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Housing 365: A Response Rooted in Supporting Students During Academic Breaks

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the

Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Science

By Abigail E. McCourt

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Chapter One: Introduction & Positionality

In Chapter One, I discuss the prevalence of trauma in the American society and the importance of a holistic approach to housing, using trauma-sensitive care in post-secondary education systems. My professional experiences directed me to focus on improved campus support systems and policies for traumatized students. Considering what housing options are available for marginalized students during university break periods, I propose a comprehensive plan for colleges and universities to ensure cohesive housing for students experiencing transitions or traumatic life experiences.

Unpacking Trauma

Trauma is pervasive in college students and its impact is very broad (Davidson, 2017). The effects of trauma are deep and life altering and are particularly impactful on the most vulnerable such as foster youth, first-generation and/or international students. Currently, there is not a comprehensive support system for students experiencing housing interruptions as a result of academic breaks. Of course, no one is guaranteed to avoid trauma or grief, but specific groups of marginalized populations are at a higher risk of crisis (Davidson, 2017) and there is no one-size fits all approach to trauma-sensitive support. However, there is a need for housing through transitional periods, such as summer and winter breaks, which create significant financial and emotional challenges for these students

Trauma is an experience whereby a person's internal resources such as relaxation, pleasure, support, strength, and safety are not adequate to cope with external stressors. Common examples of trauma include adverse childhood experiences, sexual assault, racism, or poverty. Trauma affects the whole person, adversely impacting learning, behavior, and relationships. This is why it is important for institutions to prioritize alternative housing options for at-risk students

and dedicate a committee to oversee systems and policies that view students as humans first and foremost. When students are struggling from a feeling of disconnection from their college and university communities it can undermine their success (Hoch et al., 2015). There is a need for welcoming, supportive communities that encourage students' resilience. Viewing universities as interconnected and interdependent systems where what happened or happens to students can affect everyone is vital to trauma-sensitive care and healing (Hoch et al., 2015).

University Break Periods

Typically, break periods represent a time to reunite with friends or family and catch up on overdue rest. However, for some marginalized groups, the approach of spring or summer could bring about anxiety and trepidation if they are experiencing a crisis or traumatic event. While it is common for colleges to offer alternative break housing, there is an operational cost and turnover timeline that does not always allow for an optimal transition for the student when a disruption occurs. Winter and summer break periods tend to be the longest breaks and therefore can be the most challenging periods for students to navigate alone or with limited resources.

This is where colleges and universities can step in and dedicate a single point of contact in their Residence Life and Housing department, with a committee of representatives designated to inform policy and analyze issues through a trauma-sensitive lens. Students should know there are offices dedicated to their success with people who are intentional about best practices to support them, especially marginalized groups. Having systems in place that supports students in housing from the day they move-in until the day they move on, no matter what crisis occurs, is the housing department's responsibility. Offering a consistent housing option in the midst of a tragedy is also meaningful in providing some of their most basic psychological needs like safety and security (Maslow, 1943).

Professional Experience

Upon graduating from college in May 2009, I felt accomplished, confident and excited for an increased earning potential. I was ready for post-college life, or at least I thought I was. Since I graduated at the peak of the economic crash, I felt fortunate to be offered a job as an Office Manager for my aunts' property management franchise. Unfortunately, that position did not last past the summer, but by the fall of 2010, I got my priorities in order and started searching for a full-time job. Fatefully enough, I came across a job posting on Craigslist for an Assistant Community Manager at University Student Housing, LLC (USH) in West Chester. It was an entry level position and I thought I could finesse my previous property management experience enough to qualify, so I applied. Shortly after, I was contacted for an interview and subsequently offered a different job, but I was happy to be employed and begin learning my new role managing summer camps and conferences for USH at West Chester University.

Operating student housing provided a plethora of experiences with undergraduates. I have worked in various roles within the housing department; from leasing beds to students and then testifying against them at our local courthouse due to a judgement hearing for non-payment of rent, to supervising student staff for summer housing and front desk operations. My relationship with the students varies based on our relationship and experience, but providing something so basic as the need for shelter is what housing offers students; a sense of security while pursuing their education.

Traumatic Transitions

The different jobs I assumed through my career allowed time for me to reflect on myself and my role on campus. I welcomed families and students to their residence halls and met with residents who experienced domestic violence and needed alternative housing to avoid a

dangerous relationship. I had to testify against “tenants” at our local courthouse due to a judgement hearing for non-payment of their rent. I met residents who would not live to see a graduation day and others who would go on to be directors of university departments. These experiences and opportunities for reflection provided a new lens to view not only my role in crisis or trauma support to students, but also the role of the systems of higher education.

Throughout my years working in student housing, there are a few memories of various students in crisis that will remain close to my heart. One fall, I had a resident named Siobhan come to my office as a break period was approaching. Siobhan hesitantly asked what housing options were available for the fall break period because she did not have a safe home life. I directed Siobhan to the counseling center and they were able to advocate for her so my supervisor could accommodate her request so she did not have to return home over the breaks. Recently, I received an email from a current resident in our apartment complex and she is concerned about a place to live for the summer because she may be homeless. Unfortunately, this student experience is not uncommon and without policies and procedures in place to support these marginalized groups, they can easily feel a lack of belonging.

Lessons for Practice in Post-Secondary Education

As we learn from lived experience and support students on the front lines of our work as student affairs professionals, we look to others for ideas and best practices. Without the dedication of other colleagues in the field, the awareness of the need for this housing intervention and trauma-care in post-secondary education would not be possible. Two examples of programming and policy that foster trauma-sensitive for college students are the Hope Center at Temple University and West Chester University's Promise Program. Both are strong pillars in their communities that are driven by a mission for the success of marginalized groups.

Housing 365

Through my professional experience and research, it is evident some marginalized students need help 365-days a year and a lack of basic needs or crisis should not stop them from feeling supported. Year-round housing or housing assistance through holidays and breaks should be a campus support system in place at each college or university.

To maximize use of space for availability, visitor apartments used for scholars or model units used for Admissions tours can be utilized during the academic year breaks and then more permanent housing can be provided during the summer and into the next academic year if needed. Further, a sticker could be designed to signal the campus support system as there is typically a stigma around any housing insecurities.

Programming and food accessibility will be provided so basic needs are met. This intervention will intentionally provide priority housing for marginalized students experiencing an interruption in housing and continue follow-up through a campus support system like the Counseling Center until the student no longer requires the support. Similar to the model used for the Promise Program, there will be a single point of contact to build relationships and consistency with this population.

Academic Barriers

Educators always hope students will enter college both academically ready to learn and emotionally ready to experience the enjoyment and excitement of discovery. However, many effects of trauma often block a student's ability to learn in the classroom and maintain health study habits. Processing prolonged stress and trauma can be physically and emotionally demanding and time consuming (Davidson, 2017).

Even after a stressful or traumatic situation has ended, people can continue to react as if the stress or trauma is continuing. They become self-protective; they spend a lot of their energy scanning their environment for threats; their bodies act as if they are in a constant state of alarm; their brains are endlessly vigilant; and they may experience a constant baseline feeling of low-level fear, which leaves less space for curiosity, exploration, and learning (Hoch et al., 2015).

Importance of housing security for marginalized students is vital to their academic success. Ensuring dedicated campus support systems are in place to meet the student where they are and aid them through transitional periods can build relationships and trust.

Specialized Training for Residence Life and Housing Services

Students often come to their Resident Directors or other housing professionals during a time of crisis. Issues for college students living in residence halls can range from roommate conflicts to financial or housing insecurities, grief, sexual or domestic abuse or racial trauma. Of course, no one likes to think about disasters occurring, but despite this, crises due to natural and man-made disasters affect us every year. No person or region in our state is immune from experiencing the trauma associated with these events, including our colleges and universities. So how can student affairs staff be better prepared to listen, educate, and empower these students when they arrive for support? When severe weather events, accidents, and even criminal acts occur on campuses, it strikes everyone's sense of safety, and profoundly affects students, faculty and other staff. When such tragedies occur, the community invariably rallies to provide assistance and support to those in need and faculty and staff are often called upon to offer guidance to students. The academy must prepare their hosts to best support those students who are experiencing a trauma or crisis. One proven training method is called Psychological First Aid

(PFA). This intervention can be a useful tool for housing professionals and student leaders after critical events impacting campus or individual learners.

According to the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Psychological First Aid training is a supportive intervention for the immediate aftermath of traumatic events or large-scale crises. It is an evidence-informed modular approach designed to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning and coping. Further, this program is specifically designated for non-mental health clinicians, which means faculty, staff and university partners can utilize it as an intervention for the community (Psychological First Aid Guide for Ohio Colleges and Universities, 2013).

This type of specialized training is important to consider and provide for employees who work in Residence Life and Housing Services as a vehicle to provide an improved response after critical events impacting campus: from tragedy to socio-political traumas. When tragic events happen that impact the campus community, staff are often called upon to offer support to students. Designating a course with the basic skills necessary to provide common sense support after a tragedy, such as a student death or political trauma can help empower staff to provide an optimal response rooted in assisting the whole student. Specialized training should also address how faculty and staff can collaborate with the Public Health department and other campus supports. This specialized training is a way to help increase the support campuses provides in the aftermath of a tragedy and help the student feel a sense of mattering.

Building Relationship

I entered into education and student affairs because I want to make a difference for students. I can never forget that behind research and data there is always a human face and real people facing real challenges in an ever-changing world. Trauma affects ways in which people

approach potentially helpful relationships. According to Trauma-Informed Practices for Postsecondary Education, trauma affects one's ability (or willingness) to form relationships with others. Individuals who have experienced childhood trauma may be distrustful or suspicious of others, leading them to question the reliability and predictability of their relationships (Davidson, 2017).

Conclusion

Colleges are systems and creating a trauma-sensitive climate requires the entire campus community to deepen its shared understanding of trauma's impacts on learning and agree to a campus wide approach. All staff members must work together with a sense of shared responsibility for the physical, social, emotional, and academic safety of every student. Along those lines, when students' needs are addressed holistically, the staff works together to help traumatized students improve their relationships, regulate their emotions and behavior, bolster their academic competence, and increase their physical and emotional well-being (Davidson, 2017)

In conclusion, it is often the intentionality in the small things we do in the education field that add another layer of value to the students' experience. A home should represent safety and communicate in a welcoming environment. When students with intersecting identities arrive on campus, they have likely experienced a spectrum of trauma. They are looking for a safe space where they can learn and feel seen as a whole student. Remembering birthdays, having snacks available, posting Ally stickers by your office door and simply making time for your students are the footprints that make an impact and leave a cherished memory after each interaction. This is what makes an individual feel like the matter and we should never underestimate the impact we can have on our students, large or small, positive or negative.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter is about humanizing the way the dominant, capitalistic society controls and limits education. It examines the relationship the student has with themselves, their teacher and the institution from a trauma-informed lens.

Theoretical Framework

It is important to use multiple theories to inform a philosophy of education because there is no one-size fits all approach to education or trauma-sensitive support. The same is similar with theory - a single theory is unlikely to explain the development of every aspect of any one student. Incorporating concepts from various theories helps provide a comprehensive understanding of development. Student affairs professionals will find value in keeping students' narratives in the forefront of their practice and using theories as ways to make sense of students' lives. Student development theories are observations of reality and reflect how people interpret what is happening in students' lives in systemic ways. To explore further, I focus my lens on the university and its role to support a pedagogy of hospitality. This paradigm will inform my journey as I unpack my philosophy of education.

The Philosophy of Hospitality in Post-Secondary Education

Among a collection of lived experiences and studies from undergraduate to graduate school, I formed a framework of my beliefs and views on education and the role of the university. I believe theory and practice should always be evolving; therefore, the pair must adapt to time and criticism to allow for improvement and continuity. My work and philosophy in student affairs deserve to be informed by students, continued peer-reviewed research and introspective professional development, or else my role as an educator is pointless. To cultivate my philosophy, I found it helpful to be aspirational and humanistic in my approach. My

viewpoints serve as an ideal model in engineering my educational practice with students and my colleagues.

I suggest that hospitality must be rooted within the universities pedagogy and acknowledge the process of education is a never-ending cycle of scholarship. A trauma-sensitive school will also be an effect of this model. Through analysis of Michael Oakeshott (*Idea of a University*, 2004), I argue a pedagogy of hospitality within a university without condition, has the opportunity to foster a humanistic ideal for education.

According to *Oxford Languages*, there are two definitions for the adjective, hospitality; “friendly and welcoming to strangers or guests; and (of an environment) pleasant and favorable for living in.” (“Hospitable”, 2020) Notable as well, are the origins of the word derived in the 16th century: from French, *hospiter* meaning to ‘receive a guest’ and from Latin, *hospitare* meaning to ‘entertain’. In education, students are the guests and the university is the host. The student’s role is to approach the learning environment with a lens of inquiry and self-awareness. Throughout their collegiate experience students should be shown ways of thinking, not what to think. The university’s role is to provide a critical learning environment that encourages a student-centered praxis. A humanistic approach evokes the consciousness of learners to actively participate in the teaching-learning process while respecting humanitarian values.

To place this in context for my philosophy, the university is the host for learning and campus support systems, where students are welcomed and encouraged by a critical educational environment. Similar to Michael Oakeshott’s, *The Idea of a University*, “A university, moreover, is a home of learning, a place where a tradition of learning is preserved and extended, and where the necessary apparatus for the pursuit of learning has been gathered together” (Oakeshott, 2004, p. 24). This approach to education demonstrates a commitment to the community it serves and

also provides sustainable conditions for personal and academic growth. In order for this model to be achieved, the basic needs of the whole students must be met. Without a student-centered approach, there is opportunity for neglect of basic psychological needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) states that for a person to achieve safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization, a person must first have their basic physiological needs met. According to Maslow, some of these basic physiological needs include food and shelter. Therefore, unstable access to food and shelter may significantly impact an individual's ability to achieve higher human needs, such as feeling safe, secure, confident, and loved. Whether it be due to hunger, fatigue, behavioral, or emotional difficulties related to lack of food, can ultimately affect students' academic performance (El Zein et al., 2019). When a student is having trouble meeting their basic physiological needs, such as getting their next meal or where they will sleep that night, concentrating and performing well in school may be challenging. Crisis related to student's basic needs must be eradicated by the university so they can focus on their reason for being enrolled; to learn and develop their potential.

The university must respond to this dilemma by focusing on the student as a human first. The academy, as the 'host' of education, must become more human. Student affairs professionals need to embrace the traditions of learning as Oakeshott references. Oakeshott (2004) suggests, "a university is not a machine for achieving a particular purpose or producing a particular result; it is a manner of human activity" (p. 24). Higher education institutions limit students' time, resources, and pursuit of learning, aiming for the machinery approach that Oakeshott so strongly argues against.

Education requires transformation of oneself and higher education can be a model for society on how to remake the world. In the words of Angela Davis from a lecture she gave in

2014, “You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world and you have to do it all the time.” Alliances and collectives require collaboration and resilience if they have any hope toward erecting a system that will mutually support others. Collective power is not enough if we shy away from the work. There is no way around it. Schools need nutrient rich soil and support systems where students and teachers can grow in groves, like the great redwood trees, who anchor each other at their roots.

My approach to a philosophy of education is trauma-informed because it must be if it is for the improvement of humanity. We should educate other humans not to see the neoliberal reality repeated, but to see it interrupted and re-designed. In order to critically engage in dialogue around uncomfortable topics and taboo counter-narratives, curricula, and campus environments should be informed by praxis and theory for a comprehensive and effective result. In conclusion, my philosophy of education, while it includes the relative theories and framework for a foundation, is not finite. For me, it is important to be intentional about leaving space to build upon and continue to serve as a catalyst for students.

Critical Action Research

Critical action research (CAR) is a framework that can be used in higher education to research subjects (such as university students), in a nontraditional and non-positivist way. One of the important features of CAR is that it is often put into practice in community settings. This is particularly relevant to my thematic concern because my proposed intervention is focused on community support. [...] Being an action researcher means you are in the practice of being critically observant of what is genuine and authentic and what is being used to engage or entice stakeholders and investors is important. The rigorous analytical work is critical to our research and to developing alternative outcomes for our field.

The emerging themes in my action research on trauma-informed care and training for housing operators is a sense of safety and relationship. Dublin (2019) describes how many of the life challenges students are facing even before arriving at college can actually be translated to strengths and resilience when met with proper guidance and support on-campus. This raises the awareness of how college and universities have collectively failed to provide adequate housing resources during moments of crisis to this group. To begin critical action research we use a basic model of Look, Think, Act as described by Stringer (2014).

First, we look at the problem in post-secondary education among marginalized students. Priority housing for students experiencing housing insecurities due to trauma or crisis is the way of my research. The Hope Center at Temple University and Student ARC: Advancing Student Retention are examples of organizations I will draw from who use CAR to inform their work and provide basic needs such as emergency aid, affordable housing, transportation, and childcare for college students. To achieve this, they describe their process as, scientifically rigorous, and practice-informed action research that seeks to support underrepresented college students and ensure effectiveness.

Next, is the thinking phase. This is an opportunity for the participants to reflect and analyze the emerging information from the first step. A home should represent safety and a welcoming environment. When students with intersecting identities arrive on campus, they have likely experienced a spectrum of trauma. They are looking for a safe space where they can learn and feel seen as a whole student. A student affairs mentor once told me that we choose our lenses, and through my own research and reviewing data, I recognize this is also a recurring practice for action researchers and the importance of recognizing which lenses they are using in

reporting. Deciphering and distilling the myriad of viewpoints can feel overwhelming, categorizing and coding are techniques that can provide insight to pull out important themes.

Finally, the action plan. To accomplish this, the participants identify a sustainable solution to gain a successful outcome. Through continued surveys and evaluations, I will use my research as a needed pathway to pioneer for tangible and trauma-sensitive possibilities for our students. I will also use incentives to encourage participants to complete the survey and focus group. Recognizing students are the experts when it comes to what is happening with their college experience is valuable in research. Imagine a program intentionally built to support marginalized and traumatized students to sustain their success! In order to do this, action research establish and maintain strategic partnerships that emphasize credible findings and survey methods. Also, they pursue action-oriented, stakeholder-engaged research that advances the field of inquiry. This focus on research, identifies areas for improvement and evaluates existing practices aimed at addressing real college issues.

Before we can consider action research effective, we must include strategy and sustainability in our planning. Without both considerations, the work of the participants will be in vain. Stringer (2014) reminds us that “The intent is to ensure that changes evolving from action research are systematically integrated into the life of the agency, organization, department or institution in which the research took place” (p.187).

Conclusion

By discussing my theoretical framework and a CAR approach, I demonstrated how a philosophy of education with a concentrated lens on hospitality and trauma-informed care emphasizes the role of the student as the guest and the university as the host. Further, it recognizes the benefits of a humanistic praxis to teaching and within the campus environment.

Through examining the importance of using CAR to inform student affairs practice and the Look, Think, Act model as a foundation, I reinforce the effectiveness of this research. In the upcoming chapter, I will unpack literature to support my research and provide examples of best practices used in the field to support students' basic needs through campus support systems.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Throughout the years college campuses have given students a place of refuge. Whether from war or simply as a basic need, many students rely on housing while enrolled. It is now generally expected that housing will be provided and sometimes even required for first-year and sophomore students. On-campus residence halls represent a home for the students who expect supportive campus services as they navigate the challenges of life on-campus. There are many factors to consider when assessing the needs and impacts of housing insecurities for college students. In this chapter, I unpack the marginality surrounding basic needs of students who are frequently impacted during transitional periods on-campus and provide examples of how residence halls that lack cohesive housing options can embrace the opportunity to bridge the gap between students and their institutions.

History of Concern

In this first section, I discuss the history of the college housing model and the increased demand for residence halls in higher education. There are several drivers of this problem. I present relevant research about pressure by the government to hold institutions responsible for enrollment rates and the lack of financial support which caused private developers to seize the opportunity to enter the student housing market. With diminishing funds, the burden of debt shifted to the college students making the model unaffordable for those in the middle and low class. Access to higher education has become the driver of socioeconomic mobility in America, yet state policymakers have made going to college less affordable and less accessible to the students most in need (U.S. Department of Education, N.D.).

The College Housing Model

The history of college residence halls (RHs) illustrates a rich tradition that informs the history of higher education. Adopting the practice of dormitory-style living from England's Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the American higher education system realized that "dorms" (dormitories) served as a vehicle to educate students and increase enrollment. However, Oxford and Cambridge abandoned dormitories, and the use of the term, more than a century ago, administrators now refer to on-campus housing as residence halls (Blimling, 2015).

Traditional-style RHs were developed with the intention to accommodate increased enrollments at many colleges (Rentz, 2011). As the availability of on-campus housing grew, the number of students enrolled in higher education increased rapidly (Blimling, 2015). With increased enrollments at colleges and universities, the demand for housing did not lessen. In addition, the development of land-grant colleges under the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts established campuses in rural regions of the United States and required the building of student housing to accommodate more students (Rentz, 2011). The introduction of women's colleges also increased the demand for RHs with the establishment of strictly residential colleges like Vassar, Smith, and Mount Holyoke Colleges in the 1800s (Blimling, 2015).

By the 1960s college was seen as a safe-haven for many, especially those in protest of the Vietnam War. Rentz (2011) reminds us that men who enrolled in college to avoid the military draft often viewed college campuses as a safe refuge (p. 49). Until the early 1970s, many college campuses' RHs were run by housemothers who acted *in loco parentis*, or in place of parents. Universities abandoned the traditional concept of *in loco parentis* due to dramatic societal changes in postwar America. One of the changes was the shift from same-sex to mixed-gender dorms toward the end of the 20th century (Willoughby et al., 2009). With a rise in enrollment

and the loss of *in loco parentis* students begin to wrestle with the age of activism and civil disobedience.

Funding Challenges

In the mid-1990s, state and federal governments passed regulations to hold universities more responsible for graduation rates and other quality indicators that generated institutional rankings (Mitchel et al., 2017). Additionally, financial support from the government was drastically lowered, prompting college partnerships with private companies to fund new housing growth (Blimling, 2015). As the government funding originally intended to support higher education diminished, mixed with the pressure to raise enrollment, institutions were faced with a funding dilemma. However, they quickly identified a solution to offset their loss by increasing tuition and housing costs for students.

Increased college costs did not deter enrollment growth and low interest rates allowed universities and private developers to borrow money to construct new (RHs), apartments, and other buildings that had self-generated revenue. By 2002, there was an increase in privatized housing and other outsourcing of student affairs functions. Historically, higher education experiences increases in enrollment during times of economic recession, and this trend accelerated with the educational demands of the job market post-recession of 2008 (Mitchel et al., 2017). Further, college dues have noticeably affected millennials in search of education during the peak of the Great Recession and now struggle to fulfill their student loans rather than purchasing a home, starting a business, or funding retirement. Between 1992 and 2012, the average loan owed by a typical student who graduated with a bachelor's degree increased more than double to almost \$27,000 (U.S. Department of Education, N.D.).

Faced with rising enrollments, student demand for high-end housing, and evidence that the quality of student housing influences student recruitment and retention (Mitchel et al., 2017), many housing and residence life professionals took advantage of favorable construction costs and historically low interest rates to invest in new RHs and apartments. As universities looked to expand and improve their student housing, they found interested partners among private companies who had access to capital and understood the market. Universities with limited bonding capacity also saw in these partnerships the opportunity to offer students modern accommodations without assuming debt or using their bonding capacity to build RHs (Blimling, 2015). This left the student to consume the debt instead.

In this entrepreneurial climate, universities, and occasionally their foundations, began to view private developers as partners. A survey by College Planning and Management found that 70% of the new buildings under construction in 2011 were developed by universities without any involvement from outside private partners (Moore et al., 2012). The remaining 30% were owned solely by private developers, jointly by universities and private developers, or by university foundations and operated by Residence Life and Housing Services. Starting in 2008, state funding grew more limited. The 2008 recession further reduced state funding and drove unemployment rates up and endowment equity down. State support for higher education declined by an average of 28 percent by 2013 (Weissman, 2013). State universities responded to budget cuts by increasing tuition and fees. Full-time undergraduate tuition and fees at public four-year institutions increased by an average of 42% from 2006–07 to 2011–12; tuition and fees at private institutions increased by an average of 28% (College Board, 2012).

The rapid rate of cost increases impacted low-income families greatest. For the poorest 20% of Americans, the cost of public higher education in 2011 was 114% of their annual income

(Mettler, 2014). Room and board charges are a significant part of the debt students incur on residential campuses. At public four-year universities, they account for more than half the total charges students pay (College Board, 2013).

Abramson (2012) studied the construction of new student housing over the 10-year period 2003 to 2012. His analysis included 427 student housing projects totaling 57 million square feet and housing 171,000 students. The total cost of these projects exceeded \$13 billion. Based on the data, Abramson estimated that the average RH was built to house approximately 374 students and cost approximately \$69,000 per student, or \$200 per square foot, at 2012 rates. These costs add up to astronomical amounts that students are expected to pay back upon completion of their college career, and this section is only including approximate housing bills, not tuition.

Housing and residence life professionals historically collected information about occupancy rates, numbers of students applying for rooms, annual cost of room damage, room change requests, and RH departure rates. Institutions use this information to determine housing rates and to estimate the demand for housing each year. The challenge of the next decade is stabilizing the associated operating costs and maintaining occupancy during a time of changing enrollment patterns and demographics and more cost-conscious families (Blimling, 2014).

Federal and state financial aid has lessened the impact of tuition and fee increases on students from families with low incomes. However, the overall average cost of attending college has risen for these students, because room and board costs have increased, too. As a result, between 2008 and 2012 the net cost of attendance for low-income students rose by 12% at four-year public institutions (Mitchell, et.al.2017). Further, higher education was not originally intended to benefit or support students in the margins of society. As the populations attending

colleges and universities have shifted, higher education has had to adapt along with the change to provide improved accessibility and visibility for those students in need.

Higher Education Policy from Obama to Biden

In 2018, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on food insecurity among college students, stating that “increasing evidence indicates that some college students are experiencing food insecurity, which can negatively impact their academic success” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, N.D.). The GAO concluded that the “substantial federal investment in higher education is at risk if college students drop out because they cannot afford basic necessities like food” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, N.D.). In reviewing the past two plans of US presidential administrations for higher education with the current plan, I illustrate examples of the need to address the deficits identified. While prior presidential plans do overlap in some ways, it is evident the priorities of the Trump administration differ significantly from Obama’s and Biden’s. Most notably is the final key priority listed under the Trump Administration Higher Education Policy Agenda, “to consolidation would result in reduced funding for Minority-Serving Institution programs” (American Association of Community Colleges, 2019). Comparably, both Biden and Obama highlight the necessity for increased funding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions.

To further address these deficiencies, the Hope Center created the #RealCollege survey to compensate for the lack of data collected on the security of students’ basic needs. The Center’s main focus is to coordinate institution-specific surveys to equip institutions with information they can use to support students. In 2019, the federal government, for the first time, began assessing food and housing insecurity among students using the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey.

It is evident the current administration is planning to address some of the major inequities facing college students. According to President Biden, his administration understands the barriers preventing students from completing their college degree and how frequently these students and their families also face housing and food insecurity. Further, Biden plans to give states financial incentives to foster collaboration between community colleges and community-based organizations to provide wraparound support services for students, especially veterans, single parents, low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities who may face unique challenges.

The U.S. economy rewards workers who have earned postsecondary education degrees. It will be interesting to see where this administration can address and provide sustainable support for marginalized students, especially considering a prediction in the executive summary by Georgetown Public Policy Institute that by 2020, 65% of all jobs in the economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school (Carnevale, et al., 2013). All institutions and systems must do more to control costs to make degrees more affordable, and focus on their success rate with students who have traditionally been least likely to complete their programs and degrees. In addition to supporting these needed changes, Congress must do more to protect students taking on debt they will never be able to repay and strengthen, not weaken, accountability in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, N.D.).

Connections to HESA Literature

Student affairs professionals must use an intersectional lens (Paton, et al., 2016, p.75) when considering the challenges students face on-campus. The barriers students experience related to housing security are not exclusive to minoritized groups. The need for housing is a basic human need and colleges should offer inclusive support programs for those in need of on-

campus housing. Inclusion and support for students includes enhancing services for underrepresented students and creating intersectional partnerships among our support programs.

Retention

While colleges strive to grow enrollment and increase retention rates, it has not been until recently that institutions identified basic needs insecurity as a significant challenge keeping students from achieving their credentials. Supporting students' basic needs has many benefits for colleges and universities, especially in today's difficult economic climate. Some of the benefits of higher education are boosts in academic performance, retention, and degree completion. It is important for higher education and government to recognize the implications of financial vulnerability on their students' college experience and that relatively small expenses can force difficult decisions around staying enrolled in college (Klepfer et al., 2020). Further, with evidence supporting the benefits of on-campus housing to involvement and student's success, the need for consistent and comprehensive housing support is clear.

When compared to students who live at home or commute to campus, students who live on or near campus are more likely to be involved with campus organizations, interact with faculty members and other students, and utilize campus facilities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995; Tinto, 1987, 1993). The differences in residential versus non-residential life suggest that housing is influential and facilitates the process of social integration and campus engagement. According to Blimling (2015), most research on the intersection of housing and college success has considered the benefits of on-campus housing. Students appear to be more likely to graduate if they live on campus, particularly when the on-campus experience encourages student learning and engagement. It is not yet clear, though, that on-campus housing is cost-effective compared to other interventions. Also, as college enrollment has grown, on-campus housing construction has

not been able to match increased demand. While public-private partnerships financed new construction, these residences are often less affordable than existing on-campus options.

Other research has demonstrated the benefits of student housing on aspects of students' lives, including the overall college experience (Astin, 1984; Chickering & Reisser, 1993), and adjustment of first-year students to the college environment (Kaya, 2003). Social science research provides evidence that students who live in residence halls (RHs) learn more and are more likely to remain in college and to graduate than students who have never lived in an RH (Blimling, 1993; Gellin, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Pelter, Laden, & Matranga, 1999; Schudde, 2011; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).

Recognizing how life on-campus can lead to student retention, organizations like Student ARC: Advancing Retention in College strive to advance retention at higher education institutions by providing a wide range of resources and tools to support emergency aid. Resources like this one are meaningful and necessary to create, manage, and sustain the right emergency aid efforts that can improve student retention.

Considering the Needs of College Students

Abraham Maslow (1943) was a clinical psychologist who said people have a hierarchy of needs and the basic medical and physical needs must be met first. The steps at the foundation of the pyramid are the basic needs, such as food, sleep and security. Without attention to basic needs, individuals are unable to continue to the next levels of psychological needs like love and belonging and to ultimately experience self-fulfillment. According to Maslow, meeting basic needs is essential if humans hope to achieve their full potential and be successful (McLeod, 2007). I take into consideration Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in formulating a comprehensive housing plan, where medical and basic physical needs always come first. The operating principle

behind this model is that students must Maslow before they Bloom (Riegel, 2020). In other words, student learning cannot truly occur unless and until students' basic needs are met.

According to a Real College Survey Report from 2019, basic needs insecurity continues to be more common among students attending two-year colleges compared with those attending four-year colleges. Particularly, a survey conducted among some institutions in Philadelphia, In addition, particular life circumstances are associated with higher-than-average rates of basic needs insecurity. Students who have been through systems such as foster care, the military, or the criminal legal system (i.e., "returning citizens") are much more likely to experience basic needs insecurity than their peers. Former foster youth experience food insecurity and homelessness at especially high rates, with their rate of food insecurity nearly double that of non-foster care students and their rate of homelessness more than triple. College students are talented and ambitious, but they will not complete their degrees if they are unable to find and afford both sufficient food to eat and a safe place to sleep. This report clarifies that marginalized students were at substantial risk of food and housing insecurity before COVID-19 pandemic, signaling potential for even greater risk in the future.

Mattering, Marginality, and Transition

When students can depend on the stability of basic needs like housing it creates a sense of mattering and belonging. As student affairs professionals, the goal is to serve the whole student and affirm their belonging in the academic community. Individuals know what it is like to be a part of something that makes them feel like they belong, like they are home. On-campus housing is a basic security and should be a consistent haven for students facing barriers. In the Real College Survey Report (2019), students often marginalized in higher education, including Black and Indigenous students, students identifying as nonbinary or transgender, students enrolled part-

time, and students who are former foster youth or returning citizens, are at greater risk of basic needs insecurity.

Schlossberg (1989) describes a theory of Mattering and Marginality. Mattering is the belief that we are connected and important to others, this belief motivates action. Marginality expresses the change in a role or experiences, a sense of not fitting in, and feeling uncertain about what the new role entails. “Institutions that focus on mattering and greater student involvement will be more successful in creating campuses where students are motivated to learn, where their retention is high, and ultimately, where their institutional loyalty for the short and long-term future is ensured” (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 14).

Transition Theory (1989) a transition is “any event, or non-event, [which] results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 37).

Critical Consciousness

bell hooks (1996) remind us “There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures” (p. 118). This description highlights the essence of critical consciousness within higher education. However, the Western culture implies consciousness as an individual awareness within yourself, but the Latin etymology of consciousness literally means (*con*) together (*scio*) to know. Also, derived from *conscire* "be (mutually) aware". This definition implies consciousness is not limited to the individual, rather derived from mutual knowledge. This framework is essential to radicalize the neoliberal path. Here, the savior mentality is absolved and space is created for mutuality and profound mindful deepening. This practice must inform our work as higher education professionals if they expect to have transformative outcomes from their interactions with students. It is also crucial to recognize the

importance of BIPOC influences and theories and to include them, especially when working to address deficiencies in higher education that typically impact students in the margins of society.

Basic Needs as Social Justice

Economic insecurity in the form of debt and housing affordability is another challenge weighing heavily on the minds of college students. I would be remiss in my research without including the impacts of increasing costs for college and housing. Student loan debt in the U.S. surpassed \$1.6 trillion in 2019 according to the Federal Reserve. The looming debt on the horizon for incoming students is crippling and depressing. In fact, according to a recent study by Harvard Youth Poll (2021), 57% of all 18- to -29-year-olds carry debt; 63% of all young adults under 30 are concerned about the impact housing costs will have on their future. Yet, with the potential rewards of going to college, many students take out whatever loans they need in order to enroll.

The Hope Center does an annual survey of college students which found in 2019 that around half of all two-year students and almost one-third of four-year college students experienced housing insecurity, food insecurity or both (Real College Survey Report, 2019). Further, in the most recent report from 2021, there is a focus particularly on students' basic needs security, the disparities in students' needs and access to support, and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and college leaders.

Research from the Hope Center highlights the crisis due to bereavement and housing insecurities experienced by students as a result of COVID-19. According to their survey, nearly 3 in 5 experienced basic needs insecurity, specifically 48% were affected by housing insecurity. Further, 41% of students surveyed had a close friend or family who was sick with COVID-19

and 13% lost a loved one due to COVID-19 (The Hope Center, 2021). This research and data emphasize the continued disparities for marginalized students.

To address these disparities, The Hope Center also promotes research and has a designated research collaborative that is built with scholars who examine basic needs insecurity more deeply and then share the results to be utilized by higher education professionals. In *Thriving Together: A Springboard for Equitable Recovery and Resilience in Communities Across the Country*, over 100 people and organizations came together to produce a framework for a movement that invites everyone to join in the change for well-being and justice in America. In one of the summaries, the document highlights the need for humane housing, especially for those at a higher risk for hardship. Consistent, safe, and affordable housing are the key elements of the plan to ensure this basic need.

The Hope Center's findings point to a need for an evolution of programmatic work to advance cultural shifts on college campuses, engagement with community organizations and the private sector, more robust emergency aid programs, and a basic needs-centered approach to government policy at all levels.

One example of a strong response and support system for college students during COVID-19 was at Berea College in Kentucky. Notably, they purchased tickets to fly students home plus transport to the airport for those who could not afford it. This college has a large population of students at risk due to the campus closure because nearly all came from households where the income makes them eligible for Pell Grants. These students are supported by the college receiving free tuition, working at jobs on campus, and graduating without debt.

Affordability of Higher Education & Housing

History defines us as a society and humanity is what makes up the threads of history. Noticeably, in this past year of the pandemic, we have seen how a universal tragedy can impact all of in ways that unify and in ways that divide. One trauma everyone can all relate to is the pandemic. Living through a pandemic and having to experience an abrupt transition to online learning, is traumatic enough. Colleges must monitor the financial wellness of students closely if they are to maximize the effectiveness of their student retention initiatives.

Trellis Students, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation with the dual mission of helping student borrowers successfully repay their education loans and promoting access and success in higher education, pieced together financial support from a variety of sources. Some aid (e.g., tuition waivers, grants, family support) directly reduces out-of-pocket expenses for students, while forms of credit postpone payments in exchange for paying fees and interest. Colleges that understand how their students are paying for college can take steps to help their students secure and manage stable funding that enables them to graduate while avoiding financial pitfalls.

Two of the key findings related to student debt were: 1) students seldom estimate their student debt correctly – even while they are still in school – and 2) more than half of respondents who borrowed at 2-year institutions (58%) – and 62% at 4-year institutions – agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had more student loan debt than they expected at this point. Many students borrow but have little confidence in their ability to repay. 2) More than two-thirds of respondents that borrowed at 2-year institutions (70%) – and 73% at 4-year institutions – were not at all confident or only somewhat confident they would be able to pay off the debt acquired while they were a student. Additionally, respondents who were worried about having enough

money to pay for school were more likely to be first-generation students, more likely to be under 25 years of age, and more likely to be female (Klepfer et al., 2020)

Access to a checking and savings account may reduce the chance students will use risky financial services (such as check cashing services, payday lending, etc.) Klepfer et al., 2020). One example of this, Austin Community College's Rainy Day Saving Program, encourages students to save \$500 by partnering with a local credit union to match \$100 as students start to save (Austin Community College, 2020).

Another support service available to marginalized students can be found at West Chester University (WCU). This medium-sized, public university proudly hosts a campus support program called the WCU Promise Program that serves unaccompanied homeless and foster youth. Using a single point of contact, the program helps support students with access to year-round housing on campus including over breaks, food, and supplies from the Resource Pantry, priority employment opportunities, access to scholarship funds, monthly dinners that provide mentorship and a safe space to share successes and challenges (Penn Today, 2017). West Chester President Christopher Fiorentino boasts, "WCU takes pride in assisting former foster youth by providing an environment that nurtures their academic and personal development" (Penn Today, 2017) The University should assist all marginalized populations with 356 days of on-campus housing if it can do so for others in need. While these support systems are noteworthy, they only focus on specific groups of students and are missing the ones who still fall in the margins.

The Impact of COVID-19

When COVID hit college campuses, administrators, and housing operators scrambled to react and move students occupying residence halls and apartments home. In the process, there were groups of students who were unprepared to return "home". The majority of the burden felt

by international and housing insecure groups. They had to rely on the support of the campus to provide an alternative to their housing challenge amidst a global pandemic. With the pandemic exacerbating housing inequities and challenging home environments, the universities responded by asking students with extenuating circumstances who were unable to leave campus in the event of an unscheduled closure to apply to remain on campus and approved them based on need. The pandemic also exacerbated long-standing inequities, which will likely compound the trauma and even retrigger past emotions experienced by students who have been and continue to be marginalized in and by society.

In an NPR article from March 2020, reporter Anya Kamenetz discusses college Covid-19 response plans with students and how when universities and colleges closed up for the pandemic, some students had nowhere to go (NPR, 2021) While most colleges tried to keep dorms and dining halls open, a growing number asked students to pack up and leave campus indefinitely. This presented a problem for the significant fraction of students who depended on their school for basic needs like food, housing, financial aid, health insurance and on-campus jobs. That is where resources like, The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice at Temple University become crucial.

Institutions building crisis support teams to case manage students experiencing difficulty securing basic needs is proving to be a beneficial model. This idea has been adopted from a commonly successful model used in supporting students facing mental health crises on campuses for decades. The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice recently released a guide to help campus practitioners maximize equity, impact, and efficiency of emergency grant distribution amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). One principle is to

keep administrative hurdles to a minimum for students who seek emergency aid. Fortunately, the department does not require institutions to report or track how students are spending their aid.

Higher education has a tumultuous history and faces many hurdles as it rebuilds after global pandemic. The evolution and demand for the college housing model was intended to support student success, however, the cost has prohibited the socioeconomic mobility a secondary degree advertises to Americans. Using a reflective lens is helpful because it reveals who was the most vulnerable during a crisis like the pandemic and where the gaps in support occurred. Student affairs professionals can learn from the pandemic and these examples can be applied to support services moving forward.

Institutions of higher education try to meet the financial needs of its students, but they often do so in the face of grant aid that seldom keeps pace with educational expenses and, for many public colleges, with reduced levels of state subsidization. Students are often caught in the middle, trying to afford college while attempting to only assume debt that is manageable. When the financial challenges associated with being a student become too much, students are often forced to leave school without having earned a credential.

Under the American Family Plan, there is an agenda to help students at under-resourced four-year schools complete their degrees. The Biden Administration will establish a new grant program to support under-resourced four-year schools that serve large numbers of Pell-eligible students (The White House, 2021). The funds will be used to foster collaboration between colleges and community-based organizations to provide wraparound support services for students, especially veterans, single parents, low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities who face unique challenges. Government policies can either help or hurt

institutions in their efforts to support their marginalized populations, which is why other aid and services are needed from outside resources.

Universities must consider providing wraparound support services for students.

Wraparound and single stop support services are vital to support students in need. Wraparound support services can range from public benefits and additional financial aid to cover textbook and transportation costs that often keep students from staying enrolled, to child care and mental health services, faculty mentoring, tutoring, and peer support groups. Many institutions now provide emergency support services for students such as food pantries, temporary housing, and/or emergency funding. Access to these services is often housed in a central resource center to provide a single location for all students seeking support.

As institutions determine the best system for distributing emergency funds, it is important to consider the range of student experiences and needs that have changed as a result of the crisis. Understanding student circumstances and barriers to accessing resources can help inform an institution's approach to implementation. Campus administrators will need to take stock of data availability and identify additional collection needs. While traditional financial aid can be easily used for living expenses as it is refundable, many colleges and universities offer only vouchers or third-party payments when it comes to emergency grants. This process often results in students being unable to pay key expenses like childcare and rent. Further, inadequate marketing and outreach about emergency aid programs reduces the extent to which students recognize institutional efforts to provide support. It also contributes to under-utilization of the program. NASPA found that less than one in five colleges offering emergency grants put information about that program on their website (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020).

Institutions are reconsidering their policies regarding student housing availability to ensure students who are housing insecure or homeless are not affected during holidays or breaks. Institutions are addressing housing insecurity and homelessness by partnering with local housing authorities to offer housing vouchers, working with community organizations to build housing, and advocating for state programs supporting these vulnerable students. Each survey from the Hope Center conveys policymakers' need for strong financial wellness programs and adequate resources to help students reach their academic potential, which is essential to ensuring the nation meets the workforce needs of tomorrow.

Conclusion

When basic needs are satisfied, students are considered basic needs secure. This should be a focus and measurement of success for all higher education institutions, to ensure all students are considered basic needs secure. Meeting students' basic needs requires an ecosystem where multiple systems work together to support students. This collaboration allows individuals to thrive across multiple domains including academic achievement and economic and mental wellbeing. Basic needs insecurity, however, indicates a shortcoming in this ecosystem. When the whole person is neglected, the achievement of the desired academic outcomes are threatened (Chan, 2016; Pallas, 2000; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999; Rowley & Hurtado, 2003).

Basic needs insecurity among college students is substantial and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the growth in data supporting this evidence offers an opportunity to bridge the gap with interventions for college students facing unexpected transitions and who are subsequently in need of the basic function of housing. Higher education must be prepared to listen to the facts, advocate for the needs of their students, and to rise to action. Further, the leaders of this academic ecosystem must continue their efforts to improve the

availability of support around basic needs insecurity for any student. To achieve a flourishing community, the university should not forget to tap into the roots of political, business, and philanthropic leaders who also have a vested interest in the success of higher education.

Chapter Four: Program Design & Implementation

“I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me...When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves or figments of their imagination, indeed, everything and anything except me.” --Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man, 1952

Most humans can recall or relate to a time when they felt marginal or invaluable. What is less understood by higher education institutions is the effect that invisibility has on students systemically and over an extended period of time. More importantly, is how student affairs professionals make space for students to know and feel they matter. Mattering is an integral part of student success, especially for minoritized groups (Schlossberg, 1989). Prioritizing and promoting inclusion of marginalized students helps change the lack of visibility and creates a campus climate of inclusion instead of exclusion. Universities and educators need to provide and continue to spotlight these students so their actions are viewed as the norm. Institutions also have a responsibility to prioritize students' basic needs, supporting them through transitions, and leaving them with a sense of mattering.

The premise of this intervention is that students are supported through transitions such that they feel they matter, which can in turn lead to retention (Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, 1989). Fostering a connection between students and support services leads to increased retention and success (Hunter, 2006). Introducing any form of innovation requires a well-organized plan to effectively communicate the new idea. Many people fear change of any sort, even when they know that new solutions may be necessary. In this chapter, I will explain the importance of a response rooted in supporting students at institutions of higher education in need of housing support during academic breaks, mainly the winter and summer periods. The

reason for naming this intervention a response is because it is intended to focus on prevention, rather than responding only to emergency situations.

Connection to Theory

In this two-part intervention, I introduce and outline a comprehensive plan for colleges and universities to ensure cohesive housing for students experiencing transitions during breaks. According to adult developmental theorist Schlossberg, a transition is “any event, or non-event, [which] results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 37). One of the primary transition’s students experience while enrolled at a higher education institution is a change in their basic need for housing. If left unsupported during this transition, students could experience a loss of mattering at college, which can then lead to them withdrawing from the community, activities, and the institution overall. On-campus housing is a privilege that is not afforded to all students. However, housing is a basic need for all.

Often, college students can find themselves in a transition that requires assistance from the university. The experience the student has throughout that transition is critical to their collegiate success. Therefore, I propose an intervention that supports students experiencing a housing crisis during the academic break. This response incorporates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), Transition Theory (Schlossberg, 1989), the importance of Mattering and Marginality (Schlossberg, 1989), and bell hooks’ critical consciousness. This program will serve as a set of standards that all university housing should implement if they have not already.

Today, Residence Life and Housing Services should be a single-stop resource of residential support for students, especially during academic break periods when accessibility to campus resources can be limited. Institutions that close Residence Halls (RHs) between the fall and spring terms and at the end of the academic year should arrange housing for all residents in

need during these times. This might be less of a problem for students who frequently live in off-campus apartments, but it can present a challenge for students who live in traditional RHs and who need access to food services and other student services such as food and healthcare. When students are supported through transitions, they will feel like they matter and belong to their community, which results in building relationships, and leads to retention (Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, 1989).

The various populations attending college right now have already dealt with a multitude of transitions by the time they step on campus. Their on-campus housing experience should be one that is supportive and intentional and takes into account their lived experiences, as well as offering support through challenging transitions or crises. These students deserve to feel a sense of mattering and trust in the institutions they attend. College housing operators should consider offering single-stop resources and focus on building relationships with the students if they expect them to have a fair chance of being successful. Student affairs professionals should also be aware of the increased impact of student debt on this generation of students (see, e.g., Chapter 3).

Theoretical Frameworks

Theory to Practice

It is important to use multiple theories in programming. No two students are alike, and no one theory is likely to explain the development of every aspect of any one student. Incorporating concepts from various theories helps provide a comprehensive understanding of development. Student affairs professionals must keep students' stories in the forefront and use theories as ways to make sense of students' lives. We must remember theories are observations of reality and reflect how people interpret what is happening in students' lives in systemic ways.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs describes a five-step framework. The foundation of the pyramid is psychological needs such as food and housing, followed by safety as the next step for humans that are the foundation for reaching the top which is self-actualization. Further, Schlossberg (1989), discusses the importance of support systems in her Transition Theory. Understanding the meaning behind the impact, type and context of the transition students are experiencing is valuable as educators. There are three types of transitions on Schlossberg's theory, anticipated transitions, unanticipated transitions, and non-events (Patton et al., 2016). For the purpose of this intervention, I will focus on unanticipated transitions which are not predictable or scheduled. The presence of multiple transitions can compound stress for the student and dealing with it can be an extended process.

There are various phases within transitions and we build relationships with students along the way. Supporting students through these transitions is the role of the university and is their duty to meet the student where they are at that moment and be available to guide them through the unanticipated transition. Without rooted support systems in place, the university will fail at serving the whole-student. Student affairs departments should see students through all phases of these transitions while they are enrolled in the institution. Adopting concepts from Schlossberg's framework of *Mattering vs. Marginality* (1989) and to align with the Redwood metaphor representing the student and the roots representing the various support systems of the university, I outlined a procedure the student will follow for assistance.

Educators must respond to the basic needs of students throughout transitions and utilize a critical thinking model that will support current and incoming students. One way to accomplish this goal is through responses to student transitions and crisis, specifically in Residence Life and Housing Services. I argue an approach with roots in basic needs, mattering, and relationship

building can best support those in transition. The Association of American Colleges and Universities' Greater Expectations initiative recognizes that the whole student is an intentional learner who is empowered, informed, responsible, and able to integrate learning (Hunter, 2006). The proposed intervention below considers equity, empathy, and the whole student who is living in the campus community.

Offering Students Support through Housing Transitions

Transitions can also be scary and sometimes traumatizing depending on the circumstances. Some student populations are already at an increased risk of trauma before arriving on-campus. In a study assessing adjustment to college among trauma survivors, Banyard and Cantor (2004) reported that approximately 53% of participants reported experiencing at least one potentially traumatic event (PTE) in their lifetime. Similarly, the American College Health Association (ACHA) (2015) reported that 75% of students experienced at least one traumatic or stressful event in the past 12 months, with over half of respondents indicating multiple PTEs. This data highlights the need for trauma-informed support services in higher education such as housing challenges or other financial burdens.

Students need a vehicle that assists them in their housing transitions and provides support. Many institutions have emergency aid programs that offer financial assistance to students facing financial constraints and who may otherwise leave the institution. One way student affairs professionals can further their efforts is by learning from the experiences of administrators at other institutions that offer emergency aid services. NASPA's Student Advancing Retention in College (ARC) serves as one example of a robust online resource for institutions looking to identify new approaches to providing emergency aid support. ARC recognizes the importance of established and sustainable support methods that extends a life-line

to these students. With insights, tools and resources for systems of higher education, ARC focuses on the critical components of students' lives amid crisis.

Along with other devastating impacts, COVID-19 exacerbated access to resources for many marginalized students. Some universities saw the pandemic as an opportunity to fuse together and identify further support options for students. With enrollment declining as a result of the pandemic (National ClearingHouse Research Center, 2020), especially for those at risk of basic needs, fewer students submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which resulted in retention rates dropping (Forbes, 2020). By April 2021, approximately 568,131 Americans had died as a result of COVID-19 (New York Times, 2021). As vaccination availability increases and higher education plans for Fall 2021 unfold, the effects of the pandemic will reverberate for years. Supporting students through times of crisis is one step institutions can take to ensure students can complete their degrees (The Hope Center, 2021).

The Intervention: Housing 365

To accomplish bridging the gap between transitions and support for students, I propose *Housing 365: A Response Rooted in Supporting Students During Academic Breaks*. The mission of *Housing 365* is to maintain a comprehensive housing plan and response to students experiencing a transition during academic break periods. Rooted in humanism and trauma-informed care, the program is intended to serve the whole student living on-campus at any higher education institution. *Housing 365* is an initiative that would directly report to the Presidential Cabinet of the university. This program should be implemented by senior leadership to signify the importance of a strong support system for students and to gain buy-in from all departments. In 2002, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) released *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-*

Wide Focus on the Student Experience (2004). This document calls for the collaboration of academic affairs and student affairs divisions in developing the whole student and asserts that the holistic development of the student should be a primary concern (Hunter, 2006).

Further, *Housing 365* will form a ROOTS Team that will consist of, but not limited to, LGBTQA, Admissions, Financial Aid, Title IX, Dean of Students, Multicultural Director, Academic Success, Accessibility Office and Counseling Services. Graduate and undergraduate representation should also be considered. ROOTS is an acronym adopted from Schlossberg's 4 Ss of Transition (1989). The 4 Ss outlines a framework for the four major factors that influence an individual's ability to cope with transition, situation, self, support and strategies.

Similar to the examples of solid support systems in higher education, redwood trees have an intricate and extensive root system. They can grow to be 350 feet tall, but their roots are very shallow and thrive in thick groves, where the roots can intertwine and fuse together. This gives redwoods tremendous strength against the forces of nature to withstand high winds and raging floods (National Park Center, 2015). Considering the roots of a strong community like the redwoods, educators and administrators can visualize how many support systems are needed to stabilize an individual. Further, without the roots, the tree and the community cannot withstand any crisis. Growing roots with a community allows the members to empathize with one another; to be "in it" with the person experiencing the crisis. Educators must be prepared to learn from students, which is a key aspect of critical action research.

At the onset of COVID-19, universities were faced with two choices in response to housing interruptions due to the pandemic: (1) utilize the community to provide support to marginalized students to help withstand the crisis as the redwood trees, or (2) allow the crisis to uproot the students and leave them feeling marginal and unsupported. As of this writing, the

whole world has experienced the traumatization of a global pandemic. Everyone experienced the trauma differently, but the virus did not discriminate. Hopefully the challenges exposed by COVID-19 will shift higher education's focus to empathize instead of pity marginalized students. If COVID-19 has taught educators, administrators, and student affairs professionals anything, the lesson is that they can no longer ignore the disparities among their students. *Housing 365* is an intervention that will help students experiencing transitions and utilize components of the existing campus structures to incorporate better policy and support systems within higher education.

Purpose, Goals, and Outcomes

When students arrive at college, they have a few main concerns. One of them is the basic need for housing, which falls under Residence Life and Housing Services on most college campuses. *Housing 365* is a comprehensive plan for colleges and universities to ensure cohesive on-campus housing for students experiencing housing insecurity or interruptions during academic breaks. It is rooted in trauma-informed policy and focuses on the whole student. The purpose of this intervention is for students to feel a sense of belonging, mattering, and to build relationships. In this subsection the purpose of *Housing 365* is described before I present and demonstrate how the program objectives are achieved.

From issues with mental health to gender identity, students must feel supported by the resources that are intended to help them succeed. Campus housing in higher education has room for improvement when it comes to a humanistic response and trauma-informed policy and being prepared to respond to students experiencing crises or transitions. Working in student housing for ten years demonstrated the need for the *Housing 365* intervention. Academic break periods are typically a welcomed respite for university administrators and faculty, but that is not always the

case for students. Some students do not have an alternative place to go during breaks or they can face a sudden transition that interrupts their housing security. The responsibility to support students during academic breaks seems obvious, but is not guaranteed. Students enrolled in college who are in need of resources only available through the higher education system, deserve the availability and accessibility to the very basic and expensive need of housing. As a student athlete in college, my housing needs were always accommodated between break periods and all students deserve that option if needed.

Applying a lens of hospitality (Oakeshott, 2004) can make people feel welcome and want to stay and return. A pedagogy of hospitality within a university without condition has the opportunity to foster a humanistic ideal for education (see Chapter 2). Creating a sense of being “at home” is also a foundation for building relationships and feeling seen by others. An additional example of this might include helping to address students experiencing interruptions in housing due to bereavement. Having one less thing to worry about, such as housing, during a time of need during the period after the death of a loved one is immeasurable. Further, exploring possible options for collaboration with campus partners will be beneficial to maximize support to students.

Students experiencing crisis approaching or during break periods often have limited resources from the college in comparison to non-break periods. Schlossberg termed the phases of transition as “moving in, moving through and moving out” (1989, p. 38) There is a need for housing through transitions. Transitional periods, such as summer and winter breaks, can create significant financial and emotional challenges for marginalized students. To address this, a single-point of contact designated for students experiencing the crisis can triage and foster relationships. The university has a responsibility to students during academic break periods,

especially considering financial aid and housing is less available to students in need if not enrolled in winter or summer courses (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). The marginalized groups to be considered in *Housing 365*, includes, but is not limited to: Refugees, International Students, Veterans, Pregnant and/or Single Parents, Domestic Violence Survivors, LGBTQA, Foster Care Alumni, and Housing Insecure. All students in the margins should have access to this sort of support.

Components of Housing 365

Next, I exhibit how the *Housing 365* program will be implemented in systems of higher education. Experiencing a crisis during college enrollment can lead to an unexpected transition with significant impacts as a result. One serious effect of transition can be the experience of housing insecurity (Schlossberg, 1989)

First, the mission of *Housing 365* is to ensure all enrolled students with a need for housing receive advice and support to create a plan for housing security. However, students do not need to be enrolled for classes during academic break periods to qualify for this service. The point of this policy is to provide students with a response rooted in humanism and trauma-awareness that aims to support them when they are vulnerable to housing insecurities.

Second, a policy will be developed that guarantees housing advice and support will be available to all on-campus students, 365 days of the year. Residence Life and Housing Services recognizes that housing security is a basic need that must be available regardless of the academic period. *Housing 365* seeks to provide equity and empathy to the campus community and is committed to identifying options for students with housing needs.

Once a student contacts submits a request for *Housing 365*, a Graduate Assistant (GA) will walk the student in crisis through the ROOTS steps: **R**esponse - once a form is submitted,

GA will respond to schedule meeting with student; **O**utreach - after meeting GA will perform any outreach with campus departments needed for student; **O**ptions - GA will meet with student to review options; **T**ransition - GA will be available through transition if needed; and **S**upport - GA will follow up to check on student status and determine if further follow up is needed.

See Appendix B for how students request accommodations.

Program Objectives & Goals

The program objectives and goals for *Housing 365* are outlined below:

1. Dedicate housing (visitor/guest apartment or model units) to assist with students experiencing an interruption in secure housing during break periods.
2. Appoint a single-point of contact in Residence Life and Housing Services for students experiencing a transition impacting housing.
3. Provide specialized training for RAs and GA assigned to transition housing.
4. ROOTS Team > Designate committee who informs policies and grows support services and options for students in crisis and experiencing transitions. To consist of the following staff and departments: undergraduate representative (possibly RA), Graduate Assistant, Housing Director, LGBTQA, Admissions, Financial Aid, Title IX, Dean of Students, Multicultural Director, Academic Success, Accessibility Office, Counseling Services, etc.

As a result of *Housing 365* participants will be able to demonstrate what they learned throughout the process. They will be invited to share testimonials to illustrate the benefits they received as a result of the support service.

Two Phased Approach

The two phased approach and program goals of *Housing 365* are outlined as follows:

Phase I

Program Goal #1: A comprehensive plan for colleges and universities to ensure cohesive housing for students experiencing transitions or traumatic life experiences during break periods.

- Program Objective #1: Dedicate housing to assist with students experiencing an interruption in secure housing during academic breaks.
- Program Objective #2: Designate a committee of representatives from campus support systems who inform policy and analyze issues using a trauma-sensitive approach.
- Program Objective #3: Appoint a single point of contact in Residence Life and Housing Services for students experiencing a transition impacting housing.
 - Learning Outcome #1: Point of contact will help students experience a sense of belonging.
 - Learning Outcome #2: A point of contact will help build trust with students.
 - Learning Outcome #3: A point of contact will help build relationships with students.
 - Learning Outcome #4: Able to identify resources available for help and agency
 - Learning Outcome #5: Students will feel a sense of self-authorship when determining options during transition.

Phase II

Program Goal #2: Train campus GA and RAs how to respond to students who experience trauma or crisis using specialized training.

- Program Objective #1: GA and RAs will complete a specialized six-hour training course upon onboarding, focusing on best practices for crisis intervention.
 - Learning Outcome #1: GA and RAs will be able to provide trauma-sensitive care to students in the event of a crisis or trauma.

Program Proposal

Part I - A Comprehensive Plan for Cohesive Housing

Part I of *Housing 365* includes the details to provide students a comprehensive plan for cohesive housing. To achieve this, the model starts with dedicated housing to assist students experiencing interruptions to secure housing during break periods. The next layer is to assign a committee of representatives from campus support systems who inform policy and analyze issues using a trauma-sensitive approach. Lastly, the program appoints a single point of contact in Residence Life and Housing Services for students experiencing a transition impacting housing security. These steps are the framework to build upon and leads into the next piece of this intervention; the intake process, see Appendix D.

The program goal is to ensure the intake process is simple, accessible and student-friendly. It is important for educators, administrators, and student affairs professionals to be intentional in their interactions with students. Therefore, research from the Hope Center recommends student affairs professionals follow a Top 5 Do's and Don'ts when interacting with marginalized students which I adapted to the ROOTS intake process (Baker-Smith et al., 2019) (See Appendix C)

The steps for each student are described and listed below:

- Student > Experience's crisis pertaining to housing approaching or during an academic break period

- Student > Establishes a single point of contact for housing crisis with *Housing 365* GA
- Student > Completes *Housing 365*: ROOTS intake process with GA
- Student > Receives support and options, while building a relationship with GA and RAs through the intake and support process
- Student > As a result of *Housing 365* support services, the student feels a sense of belonging and is more likely to remain enrolled at the higher education institution *Housing 365* intake process.

GAs and RAs will be trained on the following guidelines when assisting students in need during break periods. The GA does the initial ROOTS intake and the GA and RA triage the follow up so the students do not continue to feel marginalized by being passed around through the support process. Poll Everywhere and Kahoot will be utilized to check-in on students and a chatbot will be available on the housing website for 24/7 accessibility.

An added support layer to the program is the *Housing 365* ROOTS Group who will inform policies and grow support services and options for students in crisis and experiencing an unexpected transition. This group will consist of the following people and departments, but should not be limited in additional representation: undergraduate (possibly RA), Graduate Assistant, Housing Director, LGBTQA, Admissions, Financial Aid, Title IX, Dean of Students, Multicultural Director, Academic Success, Accessibility Office, Counseling Services, etc.

Programming for *Housing 365* participants will be centered around financial aid, credit scores, purchasing property, real-estate. Students will provide post program evaluation or surveys for participants. An optional focus group will be assembled to discuss students' needs during academic breaks. The results will be shared with the *Housing 365* Committee Group to inform best practices and policy.

Part II - Specialized Training for GA and RA Staff

No one likes to think about disasters occurring. Despite this, crises due to natural and man-made disasters affect people every year. No person or region is immune from experiencing the trauma associated with these events, including our colleges and universities. When severe weather events, accidents and even criminal acts occur on campuses, it strikes everyone's sense of safety, and profoundly affects students, faculty and other staff. When such tragedies occur, the community invariably rallies to provide assistance and support to those in need and faculty and staff are often called upon to offer guidance to students. The academy can do more to better prepare their hosts to best support those students who are experiencing trauma. They can provide specialized training for student affairs professionals and student staff. This training is a useful tool, especially for student leaders in roles intended to support others after critical events impacting their peers. Without this intentional training dedicated to the staff working with the students in need of support during a transition, staff will be unprepared to respond and unable to provide optimal aid. This is specifically critical during academic break periods when resources are often limited on college campuses.

As members of the university, educators, administrators, and student affairs professionals have a responsibility to serve the whole student and being someone's "good company" after a traumatic event can be life changing. This illustrates the importance of designating proper training, so the Graduate Assistant and Resident Assistants are prepared to offer optimal aid in a concise and attentive way to those traumatized. To achieve this, *Housing 365* proposes a devoted training specializing in forming a foundation and resources for the RAs and GA who will live in the building dedicated for transition housing. This specialized, six hour, interactive and virtual training will provide student staff with the skills and tools helpful when responding in times of

emergency with perspective on injuries and trauma that are beyond those that are physical in nature. The ability to recognize, empathize with, and direct to appropriate resources are important skills for front line staff to have in areas supporting students.

The six-hour course will be divided into two sessions to help student staff members of the housing community learn the basic skills necessary to provide common sense support to students after a tragedy, such as the death of a loved one or even racial trauma. The course will also address how each university's counseling department responds and the campus community can collaborate with their department and other campus supports. The training will be offered as a way to help increase the support these campuses provide in the aftermath of a tragedy and help the community begin to heal.

The specialized training proposed in *Housing 365* assumes standard student affairs training includes Mental Health First Aid or Psychological First Aid. This is where *Housing 365* creates a distinction in the RA and GA training; focusing on further training that intentionally encourages the staff to recognize their special role to create and foster a safe space. The training will consist of icebreakers, confidentiality protocol, Schlossberg's 4 Ss and listening exercises. Additionally, trainees will discuss real life circumstance and discuss Brene Brown's (2017) approach to empathy. Lastly, the training will address resources available for GA and RAs to address vicarious trauma. Adequate training and preparation are also necessary when addressing the professional competencies related to this program. An example budget can be found in Appendix J.

Professional Competencies

NASPA advises that student affairs professionals should be competent in ten different areas of higher education. Each area intersects to serve as a framework for promoting standards

of excellence in professional practice. In this program, I focus on three of these competencies; 1) Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI), 2) Advising and Supporting (A/S), and 3) Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG).

SJI is addressed through the comprehensive plan to support students experiencing transitions during academic breaks. The security of housing provision is a basic need and right that cannot be ignored or left unaddressed within institutions of higher education. LPG is highlighted with *Housing 365's* ROOTS Group; a designated committee to inform policies and governance around best practices for support services and options available to students in crisis and experiencing transitions. Including offices and voices advocating for marginalized students is also crucial to this program's success. A/S is incorporated into the program with the ROOTS intake process and exhibits foundational support to the student. Supporting students will remain a primary focus as higher education anticipates a “new normal” ahead.

Conclusion

As housing operators across the country prepare to re-open their doors to students on-campus for the fall 2021 term, it will be a whole new experience that cannot be predicted. This is the time to improve housing operations. On some campuses where first-year and sophomores dominate the residence halls, this fall will be the first to experience on-campus life post-pandemic. For student affairs professionals and the incoming fall class, this experience will be a “first” for everyone. Welcoming an entire population after surviving a global pandemic will bring unseen crises. If higher education can adopt the same concept as the redwood, they can feel assured that the community can grow in a grove to ultimately connect and support the success of the students.

No one can do it all alone, that is why this intervention suggests a rooted system so there is support coming from all departments to promote student success. Educators, administrators, and students affairs professionals must demand more for their students and not settle for less when it comes to support services for students in need, especially those who are marginalized. The data provided shows ample reasons to center efforts to address students' basic needs as institutions seek to become "student-ready" colleges where degree completion is common. Further, as the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to unfold, the importance of accurately identifying and meeting students' basic needs is essential.

Chapter Five: Implementation & Evaluation

In Chapter Five, I will explain the details of *Housing 365*, assess the limitations considered in implementing the program, and explore the future of housing security for all students, especially during an unplanned transition or crisis.

Implementation

To implement *Housing 365*, the Residence Life and Housing Services will need to ensure there is established buy-in from the Presidential Cabinet to form a cohesive approach that strives to support students with housing needs. Student affairs professionals need to consider and create strategic plans when approaching topics that are often invisible to university administration. Being prepared with data and real-life examples can help generate interest from leadership and hopefully receive the necessary support and funding to provide the service.

Sometimes considering alternative angles or using community services can prove the only available option if professionals are unable to solicit buy-in for the program. However, that does not always signal a lack of need for the support or the intervention. Educators should be able to pivot and use their critical consciousness lens to develop creative options that still make students feel a sense of mattering regardless of the limitations in place. Fundraising and grant applications are also avenues that can bring engagement around the need. Eventually, heightened attention and research on the topic should convey enough evidence to begin the foundation to support the intervention. With buy-in from the university, a comprehensive plan for housing can start to grow and take root so that basic needs security is normalized on college campuses across the nation.

The vision for *Housing 365* is that the program will become a standard wraparound service in all higher education institutions. This will be one measure I plan to use to indicate the

successfulness of the program, if it can be adopted anywhere, at any college as long as there is a need. Other assessments will happen in a phased approach with formative and summative assessments. During the assessment process, students will be surveyed on the ease of their intake process, and also identify the level of support they anticipate needing so it can be assessed and triaged if necessary. Post program, I plan to use the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results (SOAR) as a model to analyze each area and revisit the results each quarter as another barometer to indicate success.

Timeline

Thoughtful planning is important for successful implementation. Therefore, I will plan a soft launch for the fall semester. I will use winter break as a pilot to allow time for improvements by summer, then implement *Housing 365* within a year after pilot. See example timeline in Appendix A.

- Spring
 - Hire Graduate Assistant (GA) and Resident Assistant (RA) positions
 - Designate *Housing 365* Committee
- Summer
 - Notify campus partners of the *Housing 365* program
 - Train staff
 - Prepare for early arrivals
- Fall/Winter
 - Process *Housing 365* requests
 - Complete intake process
 - Provide solutions for housing request

- Survey participants
- Analyze the results and make changes
- Spring/Summer
 - Process *Housing 365* requests
 - Complete intake process
 - Provide solutions for housing request
 - Survey participants
 - Organize student focus group and invite stakeholders
 - One year review
 - Analyze the results and make changes
- Prepare for Fall II of *Housing 365*

Budget and Funding

As with any new initiative, there will be some added expenses. Funding for *Housing 365* can be secured from various sources. The division of student affairs and academic affairs could jointly budget for the ROOTS coordinator position and any operating expenses. Additionally, the counseling center might be able to contribute to the salary of the ROOTS coordinator, especially if this person was able to perform additional student support duties. Alumni donors can be approached to donate funds to support this initiative, especially in the form of emergency housing scholarships.

Based on the model of Residence Life and Housing Services on the concerned campus, additional funding might be needed to compensate Resident Assistants and facilitators for the specialized training program. This segment is intended to be incorporated as a session of an existing resident assistant training schedule. I imagine that the budget needed for a six-hour long

training segment will have little impact on the established funding methods. If needed and as funding is available, it can prove beneficial to take advantage of grant resources, especially in light of increased availability of funds due to COVID-19.

Marketing

I will design a logo to create a visual representation of the intervention. The roots will symbolize the university and community support services intended to provide housing security for all students 365 days a year. See example logo and flyer to be used throughout printed and digital on-campus housing materials on Appendix G and Appendix F. Also, when proposing *Housing 365* to stakeholders for buy-in, I will use a virtual presentation to illustrate the program and highlight the needs and benefits of support. See example presentation on Appendix E.

Leadership

Transformative leadership is not limited to executives and university presidents. It does not matter what title or status you carry; each student affairs professional and student staff member has the capacity to act as a leader. Building trust and maintaining support are important characteristics of transformative leadership. For my intervention, I do not recommend a hierarchical or autocratic approach where only the leader is able to make decisions with limited input. Instead, with transformative leadership, I hope *Housing 365* can inspire a shared vision.

If higher education is expected to be a "garden" of student success, the leaders have a responsibility to sustain a pleasant and favorable community for the scholar to recognize this opportunity for transformation. It takes concentrated collaboration, planning with multiple offices and a lot of effort to review data. A foundational leader knows the end result is worth it. Using a concept from the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, I recommend applying the concept of Common Purpose in my leadership style to "enable the group to engage

in collective analysis of the issue at hand” (Astin & Astin, 1996). Recognizing there is value in each participant, this model acknowledges the individual, the group and community as each having a role in leadership. This example observes leadership as a process instead of a position of hierarchy. It also incorporates seven important core values that are critical to the model. One of the seven elements I find valuable is common purpose, which facilitates joint collaboration and solutions when seeking a collective analysis.

Part of collective analysis is achieving “buy-in” from all audiences. For *Housing 365*, I will need to use various paths of leadership and be flexible with each stakeholder. One way to convince stakeholders of the need for my intervention is to invite them to a focus group so they can hear about student experiences first-hand. Staying aware that people who are impacted by this change need to be handled with care and it may be a process to gain their trust. Leadership can start by simply knowing your audience and then building a team that supports the mission.

My experience has shown that the path to leadership should allow for some flexibility, especially in an academic setting. Firmness and control are necessary components too, which is why leadership can be a balancing act. However, through a unified approach, the whole organization can profit: “Shared leadership, by contrast, is more flexible and identifies various individuals on campus with relevant expertise. This allows multiple perspectives rather than those of a single decision-making body; for example, only faculty or only administrators” (Holcombe & Kezar, p.v).

Therefore, I perceive effective leadership as a steppingstone for transformative leadership in the academic affairs profession. Since this does require practice and skill, I think we often begin our journey by being effective, and with cultivation we begin to expand in our capacity to

transform. A leader dedicated to modeling the way for everyone can help shape and transform a campus for the better.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership is a practical compass to center one's decision-making on students' social, interpersonal, developmental, and academic success. Using components from multiple leadership models has ultimately been beneficial in my journey. I find utilizing variety and continuing to educate yourself helps to shape your style. Whether using the Social Change of Leadership Development or a traditional hierarchical model to implement a policy, there are pros and cons to each. The art is knowing which model to use but connecting to your values and the mission is always helpful when discerning the best approach. Tapping into our strengths and utilizing the CliftonStrengths® is a valuable resource as well. Additionally, the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies, specifically the leadership competency, is a helpful tool and checklist to analyze choices as referenced in Chapter 4. In my observation and experience, an effective leadership method is one that lends itself to being a catalyst for further shared leadership ventures and works to find collaborative and equitable solutions.

Assessment and Evaluation of the Program

Evaluation and assessment are essential and important components of a successful program development (Aiken-Wisneiwski, et al., 2021). The role of assessment is to gather information and the role of evaluation is to use the information to make a decision. Together these functions build an argument to support the program planner's intervention.

To justify my intervention, I will evaluate the impact of this program and its degree of success in achieving retention and creating a sense of mattering. I will use intentionally designed follow up surveys and focus groups, etc. in Appendix H and I. All students who receive any advising or support from *Housing 365* will receive a follow up survey. The survey will be an

anonymous and non-invasive questionnaire. Students will then be invited to participate in a focus group in the fall or spring to expand on their experience and to listen to their voices so the program is informed by their suggestions. Students should feel like they are part of a community and a family when they use this support service and hopefully, they feel empowered instead of inhibited as a result. A focus group can be helpful when you want to hear from a group as opposed to interviewing everyone separately. This assessment allows the group to interact with one another and build from their shared experiences (Aiken-Wisniewski, et al., 2021, p. 47).

I will use these questions to guide my assessment and evaluation as means for ensuring equity and inclusion remain in the forefront of the *Housing 365* intervention.

1. Who is in the room?
2. Who is trying to get in the room, but cannot?
3. Have everyone's ideas been heard?
4. Whose ideas will not be taken as seriously because they are not the majority?
5. How many more [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?
6. What conditions have we created that maintains certain groups at the perpetual majority here?
7. Is this environment safe for everyone to feel the belong?
8. Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining and dehumanizing views?

I will know this intervention is successful when measuring the retention rates of students who received the service and through each victory of housing security achieved for the students in need. There will also be factors beyond Residence Life and Housing's control that may lead

the students to exit the university, however that should not signal a failure. Any support provided to students is valuable and perpetuates a sense of mattering for each individual.

Limitations and Other Considerations

There are issues and populations that are not addressed in the thesis. The demand for housing is one overarching challenge that limits this intervention. Future consideration for the LGBTQA population should be informed by ways to make housing more gender fluid and trauma-informed by examining the housing application process and opportunity for specialized peer support. Staff and faculty housing insecurity, adult learners, or non-traditional students are not highlighted or always captured with the marginalized populations on campus. International students also need to be addressed when higher education seeks to provide further equitable services and experiences. Further, the off-campus or commuter population could also benefit from needs-based housing support during a transition or crisis.

As I demonstrated, there are numerous populations that should be included, but are simply beyond the scope of the thesis. However, that should not stop higher education from thinking critically about how to best support populations in need of housing options and funding to cover the expense. One idea to address these issues and populations moving forward is to offer free or discounted summer courses and further efforts to ensure on-campus housing is affordable.

As the focus on affordability at college increases among policymakers and higher education continues, it will be interesting to see if institutions will provide increased support services for all students while managing the demand for traditional college housing while the college environment continues to shift. Isolation has left students feeling unsure of what is best for them in terms of what the college experience means now.

“We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate, and lack. We should not long to return my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.” (Sonya Renee Taylor, n.d.)

As I was writing this thesis, stakeholders are being forced to look at the needs of students as illustrated in a recent article from Georgetown University on April 30, 2021. In this article, the Editorial Board calls out Georgetown University for announcing it would charge \$4,485 for housing accommodations for students approved to live on campus for the summer term. This was a considerable increase from last summer's \$1,500 rent. The cost is a shocking increase that will heavily burden the most vulnerable students who are in need of housing because of unsafe home environments or extenuating circumstances amid the COVID-19 pandemic (The Hoya, 2021). While some administrators in higher education think it is time to return to “normal”, they must recall the deficiencies and inequities among students that were present pre-corona and during corona that left some students feeling invisible and disposable. In my role as a student affair professional, I will continue to champion for these students to demand basic needs like housing are attainable and available.

Many of the "rules" in higher education are old and outdated. Life has taken a turn and student affairs professionals should continue to ask questions and challenge the process as we continue to be change agents. Through my own research and program development I was inspired to become a change agent by asking these questions. In the words of Angela Davis from a lecture she gave in 2014, “You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the

world and you have to do it all the time” (Davis, 2014). This mindset will lead to intersectional analysis that can form coalitions and progress. It takes a lot of work, but educators and state/government representatives have to show up every day, day in and day out - it is absolutely essential.

This is the time to rewrite how on-campus housing is operated within higher education. There is no way around it. Schools need nutrient rich soil where students can thrive in groves, like the great redwood trees, who support each other at their roots.

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Appendix A



Timeline

Soft launch for fall and use winter break as pilot to allow time for improvements by summer.

Spring

- Hire Graduate Assistant (GA) and Resident Assistant (RA) positions
- Designate Housing 365 Committee

Summer

- Notify campus partners of the Housing 365 program
- Train staff
- Prepare for early arrivals

Fall/Winter

- Process Housing 365 requests
- Complete intake process
- Provide solutions for housing request
- Survey participants
- Analyze the results and make changes

Spring/Summer

- Process Housing 365 requests
- Complete intake process
- Provide solutions for housing request
- Survey participants
- Organize student focus group and invite stakeholders
- One year review
- Analyze the results and make changes

Prepare for Fall II of Housing 365

Appendix B

Housing 365 Request

Students who are not able to leave campus for extenuating circumstances may request on-campus housing on the Residence Life and Housing website. The form will be notated on the website using the *Housing 365* logo.

To request on-campus housing, please follow the steps below

1. Request *Housing 365* Advising & Support, button available on our website homepage or visit Residence Life and Housing Services on-campus
2. Once the request is received a meeting will be scheduled for the student and the *Housing 365* Coordinator (GA) either virtual or in-person depending on the student's preference.
3. During the meeting the coordinator will walk the student through the ROOTS intake to assess need and triage (wellness, financial aid, transportation, etc.) when necessary.
4. Depending on the need and options presented, the coordinator or RA will continue to meet with the student as needed to provide support through the transition.
5. The coordinator/RA will follow up with the student until the student is housing secure.

Appendix C

Best practices for coordinator when completing *Housing 365* intake and assessing basic needs for students.

Do:

1. Assess the type and severity of the student's hardships
2. Identify whether the student is parenting any children
3. Ask whether the aid you can offer will address the students' needs
4. Seek information about whether the student is in their educational trajectory
5. Communicate caring

Don't:

1. Ask students to explain the cause of their hardship
2. Demand that students outline a plan for solving their financial challenges
3. Seek an itemized list of the student's financial resources
4. Require students to write an essay
5. Ask students to write thank you letters for the support

Appendix D

Intake Form

STUDENT INFORMATION

You are the expert when it comes to what is happening with your college experience. So we need your help supporting [COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY NAME] with information it can use to help.

First Name:

Last Name:

Contact Phone:

Alternate Phone:

Current Address:

Date of Birth:

Gender:

Ethnicity (circle one): Latino or Non-Latino

Race:

Marital Status:

Best Method/Time of Contact:

HOUSING INFORMATION

Number of adults in your household, including yourself:

Number of children in your household (include ages):

Please check all that apply: I am homeless I am about to be homeless I need winter break housing I need spring break housing I need summer break housing

Please check only one box: The place I have been living is... My permanent home On-Campus A place I have been staying with other people A shelter A transitional housing program A rehabilitation center A hospital A prison A jail Other:

Please check all that apply: I am not homeless, but I wish to apply for Housing Assistance for the following: I need a safe place to stay I live in a situation where I cannot afford my housing

costs on a regular basis Other:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Are there any other organizations that you have applied to for assistance in the past 12 months?

Yes No If yes, what organization and what assistance was given?

Appendix E

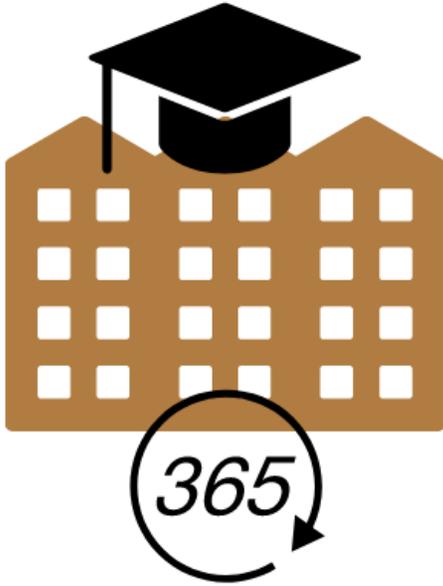
Marketing Presentation

The image displays a grid of 18 numbered presentation slides for a marketing presentation titled "Housing 365: A Response Rooted in Supporting Students During Academic Breaks". The slides are arranged in three rows and six columns. Each slide contains text, graphics, and icons related to the program's mission and structure.

- Slide 1:** "Welcome, Scholars!" with a chalkboard background.
- Slide 2:** "Housing 365: A Response Rooted in Supporting Students During Academic Breaks" with a tree and a house icon.
- Slide 3:** "Agenda" listing: Overview of program, Needs, Objectives, Resources, Engagement & Implementation, Feedback.
- Slide 4:** "Materials Needed for Class" listing: B. LITZ, W. STONACK.
- Slide 5:** "Overview" with a photo of a building and text about the program's purpose.
- Slide 6:** "Program Objectives of Housing 365" with a list of goals.
- Slide 7:** "Why?" with text explaining the need for the program.
- Slide 8:** "Statistics" with a bar chart showing data.
- Slide 9:** "Theoretical Framework I" with a pyramid diagram.
- Slide 10:** "Theoretical Framework II" with a circular diagram.
- Slide 11:** "Theoretical Framework III" with text and a small diagram.
- Slide 12:** "Program Goals" with a list of objectives.
- Slide 13:** "Components" with a list of program elements.
- Slide 14:** "Housing 365: Protocol" with a list of steps.
- Slide 15:** "HOUSING 365: INTAKE" with a house icon and text.
- Slide 16:** "Housing 365:" with a tree icon and text.
- Slide 17:** "Timeline" with a tree icon and a list of dates.
- Slide 18:** "The End!" with a photo of a person and a house icon.

Appendix F

Housing 365 logo



Appendix G

Marketing Flyer

Housing 365 Program

Supporting Students During Academic Breaks

- 365 Single-point of contact in Residence Life and Housing for students experiencing a transition impacting housing.
- 365 Available Resident Assistants and Graduate Assistants who are specialized in training to assist students experiencing transitions impacting housing.

A lack of housing and supports should not inhibit students from succeeding

Appendix H

Survey

Be honest—everything you say is confidential. If you have questions about the survey, send a note to Housing365@college.edu.

Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. How many credits have you earned?

Rate your Housing 365 experience on a scale of 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree

4. Did Housing 365 help you?
5. Would you have remained enrolled at this institution without the advising and support of Housing 365?
6. What would you change about this process?
7. The Housing 365 program provided a safe, secure opportunity for me.
8. The process to request accommodations was simple
9. I was treated with respect throughout the process
10. The opportunity to have housing was essential for me to be successful as a student

Open-Ended Questions

11. Finally, you could ask some open ended questions:
12. What additional resources might be helpful to you?
13. What might you change about the Housing 365 process?

Appendix I

Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself
2. How did you learn about the *Housing 365* program?
3. Can you discuss how the process of applying was for you?
4. What have been the benefits of the *Housing 365* program?
5. What have been the challenges?
6. If you had the power to change anything about the program, what would you change?

Appendix J

Budget

Budget Item	Amount	Description
Revenue		
Emergency Aid	\$10,0000	
Expenses		
Housing 365 Training	\$1000	Specialized RA/GA Training
Program Supplies	\$300	Giveaways, miscellaneous handouts and supplies
Graduate Assistant	\$30,000	Stipend and housing
Potential Expenses		
Total Expenses	\$30,300	