Student Family Housing Redevelopment Committee – Meeting Minutes Summary

Date: 11-18-2014      Time: 1:00PM – 2:30PM PST

Participants: Assistant Vice Chancellor Clayton Halliday, Associate Dean Lenora Timm (Chair), Marilyn Derby (Project Manager), Brittany Derieg (Project Assistant), Chair of Graduate Student Association Erica Vonasek, Graduate Student Assistant to the Dean and Chancellor Angel Hinzo, Graduate Student Representatives Sara Petrosillo, Cutcha Risling Baldy, Carlos Colman Meixner, Sandra Viviana Menza Franco, Aaron Fackler and Paul Johnson, and Undergraduate Student Representative Ryan Reynolds.

Presentation by Marilyn Derby: Quality of Life Issues in Student Family Housing

We can look at the issues surrounding quality of life in student family housing from a variety of different angles. For example, we can analyze how well housing fits student’s needs by using Maslow’s well-known hierarchy of needs paradigm. Or, we can use the guidelines set forth by H.L. Dunn in the 1960s—the eight dimensions of wellness. We can also evaluate housing by comparing it to the institutional mission and principles of community, or we can use the professional best practices as determined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. All of these are discussed below, and all provide a unique meaningful interpretation of what is most important when designing campus housing for families.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
Only when our basic biological and physiological needs are met can we begin to focus on any of our other, “higher” needs, such as family, work, knowledge, and personal growth.

It is important when designing and maintaining a space to focus on safety and stability. At an institution of higher learning, we often want to only focus on cognitive needs, but in order for students to focus on those they need to first feel safe and secure—and this includes things like knowing they will have a place to live in 6 months. Worries such as this can prevent students from being able to focus on their studies.

Eight Dimensions of Wellness
Wellness is not the absence of disease, illness or stress, but the presence of purpose in life, active involvement in satisfying work and play, joyful relationships, a healthy body and living environment, and happiness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Satisfaction with current and future financial situations. Rent increases and rent policies can profoundly affect a student’s wellness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills. For students, this need is likely met through their studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, there are many non-students living in student housing (spouses, dependents) and we must think about how to meet their needs as well.

**Occupational**  
Personal satisfaction and enrichment from one’s work

**Physical**  
Recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy foods and sleep

**Social**  
Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system

**Spiritual**  
Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life. It is not immediately obvious how housing can impact a student’s spiritual needs, however, things like dining hall hours allowing for fasting students to be able to eat after dark during Ramadan can have major effects on a student’s overall wellness.

**Best Practices as Determined by the Defining Effective Educational Practices Research Project**

This study concluded that engagement is the best predictor of overall student success. The more engaged a student is, the better their experience will be. They defined engagement as, “the time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities” and illustrated a direct relationship with learning and personal development. Students are engaged through speaking with faculty, actively writing papers, performing research, participating in internships, and through other similar activities.

The 2005 book, “Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter” identifies five effective educational practices of institutions that perform well on student engagement and graduation rates:

1. High academic challenge  
2. Active and collaborative learning  
3. Interaction with faculty  
4. Enriching educational experiences – internships, service, study abroad, co-curricular activities, culminating senior experience  
5. Supportive campus environment:  
   a. help students succeed academically, cope with nonacademic responsibilities, and thrive socially  
   b. promote good relations between students and peers, staff and faculty

**Principles of Community**

In 1990, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching initiated a study of community, entitled Campus Life: In Search of Community. Ernest Boyer developed six principles that defined the kind of community every college and university should strive to be. The first of these is “Purposeful,” and it describes an environment where students and faculty work together with a common goal to strengthen teaching and learning. This supports the principle of engagement, described earlier, and is vital to an academic community. The five
other principles of community are “Open,” “Just,” “Disciplined,” “Caring,” and “Celebrative.” Celebrative focuses on the heritage of the institution and ensuring that both tradition and change are shared throughout the community.

These principles are intentionally broad, and could describe a wide variety of groups. The reason we have residence life staff is so that this community develops in a specific way. Community development is the process of shaping the environment, or building on the experiences and needs of the members, both individually and collectively. Staff, including RAs, should focus on creating attitudes and developing the skills necessary to progress toward the realization of those conditions that make up a supportive community.

In summary, when speaking with Orchard and Solano Park residents, the overarching theme relating to community is the “feeling” of cooperation and commitment to the group welfare, of a responsibility to and for others as well as one’s self. In order to maintain this sense of community, this housing project needs to be “not just a place where interaction occurs, but a spirit of connection and commitment that sustains relationship and purpose.” (Komives, S. R., et al (1998). Exploring Leadership: For College Students who Want to Make a Difference.)

Discussion

- Social workers should regularly be brought to the campus as a resource for students, to assist them in signing up for services they are eligible for.
- There should be a more established method of informing students with families of student-family housing. Many of the student committee members only heard of the Parks in an indirect fashion, either through a friend or pure chance. In order to make student-family housing more visible to new graduate students, it was suggested to have a panel for students with families during WOW week.
- General Issue: Access to Information. Examples: Difficulty seeing the apartments before hand, difficulty getting basic information about the units, maternity leave, etc.
- The role of the RAs is not conducive to a supportive community environment. They are in charge of both organizing fun activities as well as policing the community. Community programming, mediation, and conflict resolution should be what the RAs are doing, and some other party should be responsible for policy enforcement and policing.
  - Counterpoint: Depends more on the staff coordinator than the RA
  - Counterpoint: Reevaluating the policies (such as what can be on a balcony, or parking limitations) with the help of a student advisory committee composed of student-family housing residents should eliminate the need to separate out the responsibilities of the RAs.
- Currently there is a lack of relationship and a lack of trust between housing administrators and students, and a student advisory committee that works with staff, the fire department, and other campus interest groups may build this relationship.
- Several members of the committee met with administration this past week to discuss extending the committee’s deadline for final recommendations to mid-May. Administration was supportive of this change in order to properly engage the community and fully explore financial and design strategies.
Action Items

- The design amenities list will be shared on google docs so that the committee can add items to the list to be considered, such as natural cross ventilation, storage space, etc. At some point in the future these items will be prioritized.
- Between now and the community workshop we need to meet with a variety of focus groups to ensure these groups are heard from, such as students with disabilities, international students, housing maintenance and custodial staff, non-student residents, youth, former residents (alumni), and more.
  - Erica: Recommend the committee presents to the GSA to update and inform them on the progress of the committee.
  - Requires further discussion: Should students or staff present to the GSA?
  - By reaching out to alumni now for ideas for the redevelopment of Orchard Park, they may be more receptive to contributing to the project a year from now after the project is approved.
- The community workshop will be an opportunity to present our current findings, goals, and potential conclusions to the community to gauge their feedback, while also remaining open to new suggestions. Our goals and findings need to be written up by January to prepare for this.
- This committee should develop a long-range timeline that covers broad tasks for once this project is approved and it goes to construction and design management; this included updating and sharing with the community the expected lifespan of Solano Park.