

2009/2010 FYRE Report

Office of Housing and Residence Life

Unit Goal: Expand the First Year Residence Experience (FYRE) program to include all residents in both Everglades and Biscayne Hall at South Village.

In the fall of 2008, Everglades Hall opened its doors to 396 first-time in college (FTIC) students of Florida Gulf Coast University in the newly developed South Village. In order to create an environment that would help support the needs of these students, the First Year Residence Experience (FYRE) program was established by the Office of Housing & Residence Life. The FYRE program is intended to aid first year students in a successful transition from home to college by providing a wide range of support systems upon which they can draw, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving academic and personal success. In the fall of 2009, Biscayne Hall became the second building constructed in South Village, expanding the FYRE program from 396 participants to 792.

The FYRE program first established a community model designed specifically to meet the needs of the FTIC students. The community development process begins from the time a resident checks into his/her residence hall and continues to develop over the course of the academic year. Using the strategies outlined in this model, the Office of Housing & Residence Life (OHRL) staff, specifically Resident Assistant (RA) staff, stand at the center of bringing the residents of the FGCU residential community together. This model includes:

Office of Housing & Residence Life FYRE Community Development Model

1. Welcome Letters

- Welcome letters provide RAs an opportunity to introduce themselves and welcome residents to the residential community.

2. Door Decorations

- Door decorations are personalized and incorporate any specific themes related to the residence hall.

3. Opening floor meeting

- Opening floor meetings serve as an opportunity for residents to meet, greet, and socialize with their neighbors and OHRL staff.

4. Bulletin Boards

- Bulletin boards are a means for RAs to communicate relevant University information to the residential community.

5. RA Hours

- RAs will identify 5 hours per week where they will be in their room for the sole purpose of assisting their residents. These hours are posted on the RAs door and be made available to all of their residents.

6. Personal Interactions

- Personal interactions are RA- to -resident conversations/discussions that take place in an informal setting.

7. Monthly Check-ins

- The RAs are responsible for visiting each suite a minimum of once per month.

8. Monthly Hall Meetings

- The RAs facilitate monthly meetings with their floor to discuss a variety of issues concerning the community.

9. Residence Hall Sociogram

- A residence hall sociogram is a picture or other “graphic representation” of interaction patterns between students in a residential community.

10. Programming Model

- There is overwhelming evidence that suggests student success is largely determined by student experiences during the first year (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005). As an extension of the academic community, the Residence Life staff, through the FYRE programming model, work to provide participants a valuable living/learning experience. Each RA is responsible for facilitating eight programs per semester for the FYRE residents. The programming model includes the following dimensions.
 - i. **Personal Development**-Programs in this area address topics that are specific to the personal development of students during the first year of college and fall under 3 main areas of focus (Health, Life Skills, and Ethical Responsibility).
 - ii. **Community Development**- Programs in this area emphasize the importance of positively contributing to and involving oneself in his/her community. Residents will gain a better understanding of their role in the residential community, have an opportunity to meet new people, and ultimately become an involved member of the University and surrounding local community.
 - iii. **Academic Development**-Programs in this area are designed to support the academic success of the residents and provide opportunities for faculty/staff interactions within the residence hall.

In addition to the FYRE Community Development Model, several initiatives and partnerships were established with various departments and offices throughout the FGCU community. These partnerships included:

Counseling and Psychological Services (Prevention and Wellness)

Cookies, Coke, & Conversation

The Office of Prevention and Wellness hosted a six week wellness series within South Village. Representatives from Prevention and Wellness hosted conversations and info sessions about alcohol, stress, sexual health, nutrition, and healthy relationships. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and receive information about each topic presented.

- Approximately 60 students attended these programs
 - 15% increase in attendance from 2008/2009

College of Arts and Sciences

Three Cups of Tea Dessert and Discussion- As part of our initiative to bring faculty members into the residence halls, we invited faculty members to host discussions about the first year reading book, Three Cups of Tea. Students had the option to attend one of four discussion sessions hosted within Everglades and Biscayne Halls. English Composition faculty members led the discussions and helped students develop ideas for their papers.

- 65 students attended this program
 - 3% decrease in attendance from 2008/2009

Office of New Student Programs

First Year Advising

Advisors from First Year Advising set up in South Village during the month of October to offer assistance with spring class selection and degree planning. Students were able to walk-in during evening hours and obtain information regarding holds on their accounts, classes they needed to take, and other degree planning information.

- 221 students attended a session
 - 121% increase in attendance from 2008/2009

Center for Academic Achievement

Tutoring

The Center for Academic Achievement hosted tutoring sessions for any lower level math or science class twice a week in South Village. Tutors were available between 7:00pm and 10:00pm. Tutoring is walk-in and free for students.

- Fall 2009 semester: 82 students attended a session
- Spring 2010 semester: 40 students attended a session
- **Grand total: 122 students**
 - 213% increase in attendance from 2008/2009

Student Skills Workshops

The Center for Academic Achievement (CAA) developed a series of workshops designed to help students succeed academically. The CAA presented 6 workshops within South Village on the following topics: time management, note taking, habits of effective students, reading comprehension, study techniques, and test taking skills.

- Fall 2009 semester: 77 students attended a session
- Spring 2010 semester: 89 students attended a session
- **Grand total: 166 students**

Writing Center

The Writing Center was in Everglades Hall every Monday from 4pm-6pm and every Wednesday from 5pm-7pm. The Writing Center offers topic brainstorming, thesis development, formatting, and other essay related assistance.

- Fall 2009 semester: 99 students attended a session
- Spring 2010 semester: 63 students attended a session
- **Grand total: 162 students**
 - 800% increase in attendance from last year

Campus Recreation

Group Fitness Classes

Campus Recreation hosted weekly group fitness classes in South Village. Students had the chance to participate in ab attack, yoga and body sculpting classes.

- Fall 2009 semester: 292 students attended a session
- Spring 2010 semester: 202 students attended a session
- **Grand total: 494 students**
 - 394% increase in attendance from last year

In order to assess the impact the FYRE program has had on the residents of South Village, data has been collected from numerous areas.

Office of Housing & Residence Life FYRE assessment

Grade Point Average (GPA) - The information below reflects the 2009/2010 GPA for FYRE residents and all first time in college students (FTIC). The data for FTICs was provided to the Office of Housing and Residence Life by Lisa Banks, Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Analysis.

- FYRE: 2.71
- FTIC: 2.78

Academic Standing List

- 655 students were on the Spring 2010 academic standing report
 - Of the 655 students, 206 (31%) of them were residential
 - Of the 206 residential students, 113 (54%) of them lived in South Village
 - 57 in Everglades
 - 56 in Biscayne

Residential Conduct Summary: The conduct process for the Office of Housing and Residence Life (OHRL) is set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the Community Guidebook. The OHRL adjudicates incidents that occur within the residence halls and the housing parking lots; all other locations are adjudicated by the Dean of Students office. The following statistics are from incidents that occurred between the dates August 2, 2009 through May 3, 2010.

- 325 incidents occurred in housing during the 2009-2010 academic year.
 - Of the 325 incidents, 87 incidents (27%) occurred in South Village
- 617 students were involved in at least 1 incident within the residential community.
 - Of those 617 students, 154 (25%) of them lived in South Village
- A total of 139 incidents involving alcohol occurred in housing during the 2009-2010 academic year.
 - 29 incidents (26%) occurred in South Village
- A total of 52 incidents involving controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia occurred in housing during the 2009-2010 academic year.
 - 19 incidents (36%) occurred in South Village

Housing Return Rates– The following information reflects the number and percentage of residents (as of May 18, 2010) who lived on-campus during the Spring 2009 semester and have chosen to return for the 2010/2011 academic year.

- 1308 of 2640 Spring 2010 residents have a room for Fall 2010 (49.5% return rate)
- 457 of the 761 Spring 2010 South Village residents have a room assignment for Fall 2010 (60.05% return rate)
- 403 of 784 North Lake Village FTIC residents have a room for Fall 2010 (51.4% return rate)
- 448 of 1095 Other North Lake Village residents have a room for Fall 2010 (41% return rate)

Quality of Residence Life Survey – This year, a new vendor was selected to administer the Quality of Residence Life Survey. Educational Benchmarking Inc. (EBI) administers a housing resident satisfaction survey for approximately 300 colleges and universities around the country. A decision was made to begin using this vendor for a variety of reasons. Our new survey provides enhanced resources that will allow us to examine survey results and use them to develop action plans and goals for improvement. This change required us to adopt a new survey instrument that has many similarities but several differences to our previous survey. One short term drawback will be a limited ability to contrast previous results this year but the EBI instrument will allow for longitudinal comparisons as long as we continue to use this instrument in the future.

The EBI was administered to all 761 South Village residents from March 25th- April 9th and a total of 297 (39%) of residents completed the survey. Questions on the survey are grouped into 19 factors and those 19 factors are divided into 3 main groups. Those groups are resident satisfaction, learning outcomes and full resident experience.

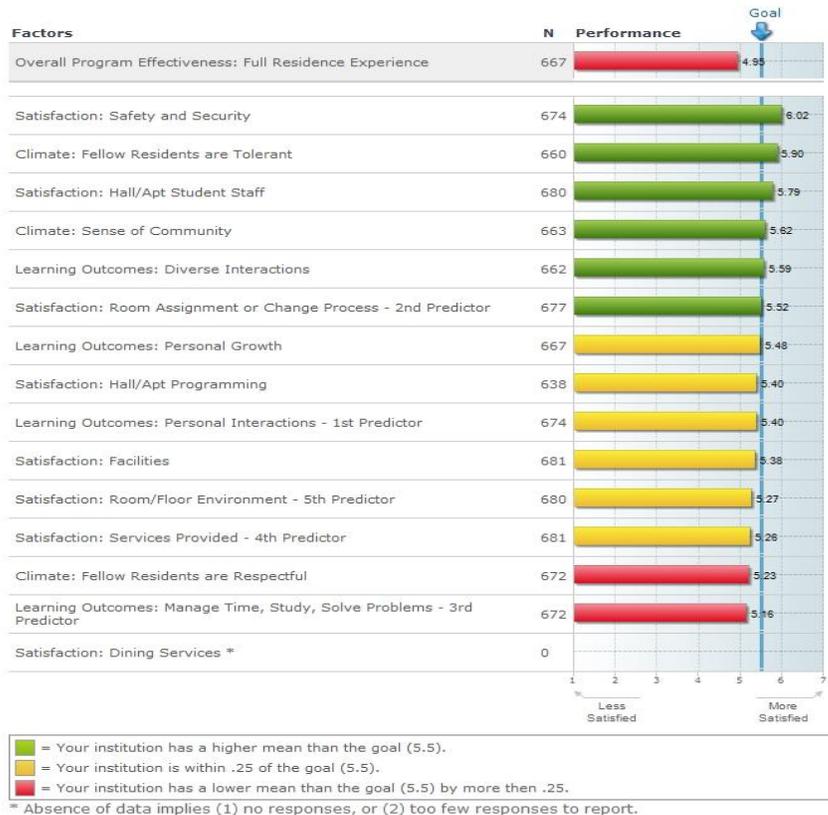
Comparing North Lake Village to South Village

When reviewing resident overall experience between South Village and North Lake Village, the communities had very different results. Using the two charts below, it is glaringly apparent that residents are significantly more satisfied with their experience at South Village versus North Lake Village. It’s worthy to point out that every area for South Village met or exceeded the benchmark.



Full Resident Experience

Population: Florida Gulf Coast University → U1. Demographics: Area > North Lake Village (Number Responding = 719)



ACUHO-I/EBI Resident Assessment (Order: 20872)

Of the 19 factors mentioned above, South Village FTIC proved to be more satisfied than North Lake Village FTIC with the:

- RA Staff
- Room/Floor Environment
- Facilities
- Services Provided
- Room Assignment/Room Change Process
- Safety and Security
- Climate regarding the tolerance of fellow residents
- Climate regarding respect between fellow residents
- Opportunity for personal interactions
- Opportunity for Diverse Interactions
- Ability to manage time, study, and solve problems
- Opportunity for personal growth
- Overall college/university experience
- Overall residence experience

Summary

The results of the 2010 Quality of Residential Life Survey (QRLS) are overall very positive. The success achieved in the first two years of South Village appears to be very promising. Despite higher rental rates in this community, residents appear to be very satisfied with their residential experience. Students are aware of programs and services offered in South Village and are taking advantage of them at increasing rates. It is worth noting that despite additional academic resources available in the academic community, South Village has not seen higher rates in academic performance in its first two years. Additional resources should be allocated going forward to review this area if this trend continues.