

Vision 2020

*Residential Colleges Program
Department of Residential Life
Louisiana State University*

Strategic Plan

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Mission Statement

MISSION OF THE LSU RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES PROGRAM

Provide living-learning communities for first-year students that promote academic success and personal development in support of *Flagship 2020*.

VISION

Be a nationally-respected leader in developing and sustaining vibrant living-learning communities that provide an intellectually and culturally vibrant environment, foster personal development and academic success and embody the highest standards of academic programs and campus housing.

VALUES

The Residential Colleges Program is a community of residential life staff, academic units, faculty and academic staff, as well as the students living in the residential colleges, that operates based on values-- those principles, standards, and qualities we believe are the bedrock for service to the campus community. These values are common to all personnel within the Department of Residential Life and represent the essence of our professionalism. Our actions are a clear reflection of the following values:

- **Learning** – Support and participate in the educational mission of the university.
- **Integrity** - Build trust with community members by creating an environment of mutual respect, openness, and truthfulness. Balance the legitimate needs of those affected by our actions.
- **Ethics** - Abide by the highest standards of our profession, a set of moral principles that guide our rules of conduct in respect to the social, professional, and learning environment.
- **Teamwork** - Use a cooperative effort by the members of our community to achieve common goals. Exercise a unity of effort to consistently achieve community goals utilizing all available resources. Create common understanding and commitment when problem solving. Display genuine and total confidence in the integrity, ability, and good character of other team members.
- **Courage** - Stand up willingly for what is right for the Program as a whole even if that stand is contrary to conventional wisdom. Exhibit confidence and tenacity to make bold decisions, hold to the chosen course despite challenges or difficulties, and accept full responsibility for the outcome.
- **Community Development** - Diversity in all its forms is central to a healthy and dynamic community. We commit to working from multiple perspectives while advocating for the interests of all individuals and the community. We strive to provide all people equal access to resources, services, and programs.
- **Stewardship** - Use resources responsibly and creatively to benefit present and future members of the community. Pursue continual improvement and excellence.

Goals

Communication Skills: To continue to develop, nurture, and assess the communication skills of residential college students beyond that which is imparted in their coursework

This goal is one of three that overlap with both the *Flagship 2020* and Department of Residential Life's "Learning" goal, which is at the center of the Residential Life mission. Here we include both formal written and verbal communication in coursework and informal written and verbal communication with their peers and faculty/staff.

Performance Indicators

- Residential college student scores on ENGL 1001 final essay are at least 0.1 points higher than those for non-residential college students
- Mean score on responses to the five questions related to communication skills on the Educational Benchmark Inc. (EBI) survey exceeds 5.50 (on a scale of 1 to 7, with "5" = mildly agree and "6" = "agree")
- EBI scores on the five questions pertaining to communication skills are statistically significantly higher for residential college students than for their peers in traditional halls on campus and on-campus apartments.

Strategies

- Encourage student use of the campus writing center
- Collaborate with the Residence Life Coordinators in encouraging resident assistants to introduce students on his/her floor to the rector and other residential college faculty, particularly early in the academic year
- Encourage the rectors to seek certification for their courses by the Communication across the Curriculum Program
- Foster co-curricular programs that encourage informal communication, particularly among students from different backgrounds

Critical Thinking Ability: To continue to develop, nurture, and assess the critical thinking ability of residential college students beyond that which is imparted in their coursework

This goal is one of three that overlap with both the *Flagship 2020* and the Department of Residential Life's first goal ("Learning"), which is at the center of the Residential Life

mission. Here we define “critical thinking skills” broadly, to include: truth-seeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, self-confidence, inquisitiveness, and maturity. For example, the consideration of, “what would you do?” types of questions with ambiguous scenarios and outcomes might foster critical thinking skills. This implies that at LSU, development of critical thinking skills should cross-cut the curriculum and co-curricular activities. We hope that *all* of our courses encourage the development of critical thinking skills among its students.

Performance Indicators

- The difference between mean GPA of first-year residential college participants vs. first-year non-residential college participants increases from high school to the end of the first year
- Grades for students who sought tutoring in a math or science sequence course in spring but not the previous fall show improvement
- Mean score on responses to the two questions related to critical thinking skills on the EBI survey exceeds 5.50
- EBI scores on the two questions pertaining to critical thinking skills are statistically significantly higher for residential college students than for their peers in traditional halls on campus and on-campus apartments

Strategies

- Encourage tutoring, supplemental instruction, group study sessions, and exam review sessions in the halls
- Foster co-curricular programs that encourage critical thinking skills, particularly those involving making mature professional and personal decisions
- Explore the possibility of reviving Academic Convocation at the beginning of the academic year in at least some residential colleges

Community and Social Responsibility: To continue to develop, nurture, and assess the sense of community and social responsibility of residential college students beyond that which is imparted in their coursework

This goal is one of three that overlap with both the *Flagship 2020* and the Department of Residential Life’s first goal (“Learning”), which is at the center of the Residential Life mission. Certainly merely living on campus contributes to this goal, but we hope that our programs within the Residential Colleges Program will further enhance our students’ sense of community and social responsibility.

Performance Indicators

- Mean score on response to the question related to sense of community and social responsibility on the EBI survey exceeds 5.50
- EBI score on the question pertaining to sense of community and social responsibility is statistically significantly higher for residential college students than for their peers in traditional halls on campus and on-campus apartments
- Number of service learning courses offered increases annually
- Weight of recycled materials increases annually
- Participation in service-related programs such as blood drives, food drives, disaster relief drives, etc. increases annually

Strategies

- Foster co-curricular programs that encourage the development of a sense of community and social responsibility
- Encourage service learning in residential college courses
- Enhance recycling efforts by increasing recycling collection sites, reporting tools, and programs