not be appropriate institutions for the study.

Further discussion with the University of Pennsylvania also indicated that this institution was not as well positioned to participate as originally thought. The Director (of housing) from the University of Pennsylvania revealed that this institution's current iteration of residential colleges was only five years old. Finally, two institutions were unresponsive despite repeated attempts to contact them. These institutions were Miami University and University of California at Santa Cruz.

Four institutions from the original group identified did agree to participate: Cornell University, State University at Binghamton, University of Massachusetts, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

While longevity remained an important criteria, further examination of the North American College Directory of Residential Colleges and Living / Learning Centers (Smith & Raney, 1993) revealed institutions which might provide a more modern approach. The researcher decided to modify the criteria for the age of the residential college program from 25 to 13 years. Thirteen years would allow time for the program to
have operationalized and yet ensure the inclusion of more modern perspectives. As noted before, some of the oldest residential college programs such as Yale and Rice, reflect models that do not have widespread application. In contrast, there are programs with more than a decade of use which also have visibility and respect in the college student housing field because they have placed "living/learning" at the center of the strategic efforts and daily operation. This is reflected in their organizational structure.

In addition to longevity, another modification to the selection criteria came through the expansion from including only schools with residential college designation to including institutions which utilize designations for both “living/learning” and “residential college.” In examining the different programs, the researcher found these to be interchangeable terms. Therefore, the researcher re-examined the The North American Director of Residential Colleges and Living/Learning Centers (Smith & Raney, 1993), looking for those institutions with features that place the program above the less complex "theme" housing. Programs above the “theme” level might include: special residential college/living/learning courses or curriculum, classrooms in the residence hall, faculty offices in the hall, or faculty in residence.

There were 23 institutions which met this criteria (excluding institutions which the researcher had already attempted to contact). In order to prioritize the contact of these institutions, the researcher created a spreadsheet with four categories and four levels of priority. Because the original proposal had established "residential colleges" as a criteria and because the presence of faculty living in the residence represents a commitment to integration, the first category of the spreadsheet was for institutions designated as residential colleges and which have offered "faculty in residence." Six institutions met this criteria. The second category was for “residential college” programs which do not have a faculty in residence component. Six institutions met this criteria.
The third category was for "living/learning programs" which also have faculty in residence. Four institutions met this criteria. Finally a category was established for "living-learning programs" which did not have a faculty in residence. Among the first three categories, the researcher ranked the top eleven in terms of longevity and the category to which each belonged. Thus, the researcher created an initial list of 11 institutions to pursue:

Dartmouth (1970's)
Princeton (1982)
USC (1983)
LeHigh (1984)
Vanderbilt (1972,1980,1988)
Illinois (1972)
Creighton (1977)
Indiana
St. Lawrence (1987)
Fordham (1987)
Arizona State (1988)

Among these institutions, six agreed to participate: Princeton, Lehigh, Illinois, Creighton, Indiana, and Fordham.

The researcher went on to gain the participation of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Iowa State, and Missouri. These programs represented those which have developed a reputation in college student housing profession for the development of their living/learning programs.

Thus the final list of 15 institutions participating was as follows:

Cornell University, Residential College (1970)
State University at Binghamton, Residential College (1968)
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Residential College (1970)
University of Massachusetts, Residential College, (1964)
University of South Carolina, Residential College (1982)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Living/Learning Programs (1986)
University of Maryland, Living/Learning Programs (1986)
University of Illinois, Living/Learning Program (1972)
Indiana University, Living/Learning Program (1972)
Creighton University, Living/Learning Program (1977)
Princeton University, Residential College (1982)
Fordham University, Residential College (1987)
Lehigh University, Residential College, (1987)
Iowa State University, Living/Learning Programs, (1995)
University of Missouri, Living/Learning Programs, (1989)

To summarize, the following is the list of criteria utilized in the selection of the fifteen institutions for the study:

1. The institution needed to utilize a residential college or living/learning format distinguished by at least one of the following: special courses, curriculum, classrooms in the hall, faculty offices in the building or faculty in residence.

2. The residential college must have been in existence for a minimum of thirteen years. (An exception was made to bring in one institution with only eight years of experience but which brought significant expertise).

3. The institution needed to assist in forming a diverse sample in terms of type of institution, size, and location.

The second set of sample criteria related to the actual student positions utilized in the critical incident technique. It was originally thought that the students participating would need to have a minimum of one year of experience. However, at that point, the timeline for the commencement of the study was to have taken place earlier in the semester. By the time distribution of the study took place, each paraprofessional had a minimum of one semester of experience. Because the fall semester is generally accepted as the most engaging and intense semester, the researcher determined that paraprofessionals with one semester experience had sufficient experience to contribute to the study.

As the researcher worked with Directors to identify the paraprofessionals it was clear that most institutions utilized only one student staff position. However, in the case of two institutions, there were dual paraprofessional positions. In these cases, the researcher elected to utilize the position more closely aligned with the learning initiatives. Furthermore, while "resident assistant," is the most prevalent term used, the term can
vary. Therefore, to avoid confusion in the first stage of the study (Critical Incident), the researcher would address participants by their institutional title and later, in the second round, utilize the more generic term, "paraprofessional."

The final set of sample criteria relates to the identification of individuals (faculty or staff positions) within the institutions which could serve as the “expert panel” to be part of the Delphi process. As stated earlier, the researcher worked with institutional contacts to obtain participants for the Delphi panel. A panel of 30 members which included 14 faculty members 15 staff members, and one individual who serves in both roles was selected. Seven institutions provided both a faculty and staff representative. In terms of expertise, the range of years of experience for the faculty was two to twenty five years with an average of nine years. The range of years of experience for staff was three to 16 years with an average of six years. The following is a list of institutions from which individual faculty and staff elected to participate in the study.

Binghamton
Bowling Green State
Cornell
Creighton
Fordham
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa State
Lehigh
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Missouri
UNC-Chapel Hill
UNC-Greensboro
Princeton
South Carolina

The Delphi panel members' institutional affiliations combined with their experience provided a panel of the expertise required to support an insightful study. The doctoral committee for this study agreed that the participants provided sufficient
expertise. This was also confirmed by subsequent feedback. As one Delphi panel member stated at the end of the third round, "You have some real high power players contributing to this, as I can see from the other comments being made."

**Research Design**

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the research question established was: for paraprofessionals in residential colleges or LLC’s, what competencies are required. These competencies are required due to the academic nature of the living environment and the emphasis on learning.

The researcher conducted the research project in two stages (CIT and Delphi) and four rounds. The first round consisted of the Critical Incident Technique and the last three rounds involved the Delphi Technique.

**Stage One: Critical Incident Technique**

In the first stage, the researcher utilized the Critical Incident Technique. Questions were distributed and data was collected via e-mail. An e-mail was sent to a sample of 189 paraprofessionals at fifteen institutions. The e-mail invited participants to share a minimum of three experiences in answer to the following question:

“Describe an experience where you successfully supported your resident(s) learning in their coursework and/or created a learning community on your floor or hall.” (See Appendix A). As one can see, the question directed the paraprofessional to focus on those experiences which supported “learning.” The focus on learning provides the distinguishing characteristic for the competency model just as it is the characteristic which distinguishes a residential college/LLC from a traditional residence hall. The central purpose of the study was to develop a competency model which would enable colleges and universities to re-cast the paraprofessional role in order to support the
The unique mission of the residential college/LLC environment. Therefore, the criteria established around the concept of “learning” fundamentally shaped the model.

Respondents were also directed to focus on “successful” experiences as opposed to both successful and un-successful experiences because the goal was to develop a set of competencies that, in keeping with a high performance model, supported the highest performance from the paraprofessional position. In addition, it was believed that paraprofessionals would be unlikely to devote the additional time to report unsuccessful experiences.

The researcher provided five residential college paraprofessionals at her own institution two different examples of the memo of instruction. Three paraprofessionals provided feedback as to which set of explanations provided the clearest instructions and was more likely to engage the paraprofessionals at other institutions.

Participants who did not return the initial e-mail within seven to ten days received a reminder e-mail with another copy of the questionnaire attached. Participants who did not respond to the reminder were sent a final e-mail with the questionnaire once again attached. Most institutions provided the researcher with a list of e-mail addresses for the residential college or LLC paraprofessionals. Two institutions asked that the researcher provide a professional staff member with the questionnaire and the staff member forwarded it on to the participants. In such cases, the staff members forwarding the survey received reminders.

Fifty-nine (30%) of the participants submitted responses providing the researcher with 208 incidents where they believed they supported learning. Following the completion of three rounds of reminders to the participants at each participating institution, the researcher selected the incidents of six respondents (10%) for use in developing an initial set of codes. In selecting the initial set of respondents, the
researcher utilized the following criteria: respondents who provided a higher number of incidents (5); respondents who appeared to provide incidents which reflected greater depth; and respondents representing a variety of institutions.

In order to identify the set of competencies contained in the participants' incidents, the researcher had to convert incidents provided by the participants into behaviors and then assign each behavior a code for the purpose of examining each incident which followed. The researcher utilized the same process for the initial 10% of incidents as would be utilized for the remaining incidents. The researcher examined each incident to first identify what behavior the participant exhibited in order to facilitate learning. The next step was to identify and articulate the underlying behavior and assign a code (or utilize an existing code if the behavior had already been identified.) For example, one respondent wrote, “I asked all of my residents to give me a schedule of their classes, and I put together a list showing who was in class with another on my floor.” The researcher identified the respondents’ behaviors as putting together and distributing a list of common classes. The behavior was then articulated as, “identifies, lists, and distributes/posts common classes among the learning community.”

This is a simple example because it only involves one behavior. However, most incidents provided by the respondents contained multiple behaviors, all of which were coded. For example, one respondent wrote,

“September 11 Program. Facilitated the organization of a program focused on the immediate and long term effects of the September 11 attacks with our faculty master, an international relations professor. Three International Relations professors spoke with 2/3’s of the building’s population out on the lawn. Program lasted a little more than an hour and included students from around the campus as the event went on.”

This incident reflected several behaviors which included:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Develops lectures to provide residents with information related to current world events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63b</td>
<td>Provides students with means for students to meet and get to know faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Provide emotional support to residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Organize and develop programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Arranges faculty lectures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only does this incident provide an example of one which involved several behaviors, it also provides an example of another methodology utilized in the coding process. Code number 66, “Organizes and develop programs,” is an example of a “macro” level behavior. By “macro” the researcher means a behavior that is generic and likely to be involved in a variety of incidents. “Organizes and develop programs” is a behavior that could and did surface in regards to a variety of incidents from social programs to emotional to academic.

In contrast, the researcher also used “micro” level coding. Code number 110 is an example of a micro level code. “Faculty lectures” are a program (activity) but of a specific nature. In order to ensure that behaviors which appeared with high frequency were not missed, the researcher coded for both “macro” and “micro” level behaviors as she moved through the coding process. Each behavior received a number (representing a specific code) or, in some cases, a number and letter for related behaviors. In other cases, behaviors received a number and a letter as a means of maintaining the overall order of the behaviors once coding began. Other guidelines utilized by the researcher in identifying the behaviors contained in each experience included:

a. If new behaviors emerged, the researcher articulated the new behavior and gave it a code.
b. If modification of an existing behavior was required, the researcher did so.

c. If the same behavior was mentioned twice in the same incident, the researcher only coded it once.

d. If the same behavior was mentioned in more than one incident, the researcher coded it for each incident.

e. If the incident reflected both macro and micro level behaviors, the researcher coded for both.

Based on the incidents of the select group, the researcher developed an initial set of 73 codes. Each code represented a behavior. The researcher then proceeded to code the next 98 incidents based on the initial set of codes.

Next, the researcher moved to validate the initial coding. The researcher met with her doctoral committee chair and one member of the doctoral committee. The researcher pulled a sample from the incidents coded (98 to that point). The sample was constructed by utilizing every third incident from among those already coded. The researcher created a spread sheet which offered each incident in the left hand column and the codes in the right hand column. The researcher and committee members then read through each incident as a group and examined the codes. Based on this process, some codes were modified and some codes were added, but in general the behaviors identified were supported as they had been identified, articulated, and coded by the researcher.

The researcher then went back to all original incidents coded to add codes in keeping with the outcomes of the validation process. The researcher moved on to code the remaining incidents, making additions and modifications as new behaviors emerged or adding clarity to existing behaviors. As the researcher moved into coding the final twenty or so incidents, it became clear that any new codes she added represented behaviors of a very specific nature. At the same time, codes already established held
application for these incidents and behaviors as well. This served as an indication to the researcher that the codes had reached extinction.

Once coding was completed on all incidents, the researcher initiated a new exercise to ensure there was no duplication of behaviors. The researcher created a card for themes and listed behaviors under each theme. The exercise resulted in the combining of four behaviors into two because of duplication. The following is a list of the 171 behaviors identified.

**List of Codes/Behaviors**  
**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code/Behavior</th>
<th>1. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicate concern, and offers assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Employs active listening skills to assist residents with personal concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Identifies sources of information.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Uses bulletin boards to stimulate dialogues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. a. Uses bulletin boards to expose students to new information or different perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Uses bulletin boards to post design information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Uses bulletin boards to post emotional &amp; physical health information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Maintains knowledge and awareness regarding issues of diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Mediates resident’s tension, conflict and debate regarding controversial issues in order to stimulate learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Demonstrates self-understanding and awareness regarding issues of white privilege.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Identifies, lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Uses the identification of common classes to assist residents in developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
friendships.

13. Develops and implements forums to address controversial issues.

14. Uses faculty, staff and community leaders to assist students understanding and debate of controversial issues.

15. Maintains knowledge and understanding regarding expressions of race and culture and their relationship to law.

16. Leads residents in identifying fundraising projects.

17. Leads residents in developing and staging variety shows.

18. Understands service opportunities for abused and neglected children.

19. Uses interpersonal skills to “get to know” individual residents’ perspectives.

20. Encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement.

21. Challenges residents’ thinking.

22. Understands University’s registration process.

23a. Assists residents in selecting classes.
   b. Provides students with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information.

24. Guides residents in using University’s registration and scheduling process.

25. Familiarity with University’s choices in majors.

26. Guides resident’s in selecting majors or learning about careers.

27. Employs active listening to find out about residents academic concerns and interests

28. Understands the major—linguistics.

29. Maintains knowledge of effective study tips. Provides study tip information.

30. Guides residents in the use of study skills.

31. Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents. Offers assistance.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out professors. Coaches residents in how to approach and talk with professors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33a.</td>
<td>Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Learns resident's background and origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34a.</td>
<td>Maintains availability to residents and keeps residents apprised of where he/she is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Gets involved in residents activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Develops trust between him/herself and residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36a.</td>
<td>Serves as an academic resource for residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Refers students to appropriate resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Communicates academic resources to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues (has advisor’s phone numbers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Familiar with the location of campus buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Provides new students with campus directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Establishes and/or enforces quiet hours and other policies which make hall conducive to study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Knows and calls each resident’s name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Knows each resident’s academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Familiar with academic tutoring services available on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or others who can provide assistance. Arranges tutorial services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Uses own experiences as a student to assist others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Assists residents with their coursework and projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47a.</td>
<td>Assists residents with math/calculus coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Assists students with biology/life science/chemistry coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Assists students with economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Assists students w/business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Assists students with engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Assists students with physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Support and assist residents in the preparation of final projects related to the learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
49a. Arrange field trips to visit state officials in keeping with the LC’s theme of politics and law.

49b. Uses “community service” to develop community among residents.
   c. Arranges field trips related to the LC’s theme.
   d. Arranges field trips related to LC’s theme of Art.

50. Identifies orientation/adjustment needs of residents and develops programs/strategies.

51. Pairs new “mid year” students with returning students to familiarize them with the University.

52. Develops lectures to provide residents with information related to current world events.

53. Identifies speakers to provide residents with additional information regarding other religions.

54. Assists residents in understanding and transitioning relationships as they move through their college years.

55. Lead guided discussions regarding transitioning relationships as students leave for break periods.

56. Assists residents in using University websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid).

57. Motivates extra-curricular academic pursuits.

58. Develops and recruits student participation for a student advisory board which provides feedback on the LC’s studies and program integration with the Honors Dean and LC Coordinator.

59a. Serve as an editor for reader response and essay papers.
   b. Listens to resident's speeches and presentations. Offers advice and suggestions.

60. Use one’s own major to communicate a diverse professional perspective to other residents’ majors.

61. Develop programs that bring instructional faculty (from LC required courses) into community for discussion on material related to the course.

62. Link hall/community programs and activities to LC course materials, curriculum, theme & classes.

63a. Provide means for residents to develop relationships with LC faculty.
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<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Provides students means for students to meet and get to know faculty and/or university administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Provides opportunities for students &amp; faculty to re-create together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Provide emotional support to individuals or groups of residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Share a common academic background with residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Organize and develop programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Guide and engage residents in organizing and developing programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>Provide programs which advance residents’ understanding of other religions and cultures, lifestyles, experiences and dispel stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>Develop means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td>Familiarity with issues and risks related to alcohol consumption and drugs among residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>Organize programs to educate residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Facilitate small group discussions and study sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>Organize resident team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, physics and engineering (ex’s: airplane competition, egg drop, gingerbread construction competition) or other learning communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>Provide review sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td>Organizes birthday socials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td>Leads residents in establishing rules and standards for community living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>Leads residents in establishing expectations for communal areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>Fosters and atmosphere of mutual respect among residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.</td>
<td>Leads residents in decorating the hall for holidays or making holiday decorations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.</td>
<td>Organizes activities such as dinners of help students understand vegen values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82a.</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for residents to relieve stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Provides information on how to deal with stress, reduce anxiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td>Arranges/organizes camping trips for residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84a.</td>
<td>Arranges/organizes off-site programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>arranges ski trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>arranges trip to Washington D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.</td>
<td>Organizes study breaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.</td>
<td>Organizes “watch parties” for students (Sports, T.V. shows)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.</td>
<td>Organizes “group readings,” book clubs for students to understand a book required for class or books that will be helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.</td>
<td>Maintains awareness of issues related to eating disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.</td>
<td>Develops passive and active programming to inform residents about eating disorders and/or nutrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90a.</td>
<td>Facilitates study sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Facilitates study sessions for economics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.</td>
<td>Arranges dinners between floors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92.</td>
<td>Knowledge of issues of time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.</td>
<td>Assists/educates residents regarding time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.</td>
<td>Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals, exams etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.</td>
<td>Provides residents with information regarding university programs (study abroad, internships, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96.</td>
<td>Establishes special areas in the halls for study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.</td>
<td>Encourages residents to attend classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98.</td>
<td>Organizes and implements “study bucks” or other programs to encourage study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.</td>
<td>Mediates conflict between individuals and groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.</td>
<td>Facilitates moving or room changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101.</td>
<td>Hangs out with residents/relationship building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102.</td>
<td>Arranges and implements faculty scavenger hunt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103.</td>
<td>Arranges and implements a Faculty banquet or dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104.</td>
<td>Organizes and develops programs to broaden residents an awareness of issues of disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 105a. | Set up “college fair” with Deans, Advisors, Professors.  
| b. | Set up a school management far. |
| 106. | Develop and implement educational sanctions for disciplinary violations. |
| 107. | Encourages, facilitates study groups and group homework. |
| 108. | Encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upperclass and freshmen. |
| 109. | Discourages competition among students. |
| 110. | Arranges faculty lectures. |
| 111. | Recognizes academic achievement. |
| 112. | Decorates doors with candy and stars for A’s & B’s. |
| 113. | Organizes Jewish New Year program. |
| 114. | Organizes group proof reading rings. |
| 115. | Organizes activities to support healthy roommate relationships. |
| 116. | Organizes programs that allow residents to share auto-biographical information |
| 117. | Organizes programs that educate residents regarding issues of safety. |
| 118. | Stands up to criticism/takes the heat. |
| 119. | Develops a sense of pride in the community. |
| 120. | Organizes and develops co-ed social programs. |
| 121. | Provides nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods. |
| 122. | Provides information and/or links students to school alumni. |
| 123. | Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework (may be combined with 107) |
| 124. | Duplicate-Combined |
| 125. | Organizes programs to develop a sense of civic responsibility. |
| 126. Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about each other and about what they are learning. |
| 127. Communicates vision for and importance of a living/learning program. |
| 128. Suspends judgment about residents until getting to know them. |
| 129. Communicates a positive attitude about coursework to residents. |
| 130. Builds residents self-esteem. |
| 131. Arranges speakers topics of concern to residents. |
| 132. Identifies and acquires resources to finance student off site trips. |
| 133. DUPLICATE-Removed |
| 134. Meets regularly with residents to discuss their classes. |
| 135. Assesses and applies the amount of guidance and support students want. |
| 136. Develops study tip newsletters and bathroom displays. |
| 137. Informs, communicates to residents resource information. |
| 138. Provides, refers residents to test files. |
| 139. Teaches cooking or cooks together. Organizes cooking programs to teach or cook together. |
| 140. Prepares and informs residents of upcoming changes in their facilities. |
| 141. Organizes lectures regarding service in foreign countries. |
| 142. Provides opportunities for R.A.s of different years to interact with each other. |
| 143. Helps students to negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop. |
| 144. Organizes and develops literary film festivals. |
| 145. Organizes programs that take residents to special events on campus (exhibits, virtual reality, dances, etc.) |
| 146. Encourages to go to dinner as a group either formally or spontaneously. |
| 147. | Counsels residents on the importance of homework. |
| 148. | Helps residents set academic goals or develop plans. |
| 149. | Decorates and enhances study areas to make more appeal for study. |
| 150. | Role models good academic habits. Shares what they are doing in their academic work. |
| 151. | Encourages personal responsibility. |
| 152. | Develops surveys for residents to get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses. |
| 153. | Surveys residents to determine the overall academic atmosphere and comfort level. |
| 154. | Studies with residents. |
| 155. | Sets up floor e-mail list servs to assist with registration and other processes. |
| 156. | Organizes programs and experiences that build leadership. |
| 157. | Posts motivational signs. |
| 158. | Provides residents with positive reinforcement. |
| 159. | Serves as a liaison between learning community members and LC mentor. |
| 160. | Develops programs that help resident connect with the university community. |
| 161. | Publishes a weekly newsletter about hall and/or university events. |
| 162. | Has dinner with individual residents. |
| 163. | Develops programs that will orient students to their hall policies. |
| 164. | Develops and organizes assassin games. |
| 165. | DUPLICATE-REMOVED |
| 166. | Bring in faculty or staff to provide students with background related to LC theme (ex. WISE brings in women to talk about the women’s movement). |
| 167. | Helps students prepare résumé's & prepare for interviews. |
| 168. | Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills. |
| 169. | Institutes policies to encourage study (example: turning off the T.V. during certain |
170. Identifies problems, trends, barriers to academic success and develops strategies to assist.

171. Presents academic information as “funny” or “cool” to help residents take notice.

The next step in the process was to determine the frequency for each behavior. Using SPSS, the 171 behaviors were loaded into a database. Each behavior was entered as a variable, and each incident was entered as a case. The cases were entered in such a way that a number was given to each respondent followed by a decimal for each incident. For example, respondent number 1 with four listed incidents would appear as R 1.1, R 1.2, R 1.3, and R 1.4.

Once all data was entered, the researcher was able to examine the frequency by which each behavior appeared (see Appendix B). In order to identify the most frequently noted behaviors, the researcher began by only reviewing those behaviors with frequencies of five or higher. Any behavior with a frequency of less than five represented less than 2% of the total number of behaviors coded. The researcher then created divisions (based on frequency ranges) and placed each behavior under its appropriate division. The frequency ranges were as follows:

- 5-10
- 10-20
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50 or higher

The researcher was then able to rank the behaviors (with frequencies of five or higher) from the highest frequency number, 52, to the lowest number, 5. The researcher
once again examined the database to ensure that all behaviors (with a frequency of five higher) had been accounted for in the list of behaviors. The researcher was then able to create a first draft of tasks based on the rank order of behaviors with a frequency of five or higher (Appendix C). The researcher created a variation on this list by removing four behaviors which obviously lent themselves to combination with another behavior as well a combining two other behaviors which appeared to suggest the same task. (Appendix D)

The next step for the researcher was to cluster the behaviors into behavior clusters which would be used to create competency statements and tasks. Each ranked behavior was placed on an index card. This allowed the researcher to begin to cluster behaviors based on like themes. The initial clustering of behaviors took place by two means. In the first method, one higher frequency behavior provided the lead theme for the cluster. In other cases, several higher frequency behaviors appeared to share a related theme and were therefore clustered together.

Thus, the most frequently noted behaviors gave rise to an initial set of identified clusters of tasks. The researcher then returned to the list of all behaviors and pulled in behaviors with lower frequencies but which appeared related to or supportive of the clusters of tasks established. Continued examination of the clusters of tasks resulted in the development of competency statements which represented the behaviors in each cluster of tasks and the further development of the clusters of tasks into task statements. This process produced an initial set of 11 competencies.

Thus, the basic process which moved the data from incident to competency was as follows:

208 incidents→ 171 behaviors→ 11 clusters of tasks→ 9 competency statements and tasks.
The researcher continued to return to behaviors as well as the initial incidents to assist in this process. As a result, competencies were more clearly articulated and two competencies sets were aggregated into other competencies. The final draft included nine competencies with accompanying tasks. The development of each specific cluster of tasks, competency statement, and tasks will be explained in greater detail in Chapter Four.

**Stage Two: Delphi Technique**

For the second stage of the study, rounds two through four, the Delphi Technique was employed. In terms of the composition of the Delphi panel, originally the researcher intended to seek both faculty and staff at various levels associated with the residential college or LLC program at the same institutions which provided paraprofessionals for the study. This would have resulted in a Delphi panel of 72. However, after discussions with the Directors (of housing) at the 17 institutions, it became clear that Directors had difficulty committing to the participation of this number and variety of staff members and/or faculty. Therefore, the researcher was forced to reduce the Delphi panel to 30 participants.

The development of the Delphi panel involved several steps. First, the researcher spoke with Directors, via e-mail and telephone conversations prior to the initiation of the critical incident phase. The researcher also requested the participation of different groups of people both the paraprofessionals for the critical incident technique and the full time faculty and staff for the Delphi panel. The researcher requested the Director's participation and referrals to staff members and faculty members with the expertise and the position within the residential college or LLC to assist in developing the competencies which best support the performance of paraprofessionals in the context of these unique programs.
As the researcher worked to develop the Delphi panel, the Director generally served as the institutional contact in some instances. However, in other instances, the institutional contact was another staff member or faculty member. As the researcher developed the panel, the institutional contact provided the researcher with the names and e-mail addresses for faculty and other staff members at some instances. The researcher then invited their participation. In other instances, the institutional contact pursued an agreement to participate from faculty and/or staff and forwarded the name to the researcher. Institutional contacts were secured from most institutions and assisted in developing the panel through these methods. In the cases where no institutional contact stepped forward, the researcher pursued faculty members directly. In these cases, the researcher identified faculty associated with residential college/LLC programs and e-mailed them directly to determine the depth of their involvement and longevity with the program and then invite them to participate. In the end, the actual Delphi panel included faculty and/or staff from the institutions which had participated in the first round (Critical Incident) of the study as well as two other institutions which provided expertise in the Delphi phase but which had not participated in the first round (Critical Incident).

Working through the institutional contacts or by making direct contact, the researcher had pursued a Delphi panel that would include at least one individual, and preferably one staff and one faculty member, from each institution in which paraprofessionals had participated in the first round of the study. This was achieved at several institutions. The researcher also accepted the opportunity to have faculty participate who represented institutions in which staff were unwilling to commit paraprofessionals' for participation. Because these institutions offered an expert perspective, the researcher welcomed their participation on the Delphi panel. For example, the Delphi panel includes faculty representatives from Michigan and Bowling
Green, both institutions which could not commit staff at various levels but whose residential college/LLC faculty were willing to participate. In fact, the three participating faculty members from these two institutions provided vast and credible experience to the panel. The researcher also attempted to achieve, as close as possible, an even number of staff and faculty so that the Delphi results would allow for a balanced “faculty” and “staff” perspective.

Once the Delphi panel was established, the researcher initiated the second stage (Delphi Technique) and second round of the study. In the second round, the researcher e-mailed to the Delphi panel, the competencies developed from analysis of Critical Incident. The panelists received a table of two columns in which in the left column they were presented with each competency followed by tasks. In the right column the participants were invited to suggest changes first to the competency and then to the descriptive activities. (see Appendix E) The table provided this format for all nine competencies. The table concluded with an opportunity for the panelists to suggest new competencies and potential tasks for the competencies. The panelists returned their feedback via e-mail. The researcher then used their feedback to modify the competencies and articulate new competencies suggested by the panelists.

The third round of the study offered the panelists the opportunity to compare the modified competencies against the original competencies and examine the newly established competencies. Once again, the panelists were presented with a table, in this case comprised of two tiers. In the first tier of the table, the left hand column outlined the new competencies suggested from the second round as well as their suggested tasks. (see Appendix F) In the right column, panelists were once again provided with the opportunity to suggest changes as they were provided in the first round.
In the second tier of the table, (see Appendix F) panelists were able to view the modified competencies and tasks. The table included the original wording ("old") followed by the "new" version. The tables also revealed to the panelists the comments provided in the second round as well as the frequency of "suggested changes" and "no suggested changes" to the competencies and tasks. (see Appendix F) Finally, at the end of each competency and its related tasks, the panelists were once again offered the opportunity to suggest changes.

The researcher used the feedback provided to modify the information for the final round of the study. Because the "suggested changes" from this round were minimal, the researcher concluded that agreement had been reached and the study could, therefore, move to the final (4th) round.

The fourth round required a process similar to that which is utilized in the nominal group technique (Dunham, 1996). “With this approach, the Coordinator asks each member to identify the top five competencies and assign five points to the most promising idea, 4 points to the next most promising, and 3, 2, and 1 points to the third, fourth, and fifth-best ideas” (Dunham, p. 2). However, in order to avoid confusion, the researcher modified this technique to allow the panelists to rank in a manner such that "one" reflected the highest priority and "five" the lowest.

In this final round, the panelists received two documents. The first document listed the competencies and invited the panelists to select the top five competencies, in order of priority, which, in their opinion, were most important for paraprofessionals to successfully support their residents "learning in their coursework and/or create a learning community on their floor or hall." This criteria for selection return the study to the original question of the study from the first round. (see Appendix G) The second
attached document outlined the competencies and their tasks. The participants received
two reminders to encourage submission of their feedback.

The researcher was then in a position to produce a set of final competencies, in
order of importance as suggested by the participants responses. (see Appendix G)
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Chapter Four presents the results of all four rounds of the study. The first stage and first round of the study involved use of the Critical Incident Technique. Results from this part of the study, were utilized to develop a set of competencies which were then modified and validated in the second stage (rounds 2-4) of the study through the use of the Delphi Technique. Results from the Delphi portion of the study are presented in this chapter as well. The chapter presents information which outlines the process by which the initial incidents provided by participants in the Critical Incident were translated into competency statements utilized in the Delphi portion of the study.

Results of the Critical Incident Analysis

The initial coding of the self-reported incidents of paraprofessionals in residential college or Living/Learning Community (LLC) programs yielded 171 behaviors. The large number of initial behaviors can be attributed in part to the approach taken by the researcher in the coding process. Specifically, the incidents were coded at both “macro” and “micro” levels in order to avoid missing any important tasks which might emerge.

Using SPSS, the researcher ran frequencies on each of the 171 behaviors. (see Appendix B) A review of the frequencies of behaviors reflected a high frequency of 52 and a low of one. The researcher initially developed a list of behaviors using those behaviors with a frequency of five or higher (referred to as "higher frequency behaviors"). Within this range, the researcher found clear breaks in the number of frequencies. For example, two behaviors had frequencies at very high levels:

“Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents.” (frequency of 52)

“Organizes and develops programs.” (frequency of 46)
The next group of highly reported behaviors had frequencies ranging from 19-24. These behaviors included the following:

“Uses own experiences as a student to assist others.” (frequency 24)

“Serves as an academic resource for students.” (frequency 21)

“Assists students with their coursework and other projects.” (frequency 20)

“Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community.” (frequency 19)

A third set of seven behaviors fell into the frequency range of eight to eleven. The researcher found nine behaviors falling into categories for a frequency of six or seven and twelve behaviors with a frequency of five.

With frequencies established, the researcher set about to convert the behaviors first into clusters of tasks and then into competency statements and tasks which was the goal of the study. In order to establish the clusters, the researcher first used only the initial set of higher frequency behaviors (those with a frequency of five or higher). The lower frequency behaviors (below five) would later be pulled into clusters. The high frequency behaviors tended to be the "macro" level codes while the lower frequency behaviors tended to be the "micro" level behaviors.

In order to develop the clusters, the researcher first had to identify lead themes. The lead themes emerged by two means: use of one very high frequency behavior or several related yet fairly high frequency behaviors. For example, higher frequency behaviors such as, "serves as an academic resource for students," with a frequency of 21, led to a cluster which centered on the paraprofessional serving as an academic resource. Similarly, the behavior "assists residents with their coursework projects," with a frequency of 20, led the cluster regarding assists/support/tutors students in coursework. Meanwhile, the behavior "organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting
to know each other and establish a sense of community/team," with a frequency of 19, led a cluster related to community. Finally, the behavior, "supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement," led a cluster related to encouragement and motivation.

While these very high frequency behaviors initially led the establishment of clusters of tasks, other clusters of tasks emerged as a result of several fairly high frequency behaviors which appeared to share a related theme. As examples, a cluster theme which centered on links to the " LLC theme, " emerged from several behaviors with frequencies of seven or higher and which implicitly addressed the LLC. These links were directly possible because of the common LLC experience and included the following behaviors:

62 Links hall/community programs and activities to LC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes

10 Identifies, lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LC

11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups

126 Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about each other and what they are learning

Through the use of these two methods, an initial set of clusters of tasks were developed. The researcher then examined the remaining higher frequency behaviors (those frequencies of five or higher) for potential placement in these clusters looking for related or common words and common themes. As a result, eleven initial clusters emerged which included:

academic resource

assists, supports, tutors students in coursework

community
links to LC theme
motivation
registration, classes, majors
interpersonal skills
peer to peer assistance
overcoming difficulties
emotional support
faculty involvement

The development of these initial clusters of tasks and the emergence of a competency statement from each involved identifying and articulating the competency which appeared to reflect the essence of work suggested by the behaviors. The higher frequency behaviors in the cluster of tasks were also used to identify tasks for each competency statement. The researcher also examined the lower frequency behaviors (those with frequency below five) for those which appeared to aggregate up into higher frequency behaviors or which appeared to have direct relationship to the competency statements developed, thereby providing an additional examples or clarification.

The following information will outline the specific process for using behaviors to identify clusters, competency statements and related tasks for each competency. This process took information gathered in stage one, round one (Critical Incident) of the study and converted it to the competency framework used in stage two, round one (Delphi Technique) of the study.

To review, the basic process that was followed to move from behaviors to competency statements and tasks was as follows:

1. Higher frequency behaviors (those with a frequency of five or higher) were used to develop lead concepts.
2. Remaining higher frequency behaviors were clustered around lead concepts.

3. Lower frequency behaviors (those with a frequency of five or less) were examined and brought into clusters of tasks as appropriate.

4. Competency statements were developed from each cluster of tasks.

5. Tasks were developed from clusters of tasks.

The following sections outline the more specific development of each competency.

- **Connects Students with Academic Resources on Campus**

  The researcher tentatively titled the first competency cluster "academic resource." The behavior, "serves as an academic resource for students," with a frequency of 21, provided the lead concept. However, several other behaviors contributed to this cluster. First, "develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents," with a frequency of 52, plugged into this cluster as well because, in order for paraprofessionals to serve as an academic resource, they must first establish channels by which to become aware of needs for resources.

  Three other items appeared to have relevancy to the concept as well. On the macro level, examples included the behavior, "Refers residents to appropriate resources," with a frequency of seven, and the more specific, "refers students to appropriate tutorial services or arranges tutorial services," with a frequency of seven. Both of these behaviors reflect the paraprofessional’s ability to support learning by serving as a resource whom students can approach and receive referral to helpful services.

  Another behavior emerged from the data which demonstrates the paraprofessionals potential to serve as an academic resource, "uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information," with a frequency of five. A related behavior, number four, "identifies sources of information," with a frequency of seven, clustered in this group as well because it served as a prerequisite for "providing information."
Therefore, the first round of clustering of tasks on these tasks produced:

36a Serves students as an academic resource

31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents

36b Refers residents to appropriate resources

44 Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or arranges tutorial services

6b Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips)

4 Identifies sources of information

Each of these clustered behaviors represents behaviors with frequencies of at least five.

The next step in developing clusters of tasks involved reviewing lower frequency (less than five) behaviors to identify those behaviors which related to the cluster. For example, both "informs, communicates to residents resource information," and "provides residents with information regarding special university programs (study abroad, internships)" enable the paraprofessional to serve as an academic resource. Similarly, the behavior, "provides, refers residents to test files," aggregates into "refers residents to appropriate resources." The same logic was applied to "uses bulletin boards to post design information," which aggregates into "uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips)." Each of these behaviors had a frequency of only one.

In addition to these behaviors which could be pulled into other behaviors already in the cluster of tasks, two lower/frequency behaviors support the concept of academic resources. They were, therefore, brought into the cluster. One is behavior 56 "assists residents in using university websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid)," with a frequency
of four and another "presents academic information as 'funny' or 'cool'" to help residents take notice," with a frequency of one.

Other lower frequency behaviors demonstrated relationship to the cluster of tasks as well and were, therefore, brought into the cluster. Based on the identification of these behaviors, the final cluster using both high frequency and low frequency behaviors developed as the following. Note that “lower” frequency tasks are in bold. Numbers correspond with the codes in Table 1.

36a Serves as an academic resource for students

137 Informs, communicates to residents resource information

95 Provides residents with information regarding special university programs (study abroad, internships)

122 Provides information and/or links to students to school alumni

51 Pairs new "mid year" students with returning students to familiarize them with the university

122 Provides information and/or links students to school alumni

171 Presents academic information as 'funny' or 'cool' to help residents take notice

31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents

27 Employs active listening to find out about and assist residents with academic concerns and interests

36b Refers residents to appropriate resources

138 Provides, refers residents to test files

44 Refers residents to appropriate tutorial services

39 Provides students with directions

6b Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips)
4 identifies sources of information

5 uses bulletin boards to stimulate dialogue

6a uses bulletin boards to expose students to new info or different perspectives

6c uses bulletin boards to post design information

56 Assists residents in using university websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid)

The next step in the process required the researcher to move from the cluster of tasks to the development of a competency statement and tasks. The lead concept, "serves as an academic resource for students," informed the development of a competency statement with a slight modification. A review of behaviors in the cluster indicated that paraprofessionals' experiences reflected not only serving as a resource but connecting their students to campus resources. The competency statement was, therefore, written to reflect this point and became "connects students with academic resources on campus."

The higher frequency behaviors in this cluster of tasks, informed by lower frequency behaviors, provided three of the four tasks for the competency. For example, behavior 31, "develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents" was modified to emphasize the relationship to campus resources. As a task, it became "develops means for becoming aware of students needs to access campus resources."

The second task originated from the behavior, "refers residents to appropriate resources" but incorporates highlights from related behaviors involving test files and tutorial services. Therefore, the task became, "refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, test files, and exam review sessions."
While the behavior, variable 56, "assists residents in using university websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid) was not a higher frequency behavior, it articulated an opportunity for the paraprofessional to assist students in significant areas of the collegiate academic experience and, therefore, emerged as a task. In order to strengthen its link to the concept of academic resources on campus, the articulated task focused on the paraprofessional assisting students in the process of managing this information. The task statement became "assists student in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade cards, schedules)."

Finally, connecting students to academic information as suggested by behavior 6b, "uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips) and its behaviors offered a final task. This task supports the overall competency statement by recognizing the need for the paraprofessional to develop means for communicating information. The final task statement became "develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters) for communicating academic resource information to students."

The final competency statement and tasks which emerged from this cluster were as follows:

Connects students with academic resources on campus

a. develops means for becoming aware of students needs to access campus resources.
b. refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, test files, and exam review sessions.
c. assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade cards, schedules)
d. develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters) for communicating academic resource information to students.
• **Personally serves students as content subject matter resource for coursework**

The behavior of paraprofessionals assisting their residents with coursework provided one of the highest frequency behaviors in the experiences reported by paraprofessionals. Therefore, the behavior "assists residents with their coursework and other projects," with a frequency of 20, provided the lead for a second cluster. Not only did the paraprofessionals describe incidents in which they provided assistance, the idea that their own experiences as a student provided benefit to their residents also appeared with some frequency (24) and supported this cluster.

Behavior number 31, which appeared in the cluster regarding academic resources, had merit for this cluster of tasks as well. Once again, in order for paraprofessionals to offer assistance, they must develop means either formally or informally to become aware of needs for assistance.

As the researcher reviewed the incidents outlined by participants, the researcher established and utilized behaviors at both a macro and micro level to code these experiences. As noted and defined in Chapter 3, this approach was utilized in order to better ensure that no important behaviors would go unrecognized. An example of the "macro" and "micro" approach becomes very apparent in this cluster of tasks. If a paraprofessional described assisting students with a specific kind of coursework, the researcher coded for "assists residents with their coursework and projects." However, the researcher also coded for providing assistance in the specific area noted. While several areas of specialized assistance were reflected in paraprofessionals' incidents, only one specific area of assistance emerged with higher frequency. This area of specialized assistance was, "assists residents with calculus/math coursework," with a frequency of six. Therefore, both the macro behavior, "assists residents with coursework," and the
micro behavior, "assists residents with calculus/math coursework," were both placed in this cluster of tasks in its initial stage.

Finally, the behavior, "guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tips," with a frequency of five, initially appeared to fall into this cluster of tasks. Thus the initial list of behaviors, based on higher frequency behaviors, for this cluster included the following:

- 46 Assists residents with their coursework and projects
- 47a Assists residents with calculus/math coursework
- 45 Uses own experiences as a student to assist others
- 31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents
- 30 Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tip information.

With this initial set of behaviors for the cluster of tasks identified, the researcher examined lower frequency behaviors for those which might have application for this cluster. In fact, many of these behaviors aggregated up into the cluster. These behaviors included:

- 59a Serve as an editor for reader response and essay papers
- 59b Listens to residents' speeches and presentations, offers advice and suggestions
- 154 Studies with residents
- 74 Provide review sessions
- 136 Develops study tip newsletters and bathroom displays
- 29 Maintains knowledge of effective study tips
- 134 Meets regularly with residents to discuss their classes

Upon review, behaviors 59a, 59b, 154 and 74 appeared to have relationship to
behavior 46, "assists residents with their coursework and projects." In each case, the behavior describes coursework assistance through a variety of venues such as editing papers, speeches, presentations. Moreover, although it emerged as a higher frequency behavior in its own right, 47a, "assists residents with math/calculus coursework," demonstrated assistance that borders on serving in a tutorial capacity.

Meanwhile, behaviors 136 and 29 supported item 30, "Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tip information," in that they spoke to vehicles for the delivery of this information (newsletters, bathroom displays) and the paraprofessionals capacity to do so.

Other lower frequency behaviors appeared related and were pulled into the cluster as well. Therefore, a revised framework for this cluster which included related higher and lower frequency tasks evolved into the following. Please note that lower frequency tasks appear in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

46  Assists residents with their coursework and projects
47a Assists residents with calculus/math coursework
59a Serve as an editor for reader response and essay papers
59b Listens to resident's speeches and presentations. Offer advice and suggestions
154 Studies with residents
74 Provide review sessions
21 Challenges residents thinking
45 Uses own experiences as a student to assist others
60 Uses own major to communicate a diverse professional perspective to other residents' majors
65 Shares a common academic background with residents
31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for
individual residents

134  **Meets regularly with residents to discuss their classes**

30  Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tip information

136  **Develops study tip newsletters and bathroom displays**

29  **Maintains knowledge of effective study tips**

These behaviors, clustered in this manner, provided the background for a competency statement and tasks. Behavior number 46, "assists students with their coursework and projects," along with related behaviors, not only represented a large grouping but seemed to encompass areas with direct relationship to supporting learning. The information contained in this grouping became an obvious task. However, it also provided a distinguishing characteristic for this cluster. Other clusters suggested the paraprofessionals role in providing "assistance." However, this cluster of tasks, in contrast to others, suggested specific competency in serving students directly in regards to coursework. The concept of direct assistance in coursework framed the competency statement which became, "personally serves students as a content, subject matter resource for coursework." The competency was crafted to recognize that the paraprofessional must personally provide this assistance.

The activities related to this competency fell in step with the reported higher frequency behaviors but with emphasis placed on the activities' relationship to providing assistance in coursework. For example, behavior number 31, "develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents," was modified, to reflect an emphasis on coursework. In its task form, this behavior became, "develops means for becoming aware of students' desire for coursework assistance."
Meanwhile behavior 45, "uses own experiences as a student to assist others," served well as an important descriptor recognizing the paraprofessionals' higher frequency contention that they utilize their own student experiences to provide assistance. Finally, the grouping of behaviors around behavior 46, "assists residents with their coursework and projects" was summarized as a task which read as, "tutors students in coursework and projects; provides feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers."

The choice to emphasize the "content, subject matter nature," in this competency statement led to dropping behavior 30, "Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tip information," and related behaviors (136, 29) from the cluster. While study skills and tips certainly have the potential to support coursework assistance, they are generic and thus lack the emphasis of "content, subject matter." They no longer appeared to link as strongly to the cluster.

Thus, the final competency statement and tasks for the first round of the study were as follows:

Personally serves students as a content, subject matter resource for coursework.

a. develops means for becoming aware of students' desire for coursework assistance.
b. uses own experiences as a student assist others.
c. tutors students in coursework and projects; provides feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.

- Establishes a sense of community among students

Two of the higher frequency behaviors related to the concept of programs and activities which assist residents in forming as a community. These two behaviors, numbers 75, "organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team," and number 66, " organizes and develops programs," provided the lead concepts for a cluster that focused on "community." The researcher was able to add two other higher frequency behaviors to
this cluster which related to using community service to develop community among residents and, a very specific type of program, alcohol education. This second behavior served as another "micro" example of the "macro" task which was number 66, "organizes and develops programs."

Therefore, the initial cluster comprised of higher frequency behaviors consisted of the following:

75 Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team

66 Organizes and develops programs
71 Organizes programs and educates residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing

49b Uses community service to develop community among residents

Following the initial development of the cluster based on higher frequency behaviors the researcher reviewed lower frequency behaviors for those which related to the cluster. Five of these behaviors appeared to fit well with the concept of community, including:

161 Publishes a weekly newsletter about hall and/or university events

77 Leads residents in establishing rules and standards for community living

78 Leads residents in establishing expectations for communal areas

119 Develops a sense of pride in the community

160 Develops programs that help residents connect with the university community

Another behavior, number 160, "Develops programs that help residents connect with the university community," with a frequency of two, appeared to fit as well.
A couple of behaviors easily pulled in lower frequency behaviors. For example, "organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team," was supported by lower frequency behaviors such as, behavior number 146, "encourages residents to go to dinners as a group," behavior number 12 "uses the identification of common classes to assist residents in developing friendships," and behavior number 152, "develops surveys for residents to get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses." Meanwhile, behavior number 66, "organizes and develops programs," with a frequency of 46, pulled in 28 lower frequency behaviors thereby offering the most vivid example of the macro-micro coding process applied in this study. While organizing and developing programs was a highly frequency behavior, the types of programs and/or activities related to their development represent a wide range of topics.

Therefore, using both higher and lower frequency behaviors, the community cluster emerged to include the following behaviors. Please note that lower frequency behaviors appear in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

75 Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team

146 Encourages residents to go to dinners as a group either formally or spontaneously

12 Uses identification of common classes to assist residents in developing friendships

152 Develops surveys for residents to get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses

77 Leads residents in establishing rules and standards for community living

78 Leads residents in establishing expectations for communal areas

34b Gets involved in resident's activities
Mediates residents' tension conflict and debate regarding controversial issues in order to stimulate learning

Discourages competition among students

Develops a sense of pride in the community

Organizes and develops programs

Organizes programs and educate residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing

Guides residents in organizing and developing programs

Develops programs that orient students to their hall policies

Organizes programs and experiences that build leadership

Organizes and develops co-ed social programs

Organizes Jewish New Year program

Arranges dinners between floors

Develops means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest

Organizes birthday socials

Organizes watch parties for students (sports, T.V. shows)

Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills

Arranges off site programs

Identifies and acquires resources to finance off site programs

Organizes activities such as dinners to help students understand vegan values

Arranges/organizes camping trips for residents

Arranges ski trips

Arranges trips to Washington D.C.

Develops passive and active programming to inform residents about eating disorders and/or nutrition

Organizes and develops programs to broaden residents awareness of issues of disabilities

Organizes activities to support healthy roommate relationships

Organizes programs that allow residents to share autobiographic information

Organizes programs that educate residents regarding issues of safety

Organizes programs to develop a sense of civic responsibility

Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills

Develops and implements forums to address controversial issues

Develops lectures to provide residents with information related to current world events
Identifies speakers to provide residents with additional information regarding other religions
Arranges speakers on topics of concern to residents
Organizes lectures concerning services in foreign countries
Develop means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest to them
Develops programs that help residents connect with the university community
Leads residents in decorating the halls for the holidays
Uses community service to develop community among residents
Leads residents in identifying fundraising projects
Leads residents in developing variety shows
Publishes a weekly newsletter about hall and/or university events
Prepares and informs residents of upcoming changes in their facilities (1)

One could identify a number of "skills" oriented behaviors and/or knowledge bases suggested from these behaviors in the community cluster of tasks. However, the key "goal" of the activity suggested by the behaviors seemed to lie in one of the lead concepts--the establishment of community. The concept of community, therefore, inspired the competency statement developed for the cluster which was "establishes a sense of community among residents." Similarly, another higher frequency behavior, "uses community service to develop community among residents," translated well as a task. Finally, the importance of communication to community, as noted in the lower frequency behavior 161 served as a task as well. However, the concept was expanded with the use of the word "media" recognizing that paraprofessionals might utilize communication tools beyond newsletters.

The final competency statement and tasks which emerged from this cluster for use in stage one, round two of the study were as follows:
Establishes a sense of community among students

a. organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners)
b. uses community service opportunities to develop community among students.
c. uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters) to communicate community information to students.

- **Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's materials, theme and classes.**

A number of high frequency behaviors suggested the role paraprofessionals can play in specifically linking the common LLC/residential college theme or experience to the residence hall environment. These behaviors included those which involved linking hall programs to LLC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes; identifying common classes for distribution and encouraging study groups; providing chances for residents to share what they are learning; and organizing team competitions. Another behavior, "arranges off site programs," became even more directly related to the concept of linking hall activities with the LLC/residential college theme when it was merged with two lower frequency behaviors. The highest frequency behavior in this cluster "links hall/community programs and activities to LLC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes," with a frequency of five, provided the lead concept for the cluster as the additional higher behaviors, appear to provide additional examples.

To summarize, following are the higher frequency behaviors that appear to cluster around the concept of linking LLC course materials, etc.

- 62 Links hall/community programs and activities to LLC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes
- 10 Identifies, lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LLC
- 11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups
126  Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about what they are learning

84a  Arranges off site programs

73  Organizes team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, physics and engineering (ex's: airplane competition, egg drop, gingerbread construction competition) or other learning communities

Once the researcher established this initial cluster of tasks based on the higher frequency behaviors, the researcher reviewed the lower frequency behaviors to identify those which merged with the cluster. As noted earlier, for the behavior number 75, "arranges off-site programs," two lower frequency behaviors appeared to provide both examples and the linkage to the LC theme suggested in this cluster. These behaviors included, behavior number 49c, "arranges field trips related to the LLC's theme" and behavior 49d, "arranges field trips related to the LC's theme of art."

In addition to these behaviors, several other behaviors were identified among the lower frequency behaviors. In each case, while they may not have been mentioned frequently, they still supported paraprofessionals assisting in linking the residence hall experience to the LLC or residential college theme. These behaviors included bringing instructional faculty from LLC/residential college courses into the community, communicating the importance of and background information for a LLC/residential college, establishing channels for LLC/residential college students to provide feedback to faculty, serving as a liaison, organizing literary film festivals, surveying residents regarding the overall atmosphere and assisting with LLC/residential college related final projects.

Therefore, the combined list of both lower and higher frequency behaviors which informed the development of this cluster emerged as follows. Note that lower frequency items appear in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.
Links hall/community programs and activities to LC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes

Develop programs that bring instructional faculty from (LC required courses) into community for discussion on material related to the course

Organizes and develops literary film festivals

Develops and recruits student participation for student advisory board which provides feedback on the LC's studies and program integration with the Honors Dean and LC Coordinator

Support and assist residents in the preparation of final projects related to the learning community's theme

Surveys residents to determine the overall academic atmosphere and comfort level

Serves as a liaison between learning community members and LC mentor

Identifies lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LC

Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups

Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about each other and what they are learning

Arranges off site programs

Arranges field trips related to LC's theme

Arranges field trips related to LC's theme of Art

Organizes team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, physics and engineering (ex's: airplane competition, egg drop, gingerbread construction competition) or other learning communities

Communicates vision for and importance of a living/learning program

Brings in faculty or staff to give students' background information related to LC theme
As noted earlier, behavior number 62 appeared to encompass all these behaviors and thereby provide the overall goal for this particular cluster. Meanwhile, other behaviors appeared to further support and/or provide examples. Therefore, the researcher chose to use this behavior as the competency statement for the cluster. The remaining higher frequency behaviors, provided the additional tasks. One lower frequency task, "Communicates vision for and importance of the living/learning program" also served as a task because, like the higher frequency tasks, it represented a unique method by which linkages could be made.

Other lower frequency behaviors supported the overall competency statement and tasks. Thus, this cluster developed into the following competency statement and tasks:

Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's materials, curriculum, theme and classes.

a. communicates vision for and the importance of the living learning community.
   Provides background/historical information regarding the learning community.

b. identifies commonalities in students' class schedules in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance in coursework.

c. based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings; encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

d. develops activities that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in classes.

e. arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community's theme

f. organizes resident team competitions to support coursework learning.

- Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success

Two higher frequency behaviors reflected the experiences of paraprofessionals that involved encouraging their residents in coursework. Because, these two behaviors contained the similar term "encouragement" and appeared to contain similar intent, the researcher initiated a cluster around the two behaviors. The initial two behaviors in this cluster of tasks, which were based on higher frequency behaviors, included:

20 Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General
98 Organizes and implements "study bucks" or other programs to encourage study

Once the researcher had initiated the cluster of tasks with these two behaviors, she examined the lower frequency behaviors to determine if any appeared to link into a cluster built around the concept of "encouragement." In fact, the researcher was able to identify many behaviors that appeared to link with this concept and, more specifically, with one of the higher frequency behaviors. For example, behavior 112, "decorates doors with candy and star's for A's and B's," appeared to aggregate into the higher frequency behavior as did, "Organizes and implements 'study bucks' or other programs to encourage study."

Similarly, other lower frequency behaviors appeared to link up into this same behavior because of their underlying programmatic orientation. They included those related to recognizing academic achievement, instituting polices which encourage study, providing residents with positive reinforcement, and posting motivational signs. Similarly, decorating study areas and setting aside special areas for study represented two more means for “encouraging” students.

Likewise, several lower frequency behaviors appear to link up to behavior number 20, "Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement." Each of the related behaviors appeared to relate to this behavior because of the more personal nature of the behavior. The related behaviors included: "Counsels residents in the importance of homework", "motivates extra-curricular academic pursuits", and "encourages personal responsibility."
Therefore, the combined cluster of tasks of higher and lower frequency behaviors is as the follows. Please note that lower frequency behaviors are in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

20 Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement

147 Counsels residents in the importance of homework
57 Motivates extra-curricular academic pursuits
151 Encourages personal responsibility

98 Organizes and implements "study bucks" or other programs to encourage study

112 Decorates doors with candy and stars for A's and B's
169 Institutes policies to encourage study
157 Posts motivational signs
158 Provides residents with positive reinforcement
149 Decorates and enhances study areas to make more appealing for study
96 Establishes special areas in the hall for study

148 Helps residents set academic goals or plans

97 Encourages residents to attend classes

111 Recognizes academic achievement

In order to develop the competency statement for this cluster, the researcher once again examined the behaviors to identify what goal they suggested. It appeared that in addition to general encouragement, the behaviors suggested “motivation” as a key concept. Both the concept of encouragement as well as motivation seemed to move the student towards academic success. The competency statement was, therefore, articulated as "actively motivates and encourages students' academic success." The higher frequency behaviors, because they seemed to encompass concepts articulated in lower frequency behaviors, served as statements of task. Several lower frequency behaviors also appeared to serve well as tasks. For example, "helps residents in developing academic plans and
goals," was utilized to develop a task because it reflected a unique method for motivating students. Similarly, "encourages students to attend class," though a lower frequency behavior, represented a strategy widely considered effective for promoting academic success, and therefore was included as a task. Finally, "recognizes academic achievement," served well as a task because "recognition" is also often considered an effective means for motivation. Therefore, though a lower frequency behavior, it was included as task. The competency statement and its tasks, therefore, were established for this stage as:

Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success:

a. assists residents in developing academic plans and goals
b. supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.
c. organizes and implements "study bucks" or other programs to encourage students to study.
d. encourages residents to attend classes.
e. recognizes individual or hall academic achievement

• **Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors**

Several higher frequency behaviors suggested a cluster built around the concept of paraprofessionals providing assistance in regards to registration, selecting classes and selecting majors. The researcher elected to cluster these concepts together because, in the collegiate environment they have relationship. Said differently, the selection of a major can dictate selection of classes which, in turn, both dictates and requires the navigation of the registration processes.

For example, "Guides residents in selecting majors or learning about careers" had a frequency of six and, combined well with a related behavior, "Familiarity with university's choices in majors," with a frequency of seven.
Other higher frequency behaviors combined as well. Behavior number 23a, "assists residents in selecting classes," merged into 23b, "provides residents with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information."

Finally, two other higher frequency behaviors appeared to combine in the same manner. The first related to the registration and scheduling processes. This is behavior number 24, "Guides residents in using university's registration and scheduling processes," which carried with it another behavior, "understands university's registration process." Therefore, this cluster initially developed based on the following higher frequency behaviors:

- 26 Guides residents in selecting majors or learning about a career
- 24 Guides residents in using University's registration and scheduling processes
- 23a Assists residents in selecting classes
- 23b Provides residents with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information

The researcher then moved on to examine lower frequency behaviors for those which appeared to link with this cluster of tasks. In fact, the researcher identified two additional behaviors. For example, number 37 "refers residents to advisor's for registration / scheduling issues (has advisor's phone number)."

A second lower frequency behavior, number 155, appeared to link well into this cluster because it demonstrates action which supports registration. This behavior was "sets up floor e-mail listservs to assist students with registration and other processes."

Two other lower frequency items, 26 and 167, were pulled in to support 23a. Therefore, the cluster of tasks containing both higher and lower frequency behaviors emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency behaviors are noted in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.
24 Guides residents in using university's registration and scheduling processes

155 Sets up floor e-mail listservs to assist with registration and other processes

37 Refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues (has advisors phone number)

23a Assists residents in selecting classes

23b Provides residents with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information

26 Guides residents in selecting majors or learning about careers

167 Helps residents prepare resume' and prepare for interviews

From this cluster, the researcher moved to develop a competency statement. No one behavior appeared to provide a lead concept but rather the idea of providing assistance in the areas of registration and selection of classes and major appeared to serve as a linking concept. The competency statement which articulated this concept emerged as, "assists residents in registration/class selection and exploration of majors."

In addition to the development of the competency statement, three tasks were also developed based on the higher frequency behaviors and one task based on a lower frequency behavior. The first task was based on the behavior "refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues." While this is a lower frequency behavior, the researcher elected to acknowledge it as a task based on the knowledge that, on most campuses, students primarily receive advising from professional advisors on campus. Furthermore, the concept of referrals was also reflected in behavior 23b.

Another task developed directly from higher frequency behaviors. This task was based on behavior number 24, "Guides residents in using university's registration and scheduling processes." The final task combined concepts in behaviors 23a, 23b and 26,
recognizing that the paraprofessional both provides information (as suggested by 23b) and then assists residents in the selection of classes (23a) and majors (26).

The final competency statement and list of tasks articulated for stage two, round two of the study were as follows:

- Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances

  A previous set of behaviors developed into the cluster and subsequent competency which acknowledged the pro-active behaviors paraprofessionals complete in order to encourage academic success. However, this next competency was based on still other higher frequency behaviors which suggested that LLC/residential college paraprofessionals assist students in overcoming difficulties which can become barriers to academic success.

  This cluster was initiated from two higher frequency behaviors. The first behavior, reflected the assistance provided in times of pressure. This behavior, number 94, "assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams," had a frequency of seven. The second behavior, number 32, involved coaching residents in how to approach and talk with faculty when facing difficulties and had a frequency of five. In both cases, either directly or indirectly, the paraprofessional seeks to assist the student in need. Thus, this cluster was initiated by two anchoring behaviors:

- 94 Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams
32 Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out professors. Coaches residents in how to approach and talk with professors.

Following the establishment of this cluster, the researcher examined lower frequency behaviors to determine if any appeared to reflect the emerging cluster of tasks’ theme of overcoming difficulties. In fact, several lower frequency behaviors appeared to support this cluster. For example, behavior number 43, "helps students negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop," carried with it the cluster's concept of providing assistance in times of difficulty. Similarly, behavior number 170, "Identifies problems, trends, barriers to academic success and develops strategies to assist," fits into the cluster because it reflects the paraprofessionals’ behavior of looking ahead to potential barriers for students and strategizing to prevent them. It also appeared to combine well with 143.

Finally, two other lower frequency behaviors, which were related to each other, also fit the cluster concept because stress and anxiety are often considered a difficulty. These were behaviors 82a and 82b which speak to providing opportunities to relieve stress and or receive information. Still other lower frequency behaviors supported the concept of this cluster. Therefore, the cluster of higher and lower frequency behaviors emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency behaviors are noted in italics.

94 Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams
32 Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out professors. Coach's residents in how to talk with professors.
143 Helps students negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop
170 Identifies problems, trends, barriers to academic success and develops strategies to assist
82a Provides opportunities for residents to relieve stress
Provides information on how to deal with stress reduce anxiety
Organizes study breaks

Once the cluster of tasks emerged, the researcher moved to develop the competency statement. Seeking counseling from staff and/or faculty and overcoming stress represent sound academic survival skills. This idea became a key concept for the development of the competency statement. Moreover, because each behavior statement suggested problems or stress, it seemed appropriate to recognize the underlying competency as applying academic survival skills “under difficult circumstances.” Therefore, the competency statement emerged as, "Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances."

Two tasks were formed directly from the behavior statements. In the first case, "Helps student negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop," was modified slightly to recognize that the paraprofessional counsels their residents "as appropriate," once again recognizing that their counsel has limitations.

In regards to encouraging students to seek out professors, the behavior statement appeared to translate directly as a task. Finally, the researcher elected to combine concepts in two behaviors (82 and 94) to describe the work of assisting students with stress under generally accepted stressful collegiate circumstances (mid-terms, finals, exams and papers). The final competency statement and task for stage one, round one of the study was articulated as:

Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic and stressful circumstances:

a. counsels residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing classes, or modifying class schedules.
b. encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors. Coach's residents in how to talk with faculty about difficulties.
c. assists residents in identifying and using stress management techniques in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals, exams or papers.
• Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns

The next cluster which emerged began with two higher frequency behaviors which pulled in lower frequency behaviors and, at the same time, became lead concepts. These two behaviors were number 64 and number one. The first lead concept was behavior number 64, "Provides emotional support to individual residents or groups," with a frequency of eight.

The next higher frequency behavior which helped to form this cluster was behavior number one, "Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents with a frequency of six. Therefore, the initial set of two behaviors for this cluster were:

64  Provides emotional support to individual residents or groups (8)
1  Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents (6)

With these two behaviors identified, the researcher moved to examine lower frequency behaviors for those which might have relationship. In regards to the first behavior, number 64, lower frequency behaviors several seemed to link well. These behaviors describe areas in which emotional support may occur such as transitioning relationships, personal crisis, self esteem and conflict. Meanwhile, the behaviors suggested methods by which they provide assistance such as contacting residents, active listening, use of bulletin boards, leading discussions, applying guidance and support and mediating conflict.

In regards to behavior number one, once again, several behaviors seemed to support this behavior because they describe means by which the paraprofessional can become more aware of personal concerns. These behaviors include getting to know the residents' perspectives, maintaining availability, and having dinner with individual
residents. Thus the initial framework of the higher and lower frequency behaviors emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency behaviors are noted in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

64 Provides emotional support to individual residents or groups

6d Uses bulletin boards to post emotional and physical health information

50 Identifies orientation/adjustment needs of residents and develops programs and strategies

54 Assists residents in understanding and transitioning relationships as they move through their college years

55 Leads guided discussions regarding transitioning relationships as students leave for break periods

135 Assesses and applies amount of guidance and support students want

128Suspends judgment about residents until gets to know them

130 Builds residents self-esteem

99 Mediates conflict between individuals and groups

88 Maintains awareness of issues related to eating disorders

2 Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern, and offers assistance

3 Employs active listening skills to assist residents with personal concerns

1 Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents

19 Uses interpersonal skills to "get to know" individual residents perspectives

34a Maintains availability to residents and keeps residents apprised of where he/she is

162 Has dinner with individual residents

The lead behavior, "provides emotional support to individual residents or groups" seemed to provide an overarching concept which encompassed the lower frequency behaviors. Once again, the lower frequency behaviors provided more specific descriptions. Moreover, it served to support the other higher frequency behavior because, in order to assist students, the paraprofessional must first develop means for becoming aware of concerns. Therefore, the researcher utilized the behavior, "provides emotional
support to individual residents or groups" for the competency statement with one modification. In order to recognize the distinction between this type of assistance and the competency cluster which articulates academic assistance, the researcher added the term, "non-academic concerns." Therefore, the competency statement emerged as, "provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns."

Behavior number two appeared to serve well as the first task for this cluster because the concepts of communicating concern and offering assistance seemed to encompass the more specific behaviors. Moreover, many of the behaviors seemed to speak to individual assistance.

The other higher frequency behavior and its' supporting behaviors, served well as another task. Therefore, this competency cluster emerged as the following:

**Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.**

a. develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents.
b. contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern and offers assistance.

- **Faculty Involvement**

Another competency emerged around the concept of the paraprofessionals facilitating interaction between students and faculty. This cluster began with one higher frequency behavior which appeared to stand on its own, behavior number 63b, "provides means for students to meet and get to know faculty," which had a frequency of eight.

Faculty play an important role in residential colleges/LLC programs. In fact, most of the institutions which participated in the study were selected, in part, because of the involvement of faculty. Therefore, the researcher allowed the behavior to stand on its own and examined the lower frequency behaviors for those which might link into this one. In fact, several lower frequency behaviors did appear to center on the concept of
faculty involvement. For example, 63a, "provides means for residents to develop relationships with faculty," seemed to be another form of the higher frequency behavior, 63b. Meanwhile, other behaviors described arranging and implementing scavenger hunts and faculty banquet/dinner.

While these behaviors highlighted the role of social interaction between faculty and students, other behaviors addressed faculty related, yet academically oriented, activities such as lectures or fairs to learn more about academic programs. For example, behavior number 110, "arranges faculty lectures," and the related behavior, number 14, "uses faculty, staff and community leaders to assist students understanding and debate of controversial issues," demonstrated the behavior of creating interaction opportunities focused on intellectual inquiry. Similarly, behavior numbers 105a and 105b relate to the paraprofessionals setting up "college fairs," which are opportunities to interact with faculty in the colleges.

Thus, the initial cluster including both higher and lower frequency behaviors emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency items are noted in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

63b Provides means for students to meet and get to know faculty
63a Provides means for residents to develop relationships with faculty

102 Arranges and implements faculty scavenger hunt
103 Arranges and implements a faculty banquet or dinner

110 Arranges faculty lectures
14 Uses faculty, staff and community leaders to assist students understanding and debate of controversial issues

105a Set up "college fair" with Deans, Advisors, Professors
105b Set up school of management fair
This cluster of tasks was initiated based on one higher frequency behavior (63a). The concept within this behavior appeared to encompass well the other behaviors and therefore was utilized as the lead concept with a slight modification. The word "relationship" was changed to "interact" which better reflected the range of activities in the cluster. Some of these activities are designed to allow time for interaction but potentially not enough time for relationship building. Therefore, the competency statement for this cluster, became, "provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty."

In terms of the tasks to accompany the competency statement, the researcher elected to combine the two behaviors which had social overtones. Thus, behaviors 102 and 103, "organizes opportunities such as banquets, dinners or a scavenger hunt, which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty into a task" which were combined. This task also emphasized the learning community. Similarly, the second task, "organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions..." evolved from behaviors numbers 110 and 114.

The behaviors in this cluster could have involved either LLC faculty or non-LLC faculty. In recognition of this and because behaviors 105a and 105b related to the paraprofessional providing students with exposure to "college" faculty, likely including non-residential college faculty, the researcher developed a task which centers on exposing students to other faculty on campus.

Therefore, the final competency and its tasks emerged as:

Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

a. organizes opportunities, such as banquets, dinners, or a scavenger hunt, which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

b. organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions.
• Employs effective interpersonal skills for developing individual relationships and nurturing the community

Among the clusters, there were two final clusters which initially emerged but which the researcher would later merge into other clusters based on a decision to provide specific direction to the clusters. These clusters initially developed based on high frequency behaviors.

The first of the two clusters revolved around interpersonal skills and began with three higher frequency behaviors:

41 Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents
35 Develops trust between him/herself and residents
121 Provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods

With these three higher frequency behaviors tentatively grouped together, the researcher returned to the lower frequency behaviors to determine if any appeared related to these behaviors. In fact several lower frequency behavior appeared to link well. For example, number 41, "knows and calls each residents name," and number 42, "knows each residents' academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, etc." linked to number 33a, "uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents." The researcher made the link in this case because paraprofessionals are often instructed to learn their residents' names and majors as a pre-cursor for getting to know residents.

Two other behaviors appeared to match with this cluster of tasks as well. For example, 33c, "checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally," and number 101, "hangs out with residents/relationship building," also
appeared to link into this cluster because, once again, it requires and demonstrates skills that paraprofessionals utilize to develop interpersonal relationships. Thus, the outline of higher and lower frequency behaviors emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency items are noted in bold. Numbers correspond to codes in Table 1.

33a Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents

41 Knows and calls each residents' name
42 Knows each residents' academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, etc.

35 Develops trust between himself/herself and residents

33c Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally
101 Hangs out with residents/relationship building

121 Provides nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods

The researcher used this framework of higher and lower frequency behaviors to develop a competency statement and tasks. To develop the competency statement, the researcher recognized that the behaviors suggested the use of interpersonal skills such as generating dialogue, developing trust and "checking in." The researcher also noted the purpose of these skills, as suggested in behavior 101, which is to develop relationships with individuals. The researcher recognized these points in the competency statement and also recognized the nurturing of the community suggested in behavior 101. Therefore, the cluster's competency statement emerged as, "employs effective interpersonal skills for developing individual relationships and nurturing the community."

The researcher utilized the higher frequency behaviors to provide a set of tasks for the competency statement. Both behavior number 35, "develops trust between himself/herself and residents," and number 121, "provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods", were utilized in the same format. Two other behaviors, 33a
and 33c, were combined to form one task because they are likely to occur in tandem. Paraprofessionals generally do “check in” and then “generate dialogue.”

The final competency statement and descriptive activities appeared as:

Employs effective interpersonal skills for developing individual relationships and nurturing the community.

a. develops trust between himself/herself and residents
b. "checks in" with residents. Generates dialogue and conversation.
c. provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks

- Establishes an environment for students to assist each other in their coursework

A final competency cluster emerged based on both higher and lower frequency behaviors which suggested a role for the paraprofessional in fostering residents assisting each other in coursework. Three higher frequency behaviors initially formed the cluster of tasks because they either specifically noted students assisting each other or the encouragement of study groups. In study groups students assist each other with coursework. Thus the three higher frequency behaviors which initially formed this cluster were as follows:

11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups

123 Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework

107 Encourages and facilitates study groups and group homework

The researcher then examined lower frequency behaviors for those which might identify with this cluster. In fact, six behaviors appeared to link with these higher frequency behaviors, "encourage and facilitates study groups and group homework." These behaviors relate to organizing group readings, group proof readings, facilitating small group discussions and "study sessions." Another lower frequency behavior appeared to relate to this cluster because of its emphasis on “student to student”
assistance. This behavior, number 108, was "encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upper-class and freshmen." By clustering these lower frequency behaviors combined with higher frequency behaviors, a cluster framework emerged as the following. Please note that lower frequency items are noted in bold. Numbers correspond to codes from Table 1.

11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups

123 Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework

107 Encourages and facilitates study groups and group homework

87 Organizes group readings, book clubs for students to understand a book required for class or books that will be helpful

114 Organizes group proof reading rings

72 Facilitates small group discussions and study sessions

90a Facilitates study sessions

90b Facilitates study sessions for economics

108 Encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upper-class and freshmen

The behaviors in this cluster appeared to speak to the paraprofessionals' role in establishing the context in which peers can assist each other. Therefore, behavior 123, "encourages and facilitates study groups and group homework," served as a lead concept which then emerged as the competency statement.

Other behaviors then aptly translated into tasks which further described the competency. For example, behavior 11 and its related behaviors articulated a role in facilitating group learning. Therefore, a task statement emerged as, "encourages study groups and assists residents." The second task, 107, recognized the paraprofessional's role, suggested in the behaviors, of organizing group learning activities--study groups, group homework, etc. These two activities and the competency statement combined to establish the following competency and tasks:
Establishes an environment for students to assist each other in their coursework.

a. encourages study groups and assists residents
b. organizes group readings; encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

A summary of all behaviors as clustered may be found in Appendix H.

As the researcher reviewed the competency statements and tasks which emerged from the behaviors, it appeared that nine of the competencies reflected a “goal orientation.” Said differently, these competencies reflected what might be goals for the program. These competencies reflected the specific nature of the LLC. Meanwhile two other competencies reflected a “functional orientation.” In other words, they reflected competencies related areas of function or skill which could be found in a variety of programs. At this point, the researcher determined that a paraprofessional competency model would best reflect the unique nature of the position and residential college or LLC program if the competencies reflected a “goal orientation”. The “Interpersonal Skills” and “peer to peer Assistance” clusters both appeared to reflect a “functional” as opposed to "goal" orientation. Even closer examination of these two clusters revealed a link between many of the behaviors contained in these clusters and other "goal oriented" competencies. In fact, all behaviors under the competency, “peer to peer” assistance, appeared to fit within the competency, “Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes.” The specific tasks in the “peer to peer” assistance were as follows:

11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups

123 Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework

107 Encourages and facilitates study groups and group homework
Organizes group readings, book clubs for students to understand a book required for class or books that will be helpful
Organizes group proof reading rings
Facilitate small group discussions and study sessions
Facilitates study sessions
Facilitates study sessions for economics
Encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upper-class and freshmen

Because residential college/LLC programs typically involve common classes or a common curriculum, the development or facilitation of study groups described by the behaviors (and then tasks) in the peer to peer assistance cluster inherently must relate to these common class experiences. Therefore, these tasks appeared to support at least two tasks under the competency for "linking hall community programs and activities to the learning community's materials, curriculum, theme and classes."

Similarly, behaviors contained in the competency cluster, related to “interpersonal skills” fit well with three other competencies. For example, several behaviors appear to support the competency “Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.” These behaviors included:

- 33a Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents
- 41 Knows each resident's name
- 42 Knows each resident's academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, etc.
- 35 Develops trust between him/herself and residents
- 33c Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally

Each of these behaviors supports the development of relationship and trust. Relationship and trust are key to developing means for becoming aware of a personal concerns and / or
to contact and offer assistance as suggested in the competency cluster which emerged around the idea of “emotional support.”

Meanwhile, behavior number 33 “checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally," and number 42, “knows each residents academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects," support the competency, “connects students with academic resources on campus.” More specifically, they support the task “develops means for becoming aware of students needs to access campus resources.”

Two final behaviors in the Interpersonal Skills cluster support the competency, “Establishes a sense of community among students”. These behaviors are:

121 Provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods

101 **Hangs out with residents/relationship building**

These behaviors fit easily with the “community” cluster for two reasons. Behavior number 101, "hangs out with residents/relationship building," suggests something paraprofessionals can do to facilitate community development. Similarly, behavior 121 suggests the kind of nurturing environment which supports community.

The merging of the interpersonal skills and peer to peer assistance clusters into other competencies produced the final framework of tasks shown below. The final set of nine competencies and related descriptive activities appear in Appendix E.

**Competencies and Task Statements**

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. communicates vision for and the importance of the living learning community. Provides background historical information regarding the learning community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. identifies commonalities in students’ class schedules in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance in coursework.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings; encourages</td>
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</table>
and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

d. develops activities that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in classes.

e. arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community's theme.

f. organizes resident team competitions to support coursework learning.

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<tr>
<th>II. Personally serves students as a content, subject-matter resource for coursework.</th>
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<td>b. uses own experiences as a student to assist others.</td>
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<td>c. tutors students in coursework and projects; provides feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.</td>
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<td>b. organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions.</td>
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<td>b. refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, test files, and exam review sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade cards, schedules).</td>
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<td>d. develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters) for communicating academic resource information to students.</td>
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<td>c. provides information and guides residents in selecting classes and majors.</td>
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VI. Actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success.

- a. assists residents in developing academic plans and goals.
- b. supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.
- c. organizes and implements “study bucks” or other programs to encourage students to study.
- d. encourages residents to attend classes.
- e. recognizes individual or hall academic achievement.

VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.

- a. counsels residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing classes, or modifying class schedules.
- b. encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors. Coach’s residents in how to talk with faculty about difficulties.
- c. assists residents in identifying and using stress management techniques in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals, exams or papers.

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

- a. organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners).
- b. uses community service opportunities to develop community among students.
- c. uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters) to communicate community information to students.

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

- a. develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents.
- b. contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern and offers assistance.

Results from Delphi Technique

The next stage (stage two, round two) of the study called for the researcher to distribute the set of nine competencies to a Delphi panel. The Delphi panel was comprised of faculty and staff. Each member of the Delphi panel received the
competencies and tasks. They were asked to review the competencies and tasks and suggest modifications. The Delphi panel members were also invited to suggest new competencies (see Appendix E).

Twenty-two of thirty Delphi panel members responded in this stage of the study. One panel member’s responses were directed toward another position (faculty) and therefore dropped. Therefore, there were 21 usable responses. Based on the feedback provided by Delphi panel members, the researcher was able to modify the competencies and tasks and to articulate three new competencies. Because the researcher had invited "suggested changes" the researcher assumed that panel members suggested “no changes” if they did not indicate a change.

In the case of the original nine competencies and tasks the majority of respondents suggested “no changes.” Whenever “no changes” were suggested, the researcher assumed an absence of comment. Also, each “suggested change” generally equates to one respondent. Therefore, the researcher did not change the essential competencies or tasks. However, the researcher was able to utilize the suggested changes to make modifications which,

a) provide greater explanation and/or

b) expand the examples provide in the statements and tasks

In the following examples, the researcher reviews modifications to each competency as well as the tasks. Changes may be viewed in Appendix F.

- **Competency 1: Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes.**

  For the first competency, “Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes,” seventeen Delphi panel members suggested no changes. However, based on feedback from panel members, the
researcher modified the competency to add the concept of “mission” to the competency statement. The new competency became: “Links hall / community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.”

Another reviewer suggested the integration of LLC with the larger campus community. This feedback was written by a panel member under the competency. However, the researcher determined it better served to modify task “e.”

In regards to other changes to tasks, for the first task for Competency One, seventeen Delphi panel members suggested no change and four suggested changes. Several pieces of feedback enhanced the task such as recognizing that paraprofessionals must communicate “rationale” for LLC programs as well as ‘vision.” Another suggested change was “understands the in and out of class experience of students in the LC…” Because the key to this task was for the paraprofessional to frame the LLC/residential college experience for participants and make linkages which are an important part of the process, the researcher modified this task to say “communicates the link between both in and out class experience.” Another suggestion regarding the local community was utilized with in task "e.” This descriptive activity related to arranging off site programs. The suggested change allowed for the expansion of that idea to encompass “integration of the LLC activities with campus and community opportunities.”

Nineteen Delphi panel members gave Competency I’s second task, (b) no suggested changes. The original wording stated: “Identifies commonalities in students' classes in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.” One Delphi member suggested that the activity be expanded to include “majors” as well as "class schedules.” This seemed appropriate since LLC/residential colleges can be formed based on common majors and/or major related interests.
For the third task, “Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings, encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework”, twenty Delphi members suggested no changes. One member, however, questioned the meaning of “group readings” and suggested a meaning (poetry). Therefore, the researcher used the suggested item (poetry) as well as an item from the original descriptive activity (assigned novels) to modify the task for enhanced explanation.

The fourth task (d) received 20 responses of no suggested changes from the Delphi panel. However, one panel member suggested adding “…and ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning community.” The panel member's suggestion seemed to stand on its own as a task which would support the competency. Therefore, the researcher used this feedback to create new task, (h). Therefore, no modifications were made to task (d). (see Appendix F)

The fifth task (e) under Competency I received only one suggested change and 20 no suggested changes. Rationale for changes to this activity have already been noted.

The sixth task was “organizes residence hall team competitions to support coursework learning.” While the majority of Delphi panel members (16) suggested no changes, five members had questions or feedback. Panel members' questions seemed to center around the concept of “competitions” and its healthiness in an LLC/residential college environment. Based on the feedback, the researcher elected to expand the task using the broader concept, “team activities” as opposed to “team competitions”. The researcher then noted potential forms which “team competitions” might take (debates, competitions, collaborative activities) as suggested by the feedback. Thus, this activity was modified to read as: “organizes/ residence hall team activities to support coursework learning (debates, competitions, collaborative).”
The final changes to tasks under Competency I, came in the form of two new activities. As noted earlier, an activity was added regarding quiet time and study space. A second task was added based on feedback noted directly under Competency I. The Delphi panel member suggested the coordination of co-curricular activities, “themed dinners (hunger banquet), talk shows, meeting actions and director and then going to a play.” Because co-curricular programming and the examples suggested provide additional examples which support the overall competency, the researcher added a new task.

- **Competency II: Personally serves students as a content-subject matter resource for coursework.**

  The second competency, “personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework,” received 19 responses with no suggested changes. One Delphi panel member suggested dropping the concept “contains subject-matter” resource from the competency. However, the concept of “subject-matter” was important for distinguishing and focusing this cluster from another the competency related to serving as an academic resource (Competency IV). Competency IV, unlike this competency, is more general and relates to serving as a resource for the total academic experience. Therefore, no modifications were made to the Competency II based upon this feedback.

  There were, however, modifications made to the three tasks under Competency II. For the first task, “Develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance,” 19 Delphi panel members suggested no change. However, the feedback provided ideas which suggested means by which this activity might occur. Therefore, the researcher modified the task to include these concepts. The modified task read as, “develops means for becoming aware of students' desire for coursework
assistance (asks students if assistance is needed/monitors needs for assistance, visits residents regularly)."

The second task under this cluster also received 10 responses with no suggested changes. However, one panelist asked what task "b" covered that task “c” did not cover? Upon closer examination, the researcher determined that task “c” could be modified to encompass the concept in “b.” Moreover, in both task “b” and task “c,” panelists emphasized that any “tutoring” provided by paraprofessionals should have a "training: base as opposed to an “experiential” base. Upon closer consideration, the researcher agreed that the knowledge and skills required for tutoring are such that the task in this model should reference the relationship to training. Therefore, the researcher combined “b” and “c” and incorporated the concept of training. The modified task then read as, "Uses own experiences as a student and training to assist students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers."

- Competency III: Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

The third competency, “provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty” received no suggested changes from 19 Delphi panelists and only two comments. No modifications were made to the competency. However, modifications were made to each of the three tasks.

The first task, "Organizes opportunities, such as banquets, dinners, or a scavenger hunt, which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty,” received only three “suggested changes” and 18 responses with no suggested changes. However, among the three suggested changes the researcher identified more examples of activities which provided an opportunity to enhance the model. For example, two panelists emphasized “informal” activities so the researcher included this concept. Other
examples provided by panelists included campus tours, book clubs and film series. The task was therefore modified to read, “Organizes opportunities, (banquets, dinners, community/hall/floor events, informal social events, service, campus tours, book clubs, film series, which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.” It should be noted that two examples of activities “hall / floor activities and service,” and “campus tours” came from a suggested change of task “b” under this competency.

In regards to the second task, (b), 17 Delphi panelists suggested no changes. Four panelists suggested changes, two of which incorporated previous task, (a). In fact, a third comment which related to students mingling with faculty, seemed also to fit with the intent of the previous activity and, therefore, did not affect modifications to activity (b). However, one panelist suggested the idea of focusing the faculty lectures and discussions on topics “relevant to the LC”. Because these competencies and subsequent tasks were focused on the paraprofessional in LLC/residential college programs, the panelist’s suggestion seemed an appropriate modification. The modified task read as, “Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions around topics relevant to the LC.”

The final task under Competency III, related to the activity of exposing students to non LLC/residential College faculty. This task was, “seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to other faculty on campus." Nineteen Delphi members suggested no change but two panelists suggested changes. One panelist requested clarification as to what the word “other” referred. The researcher, therefore, modified the task and replaced “other” with “non LC” faculty. The researcher further modified this task by pulling in a comment suggested directly under the Competency I which involved encouraging students to interact with “their own” faculty. Because “their own” faculty
presumably meant non-LC faculty (typically students do no have all LC/residential college courses in their schedule), this comment enhanced the task. The modified task therefore, read as “seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non-LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own faculty.”

- **Competency IV: Connects Students with Academic Resources on Campus**

  Nineteen Delphi members proposed “no suggested changes” to the fourth competency and no modifications were made. However, two “suggested changes” from panelists provided examples which relate to important services on campus and which had not been covered by the existing tasks. The researcher therefore elected to add a new task, (d) “organizes activities which bring representatives from student academic services centers and/or career centers into the halls.”

  Some modifications were also made to existing tasks. Activity “a”, received 18 “no suggested” changes from Delphi members. Among the three suggested changes, one was a simple grammatical change. Another panelist suggested that paraprofessionals should not only “develop means for becoming aware of students needs to access resources” but should also be able to “detect” students needs to access campus services. This concept enhanced the task because the ability to "detect needs" could increase the connections to campus resources which paraprofessionals facilitate, thereby potentially assisting a greater number of students. The task was, therefore, modified to include this concept and read “develops means for becoming aware of or detecting students' needs to access campus resources.”

  The second task under Competency IV, related to referring students to campus resources, "refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, test files, and exam review sessions." Eighteen panelists suggested “no changes” to this task. However, one panelist's suggestions were inserted because they expanded the examples
of such services to include time management workshops. Another panelist questioned whether the paraprofessionals should be able to "lead or accompany" students in addition to "referring" them. This concept enhanced the task because college students often are less inhibited to utilize a campus service if accompanied by another student. The modified task, therefore, became, “refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, time management workshops, test files, exam review session. Leads/accompanies students to such services as appropriate."

The third activity under Competency IV, (c) received only one suggested change while 20 panelists provided no suggested changes. The researcher followed the one suggestion to change the term “grade cards” to the more common term “grade reports”.

Finally, in the fifth task (e) which received 19 no suggested changes, the researcher agreed with one panelist that e-mail, like bulletin boards and newsletters, is a viable means for communicating academic resource information. The task was modified to read, “develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail) for communicating academic resource information to students."

- **Competency V: Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.**

The fifth competency, “assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors”, received 20 responses with no suggested changes and therefore was not modified. The only suggested change was applied to the first task. “Refers residents to advisors for registration scheduling issues.” The panelist suggested that paraprofessionals may also want to refer students to academic departments or colleges. The researcher agreed that referrals to college/departments might equally be required as would referral to advisors and, therefore, incorporated this suggestion into the task. Another panelist suggested the value of the paraprofessional developing
relationships with advisors. Developing such relationships would assist the referral process and enhanced the task. Therefore, the modified task read as, “refers residents to advisors, academic colleges or departments for registration/scheduling issues and exploration of majors. Develops relationships with advisors.”

All 21 members of the Delphi panel suggested no changes to task (b), “guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes”.

Task “c”, “Provides information and guides residents in selecting classes and majors,” received 20 responses with no suggested changes. One panelist suggested that “referring” students to resources for advising should be emphasized. Given the complex nature of advising and the serious repercussions which can result from errors, the researcher agreed this modification should occur. Therefore the modified task read, “provides information, guides, or refers residents to campus resources for selecting classes and majors.”

- **Competency VI: Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success.**

The sixth competency, “actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success” received 20 responses with no suggested changes for the competency statement. One panelist suggested noting the importance of “role modeling.” This suggestion was consistent with other feedback received suggesting this concept as a new competency. Because “role modeling” can carry with it some specific activities and support a variety of aspects within the LLC/residential college, the researcher elected to establish it as its own competency rather than to modify this particular competency.

While changes were not made to several tasks which support this competency, there were a couple of places where modifications occurred. For example, the first task (a) received 19 “no suggested changes” from the Delphi panel. However, two suggested
changes led to modifications of the task. One panel member suggested that the task of developing academic plans and goals might prove too large a task for paraprofessionals in typical positions where they have 35 – 50 students on a floor/hall. The researcher agreed that given other responsibilities, the part time nature of the position and the paraprofessional’s status as a student, developing “plans” might prove time consuming. The task was, therefore, modified as a suggested to recognize this as an task which could occur “upon request”.

Another panelist suggested that the task be expanded to allow for assistance with both academic and "career planning." Since these two planning processes can have a relationship, the researcher incorporated this change. The task was therefore modified to read as, “assists residents in developing academic and career plans and goals upon students' request and need."

Both the second task (b), “supports and encourages individuals residents and the group to persevere in coursework” and the fourth task (d), “encourages residents to attend classes” received no suggested changes from any of the 21 Delphi panel members. As a result, no changes were made. Similarly, the fifth task (e), “recognizes individual or hall academic achievement”, received 20 “no suggested changes” and one “suggested change.” Thus no modifications were made to this task.

Finally in regards to the tasks for Competency VI, a modification was made to the third task, “organizes and implements “study bucks” or other programs to encourage students to study. While the task received 18 responses with no suggested changes, it did receive three suggested changes. Based on two panelist’s responses, the use of “study bucks” may have been too specific a concept. Therefore, the researcher elected to follow the advice of another panelist and replace the more specific term “study bucks” with the
term “incentive” programs. The modified task read as, “organizes and implements incentive programs to encourage students to study.”

- **Competency VII:** Guides residents in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.

  In regards to Competency VII, all twenty-one Delphi panel members responded with no suggested changes to the actual competency statement.

  Three descriptive tasks supported this competency. The first task (a), “counsels residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing classes or modifying class schedules” received 17 responses with no suggested changes from panelists. Among the four suggested changes, the key concern appeared to be the desire to recognize a limited role for paraprofessionals in regard to counseling on these matters. The researcher therefore accepted a panelist’s suggestion to expand the task to include the concept of "referring." The new concept read, "counsels or refers residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing class, or modifying class schedules."

  The second task (b) received seven suggested changes all of which pertained to the misspelling of the word “coaches.” This correction was made in the modified version.

  Finally, for the third task (c) “assists residents in identifying and using stress management techniques in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals exams or papers,” received 19 responses with no suggested changes and two suggested changes. Once again, the concept of “refers” was suggested by the panelists. Because more severe stress experienced by a student may require the assistance of professionals, the researcher elected to modify the task to include use of the concept, “refers.” The revised task read,
assists or refers residents in identifying and using stress management techniques at times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals exams or papers."

- Competency VIII: Establishes a sense of community among students.

The eighth competency, received 19 responses with no suggested changes and two suggested changes to the competency statement. Both suggested changes relate specifically to tasks mentioned subsequently.

The first task (a), “organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners)” received no suggested changes and, therefore, was not modified. Similarly, the second task (b) received 21 responses with no suggested changes from the panel. However, a panelist had requested under the original competency statement that "citizenship – type" activities can also assist in developing community among students. Based on this feedback, the researcher modified task (b) to incorporate the concept of “civic opportunities.” The modified task read as, “uses community service and civic opportunities to develop community among students.”

The third task (c) under Competency VIII, “uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters) to communicate community information to students,” received 18 responses with no suggested changes. Panelists did, however, suggest the expansion of the examples, especially in regards to more modern means of communications. The suggestions enhanced the relevancy of the task and therefore were incorporated.

In regards to Competency VIII, a fourth task was added based on feedback received under Competency I, activity (d). In both cases, the feedback suggested an activity which would pertain to addressing student behavior. The new task developed read as, “addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of community and/or conduct policies.”
Competency IX: Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

All 21 members of the Delphi panel suggested no changes to the ninth competency statement.

The first task (a) “develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents," received 17 responses with no suggested changes. Among the four suggested changes were several items which provided examples of the concept of “personal concerns” which appeared in the task statement. The researcher added these examples to the task. There was also a suggestion that paraprofessionals refer students to campus resources for non-academic concerns. Because “personal concerns” can encompass issues of deep and/or complex nature requiring the assistance of a professional, the researcher agreed that the suggested change would add an important task to the competency and was, therefore, added.

The second task (b) received 20 responses with no suggested changes. The one suggested change, offered the idea of the paraprofessional offering support as well as assistance. The researcher modified the task to incorporate this concept because assistance may not always be possible but “support” may still be offered. The new task read as, “contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern and assistance and support.”

In addition to suggesting revisions to competencies and tasks, Delphi panel members were also afforded the opportunity to suggest new competencies and tasks.

New competencies

Three new competencies emerged based on panelists' suggestions. The first new competency to emerge pertained to paraprofessionals communicating and collaborating
with LLC faculty and staff. One comment gave rise to this new competency while two others assisted by providing supporting tasks. The following comment gave rise to a new competency: “….but a possible one might have been: ‘Communicates and collaborates with learning community staff.’” Other comments from Delphi panel members formed descriptive tasks which supported this competency.

“Something about meeting and communicating with faculty and their supervisor about the community programs and individual concerns – (related activity: regularly scheduled meetings).” A regular meeting with LLC faculty and supervisor to discuss community programs and individual concerns was a task that supported well communication and collaboration. Therefore, the researcher used these suggestions to form a competency statement.

Another panelist suggested that paraprofessionals should contact faculty members if a resident had to miss class due to a serious problem or death in the family. Once again, this type of communication represented a task which supported a competency for communication and collaboration. The centrality of integrated learning to LLC/residential colleges, suggests the strong need for collaborative relationships. Therefore, the researcher recognized the emerging new competency. The new competency and related tasks emerged as, "Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff."

The new competency and its tasks are:

Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff:

a. contacts faculty members if resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.
b. meets with supervisor, LC faculty and staff (professional and student) as appropriate to discuss the community programs and individual concerns.
Another competency emerged as a result of several comments related to role modeling. Examples of these comments include:

"I wonder if you'd like to add a competency, something about being a role model, both academically and as a member of the community."

"Actively participates in the community as a 'student' and as a leader (related activities might include: be a member of a group such as a student group, performance group, etc. e.g. be a leader/organizer of a group)."

"Models behaviors that are important to the community (related activities might include: interacts with faculty, takes initiative, participated in formal and informal activities)."

"Role Modeling: Going to class themselves; studying in their rooms; being interested in their coursework and not whinny about school."

"Encouraging enthusiasm about learning and education."

In addition to these comments, two behaviors from the original set of codes reflected the idea of role modeling:

150 Role models good academic habits (2)
129 Communicates a positive attitude about coursework to residents (1)

The researcher agreed that the importance of peer relationships suggests the potential of positive role modeling and, therefore, moved to establish the competency.

Taken as a whole, the researcher was able to articulate a competency as well as related tasks which were suggested by the comments and behaviors. The new competency and its tasks are:

Role models behavior important to the LC community and academic success:

- a. communicates and encourages enthusiasm for learning and education.
- b. interacts with faculty.
- c. leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance groups).
- d. participates in formal and informal activities.
- e. utilizes strategies for academic success (attends class, studies on the floor, uses campus resources, talks with faculty advisors).
The final new competency, pertaining to diversity, was found in only one Delphi panel member’s comments. This member wrote, “1) diversity and social identity work for individuals and the residence hall, 2) encouraging positive intergroup relations between individuals and creating a safe and accepting climate in the residence hall.”

Interestingly, this panel member’s comments matched with behaviors suggested through the review of paraprofessionals input in the first round. These behaviors included the following. Please note that lower frequency behaviors (frequency of less than five) are noted in italics.

68 Provide programs which advance residents' understanding of other religions and cultures, lifestyles and experiences and dispel stereotypes

7 Maintains knowledge and awareness regarding diversity

9 Demonstrates self-understanding and awareness regarding issues of white privilege

15 Maintains knowledge and understanding regarding expressions of race and culture and their relationship to law

Even though behavior number 68 represented a higher frequency behavior, the researcher was unsure if it fit in the original competency model since it represented behaviors and activities which traditional RA positions emphasize. However, when combined with the Delphi member’s comments, the researcher decided to articulate a competency and present it back to the Delphi panel for review. The researcher used the Delphi member’s initial concept in developing the competency statement, “Established an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the LC community.” The Delphi panel member's continued comments (encouraging positive inter-group relations between individuals and creating a safe space) formed the tasks
because they describe means by which diversity and social identity work might occur.

The new competency and its tasks became:

Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the LC community:

a. encourages positive inter-group relations.
b. creates a safe and accepting climate in the LC community.

Once the modifications were made and the new competencies added, the researcher created yet another set of tables (see Appendix F). For the modified competencies, a table which contained the old wording and new iteration for each modified competency and task. The table also outlined each comment for each competency and then each task. The table once again provided an opportunity to suggest changes at the end of each competency. The researcher also created a table for the new competencies using a similar format as had been used in stage two, round two of the study.

**Stage Two, Round Three**

These tables (see Appendix F) were distributed to the Delphi panel requesting their review and suggestions for change. Sixteen of the 30 members of the Delphi panel responded in this round. Among the competency statements, there were no suggested changes from all 16 Delphi panel members to all competencies except one. In the case of competency number VI, the suggested change was grammatical, (the use of an apostrophe). Wherever there were “no suggested changes” the researcher assumed an absence of comment. Also, each “suggested change” generally equates to an individual respondent.

In regards to the new competencies, there was, once again, widespread agreement with only slight modifications suggested. For example, for Competency X,
“Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff,” 15 Delphi members provided no suggested changes and one provided comment. No modifications were made to this competency.

For Competency XI, all 16 members of the Delphi panel did not suggest changes. Finally in regards to competency XII, 15 Delphi panel members suggested no changes. One panel member felt that the wording of the competency, “Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the LC community,” was awkward. The panel member suggested revising the competency to state, "promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences.” The researcher carefully considered this suggestion and determined that the original competency and panel member’s suggestion represented distinctive ideas. However, recognizing the importance of the Delphi member’s comment, the researcher chose to modify the competency to include the comment. The new competency read as, "Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work and promotes understanding of individual differences.”

In regards to suggested changes to specific tasks under each competency, 35 activities received no suggested changes from all or most of the Delphi panel members. Thus no modifications were made to them. The following is a brief description of modifications made to the remaining activities.

- **Competency I: Links hall/community programs and activities to learning community's mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.**

  Feedback outlined under task (c) for this competency was incorporated under activity (d), “Develops programs that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.” The essential modification pertained to adding more descriptions for the concept of “programs.” The expanded version added in parentheses
"(dinners, lecturettes with faculty or discussions)." The new task reads as, “Develops programs (dinners, lecturettes with faculty or discussions) that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.”

Meanwhile, task (c) was modified slightly to include “performing arts,” as suggested by a Delphi panelist, to the descriptors for co-curricular activities tied to LLC classes. The new reading, “Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays, performing arts events)."

- **Competency II: Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework.**

  Under Competency II, no modifications were made to tasks.

- **Competency III: Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.**

  Under Competency III, “Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty,” the third task (c) was clarified based on a panelist’s question, to explain that the word “other” could include not only the paraprofessionals own faculty but non-LLC/faculty. The new reading was, “Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own or other non-LC faculty.”

- **Competency IV: Connects students with academic resources on campus.**

  Under Competency IV no modifications were necessary for tasks.

- **Competency V: Assists residents in registration/class selection processes.**

  Under Competency V, the third task (c) was modified into two sentences in order to provide greater clarity. This action was taken based on the input of one panelist who suggested the wording was complicated.
• Competency VI: Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success.
  Under Competency VI, no tasks were modified.

• Competency VII: Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.
  Under Competency VII, task (a) was modified grammatically adding commas to emphasize that "counseling" and "referring" students should be done “as appropriate.”

• Competency VIII: Establishes a sense of community among students.
  No modifications were required for tasks under Competency VIII.

• Competency IX: Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.
  No modifications were required for tasks under Competency IX.

• Competency X: Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.
  A few modifications were made to tasks under Competency X. The first task (a), “Contacts faculty members if resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem” received 12 responses with no suggested changes. However, among the suggested changes there was a concern about the appropriateness this task suggested and also that both faculty and staff should be contacted. Therefore, the task was modified to recognize this task should take place within the context of what is appropriate for the institutions as well as to add “staff” to those who potentially can be called. The modified task read as, “Contacts a professional staff member or faculty member (if appropriate) if a resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.”

  Another suggested change under this competency resulted in the establishment of a new task. One panelist had requested recognition of the student’s personal responsibility to involve LLC/ residential college faculty or staff themselves and wondered about the role the paraprofessional might play in facilitating that contact.
Because assisting students in making contact is a separate action from making the contact oneself (as a paraprofessional), the researcher elected to establish this as a separate task worded as, “Assists students’ in involving LLC/residential college professional staff and faculty as appropriate when they have an issue.”

No modifications were made by the researcher to the second task (b) which received 15 no suggested changes. However, one comment led to the development of a new task. The original task pertains to the "paraprofessional meeting with supervisor and LC/residential college faculty to discuss." The comment suggested paraprofessionals should collaborate with LC/residential college faculty in implementing programs. The idea of collaborating to implement programs provided a task which supported the overall competency. Therefore, the researcher used this feedback to develop an additional task which read as, “collaborates with LC faculty and staff to identify and implement educational activities for the community.”

- **Competency XI: Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.**

In regards to the second new competency, a slight modification was made to the second task. As suggested by a panelist, the second task was modified from, “interacts with faculty,” to “interacts with LC instructional faculty” thereby providing a more clear linkage to the competencies which are focused on the LC/residential college community. Similarly, tasks (c) and (d), “leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance group) that are connected to the LC” and “participates in formal and informal activities sponsored by the LC”, respectively, were modified to add “LC” and make the linkage more explicit.
• **Competency XII: Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the community.**

In regards to the final new Competency XII, which had two tasks, only one modification was made. The first task (a), “Encourages positive inter-group relations”, received 15 responses with no suggested changes. However, one panelist suggested a change which provided greater clarity to the term “inter-group relations”. Therefore, the researcher modified the task to read, “Encourages positive relationships between all community members.”

The final set of competencies and tasks were as follows:

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.

a. Communicates vision and rationale for, as well as the importance of the living/learning community. Communicates the link between both in and out class experience. Provides background / historical information regarding the learning community.

b. Identifies commonalities in students' class schedules and majors in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.

c. Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings (assigned novels, poetry etc.), encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

d. Develops programs (dinners, lecturettes with faculty or discussions) that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.

e. Arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community’s theme. Integrates with and uses university, city/community activities and opportunities to enhance LC learning experiences.

f. Organizes residence hall team activities to support coursework learning (debates, competitions, collaborative activities).

g. Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays, performing arts events).

h. Ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning community.

II. Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework

a. Develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance (asks students if assistance is needed, monitors needs for assistance, visits residents regularly).

b. Uses own experiences as a student and training to assist students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.
III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

a. Organizes opportunities, (banquets, dinners, community/hall/floor events, informal social events, service, campus tours, book clubs, film series) which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

b. Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions around topics relevant to the LC.

c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non-LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own or other non-LC faculty.

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.

a. Develops means for becoming aware of or detecting students’ needs to access campus resources.

b. Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, time management workshops, test files, exam review sessions. Leads/accompanies students to such services as appropriate.

c. Assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade reports, schedules).

d. Organizes activities which bring representatives from student academic services centers and/or career centers into the halls.

e. Develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail) for communicating academic resource information to students.

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.

a. Refers residents to advisors, academic colleges or departments for registration/scheduling issues and exploration of majors. Develops relationships with advisors.

b. Guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes.

c. Provides information or guides residents in selecting classes and majors. Refers students to campus resources as appropriate.

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success.

a. Assists residents in developing academic and career plans and goals upon student’s request and need.

b. Supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.

c. Organizes and implements incentive programs to encourage students to study.

d. Encourages residents to attend classes

e. Recognizes individual or hall academic achievement

VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.
a. Counsels or refers residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing class, or modifying class schedules.
b. Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors. 
   Coaches' residents on how to talk with faculty about both academic and nonacademic difficulties.
c. Assists or refers residents in identifying and using stress management techniques at times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams or papers.

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

a. Organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners.)
b. Uses community service and civic opportunities to develop community among students.
c. Uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail, floor list servs, floor web page) to communicate community information to students.
d. Addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of the community and/or conduct policies.

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

   a. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns (familial, medical, emotional, roommate conflicts, etc.) and crises for individual residents.
b. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern, assistance and support.
c. Refers students to campus resources for non-academic concerns as appropriate.

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.

   a. Contacts a professional staff member or faculty member (if appropriate) if a resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.
b. Meets with supervisor, LC faculty and staff (professional and student) as appropriate to discuss the community programs and individual concerns.
c. Collaborates with LC faculty and staff to identify and implement educational activities for the community.
d. Assists residents in involving LC professional staff or faculty as appropriate when they have an issue.

XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.

   a. Communicates and encourages enthusiasm for learning and education.
b. Interacts with LC instructional faculty.
c. Leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance groups) that are connected to the LC.
d. Participates in formal and informal activities sponsored by the LC.
e. Utilizes strategies for academic success (attends class, studies on the floor, uses campus resources, talks with faculty advisors).

XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work, and promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences.

a. Encourages positive relationships and interactions between all LC community members.
   b. Creates a safe and accepting climate in the LC community.

Stage Two, Round Four

Because all competencies received no or only one suggested change and the suggested changes to tasks were minimal, the researcher decided that basic acceptance of the competencies was received. Once again, the researcher treated “no suggested change” as an absence of comment and as consensus. Therefore, the researcher moved on to the fourth and final round of the study. In this round, the Delphi panel received an outline of all competencies, activities and comments from the third round (see Appendix G). This information was provided to the panelists for review only. Another piece of information was provided to the Delphi panel for their action. The panelists were provided a list of the final twelve competencies and asked to rank, from one to five, the five they believed were the most important competencies for “paraprofessionals to develop in order to successfully support their resident(s) learning in their coursework and/or to create a learning community on their floor or hall.” (see Appendix G). The researcher computed the ranking by assigning to each panel members highest ranked response (1), five points. Subsequent rankings received points in descending order:

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The researcher then added the points allotted to each. The competency with the highest number of points received the highest ranking with the other rankings falling into line.

Based on their responses, the following competencies emerged as the top five (see Appendix I):

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes. (90)

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students. (42)

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty. (37)

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success. (29)

Two competencies achieved the same score to secure the fifth position:

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus. (24)

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff. (24)

With a clear ranking in hand, the researcher concluded the Delphi rounds. The implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The development of this competency model for paraprofessionals in residential college programs provides the college student housing profession with its first research based competency model for paraprofessionals at any level. At the same time, the model presents the residential college/living/learning movement with its first and only competency model for any of the key positions (student, staff, faculty) typically found in the design of these unique programs.

While theories and guidelines exist for the paraprofessional position in college student housing, a validated competency model has not been developed for paraprofessional positions in traditional residence halls. Therefore, this model, while specifically directed towards the paraprofessional position in residential college/LLC programs, provides the entire profession with both an important model for that position as well as a research methodology for competency development for other positions.

Likewise, a fair amount of discussion has emerged in the profession around the need to re-cast roles in a manner which will support the residential college/living learning community (LLC) program and its focus on integrated learning. Once again, however, as yet, no validated competency model has emerged for the faculty, staff or student positions.

Residential Colleges and Living/Learning programs revolve around the concept of “integrated learning.” This competency model provides the movement with competencies that integrate the here-to-for bifurcated approach to learning employed by the university. The model emerged with competencies that one would have traditionally found in both the academic and student develop arenas. For the college or university that wants to blur the lines between the in and out of class experiences, they now have a
competency model for what is arguably the most influential position for supporting a student’s learning – their peer. The study focused on learning by asking paraprofessionals to share experiences where they supported their residents’ learning and/or the creation of a learning environment. The focus on learning shaped the model and serves to distinguish the competencies from competencies which might have been developed for a traditional paraprofessional role.

In this final chapter the researcher will further discuss the uses of these competencies in universities as well as its meaning for the profession, the paraprofessionals and students. In fact, there are four major conclusions which emerge from this study and the competency model's ability to support the following areas:

1.) Uses of the model for re-focusing colleges and universities on learning
2.) Re-casting the profession
3.) Re-casting the para-professional role
4.) Benefits related to student learning

These conclusions will be discussed in each of the following sections. In this chapter, the researcher will also discuss implications of the study and the research agenda that could follow. Finally, the chapter will review the limitations of the study.

Conclusions

Uses of the Model for Re-focusing Colleges and Universities on Student Learning

This competency model has the potential to support an important movement in progress on many campuses. The purpose of movement is to refocus efforts around the concept of “learning” as an outcome. Many campuses have adopted residential colleges and/or living/learning communities as a key strategy for facilitating learning. As noted before, the value of the residential college/LLC lies in its ability to provide integrated
experiences. In this environment, the long held separation of students’ in and out of class experience becomes intertwined.

The competency model developed through this study supports efforts toward holistic learning because it takes a key student staff position, with roles and competencies typically embedded in a student development approach, and identifies competencies which enable the position to support learning. In fact, the Delphi panel’s top ranked competency, “Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes,” takes the paraprofessional position directly into the heart of re-focused university activity – learning and the curriculum.

The competency model developed in this study does something else for colleges and universities. According to Guskin and Marcy (2003), universities cannot expect additional funding in the future at a time when more instruction will be required in order to achieve learning outcomes. They suggest that universities will need to identify means for expanding learning opportunities, outside of traditional instruction. One means suggested is the recasting of other staff roles on campus specifically student affairs.

This competency model achieves exactly this suggestion by developing and positioning the paraprofessional position to support learning. Paraprofessionals trained and supervised in these competencies will provide venues beyond the classroom for stimulating and reinforcing learning. As they organize group readings, off-site programs or assist students with coursework, they directly support learning. Thus, a paraprofessional position based upon these competencies expands the university’s venues for supporting learning. For example, as paraprofessionals exercise the competency “Connecting students with academic resources on campus,” they assist the student and, at the same, increase the use of campus services. Furthermore, as they communicate and
collaborate with faculty and provide students the opportunity to interact with faculty, they strengthen in university’s culture and infrastructure to support integrated learning.

**Re-casting the Profession to Support Learning**

While the competency model shows promise for supporting the university mission, which is re-focused on learning, the competency model developed by this study also has potential for re-casting the profession of student affairs and, more specifically, college student housing. Conferences and workshop discussions suggest the need to re-cast student affairs staff and faculty roles to support university and housing program missions focused on learning.

The competency model developed in this study will infuse this dialogue with research. Description and definition can now be provided to the concept of “re-casting roles,” at least in regards to one key staff position (paraprofessional). Through the use of this competency model, the student affairs and housing professions can now demonstrate their ability to move beyond student development interventions to contribute to learning. If, as Guskin and Marcy (2003) noted, student affairs/housing professionals can support the university’s need to use a variety of campus roles to support learning, this competency model can provide the needed background to do so.

Research indicates that student affairs staff members can contribute to student learning at least at the paraprofessional level. In fact, they already are contributing. The model developed through this study articulates not only “how” but re-casts their roles to do so successfully. Thus use of the model’s learning based competencies will support higher performance for the paraprofessional and, in turn, the work of student affairs and housing professionals on individual campuses. Similarly, because the study engaged staff and faculty at a variety of institutions, the model provides the profession with a
standard for validated research for staff positions in general and particularly those involved the residential college or living/learning programs.

**Re-Casting the Paraprofessional Role**

The differences between the competency model developed for this study and traditional models for paraprofessionals demonstrates the model’s value as a tool to support this key paraprofessional position in a residential college or LLC program. While traditional models certainly hold value, they do not directly prepare the paraprofessional for the university’s and residential colleges/LLC’s mission. The result of which could be a mismatch between mission, expectations and performance. Students trained and experienced using the residential college/LLC competency model will be prepared to support learning which is at the heart of the college’s mission. The tasks developed for the model, like the competencies, also support the position in this effort.

The competency model developed through this study, if placed in use, has potential for supporting the university’s mission and learning strategies. At the same time, it demonstrates the student affairs/housing profession’s ability to contribute to learning by re-casting roles and by providing residential colleges/ LLC’s with the ability to build “learning” into the college's or LLC’s design through staff positions.

All of these impacts have potential but the model’s most direct impact is on the paraprofessional position. The “re-casting” that needs to occur involves taking the traditional role of the paraprofessional, designed to support student development, and develop it to support learning. The competencies which emerged in this study clearly demonstrate that supporting the learner centered design of a residential college or LLC requires a different competency base from that which might be required in a traditional paraprofessional role. For example, although there is not a research based competency model for the traditional paraprofessional position, comparisons can be drawn to the
“subjects or activities” for the paraprofessional role as established by Rickgarn (1978) and as noted in Chapter Two of this study. To review, these activities included:

1. Paraprofessional Counseling (counseling and discipline)
2. Problem solving (counseling and discipline)
3. Conflict resolution (counseling and discipline)
4. Values clarification (counseling and programming)
5. Assertiveness (counseling and discipline)
6. Cross-cultural awareness (counseling and programming)
7. Human sexuality (counseling and programming)
8. Vocational (counseling and programming)
9. Social interaction (counseling, advising and programming)
10. Interpersonal relationships (all roles) (Rickgarn 1978, pp 53 – 74)

A review of these activities highlights the differences between the list and those which emerged in this study. As an example, Rickgarn’s (1978) outline appears to have a strong lean towards “counseling” based activities whereas the competency model developed in this study focuses on student learning. No where in Rickgarn’s (1978) activities are competencies which have a direct relationship to classroom/curriculum activities. In fact, one could potentially view Rickgarn’s (1978) model as a framework for staff working with students inside or outside of the collegiate environment.

By contrast, in the competency model developed in this study, nine of the twelve competencies cannot be separated from the university environment. These competencies include:

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.
II. Personally serves students as content subject-matter resource for coursework.
III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.
IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.
V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.
VI. Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success.
VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.

XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.

The model might also be compared to the text book used for traditional paraprofessional education, *The Resident Assistant*, (Blimling, 1998). This text is utilized by housing departments throughout the country. Competencies are not outlined in the text. However, the text does outline roles and responsibilities which include role model, counselor, student, teacher and administrator. While on the surface these roles appear similar to some suggested by the competencies established through this study, they are not directed specifically toward integrated learning.

In summary, use of the competency model developed through this study, enhances the paraprofessional’s performance by preparing the position to directly support the mission of the university and residential college/LLC in a way that traditional models could not support. Said differently, the competencies which emerged from this study are different from those non-validated competencies traditionally utilized for paraprofessionals. The differences affirm that traditional competencies and activities were not adequate to support a new mission. A new set of competencies was needed if new expectations, based on the unique residential college or LLC environment, were to be met in the para-professional role. In fact, as one Delphi panel member stated (in regards to the competencies which emerged in the study), “there are MANY new ideas about how to enrich the LLC connections.”

**Benefits for Students’ Learning**

If the university’s mission is supported, the people who gain the most from the use of this model are students living in residential college/LLC programs. For most
college students, their mission and goal is to graduate with some measure of academic success. As was noted in the literature review of this study, peer relationships are key to learning (Kuh, 1994, 1996.) In fact, the paraprofessional position in college student housing exists in large part in recognition of the impact peers have on one another (Ender, 1983). The paraprofessional’s ability to support and enhance interaction with peers is but one benefit to students who live in the college. Other benefits include holistic learning, enhanced relationships with faculty, the ability to integrate concepts and experiences, effective role modeling, and the development of academic success and survival skills. Each of these benefits is supported by the competency model which equips paraprofessionals to serve as a catalyst for them.

Consider how much more impactful these peers (paraprofessionals) might be if they developed competency in areas which this research has suggested. For example, Springer et al (1995) found that college’s effects on student learning are holistic. This competency model can support this research as it is put into practice. The Delphi panel's top ranked competency, “Links hall / community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes,” calls on the paraprofessional to supporting integrated experiences. “Integrated experiences” translates into holistic learning

Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzni (1980) found that the importance of living / learning residences lies in their ability to foster interpersonal relationships between students with other students and faculty. Once again, several competencies which emerged in this model will position the paraprofessional to effectively foster these interpersonal relationships. These competencies include:

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.
IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty.

Competency I, which focuses on integration, strongly supports the peer to peer relationships. Moreover, tasks for this competency suggest means by which the paraprofessional can exploit the common curriculum and influence of peers to support learning through peer to peer assistance, study groups of various sorts, and programs that encourage student discussion and interaction around topics of learning.

Another competency which emerged in this model harnesses the “peer factor.” Student peers are important not only for what students gain in interacting with each other but also because college students tend to observe other students and measure themselves against them. This competency model takes the college student tendency for measuring oneself against peers and focuses in a direction which supports their learning and success. Specifically, Competency XI, “Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success,” if developed in the paraprofessional, leads them to be a positive role model. In other words, the paraprofessional can provide a positive benchmark for peers to measure themselves against.

Other competencies in the model take advantage of the peer nature of the paraprofessional position and the close proximity of the position in ways which promote learning and academic success. For example, Competency IV, “Connects students with academic resources on campus,” and Competency V, “Assists residents in registration / class selection processes and exploration of majors,” both equip the paraprofessional to assist the student in navigating the university environment. Lack of effective navigation can result in missed opportunities for assistance, frustration and delays.
Similarly, when paraprofessionals are competent in promoting academic success, (as noted in Competency VI), guiding students in applying academic survival skills (Competency VI) and providing emotional support (competency IX), they encourage learning, success and assist students in working through those life events, both academic and personal, which can present barriers to learning and success.

For students, the cumulative effect of these benefits should be enhanced learning, academic success, retention and graduation. Thus, the competency model places the paraprofessional at the heart of activities, which research indicates, support success in each of these areas related to student learning.

Implications

While the competency model for paraprofessionals offers positive implications in terms of benefits for the paraprofessional, students, universities and colleges and the profession, for institutions wishing to adopt the model, there are areas which may need to be evaluated for change, adjustment or modification in order to support the model. The implications of this model include environmental and paraprofessional job design, paraprofessional selection / training and education as well as institutional cost and commitment.

The most prominent of these implications is environmental and paraprofessional job design. As noted earlier, traditional paraprofessional job designs include areas such as community development, programming, peer counseling, behavioral response / policy enforcement, crisis response and administration. While paraprofessional positions like Resident Assistant and Community Assistant, are technically on “duty” 24/7, these positions are generally only recognized as a 20 hour per week jobs.

The competency model which emerged through this study, incorporates a few competencies which typically appear in a more traditional model for the position. These
competencies include community development, emotional support and diversity education. Despite these inclusions, the residential college/LLC competency model still leaves unaddressed several areas currently included in most paraprofessional position job designs. These areas represent functions which must occur in a college student residence hall environment. Institutions could elect to add these functions to the competency model. However, the question for those institutions then becomes, “is it all doable?” The competencies developed under this model are not insignificant in terms of the level of expertise and time they will require. Yet, according to the experts in this study, they are the competencies required to facilitate learning. Mixing traditional competencies and competencies which emerged from this model may prove overwhelming for students in the position. Colleges and universities wishing to utilize the paraprofessional position to facilitate learning, may need to analyze their current paraprofessional job descriptions. Changes may need to be made in the assignment of roles and responsibilities in the hall environment. Potentially, housing organizations may need to re-assign responsibilities which do not directly impact learning to other or new positions.

One Delphi panel participant suggested that residential college / LLC competency model on its own may be too much. “….I fear you are creating super-expectations for RA’s.” While others did not express this concern, institutions may want to consider limiting use of the model to the top five ranked competencies or selecting those competencies which best match their particular residential college / LLC design.

A second implication for institutions wishing to adopt the model is the changes it will generate for paraprofessional training programs. Housing programs typically conduct training programs prior to the beginning of the fall semester. However, many also conduct courses either prior to or during the first semester of service. These training programs are traditionally built around student development models. Use of this
competency model will involve redesigning or modifying training programs and subsequent supervision around the learning model.

Paraprofessionals will need training and education in areas not normally a part of traditional paraprofessional training and education. Training and education will have to be developed which enhances their ability to be facilitators of learning consistent with the competencies. Paraprofessionals will have to become skilled in integrated learning, partnering with others from the LLC staff and faculty, course subject matter, and developing LLC oriented programs.

Institutions may also need to give attention to the selection of paraprofessionals. Typically, paraprofessionals are not hired and placed based on their major and academic background. But given the competencies contained in this model, it may be that specific coursework, or majors, or previous participation in a specific learning community could have value as preparation for the position.

Finally, as one Delphi panel member suggested, there may be educational costs and financial commitments associated with adoption of the model. These potential costs might be institution specific. However, one example of new costs might be additional paraprofessional staff. While traditional paraprofessional models call for an average ratio of 40 students to one paraprofessional, it might be that this model will require a lower ratio. Similarly, institutions might discover that the potential presented by a differently focused and prepared paraprofessional position calls for additional resources to support programmatic and/or faculty involvement aspects of the residential college / LLC.

**Action Agenda**

As Delphi panel members returned their responses, at least five indicated they were already using the material or requested permission to do so. For institutions planning to use the competency model, the following action agenda is suggested:
1. Analyze current job descriptions for paraprofessionals in the residential college or LLC program. Identify differences between the competencies suggested by the existing job description and those suggested by the model. Revise the job description as needed to incorporate competencies from the model.

2. Based on a revised paraprofessional set of competencies and/or job description, analyze the current faculty and staff structure within the residential college or LLC. Determine and adjust for the impact of the modified competencies and job description for the paraprofessional.

3. Analyze the impact of a modified paraprofessional job description on programs, activities and processes. Create new positions or make adjustments in these areas to support the paraprofessional role.

4. Assess current education and training for the paraprofessional position. Identify the knowledge and skills required to support competencies under the modified job description. Revise training and education to support development of appropriate knowledge and skills.

5. Provide “refresher” training for paraprofessionals currently serving in residential college or LLC programs.

6. Identify needs for changes to supervisory strategies from paraprofessional supervisors and/or modified support paraprofessional competencies.

**Limitations of the Study**

While the research methodology produced results which appear solid and comprehensive, the study does have several limitations. The most obvious limitation is the uniqueness of each LLC and residential college program which participated in the study. The curriculum, size, role of faculty and current role of paraprofessionals are different at each institution. There is no national standard or set of criteria for residential
college/LLC programs nationally. Size of program was another difference in this study. Some schools which participated had several or a large LLC program with many paraprofessionals participating. In other cases, there is only one residential college or LLC and thus a handful of paraprofessionals who participated.

This limitation was partly mitigated by the selection of institutions with some common characteristics among them. However, the uniqueness of each institution’s model means that the competency model may not be directly applicable in its entirety to each institution.

A second limitation comes from the initial set of paraprofessionals. Because they served as the subject matter experts in the first stage of the study but had very little job experience in life as yet, they may have tended at times to view their role more broadly. This limitation was partially mitigated by the Delphi panel which placed the competencies into the broader context of the university. A good example occurred in regards to coursework assistance and advising process. The paraprofessionals highlighted their role in assisting other students. The Delphi panel members suggested modifications which recognized their role as a limited role in view of experts and professional offices on campus and the paraprofessional’s role in “referrals.”

**Research Agenda**

The competency model developed through this study contributes to the body of research which can support universities in transforming roles for a re-focused mission. The model also has the potential to contribute to a body of research pertaining to such.

As an example, while paraprofessional staff members hold an important role, other positions carry weight in supporting the residential college/LLC. Faculty, full time professional staff, and graduate assistants also engage in these programs. With faculty positions deeply ingrained in academic disciplines and instruction and staff
ingrained in student development and administrative models, the movement could arguably benefit from a study which develops competencies to assist in re-casting these other roles to serve the residential college/LLC programs as well.

The methodology for this study is replicable and therefore can serve as a model for how other competency models might be developed. The methodology could be transferred to assist in developing competency models for other faculty and staff positions associated with residential college/LLC programs or positions in college student housing. For example, the methodology might easily be utilized to develop a validated competency model for the paraprofessional role in a traditional hall. Likewise, the methodology might be utilized for competency models for graduate assistants, full-time entry level staff (in traditional halls or LLC/residential colleges) or even faculty coordinators, faculty in residence or faculty in directors for residential college/LLC programs.

In regards to the paraprofessional, several pieces of research could advance operation and performance. First, a natural next step would be to convert the competencies into job designs and equally as important, develop models for training and education based on the competency model as suggested in the “action agenda” in this chapter. Other valuable pieces of research might include studying residents’ perceptions, engagement and satisfaction with environment, particularly its academic nature, between communities utilizing the model and those which do not.

The most critical piece of research which might occur pertains to testing the competency model. An interesting and valuable study would involve the performance, in terms of learning outcomes, between residential college / LLC programs utilizing the model and those not utilizing the model. Such research would test the direct support the
model should provide to the community and university’s mission. Such research will require well defined learning outcomes for the community.

Summary

In summary, there was a need for the model contained in this study. This study involved institutions with deep experience and yet comments indicate that, for many, a competency model had not been articulated. In fact, this study represents the first validated set of competencies for housing paraprofessionals of any kind.

Second, the competency model developed through this study affirms that traditional models of competency activity for paraprofessionals are inadequate to support student learning. In this model, competencies emerged which directly relate to learning and recognize the uniqueness of the residential college and university environment. These competencies are not found traditional models.

Finally, the model affirms that paraprofessionals can be engaged work that directly supports university mission and strategy. Aside from the value provided by their status as a peer, they can facilitate learning and academic success. The paraprofessional role can be re-cast. In fact, the role has been re-cast in pieces as paraprofessionals at different institutions have used their position to support learning. Their behaviors only needed the identification of the competencies which lay behind their efforts.

The idea of the residential college is one of the oldest concepts in higher education. Though over forty years old, the paraprofessional position is one of the more modern concepts. This competency model assimilates the modern paraprofessional position into a holistic approach which is hundreds of years old. In the process, both the position and the college become more effective and college students reap the benefits.
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http://www.psych.ucalgary.ca/CourseNotes/old/PSYC413/Assignments/LabManual/proj2


Zunker, V.G (1975) “Students as paraprofessionals in four year colleges and universities.” Journal of College Student Personnel, 16, 282-286
APPENDIX A
STAGE ONE, ROUND ONE
CRITICAL INCIDENT

Dear Resident Assistant,

I request your participation in a research study regarding R.A.s in residential college or living/learning programs. R.A.s from several universities have been selected based on the longevity, design and/or breadth of their institution’s residential college or living/learning program. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

I hope you will assist this study by providing a minimum of three experiences where, as an R.A., you successfully supported your resident(s) learning in their coursework and/or created a learning community on your floor or hall. Your descriptions should be no more than one paragraph for each experience.

The study will use your descriptions of successful experiences, along with those of R.A.s from other other universities, to develop a set of competencies (what an individual should be able to do) for R.A.s who serve in residential colleges.

While the final set of competencies may be widely shared, your individual answers will be kept confidential. Once you have completed your descriptions, simply return this e-mail to me at debaker@lsu.edu.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study. Thank you for your time and best wishes as you complete your studies this semester.

Debora Baker
Doctoral Student
School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development
Louisiana State University

How long have you served as an R.A.?_________________

Experience #1: Describe an experience where you successfully supported your resident(s) learning in their coursework and/or, created a learning community on your floor or hall.

Experience #2:

Experience #3:
Experience #4:

Experience #5:

Other Experiences:
APPENDIX B
FREQUENCY OF BEHAVIORS

1. Develop means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents. (6)

2. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicate concern, and offers assistance. (1)

3. Employs active listening skills to assist residents with personal concerns. (2)

4. Identifies sources of information. (7)

5. Uses bulletin boards to stimulate dialogues. (3)

6 a. Uses bulletin boards to expose students to new information or different perspectives. (2)
   b. Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips) (5)
   c. Uses bulletin boards to post design information (1)
   d. Uses bulletin boards to post emotional & physical health information (3)

7. Maintains knowledge and awareness regarding issues of diversity. (2)

8. Mediates resident’s tension, conflict and debate regarding controversial issues in order to stimulate learning. (4)

9. Demonstrates self-understanding and awareness regarding issues of white privilege. (1)

10. Identifies, lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LC. (7)

11. Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups. (7)

12. Uses the identification of common classes to assist residents in developing friendships. (2)

13. Develops and implements forums to address controversial issues. (2)

14. Uses faculty, staff and community leaders to assist students understanding and debate of controversial issues. (2)

15. Maintains knowledge and understanding regarding expressions of race and culture and their relationship to law. (1)

16. Leads residents in identifying fundraising projects. (2)

17. Leads residents in developing and staging variety shows. (2)
18. Understands service opportunities for abused and neglected children. (1)

19. Uses interpersonal skills to “get to know” individual residents’ perspectives.(2)

20. Encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement.(13)

21. Challenges residents’ thinking. (2)

22. Understands University’s registration process.(6)

23a. Assists residents in selecting classes.(5)
   b. Provides students with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information. (6)

24. Guides residents in using University’s registration and scheduling process.(6)

25. Familiarity with University’s choices in majors. (7)

26. Guides resident’s in selecting majors or learning about careers.(6)

27. Employs active listening to find out about residents academic concerns and interests. (11)

28. Understands the major—linguistics.(1)

29. Maintains knowledge of effective study tips. Provides study tip information.(2)

30. Guides residents in the use of study skills. (5)

31. Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents. Offers assistance. (52)

32. Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out professors. Coaches residents in how to approach and talk with professors. (5)

33a. Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents. (9)
   b. Learns residents' background and origin. (3)
   c. Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally. (5)

34a. Maintains availability to residents and keeps residents apprised of where he/she is. (3)
   b. Gets involved in residents activities. (2)

35. Develops trust between him/herself and residents. (5)

36a. Serves as an academic resource for residents. (21)
   b. Refers students to appropriate resources. (9)
   c. Communicates academic resources to students. (2)
37. Refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues (has advisor’s phone numbers). (2)

38. Familiar with the location of campus buildings. (1)

39. Provides new students with campus directions. (1)

40. Establishes and/or enforces quiet hours and other policies which make hall conducive to study. (5)

41. Knows and calls each resident’s name. (2)

42. Knows each resident’s academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, etc. (2)

43. Familiar with academic tutoring services available on campus. (5)

44. Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or others who can provide assistance. Arranges tutorial services. (7)

45. Uses own experiences as a student to assist others. (24)

46. Assists residents with their coursework and projects. (20)

47a. Assists residents with math/calculus coursework. (6)
   b. Assists students with biology/life science/chemistry coursework (4)
   c. Assists students with economics (1)
   d. Assists students w/business (1)
   e. Assists students with engineering (1)
   f. Assists students with physics (1)

48. Support and assist residents in the preparation of final projects related to the learning community’s theme. (1)

49a. Arrange field trips to visit state officials in keeping with the LC’s theme of politics and law. (1)

49b. Uses “community service” to develop community among residents. (6)
   c. Arranges field trips related to the LC’s theme. (1)
   d. Arranges field trips related to LC’s theme of Art. (1)

50. Identifies orientation/adjustment needs of residents and develops programs/strategies. (3)

51. Pairs new “mid year” students with returning students to familiarize them with the University. (1)
52. Develops lectures to provide residents with information related to current world events. (2)

53. Identifies speakers to provide residents with additional information regarding other religions. (1)

54. Assists residents in understanding and transitioning relationships as they move through their college years. (1)

55. Lead guided discussions regarding transitioning relationships as students leave for break periods. (1)

56. Assists residents in using University websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid). (1)

57. Motivates extra-curricular academic pursuits. (4)

58. Develops and recruits student participation for a student advisory board which provides feedback on the LC’s studies and program integration with the Honors Dean and LC Coordinator. (1)

59a. Serve as an editor for reader response and essay papers. (4)
   b. Listens to residents' speeches and presentations. Offers advice and suggestions. (2)

60. Use one’s own major to communicate a diverse professional perspective to other residents’ majors. (1)

61. Develop programs that bring instructional faculty (from LC required courses) into community for discussion on material related to the course. (2)

62. Link hall/community programs and activities to LC course materials, curriculum, theme & classes. (11)

63a. Provide means for residents to develop relationships with LC faculty. (4)
   b. Provides students means for students to meet and get to know faculty and/or university administrators. (8)
   c. Provides opportunities for students & faculty to re-create together. (1)

64. Provide emotional support to individuals or groups of residents. (8)

65. Share a common academic background with residents. (1)

66. Organize and develop programs. (46)

67. Guide and engage residents in organizing and developing programs. (2)

68. Provide programs which advance residents’ understanding of other religions and cultures, lifestyles, experiences and dispel stereotypes. (7)
69. Develop means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest to them. (1)

70. Familiarity with issues and risks related to alcohol consumption and drugs among residents. (7)

71. Organize programs to educate residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing issues. (6)

72. Facilitate small group discussions and study sessions. (2)

73. Organize resident team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, physics and engineering (ex’s: airplane competition, egg drop, gingerbread construction competition) or other learning communities. (5)

74. Provide review sessions. (2)

75. Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team. (19)

76. Organizes birthday socials. (1)

77. Leads residents in establishing rules and standards for community living. (1)

78. Leads residents in establishing expectations for communal areas. (1)

79. Fosters and atmosphere of mutual respect among residents. (2)

80. Leads residents in decorating the hall for holidays or making holiday decorations. (2)

81. Organizes activities such as dinners of help students understand vegen values. (2)

82a. Provides opportunities for residents to relieve stress. (4)
   b. Provides information on how to deal with stress, reduce anxiety. (3)

83. Arranges/organizes camping trips for residents. (1)

84a. Arranges/organizes off-site programs. (5)
   b. arranges ski trips (1)
   c. arranges trip to Washington D.C. (1)

85. Organizes study breaks. (1)

86. Organizes “watch parties” for students (Sports, T.V. shows) (1)

87. Organizes “group readings,” book clubs for students to understand a book required for class or books that will be helpful. (2)

88. Maintains awareness of issues related to eating disorders. (2)
89. Develops passive and active programming to inform residents about eating disorders and/or nutrition. (2)

90a. Facilitates study sessions. (1)
   b. Facilitates study sessions for economics. (1)
91. Arranges dinners between floors. (1)

92. Knowledge of issues of time management. (1)

93. Assists/educates residents regarding time management. (4)

94. Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals, exams etc. (7)

95. Provides residents with information regarding university programs (study abroad, internships, etc.). (1)

96. Establishes special areas in the halls for study. (3)

97. Encourages residents to attend classes. (1)

98. Organizes and implements “study bucks” or other programs to encourage study. (5)

99. Mediates conflict between individuals and groups. (1)

100. Facilitates moving or room changes. (2)

101. Hangs out with residents/relationship building. (4)

102. Arranges and implements faculty scavenger hunt. (2)

103. Arranges and implements a Faculty banquet or dinner. (3)

104. Organizes and develops programs to broaden residents an awareness of issues of disabilities. (1)

105a. Set up “college fair” with Deans, Advisors, Professors. (1)
   b. Set up a school management far. (1)

106. Develop and implement educational sanctions for disciplinary violations. (1)

107. Encourages, facilitates study groups and group homework. (5)

108. Encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upper-class and freshmen. (1)

109. Discourages competition among students. (1)
110. Arranges faculty lectures. (2)

111. Recognizes academic achievement. (2)

112. Decorates doors with candy and stars for A’s & B’s. (1)

113. Organizes Jewish New Year program. (1)

114. Organizes group proof reading rings. (1)

115. Organizes activities to support healthy roommate relationships. (1)

116. Organizes programs that allow residents to share auto-biographical information. (1)

117. Organizes programs that educate residents regarding issues of safety. (1)

118. Stands up to criticism/takes the heat. (2)

119. Develops a sense of pride in the community. (1)

120. Organizes and develops co-ed social programs. (1)

121. Provides nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods. (5)

122. Provides information and/or links students to school alumni. (1)

123. Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework. (6)

124. Duplicate-Combined

125. Organizes programs to develop a sense of civic responsibility. (1)

126. Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about each other and about what they are learning. (7)

127. Communicates vision for and importance of a living/learning program. (2)

128. Suspends judgment about residents until getting to know them. (1)

129. Communicates a positive attitude about coursework to residents. (1)

130. Builds residents self-esteem. (1)

131. Arranges speakers on topics of concern to residents. (1)

132. Identifies and acquires resources to finance student off site trips. (1)

133. DUPLICATE-Removed
134. Meets regularly with residents to discuss their classes. (1)

135. Assesses and applies the amount of guidance and support students want. (1)

136. Develops study tip newsletters and bathroom displays. (1)

137. Informs, communicates to residents resource information. (1)

138. Provides, refers residents to test files. (1)

139. Teaches cooking or cooks together. Organizes cooking programs to teach or cook together. (2)

140. Prepares and informs residents of upcoming changes in their facilities. (1)

141. Organizes lectures regarding service in foreign countries. (1)

142. Provides opportunities for R.A.s of different years to interact with each other. (1)

143. Helps students to negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop. (3)

144. Organizes and develops literary film festivals. (1)

145. Organizes programs that take residents to special events on campus (exhibits, virtual reality, dances, etc.) (2)

146. Encourages to go to dinner as a group either formally or spontaneously. (2)

147. Counsels residents on the importance of homework. (1)

148. Helps residents set academic goals or develop plans. (3)

149. Decorates and enhances study areas to make more appeal for study. (3)

150. Role models good academic habits. Shares what they are doing in their academic work. (1)

151. Encourages personal responsibility. (3)

152. Develops surveys for residents to get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses. (1)

153. Surveys residents to determine the overall academic atmosphere and comfort level. (1)

154. Studies with residents. (2)

155. Sets up floor e-mail list servs to assist with registration and other processes. (1)
156. Organizes programs and experiences that build leadership. (1)

157. Posts motivational signs. (1)

158. Provides residents with positive reinforcement. (1)

159. Serves as a liaison between learning community members and LC mentor. (1)

160. Develops programs that help resident connect with the university community. (2)

161. Publishes a weekly newsletter about hall and/or university events. (1)

162. Has dinner with individual residents. (1)

163. Develops programs that will orient students to their hall policies. (1)

164. Develops and organizes assassin games. (1)

165. DUPLICATE-REMOVED

166. Bring in faculty or staff to provide students with background related to LC theme (ex. WISE brings in women to talk about the women’s movement). (1)

167. Helps students prepare résumé’s & prepare for interviews. (1)

168. Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills. (1)

169. Institutes policies to encourage study (example: turning off the T.V. during certain hours). (1)

170. Identifies problems, trends, barriers to academic success and develops strategies to assist. (1)

171. Presents academic information as “funny” or “cool” to help residents take notice. (1)
APPENDIX C
RANKING OF BEHAVIORS WITH FREQUENCIES OF FIVE OR HIGHER

1. *Var 31*-Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents. *(52)*

2. *Var 66*-Organizes and develops programs. *(46)*

3. *Var 45*-Uses own experiences as a student to assist others. *(24)*

4. *Var 36a*-Serves as an academic resource for students. *(21)*

5. *Var 46*-Assists students with their course work and other projects. *(20)*

6. *Var 75*-Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other & establish a sense of community. *(19)*

7. *Var 20*-Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement. *(13)*

8. *Var 62*-Link hall community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes. *(11)*

9. *Var 27*-Employs active listening to find out about residents academic concerns and interests. *(11)*

10. *Var 33a*-Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents. *(9)*

11. *Var 36b*-Refers residents to appropriate resources. *(9)*

12. *Var 63b*-Provides students with means for getting to know faculty. *(8)*

13. *Var 64*-Provides emotional support to individuals and groups. *(8)*


15. *Var 10*-Identifies, lists, distributes or posts common classes among the LC. *(7)*

16. *Var 11*-Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups. *(7)*

17. *Var 25*-Familiarity with university’s choices in majors. *(7)*

18. *Var 44*-Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or arranges tutorial services. *(7)*

19. *Var 68*-Provide programs which advance residents understanding of other religions, cultures, lifestyles, and experiences. *(7)*
20. *Var 70*-Familiarity with issues and risks related alcohol consumption and drugs among residents. (7)

21. *Var 94*-Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals, exams, etc. (7)

22. *Var 126*-Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about each other and what they are learning. (7)

23. *Var 22*-Understands University’s registration process. (6)

24. *Var 23b*-Provides students with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information. (6)

25. *Var 24*-Guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes. (6)

26. *Var 26*-Guides residents in selecting majors or learning about careers. (6)

27. *Var 47a*-Assists residents with calculus/math coursework. (6)

28. *Var 49b*-Uses community service to develop community among residents. (6)

29. *Var 71*-Organizes programs to educate residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing. (6)

30. *Var 123*-Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework. (6)

31. *Var 1*-Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents. (6)

32. *Var 6b*-Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips, etc.). (5)

33. *Var 30*-Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tips info. (5)

34. *Var 32*-Encourages residents having difficulty to seek our professors. Coach's residents in how to talk with professors. (5)

35. *Var 33c*-Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally. (5)

37. *Var 43*-Familiar with academic tutoring services available on campus. (5)

38. *Var 73*-Organizes resident team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, engineering, physics or other coursework. (5)

39. *Var 84a*-Arranges/organizes off-site programs.(5)
40. Var 98-Organizes and implements “study bucks” or other programs to encourage study. (5)

41. Var 107-Encourages, facilitates study groups and group homework. (5)

42. Var 121-Provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods. (5)

43. Var 23a-Assists residents in selecting classes. (5)

44. Var 35-Develops trust between him/herself and residents. (5)
APPENDIX D
RANKING OF COMPETENCIES B
(WITH A FREQUENCY OF FIVE OR HIGHER)

Refinements:

1. Removed the following variables (competencies):

   Var 25-Familiarity with university’s choices in majors.

   Var 70-Familiarity with issues and risks related alcohol consumption and drugs among residents.

   Var 43-Familiar with academic tutoring services available on campus.

   Var 22-Understands university’s registration process

2. Presents obviously related variables

   1. Var 31-Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents. (52)

   2. Var 66-Organizes and develops programs. (46)

   3. Var 45-Uses own experiences as a student to assist others. (24)

   4. Var 36a-Serves as an academic resource for students. (21)

   5. Var 46-Assists students with their course work and other projects. (20)

   6. Var 75-Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other & establish a sense of community. (19)

   7. Var 20-Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement. (13)

   8. Var 62-Link hall community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes. (11)

   9. Var 27-Employs active listening to find out about residents academic concerns and interests. (11)

   10. Var 33a-Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents. (9)

   11. Var 36b-Refers residents to appropriate resources. (9)

   12. Var 63b-Provides students with means for getting to know faculty. (8)
13.  *Var 64-* Provides emotional support to individuals and groups. (8)


   *Var 5-* Uses bulletin boards to stimulate dialogue (3)
   *Var 6a-* Uses bulletin boards to expose students to new information (2)
   *Var 6b-* Uses bulletin boards to provide academic information (5)
   *Var 6e-* Uses bulletin boards to provide design information (1)
   *Var 6d-* Uses bulletin boards to provide health information (3)

15.  *Var 10-* Identifies, lists, distributes or posts common classes among the LC. (7)

16.  *Var 11-* Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups. (7)

17.  *Var 44-* Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or arranges tutorial services. (7)

18.  *Var 68-* Provide programs which advance residents understanding of other religions, cultures, lifestyles, and experiences. (7)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Suggested changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s materials, curriculum, theme and classes.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. communicates vision for and the importance of the living learning community. Provides background/historical info-regarding the learning community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. identifies commonalities in students’ class schedules in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance in coursework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings; encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. develops activities that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.安排/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community’s theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. organizes resident team competitions to support coursework learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>II. Personally serves students as a content, subject-matter resource for coursework.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. uses own experiences as a student to assist others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. tutors students in coursework and projects; provides feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.</td>
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<td><strong>III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.</strong></td>
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<td>IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.</td>
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d. encourages residents to attend classes.

e. recognizes individual or hall academic achievement.

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<td>X. Suggested Competencies:</td>
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</table>
Dear participant,

Thank you for your time in reviewing the initial set of competencies developed for student staff working in residential college or living/learning programs. Your comments and suggested changes proved most helpful.

Attached you will find two documents. In the first, I have incorporated feedback which appeared to clarify or enhance competencies and activities. Some of the feedback was utilized for the competency or activity with which it was directly linked. In other cases, it was helpful in modifying a competency or activity in another part of the model. I would ask you to review the modifications and, once again, suggest any changes you think appropriate.

The second attachment contains three suggested new competencies which are based on your feedback. I would ask you to review these competencies as you reviewed the first set and offer your suggested changes.

Once again, many thanks for your participation in this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested NEW Competencies</th>
<th>Suggested Changes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>a. Contacts faculty members if resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.</td>
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<td>b. Meets with supervisor, LC faculty and staff (professional and student) as appropriate to discuss the community programs and individual concerns.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>a. Communicates and encourages enthusiasm for learning and education.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Interacts with faculty</td>
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<td>c. Leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance groups).</td>
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<td>d. Participates in formal and informal activities.</td>
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<td>e. Utilizes strategies for academic success (attends class, studies on the floor, uses campus resources, talks with faculty advisors).</td>
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<td><strong>XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the LC community.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>a. Encourages positive inter-group relations.</td>
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<td>b. Creates a safe and accepting climate in the LC community.</td>
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Revisions
Para-professional Competencies
Residential Colleges/Living-Learning Programs

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Competency</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Old</strong></td>
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<td><strong>New</strong></td>
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</table>

17 no suggested change  /  4 suggested changes

Well phrased

All excellent and well articulated

Good

Assumes role as TA in LC course

Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes, e.g. themed dinners (hunger banquet), talk shows, meeting actors and director and then going to a play.

Change "materials" to mission.

There also needs to be an effort (at least in our program) to integrate the LLC into the larger campus community. RA's have to encourage involvement with the larger campus community.

| Old | a. Communicates vision for and the importance of the living/learning community. Provides Background/historical information regarding the learning community. |
| New | a. Communicates vision and rationale for, as well as the importance of the living/learning community. Communicates the link between both in and out of class experience. Provides background/historical information regarding the learning community. |

17  no suggested changes  /  4 suggested changes

Possibly add: understands the in and out of class experiences of students in the LC (I'm thinking of student staff understanding what students do both in and out of class that is part of the entire LC experiences—not just what happens out of class).

While vision is a good work, Rationale seems to work also. vision is where one hopes to go. Communicating rationale means helping people understand the advantages of the current situation.

Perhaps one could expand this: "Provides background/historical info regarding the learning community and regarding the local community/city within which the learning community exists." At (name of university), the city itself (New York City) is integrated into some of the learning experiences.

Crucial-especially for a place with a long tradition, like (this RC) here at (name of university). Our way of putting this is that it is a place to integrate academics and residence life, that is, a way to integrate their life of study with their social life.
Item a. is good, but does not seem to fit cleanly in this section. I'm not sure where I would plug it in because it does seem important.

OK

Yes, and this can be challenging when the RA is new and the students have been around for multiple years.

Old  b. Identifies commonalities in students’ class schedules in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.

New  b. **Identifies commonalities in students’ class schedules and majors in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.**

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested change

Good idea

Not a role in our program

Yes, this helps—we have a classroom in the building where four sections of some freshmen course is taught and the only students who can register for this are our own students; this helps with identifying commonalities. In fact, we have the faculty academic advisors create commonalities.

Schedules "and majors"

Old  c. Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings, encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

New  c. Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings (assigned novels, poetry etc.), encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change

I'm not sure what "group readings" means here? Poetry readings? Study time?

Very important—see B. above

OK

Old  d. Develops programs that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.

New  d. None

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change

Good

Good one

Perhaps one could expand this: “Develops activities that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in classes, and ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning community.”
This would be good too--don't think we've really managed to do much in this regard, except by the informal route of having lots of occasions for people to talk to one another in general.

OK

**Old**
e. Arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community's theme.

**New**
e. Arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community’s theme. Integrates with and uses university, city/community activities and opportunities to enhance LC learning experiences.

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change

These seem to be more tasks than competencies. Seems that the competency would be "the ability to arrange"

Essential--our R.A.'s do lots of this round and about New York City

OK

**Old**
f. Organizes resident team competitions to support coursework learning.

**New**
f. Organizes residence hall team activities to support coursework learning (debates, competitions, collaborative).

16 no suggested changes / 5 suggested changes

Residence hall team?

In I.f., I'm not clear on the purpose/use of "team competitions" as a tool to support coursework learning...is this a specific requirement of the program?

The only thing that we have tried in this respect has been in the nature of a formal debate. We call it "disputation" and have two teams of 3-students each do the debate. Often the topic springs out of controversies met with the coursework and the RA in charge is involved in figuring out a topic that would be suitable--this can come from coursework.

I don't understand why competitions are encourages-we are encouraging collaborations around learning and studying.

Delete-not an opportunity for all campuses

**Old**
g. None

**New**
g. Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays.)

**Old**
h. None
**New**  

h. Ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning community.

---

**Suggested Changes:**

---

**II. Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework**

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested changes

Might leave those words (content, subject-matter) out--"resource for coursework would be fine.

Perhaps this (the activities below) could be expanded to including something along these lines: "Assists students in negotiating some of the administrative difficulties connected with the learning community, e.g. registering for classes, etc." However, I see below (section V) that you also cover this issue under a different topic.

Good  

OK

---

**Old**  
a. Develops means for becoming aware of students' desire for coursework assistance.

**New**  
a. **Develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance**  
* (asks students if assistance is needed / monitors needs for assistance, visits residents regularly).  

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested changes

Asks students about their desire?

Absolutely essential. this competency would be sensitivity to academic needs of students or some such.

Monitors students wants and needs for assistance with coursework (i.e. tutoring, study groups, etc.)

This seems to me to be a function of an RA getting to know the students on his/her floor well and stopping by often to talk with them about this and countless other things.

OK

---

**Old**  
b. Uses own experiences as a student to assist others.

**New**  
b. **Combined with “c”**
I'm leery of this. Often perpetuates misconceptions. I'd much rather students' use training they are given to assist students.

What is B going for that isn't covered in C? Advice giving?

Yes, this goes without saying

OK

**Old**
- c. Tutors students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.

**New**
- c. **Uses own experiences as a student and training to assist students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.**

This would be valuable assistance

I suppose that this could happen, but our RA's are so busy, that I doubt that many of them get into the tutoring role themselves.

Are not trained to tutor to help with coursework--I wouldn't see this as a competency--referring students to such resources on campus is a competency.

Umm...they're not trained for that!

**Suggested Changes:**

### III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>We use a 2-3 hour weekly block of time called Field Experiences. Almost every week we offer and optional or mandatory community event; most are tied to community theme for the semester or to class contents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perhaps something on encouraging students to interact with their own faculty (i.e. help them not be intimidated by faculty)</td>
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**Old**
- a. Organizes opportunities, such as banquets, dinners, or a scavenger hunt, which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

**New**
- a. **Organizes opportunities, (banquets, dinners, community/hall/floor events, informal social events, service, campus tours, book clubs, film series, which**
allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

18 no suggested changes / 3 suggested changes

How about academic advising from faculty on an informal basis? We do that in our residential colleges

Good

Organizes informal social opportunities which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

Crucial. We call these events "common dinner" and try to hold them every other week on the same day (usually Mondays) at the same time. We invite some freshmen faculty, and we expect one of the RAs floors to come up with a program for the occasion. The idea is to linger a bit over dinner rather than eat-and-run. We use the faculty dining room for these meals.

OK

We use book clubs, film series, and faculty as judges in talent competitions as well if you need more program ideas.

Old  b. Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions.

New  b. Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions around topics relevant to the LC.

17 no suggested changes / 4 suggested changes

Good

Invite faculty to attend/participate in hall/floor activities

How about taking everyone out together to do something: services, campus tour, etc.

Organizes opportunities for LC faculty and students to interact around topics relevant to that LC

Good idea--it happens a couple of times a semester for us, depending on how well connected the RAs are.

Perhaps this could be expanded: "Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions, or that bring students to lectures or other events where students can meet and mingle with faculty."

Good

Old  c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to other faculty on campus.

New  c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own faculty.
Clarify "other." Does it refer to faculty who are not affiliated with the LC/faculty in other disciplines.

Great

Good idea in principle

Good

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested changes

All these competencies (in this section) sound excellent

Is familiar with resources on campus

Good

We often bring in advisors from colleges, vocational ed specialists to get students thinking about careers, majors and personal skills/values, and how all those connect.

Organizes programs with the Student Success Center or Career Center

Old

a. Develops means for becoming aware of students' needs to access campus resources.

New

a. Develops means for becoming aware of or detecting students' needs to access campus resources.

18 no suggested changes / 3 suggested changes

Add apostrophe after students (students').

Do you really want the competency to be ability to develop, or do you want the RAs to be competent to detect student needs?

Identifies students' needs to access campus resources

This flows naturally from RA's who make sure to visit their residents. We urge them that, when they come back to the dorm in the evening, even when they are not on duty, to take a walk around and to talk to their residents, about this, that and the other thing. This awareness of needs for access emerges in the course of things.

OK

Old

b. Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, test
files and exam review sessions.

**New  b. Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, time management workshops, test files, exam review sessions. Leads/accompanies students to such services as appropriate.**

18 no suggested changes / 3 suggested changes

In IVb., would you want there to be actual "leading/taking" students to appropriate campus services as well as the referral? If that's an expectation, it may need to be stated explicitly.

An objective, not a competency as are most of these below

Perhaps this could be expanded: "Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, counseling services, time-management workshops, test files, and exam review sessions."

OK

**Old  c. Assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade cards, schedules).**

**New  c. Assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade reports, schedules).**

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change

Yes-this happen quite naturally. We also have faculty advisors who do this (one advisor for 20 students, and each faculty advisor has a sophomore student assistant). These faculty advising groups are grouped by residence hall where possible, and so all the students in our residential colleges will have students from the same residential college in their advising group.

Replace "grade cards" with "grade reports"

OK

**Old  d. None**

**New  d. Organizes activities which bring representatives from student academic services centers and/or career centers into the halls.**

**Old  e. Develops means (bullet boards, newsletters) for communicating academic resource information to students.**

**New  e. Develops means (bullet boards, newsletters, e-mail) for communicating academic resource information to students.**

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested changes

Include "email" as a means for communicating academic resource information

Yes-- and be sure to get the RAs to keep a beautiful neat bulletin board--even the style of
keeping their bulletin boards makes a difference

OK

Suggested Changes:

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested changes

Fine (entire section)

Possible add: refers students to academic colleges or departments for information regarding specific academic majors or programs and career opportunities.

Good

OK

Old  a. Refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues.
New  a. Refers residents to advisors, academic colleges or departments for registration/scheduling issues and exploration of majors. Develops relationships with advisors.

19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested change

Faculty advisors are assigned to students by the Dean of the College--RA's can really help by encouraging their residents to get to the group and individual meetings with these advisors.

Developing a relationship with academic advisors, so that they can refer students to a specific person, not just an office...Our 1st year advisors have an office in the residence hall, so staff can say, "You should go see Mike about this. His office is right next to the photography studio, and he keeps his appointment calendar posted, so you know when he is available.

Old  b. Guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes.
New  b. None

21 no suggested changes

Yes, this tends to happen quite informally

Old  c. Provides information and guides residents in selecting classes and majors.
New  c. Provides information, guides or refers residents to campus resources for selecting classes & majors.
### VI. Actively motivates and encourages student's academic success.

| Old | a. Assists residents in developing academic plans and goals. |
| New | a. **Assists residents in developing academic and career plans and goals upon student’s request and need.** |

**20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change**

- Possibly add: role model academic success by attending class, studying on the floor, utilizing campus resources, and talking with faculty and advisors

**OK**

**Suggested Changes:**

**Old** b. Supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.

**New** b. **None**

**21 no suggested changes**

- Yes, of course

**OK**

**Old** c. Organizes and implements "study bucks" or other programs to encourage students to study.
**New  c. Organizes and implements incentive programs to encourage students to study.**

18 no suggested changes / 3 suggested changes

Might be a little more specific here about what kinds of programs these would be (I don't understand what study bucks means, but we used to show a film "Where there's a will, there's an A")

I don't know what this one means

Replace "study bucks or other" with "incentive"

We don't do this. It's assumed that students will study if they have chosen to come to college

We pass out smarties candies to students who are studying in their rooms or floor lounges during key academic points of the year.

OK

---

**Old  d. Encourages residents to attend classes**

**New  d. None**

21 no suggested changes

Yes, for RA's are in a much better position to notice who is not going to class, and usually there is some other problem there that needs to be attended too.

OK-underlined!

---

**Old  e. Recognizes individual or hall academic achievement**

**New  e. None**

20 no suggested changes / 1 suggested change

Yes, we actually have a formal awards program in the spring semester

We don't do this--we encourage and support students' individual accomplishments as they define their own goals

OK

---

**Suggested Changes:**

---

**VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.**

21 no suggested changes

Good

OK
**Old**  
a. Counsels residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing classes, or modifying class schedules.

**New**  
a. **Counsels or refers residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing class, or modifying class schedules.**

17 no suggested changes / 4 suggested changes

Are there any referral opportunities in this sub-competency? Referrals may be necessary in extreme situations.

The "as appropriate" here is important, again so as not to perpetuate misconceptions.

yes, this happens in the give and take among friends

College is careful about RA's "counseling"--the advising office prefers that RAs do the referral work and let the advisors do the counseling.

OK

This is challenging if the university changes rules, and doesn't communicate this to staff so we can appropriately train students. At (name of university) we get into lots of university political conflict about sharing this information, and student staff not being the appropriate people for students to get this information from, but of course RAs are who students ask for help.

**Old**  
b. Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors. Coach's residents in how to talk with faculty about difficulties.

**New**  
b. **Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors.**  
**Coach's residents on how to talk with faculty about both academic and non-academic difficulties.**

14 no suggested changes / 7 suggested changes

Coaches

"Coaches" instead of "Coach's"

Important

Coaches?

I think that it would be good to modify one of the phrases in section (b) in the following way: "Coaches (not coach's) residents on (not in) how to talk with faculty about both academic and non-academic difficulties (note that I've expanded the sentence a bit)."

This is a great idea--for freshmen especially, but sometimes also for students further along--they can be mystified about how to communicate, and this sort of coaching can be very helpful. I try to do some of the same myself in advising sessions.

Replace "coach's" with "coaches"

Coaches--typo above

Good!
<table>
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<th>c. Assists residents in identifying and using stress management techniques in times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals exams or papers.</th>
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<td>New</td>
<td>c. <strong>Assists or refers residents in identifying and using stress management techniques at times of pressure such as mid-terms, finals exams or papers.</strong></td>
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**19 no suggested changes / 2 suggested changes**

**or refers**

Yes, this is a crucial part of our faculty advising sessions, and I always make use of the sophomore assigned to help with the advising program, for students find their own fellow students very credible in these matters. RA's saying the same thing would be very helpful.

Again--RA's refer, but also show support of students to get through pressure times

**OK**

**Suggested Changes:**

### VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

<table>
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<th>Old</th>
<th>a. Organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>a. <strong>None</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**21 no suggested changes**

Yes, we have a quota system for how many of these our RA's are expected to develop

**OK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old</th>
<th>b. Uses community services opportunities to develop community among students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>b. <strong>Uses community service and civic opportunities to develop community among students.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21 no suggested changes

Very good idea--a helpful way to get students to think about others rather than themselves

OK

Old  c. Uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters) to communicated community information to students.
New  c. Uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail, floor list servs, floor web page) to communicate community information to students.

18 no suggested changes / 3 suggested change

Possibly add: e-mails, floor list servs, floor web page

OK

The other types of media used to communicate community information to students include: mass e-mail and mass voice mail.

Yes, and let me again stress the need to keep a neat, beautiful bulletin board--it is not just a pro forma matter of putting information up, it is a matter of nice design

Old  d. None
New  d. Addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of the community and/or conduct policies.

"D" addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of the community and/or conduct polices.

Suggested Changes:

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

21 no suggested changes

Good

OK

Old  a. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents.
New  a. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns (familial, medical, emotional, roommate conflicts, etc.) and crises for individual residents.
Possibly add: Refers students to campus resources for non-academic concerns, when appropriate.

In IXa. you may want to add "and knows when to refer students to professional services or contact staff members to intervene if necessary.

I wonder whether this can be clarified a bit with a few extra words: "develops means for becoming aware of personal (e.g. familial, medical, emotional, etc.) concerns and crises for individual residents.

I don't know how you would characterize this, but another non-academic issue that often has to be addressed is the issue of "roommate conflicts and disagreements."

Indispensable--again, I would emphasize frequent pro-active patterns of visiting their residents. It is not enough to be reactive when there is a crisis.

Helps students experiencing personal concerns or crises locate university counseling service(s).

OK

Old  b. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern and offers assistance.
New  b. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern and assistance and support.

"C" provides appropriate support to resident in crisis and other affected residents.

Yes, very important to get the RA's adequately trained for these crisis situations.

OK

Old  c. None
New  c. Refers students to campus resources for non-academic concerns as appropriate.

Suggested Changes:

X. Suggested Competencies

Contacts faculty members if a resident has to miss class because of death in family or other serious problem.

At (name of university), our residential LCs have Peer Mentors (supervised by their LC program) who also live on the residence hall floors of their programs. Peer Mentors are responsible for a lot of the above activities specifically related
to the LC activities, but the residence life student staff are expected to participate in and support LC activities. Maybe this model is unique and should not have its "own" competency, but a possible one may be: "Communicates and collaborates with learning community staff."

**Competency's**

Something about...meeting and communicating with faculty and their supervisor about the community, programs and individual concerns. (related activity: regularly scheduled meetings).

I wondered if you'd like to add a competency, something about being a role model. Both academically and as a member of the community. Behaviors would include having others aware of your study habits, following policies and helping explain new ones. behaving as a professional, even with people you may not like. (I'm sure you can come up with more academic language). That's just one thought, but it may take you far from you focus on LLCs.

Looking at the list of competencies, I began to see a pattern. Specifically, I wonder why these competencies were listed in this order? Using the pattern I see, it might be worthwhile to reorganize the order of the competencies. I see 3 basic areas, they are Academic, Resources, and Community. I would identify for "Academic" competencies 5,6,7, "Resources" competencies 2,3,4 and "Community" competencies 1,8,9. I define academic competencies as having to do with directly supporting academic pursuits. Resources refers to activities that connect or provide interaction that leads to information. Community refers to activities, personal or group, that contribute to the sense of ownership in their community and learning environment.

I had assumed that the competencies pertaining to (name of institution) Residential Colleges, particularly (name of RC) Residential College, was feedback from the Resident Assistants. In many instances, the responses articulated the ideal. There is also some reality that staff changes from year to year. As a result of this, creativity, active involvement and leadership differ on the part of staff. Sometimes when it comes to programming, quantity outweighs the quality and thought behind what is presented or facilitated. However, the concept of the Residential College remains a unique experience for students, especially freshmen, who participate. I accept what you forwarded. However, I believe your research should include some of the realities.

**Actively participates in the community**

- as a "student" and as a leader (related activates might include: be a member of a group such as a student group, performance group, etc. e.g. be a leader/organizer of a group)

- Models behaviors that are important to the community (related activities might include: interacts with faculty, takes initiative, participated in formal and informal activities)

1) diversity and social identity work for individuals and the residence hall
encouraging positive inter-group relations between individuals and creating a safe and accepting climate in the residence hall 3) encouraging enthusiasm about learning and education

Those are my comments. In the “suggested changes” column, I would pen in “how and cost” to remind folks that an educational process and financial commitment are part of this study.

I did try to suggest one of the major vehicles we, in (name of LLC), use to make Living-learning connections. This is our 1 credit hour course which ALL students in our LC must take as first year students. It’s called Field Experiences, RESC 200. Usually, there are four required community events and four optionals. For the optionals, we offer students about 15-20 choices. These can be anything from going to an opera to drumming with the national drummer of Ghana. Where possible, we try to link the events to our semester themes. Hope this helps.

Role Modeling: Going to class themselves; studying in their rooms; being interested in their coursework and not whiny about school.
APPENDIX G
STAGE TWO, DELPHI TECHNIQUE, ROUND FOUR

Competency Ranking
Para-professional Competencies
Residential Colleges/Living-Learning Programs

This research study has established the following set of twelve competencies for para-professionals working in residential college living / learning programs. These competencies were developed based on the self reported experiences of para-professionals at selected institutions as well as the review and feedback of residential college / LLC faculty and staff, such as yourself.

In this final round of the study, I would ask you to rank, from among these twelve, the five you believe are the most important competencies for para-professionals to develop in order to successfully support their resident(s) learning in their coursework and / or to create a learning community on their floor or hall. Your highest ranked item should receive a 1 and your lowest ranked item a 5.

Attached you will find an additional document which outlines potential activities supporting each competency. Thank you for lending your time and expertise to this study.

Write your ranking in the box

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.

II. Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework.

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success.

VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.

XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.

XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work and promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences.
Para-professional Competencies/Activities
Residential Colleges/Living-Learning Programs
(for review purposes only, no response required)

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community’s mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.

a. Communicates vision and rationale for, as well as the importance of the living/learning community. Communicates the link between both in and out class experience. Provides background / historical information regarding the learning community.
b. Identifies commonalities in students’ class schedules and majors in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.
c. Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings (assigned novels, poetry etc.), encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.
d. Develops programs (dinners, lecturettes with faculty or discussions) that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.
e. Arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community’s theme. Integrates with and uses university, city/community activities and opportunities to enhance LC learning experiences.
f. Organizes residence hall team activities to support coursework learning (debates, competitions, collaborative activities).
g. Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays, performing arts events).
h. Ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning community.

II. Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework

a. Develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance (asks students if assistance is needed, monitors needs for assistance, visits residents regularly).
b. Uses own experiences as a student and training to assist students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

a. Organizes opportunities, (banquets, dinners, community/hall/floor events, informal social events, service, campus tours, book clubs, film series) which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.
b. Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions around topics relevant to the LC.
c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own or other non-LC faculty.
IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.

a. Develops means for becoming aware of or detecting students’ needs to access campus resources.
b. Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, time management workshops, test files, exam review sessions. Leads/accompanies students to such services as appropriate.
c. Assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade reports, schedules).
d. Organizes activities which bring representatives from student academic services centers and/or career centers into the halls.
e. Develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail) for communicating academic resource information to students.

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.

a. Refers residents to advisors, academic colleges or departments for registration/scheduling issues and exploration of majors. Develops relationships with advisors.
b. Guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes.
c. Provides information or guides residents in selecting classes and majors. Refers students to campus resources as appropriate.

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success.

a. Assists residents in developing academic and career plans and goals upon student’s request and need.
b. Supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.
c. Organizes and implements incentive programs to encourage students to study.
d. Encourages residents to attend classes
e. Recognizes individual or hall academic achievement

VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.

a. Counsels or refers residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing class, or modifying class schedules.
b. Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors. Coaches' residents on how to talk with faculty about both academic and non academic difficulties.
c. Assists or refers residents in identifying and using stress management techniques at times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams or papers.
VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

a. Organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners.)
b. Uses community service and civic opportunities to develop community among students.
c. Uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail, floor list servs, floor web page) to communicate community information to students.
d. Addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of the community and/or conduct policies.

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

a. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns (familial, medical, emotional, roommate conflicts, etc.) and crises for individual residents.
b. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern, assistance and support.
c. Refers students to campus resources for non-academic concerns as appropriate.

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.

d. Contacts a professional staff member or faculty member (if appropriate) if a resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.
e. Meets with supervisor, LC faculty and staff (professional and student) as appropriate to discuss the community programs and individual concerns.
f. Collaborates with LC faculty and staff to identify and implement educational activities for the community.
g. Assists residents in involving LC professional staff or faculty as appropriate when they have an issue.

XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.

f. Communicates and encourages enthusiasm for learning and education.
g. Interacts with LC instructional faculty.
h. Leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance groups) that are connected to the LC.
i. Participates in formal and informal activities sponsored by the LC.
j. Utilizes strategies for academic success (attends class, studies on the floor, uses campus resources, talks with faculty advisors).

XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work, and promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences.

c. Encourages positive relationships and interactions between all LC community members.
d. Creates a safe and accepting climate in the LC community.
Revisions
Para-professional Competences
Residential Colleges/Living-Learning Programs
(for review purposes only, no response required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 no suggested changes

I think this last point is critical...especially for campuses where there are programs that aren't LC's. Students can't get isolated/elitist.

Good

a. Communicates vision and rationale for, as well as the importance of the living/learning community. Communicates the link between both in and out class experience. Provides background/historical information regarding the learning community.

16 no suggested changes

Good.

b. Identifies commonalities in students' class schedules and majors in order to create opportunities for the development of peer to peer assistance.

16 no suggested changes

Good editing.

Good

c. Based on the identification of common classes, organizes group readings (assigned novels, poetry etc.), encourages and/or facilitates study groups and group homework.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change

Could also be simple discussions or dinners/lecturettes with faculty...or maybe you want that to fall somewhere else...D perhaps.

Good
Old  

d. Develops programs that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.

New  

d. **Develops programs (dinners, lecturettes with faculty or discussions) that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in class.**

16 no suggested changes

This sounds like an older faculty member to me...quiet hours are good to have, and need to be enforced by the RA's and residents but it doesn't belong in this section...thanks for not changing it. ("Perhaps one could expand this: "Develops activities that allow residents to talk with each other about what they are learning in classes, and ensures quiet time and and/or study space within the residential learning community.")

Good.

---

e. Arranges/organizes off-site programs related to the learning community’s theme. Integrates with and uses university, city/community activities and opportunities to enhance LC learning experiences.

16 no suggested changes

Good

---

f. Organizes residence hall team activities to support coursework learning (debates, competitions, collaborative activities).

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

I didn't notice this section the first time around...it seems hokey and outdated to me. It it the debate and discussion or the idea of competitions that is most important to you.

Good

---

Old  

g. Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays.)

New  

g. **Coordinates co-curricular activities tied to LC classes (i.e. themed dinners, talk shows, meeting actors/directors, attending plays, performing arts events).**

14 no suggested changes  2 suggested changes

Maybe this fits into D.

Performing arts events

---

h. Ensures quiet time and/or study space within the residential learning
community.

16 no suggested changes

Yes, separating this out was a good idea.

Good

II. Personally serves students as a content subject-matter resource for coursework

16 no suggested changes

a. Develops means for becoming aware of students’ desire for coursework assistance (asks students if assistance is needed / monitors needs for assistance, visits residents regularly).

16 no suggested changes

I like the wording on suggestions 2 and 3.

Good

b. Uses own experiences as a student and training to assist students in coursework and projects, provide feedback on speeches/presentations; edits papers.

14 no suggested changes 2 suggested changes

Makes referrals to campus resources.

Good, but should focus on referrals.

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty.

16 no suggested changes
a. Organizes opportunities, (banquets, dinners, community/hall/floor events, informal social events, service, campus tours, book clubs, film series), which allow residents to become acquainted with learning community faculty.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change

Where is the end parentheses?

Good

b. Organizes programs that bring learning community faculty into the halls for lectures and/or discussions around topics relevant to the LC.

16 no suggested changes

*****I like this idea (starred above)..do something to recognize that RA's have to collaborate with faculty..sometimes in some places this isn't as easy as we would want it to be.

Good

Old c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own faculty.

New c. Seeks or identifies opportunities to broaden exposure of students to non LC faculty on campus. Encourages students to interact with their own or other non-LC faculty.

15 no suggested change 1 suggested change

Who? LC faculty or professors they are taking classes from? Maybe use "instructional" instead of "own" Who is mean by "their own faculty?" Good

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus.

16 no suggested changes

a. Develops means for becoming aware of or detecting students’ needs to access campus resources.

16 no suggested changes

Good
b. Refers students to appropriate campus services such as tutoring services, time management workshops, test files, exam review sessions. Leads/accompanies students to such services as appropriate.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

Be consistent with your wording of these items. Are they skills the RA is learning "how to" and developing a personal skill, OR is this a task on the RA "to do list?"

Good

c. Assists students in accessing, managing and understanding their student information (student aid, fee bill, grade reports, schedules).

16 no suggested changes

Good

d. Organizes activities which bring representatives from student academic services centers and/or career centers into the halls.

16 no suggested changes

Good addition.

Good!

e. Develops means (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail) for communicating academic resource information to students.

16 no suggested changes

Good

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors.

16 no suggested changes

a. Refers residents to advisors, academic colleges or departments for
b. Guides residents in using registration and scheduling processes.

16 no suggested changes

Old c. Provides information, guides or refers residents to campus resources for selecting classes & majors.

New & Refers c. Provides information, guides residents in selecting classes and majors. Refers students to campus resources as appropriate.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change

In C. the wording seems more complicated now. I see why you did it, but I have to re-read the sentence a couple of times to be sure I have the meaning.

Good

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students’ academic success.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change

a. Assists residents in developing academic and career plans and goals upon student’s request and need.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change (see below)

Good

b. Supports and encourages individual residents and the group to persevere in coursework.

16 no suggested changes
c. Organizes and implements incentive programs to encourage students to study.

16 no suggested changes

Good

d. Encourages residents to attend classes

16 no suggested changes

e. Recognizes individual or hall academic achievement

16 no suggested changes

Suggested Changes:

In this section, especially A, I get the sense that I may have a minority view...We have to understand and accept that overall more of these competences happen informally and don't impact all of the students all of the time..but in the long haul the staff have a gigantic impact on individuals and the overall community.

VII. Guides students in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic or stressful circumstances.

16 no suggested changes

Old a. Counsels or refers residents as appropriate in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing class, or modifying class schedules.

New a. Counsels or refers residents, as appropriate, in decisions regarding add/drop, auditing classes, or modifying class schedules.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

classes, Good

There are other competencies about encouraging sound academics and unless students are trained as academic advisors, this is problematic. They are seen as an authority figure by students and if they give wrong advice, (like, Yeah, your load is too heavy, drop that course--not realizing that dropping it now means taking it next semester when that course load is more of a killer) it can really cause students problems. I'd rather the competency be something about realizing the limits of their ability to counsel students about academic guidelines and refer/encourage students to seek academic advice from their advisor.
b. Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out their professors.
Coaches residents on how to talk with faculty about both academic and non
academic difficulties.

15 no suggested changes 1 suggested change

Good change

Leave non academic for other student services. Some profs aren't good at the non-academic stuff.

c. Assists or refers residents in identifying and using stress management
techniques at times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams or papers.

16 no suggested changes

Suggested Changes:

B. I wonder if faculty should focus on non-academic issues. See B for change.

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among students.

16 no suggested changes

a. Organizes programs and activities that assist students in talking to and getting to know each other (social programs, group dinners.)

16 no suggested changes

b. Uses community service and civic opportunities to develop community among students.

16 no suggested changes

Good clarification.

Good
c. Uses various media (bulletin boards, newsletters, e-mail, floor list servs, floor web page) to communicate community information to students.

16 no suggested changes

Good

d. Addresses student behaviors that violate the norms of the community and/or conduct policies.

16 no suggested changes

Good

Suggested Changes:

Works with faculty and other LC staff to facilitate their integration into the community.

 IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns.

16 no suggested changes

a. Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns (familial, medical, emotional, roommate conflicts, etc.) and crises for individual residents.

16 no suggested changes

Good

b. Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicates concern, offers assistance and support.

16 no suggested changes

Good

c. Refers students to campus resources for non-academic concerns as appropriate.

16 no suggested changes

Suggested Changes:
D. Coaches residents on how to seek assistance from campus resources for non-academic difficulties. Can be combined with “c”

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

Great addition...maybe worded more like a job expectation and less like a competency.

Old  a. Contacts faculty members if resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.
New  a. Contacts a professional staff member or faculty member (if appropriate) if a resident has to miss class because of a death in the family or other serious problem.

12 no suggested changes  4 suggested changes

What about student’s personal responsibility...helps student involve LLC professional staff or faculty as appropriate when they have an issue.

We don't leave "A" to a student. A professional staff member does this.

This overall competency is great, but I'm a bit uncomfortable with Xa. Seems like this is truly the student’s responsibility, not the LS student staff.

a. On our campus this would be inappropriate. This information would be sent to the VP for SA, who’s office would communicate to various parties.

b. Meets with supervisor, LC faculty and staff (professional and student) as appropriate to discuss the community programs and individual concerns.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change
b. I'd separate into "b. programming" and c. "concerns with individual students" and d. "community development”

I'd also phrase it like, b. "collaborates with LC faculty and staff to identify and implement educational activities for the community” knowing if they meet, does not say what happens at that meeting. And collaboration can happen outside of meetings.

Old  c. None
New  c. Collaborates with LC faculty and staff to identify and implement educational activities for the community.

Old  d. None
New  d. Assists student’s in involving LC professional staff or faculty as appropriate when they have an issue.
XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success.

*16 no suggested changes*

Wonderful. I'm glad you added this. I was glad to see others suggested it as well.

Good!

- Communicates and encourages enthusiasm for learning and education.

**Old** b. Interacts with faculty.

**New** b. *Interacts with LC instructional faculty.*

B. Interacts with their instructional faculty and LC

**Old** c. Leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance groups).

**New** c. *Leads, organizes and participates in group activities (student groups, performance group) that are connected to the LC.*

c....that are connected to the LC.

**Old** d. Participates in formal and informal activities.

**New** d. *Participates in formal and informal activities sponsored by the LC.*

d...."sponsored by the LC" or "that are connected to the LC's theme/topic."

---

- Utilizes strategies for academic success (attends class, studies on the floor, uses campus resources, talks with faculty advisors).

**Suggested Changes:**

*14 no suggested changes  2 suggested changes* (for all activities in XI)
Old XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity and social identity work for individuals and the LC community.
New XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work and promotes understanding of individual and community differences.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

Good addition.

Awkward wording. "promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences.

Old a. Encourages positive inter-group relations.
New a. Encourages positive relationships and interactions between all community members.

15 no suggested changes  1 suggested change

a. Encourages positive relationships and interactions between all community members.

b. Creates a safe and accepting climate in the LC community.

General Comments:

*This is a fun project you are working on. Overall I remain impressed. I can't follow directions very well, so I inserted comments in places outside of your suggested changes boxes...I did so in Comic Sans font and underlined it. I hope that helps. My biggest comment overall is the need to watch out for/decide on your phrasing and consistency of thought. In a couple of places it feels like your list drifts away from competences and into tasks RA's should complete. My original understanding is that competences were skills the RA could gain or demonstrate they have. As I uses these drafts to help me think about training my staff for the fall, I want to be sure I'm giving them something tangible to walk away with about themselves...not just a to do list. Does that make sense?

*Looks fine, but, I fear, you are creating a super-expectation for RAs!!!

*I tried really hard to find some area where I could provide helpful feedback, but your work is really thorough. I think the three new competences are well laid out, and in my opinion--really complete. I'm very excited to have this document, it gave me some new ideas. Thanks for including me in this project.

*I've not had time to look over the new competences very carefully, but it sure looks like you've put together quite a balanced and comprehensive overview. Given the fact the
competences look so good already, and that I've got little time left to look it over, I think it's safe to say that the latest version meets with my approval (but I'll let you know if anything else occurs to me).

*Thanks so much--I'm not really sure that I understand the material in the form you sent it now, but to the extent that I do (basically I read over the new items) it looks good to me.

*Here you go. It's looking great! Good luck.

*The new competences sound fine to me, no recommended changes. For the second part, I feel the modifications are fine.

*Your competences look good. I don't have any additional suggestions. If possible, can you send me a copy of your final report? I'd like to share it with other folks who work with LC's. Please let me know if I can do anything else.

I've taken time to look over your material. It looks very strong. On pg. 7, w/the"Develops a means for becoming" section, "form" should be "from." Otherwise, this looks well considered.

I think you have done a fine job of integrating our comments into your competency framework. I don't see any further need for change, but I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to comment.

Debora, I've read the new draft and it looks great. In fact with your permission, I'd like to show it to our new hall director and our community coordinator. There are MANY new ideas about how to enrich the LL connections. Two short observations: Re competency 1, integrating LLC is esp. imp't if it does not fully occupy a hall and important if campus is trying to build the LL symbiosis. Two, re I f, competition is healthy within a civil and caring community. Too much collaboration can get, will get sappy, sloppy and solipsistic! Many thanks for doing this fine work and including us in the process.

This looks great--you've done a ton of work here, and I commend you on putting up with all this "wordsmithing" from your reviewers! I only have one comment on the new competencies (listed in the text). Otherwise, the existing changes look good to me.

I have no additional suggestions. The competences look very good to me.

This looks great and I particularly enjoyed reading others comments. Its interesting that some of these things seem directly related to working faculty and academics with residents and some of the areas seem more related to being a successful RA in general, like keeping up good bulletin boards. I am wondering if we are looking to describe competencies in RAs that are directly related to being in a living/learning program or competencies that help RAs be successful in general and include specific references to working with faculty and classes within programs. Many of these competencies fit competencies for any RA.

I'll just comment that my RAs who work in this program, really do a couple of things differently than general RAs. They need to consider if there is a reason for them to
connect with the faculty director regarding individual or community issues, coordinate with the faculty director regarding any programs and encourage students to connect with their faculty, seek assistance from them etc.
All of my RAs should be good at promoting academic resources, navigating issues of diversity, creating study buddies or other ways of connecting students in the same classes, helping students with online registration and add/drops etc.
Overall, I think the general headings are excellent, just in some of the details I was asking myself why certain items were related to Living/Learning RAs only. It may be that we are describing the RAs within their general role, as well as their liv/lrn role and then it all makes sense.
Either way, this is very thought provoking and excellent work...I am happy to see we are looking at this! Thanks for checking in with me!

This is good work. Now let's hope it is properly funded.

Most look really good. I'm uncomfortable with the specific one (see VII a. for specific comments). The others are impressive and would be really daunting to me if I were applying for this job.

Wow, this is really becoming something very useful. I made some suggestions on the first page (which blend ever-so-slightly to a second page) and one on pg 14 which I highlighted in yellow so it is easy to find).
I look forward to seeing a finished draft. You have some real high-power players contributing to this, as I can see from the other comments being made.
APPENDIX H
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK-A

Academic Resource

36a Serves as an academic resource for students (21)

137 Informs, communicates to residents resource information (1)
95 Provides residents with information regarding special university programs (study abroad, internships) (1)
51 Pairs new "mid year" students with returning students to familiarize them with the university (1)
122 Provides information and/or links students to school alumni (1)
171 Presents academic information as "funny" or "cool" to help residents take notice.

31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents. (52)

27 Employs active listening to find out about and assist residents academic concerns and interests (3)

36b Refers residents to appropriate resources (9)

138 Provides, refers residents to test files (1)
44 Refers students to appropriate tutorial services or arranges tutorial services (7)
43 Familiarity with academic tutoring services available on campus (5)
38 Familiar with the location of campus buildings (1)
39 Provides students with campus directions (1)

6b Uses bulletin boards to inform students of academic information (past exams, study tips) (5)

4 Identifies sources of information (7)
5 Uses bulletin boards to stimulate dialogue (3)
6a Uses bulletin boards to expose students to new information from different perspectives (2)
6c Uses bulletin boards to post design information (1)

56 Assists residents in using University websites and processes for managing their student information (registration, checking grades, verifying bills, student aid) (4)

171 Presents academic info as "funny" or "cool" to help residents take notice (1)
**Assists, Support, Tutors Students in Coursework**

46 Assists residents with their coursework and projects (20)

47a Assists residents with calculus/math coursework (6)

59a Serve as an editor for reader response and essay papers. (4)

59b Listens to resident's speeches and presentations. Offer advice and suggestions (2)

154 Studies with residents (2)

74 Provide review sessions (2)

21 Challenges residents thinking (2)

45 Uses own experience as student to assist others (24)

60 Uses one's own major to communicate a diverse professional perspective to other residents' majors (1)

65 Share a common academic background with residents (1)

31 Develops means for becoming aware of academic concerns for individual residents (52)

134 meets regularly with residents to discuss their classes (1)

30 Guides residents in the use of study skills. Provides study tip information (5)

136 Develops study tip newsletters and bathroom displays (1)

29 Maintains knowledge of effective study tips (2)

**Community**

75 Organizes programs and activities that assist students in getting to know each other and establish a sense of community/team (19)

146 Encourages residents to go to dinners as a group either formally or spontaneously (2)

12 Uses identification of common classes to assist residents in developing friendships (2)

152 Develops surveys for residents to get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses (1)

77 Leads residents in establishing rules and standards for community
Leads residents in establishing expectations for communal areas
34b Gets involved in resident's activities
8 Mediates residents' tension, conflict and debate regarding controversial issues
9 Discourages competition among residents
119 Develops a sense of pride in the community

66 Organizes and develops programs (46)

71 Organizes programs and educate residents regarding alcohol consumption, drugs or clubbing (6)
67 Guides residents in organizing and developing programs (2)
163 Develops programs that orient students to their hall policies (1)
156 Organizes programs and experiences that build leadership (1)
120 Organizes and develops co-ed social programs (1)
113 Organizes Jewish New Year program (1)
91 Arranges dinners between floors (1)
69 Develops means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest (1)
76 Organizes birthday socials (1)
86 Organizes watch parties for students (sports, T.V. shows) (1)
168 Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills (1)
84a Arranges off site programs (1)
132 Identifies and acquires resources to finance off site programs (1)
81 Organizes activities such as dinners to help students understand vegean values (1)
83 Arranges/organizes camping trips for residents (1)
84b Arranges ski trips (1)
84c Arranges trips to Washington D.C. (1)
89 Develops passive and active programming to inform residents about eating disorders and/or nutrition (1)
104 Organizes and develops programs to broaden residents awareness of issues of disabilities (1)
115 Organizes activities to support healthy roommate relationships (1)
116 Organizes programs that allow residents to share autobiographic information (1)
117 Organizes programs that educate residents regarding issues of safety (1)
125 Organizes programs to develop a sense of civic responsibility (1)
168 Develops programs related to career exploration and job search skills (1)
13 Develops and implements forums to address controversial issues
52 Develops lectures to provide residents with information related to current world events
53 Identifies speakers to provide residents with additional information regarding other religions (1)
131 Arranges speakers on topics of concern to residents (1)
141 Organizes lectures concerning services in foreign countries (1)

69 Develop means for residents to suggest and organize programs of interest to them

160 Develops programs that help residents connect with the university community

80 Leads residents in decorating the halls for the holidays

49b Uses community service to develop community among residents (6)

16 Leads residents in identifying fundraising projects (2)

17 Leads residents in developing variety shows (2)

161 Publishes a weekly newsletter about hall and/or university events (1)

140 Prepares and informs residents of upcoming changes in their facilities

**Links to LC Theme**

62 Links hall/community programs and activities to LC course materials, curriculum, theme and classes (11)

61 Develop programs that bring instructional faculty from (LC required courses) into community for discussion on material related to the course (2)

58 Develops and recruits student participation for student advisory board which provides feedback on the LC's studies and program integration with the Honors Dean and LC Coordinator (1)

48 Support and assist residents in the preparation of final projects related to the learning community's theme (1)

153 Surveys residents to determine the overall academic atmosphere and comfort level (1)

159 Serves as a liaison between learning community members and LC mentor (1)

144 Organizes and develops literary film festivals (1)

10 Identifies, lists and distributes or posts common classes among the LC (7)

11 Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups (7)

126 Provides residents a chance to talk with each other about what they are learning (7)

84a Arranges off site programs (5)

49c Arranges field trips related to LC's theme (1)

49d Arranges field trips related to LC's theme of Art (1)
Organizes team competitions to develop teamwork, time management, and support learning in science, physics and engineering (ex's: airplane competition, egg drop, gingerbread construction competition) or other learning communities (5)

Communicates vision for and importance of a living/learning program (2)
Bring in faculty or staff to give students' background information related to LC theme (1)

Motivation

Supports and encourages residents to persevere in coursework. General support and encouragement (13)

Counsels residents in the importance of homework (1)
Motivates extra-curricular academic pursuits (4)
Encourages personal responsibility (1)

Organizes and implements "study bucks" or other programs to encourage study (5)

Decorates doors with candy and stars for A's & B's (1)
Recognizes academic achievement (2)
Institutes policies to encourage study (1)
Posts motivational signs (1)
Provides residents with positive reinforcement (1)
Decorates and enhances study areas to make more appealing for study (3)
Establishes special areas in the halls for study (3)

Helps residents set academic goals or plans (3)

Encourages residents to attend classes (1)
Recognizes academic achievement

Guides residents in selecting majors or learning about careers (6)
Helps residents prepare resume and prepare for interviews (1)

Guides residents in using University's registration and scheduling processes (6)
Sets up floor e-mail listservs to assist with registration and other processes (1)

Refers residents to advisors for registration/scheduling issues (has advisor's phone number) (2)

Assists residents in selecting classes (5)

Provides residents with information concerning classes and/or makes referrals for more information (6)

**Interpersonal Skills**

Uses interpersonal skills to generate dialogue and conversation with residents (9)

Knows and calls each resident's name (2)

Knows each resident's academic major and academic abilities, interests, projects, et. (2)

Develops trust between him/herself and residents (5)

Checks in with residents to see how they are doing academically or personally (3)

Hangs out with residents/relationship building (4)

Provides a nurturing environment by providing snacks and foods (5)

**Peer to Peer assistance**

Uses the identification of common classes to develop or encourage study groups (7)

Provides an environment for students to assist each other in coursework (6)

Encourages and facilitates study groups and group homework (5)

Organizes group readings, book clubs for students to understand a book required for class or books that will be helpful (2)

Organizes group proof reading rings (1)

Facilitate small group discussions and study sessions (1)

Facilitates study sessions (1)

Facilitates study sessions for economics (1)

Encourages mentoring and coursework assistance between upper-class and
Overcoming difficulties

94 Assists/supports residents in times of pressure such as mid-terms, final exams (7)
32 Encourages residents having difficulty to seek out professors. Coaches residents in how to approach and talk with professors (5)
143 Helps students negotiate difficulties with classes, schedules, coursework, make choices to add/drop (3)
170 Identifies problems, trends, barriers to academic success and develops strategies to assist (1)

82a Provides opportunities for residents to relieve stress (4)

82b Provides info on how to deal with stress reduce anxiety (3)
85 Organizes study breaks (1)

Emotional Support

64 Provides emotional support to individual residents or groups (8)

6d Uses bulletin boards to post emotional and physical health information (3)
50 Identifies orientation/adjustment needs of residents and develops programs and strategies (3)
54 Assists residents in understanding and transitioning relationships as they move through their college years (1)
55 Leads guided discussions regarding transitioning relationships as students leave for break periods (1)
135 Assesses and applies amount of guidance and support students want (1)
128 Suspends judgment about residents until gets to know them (1)
130 Builds residents self-esteem (1)
99 Mediates conflict between individuals and groups (1)
70 Familiarity of issues related to alcohol consumption and drugs among residents (7)
88 Maintains awareness of issues related to eating disorders (2)

2 Contacts residents in time of personal crisis, communicate concern, and offers assistance (1)

3 Employs active listening skills to assist residents with personal concerns (2)

1 Develops means for becoming aware of personal concerns and crises for individual residents (6)
Uses interpersonal skills to "get to know" individual residents' perspectives (2)

Maintains availability to residents and keeps residents apprised of where he/she is (3)

Has dinner with individual residents (1)

Faculty Involvement

Provides means for students to meet and get to know faculty (8)

Provides means for residents to develop relationships with faculty

Arranges and implements faculty scavenger hunt (2)

Arranges and implements a faculty banquet or dinner (3)

Arranges faculty lectures (2)

Uses faculty, staff and community leaders to assist students understanding and debate of controversial issues (1)

Set up "college fair" with Deans, Advisors, Professors (1)

Set up a school of management fair (1)

Competencies which fell out/stand alone

Facilitates moving or room changes (2)

Stands up to criticism, takes the heat (2)

Provides opportunities for R.A.s of different years to interact (1)

Competencies which can be pulled up into the new competencies from Delphi

Establishes and/or enforces quiet hours and other policies conducive to study (5)

Provide programs which advance residents' understanding of other religions and cultures, lifestyles and experiences and dispel stereotypes (7)

Maintains knowledge and awareness regarding issues of diversity (2)

Demonstrates self-understanding and awareness regarding issues of white privilege (1)
15  Maintains knowledge and understanding regarding expressions of race and culture and their relationship to law (1)

79  Fosters mutual respect among residents (2)

129 Communicates a positive attitude about coursework to residents (1)

150 Role models good academic habits (2)
APPENDIX I
FINAL RANKING OF COMPETENCIES

I. Links hall/community programs and activities to the learning community's mission, materials, curriculum, theme and classes. (90)

VIII. Establishes a sense of community among residents. (42)

III. Provides students with opportunities to interact with faculty. (37)

VI. Actively motivates and encourages students' academic success. (29)

IV. Connects students with academic resources on campus. (24)

X. Communicates and collaborates with LC faculty and staff. (24)

XI. Role models behaviors important to the LC community and academic success. (23)

XII. Establishes an environment that facilitates diversity, social identity work, and promotes understanding of individual and LC community differences. (13)

VII. Guides residents in developing and applying academic survival skills under problematic and stressful circumstances. (12)

IX. Provides emotional support to individuals and groups for non-academic concerns. (11)

V. Assists residents in registration/class selection processes and exploration of majors. (3)

II. Personally serves students as content subject-matter resource for coursework. (0)
VITA

The researcher, Debora E. Baker, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Letters from the University of Oklahoma in 1985. She went on to receive a Master of Education degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1988 where her studies focused on higher education and student personnel services.

She began her career in college student housing as a resident assistant at the University of Oklahoma. Upon completion of her master's degree, she went on to work full time in college student housing at the University of Oklahoma, Trinity University, and George Mason University. She has now worked in the Department of Residential Life at Louisiana State University for over nine years serving as Director since 1999. As such, she has provided leadership for the organizational development of three residential colleges and a housing facility master plan. Her core mission, in her leadership role, is to bring all areas of her department into alignment to support student learning.