Priming the Pump

Residential Learning Community Effects on Engagement
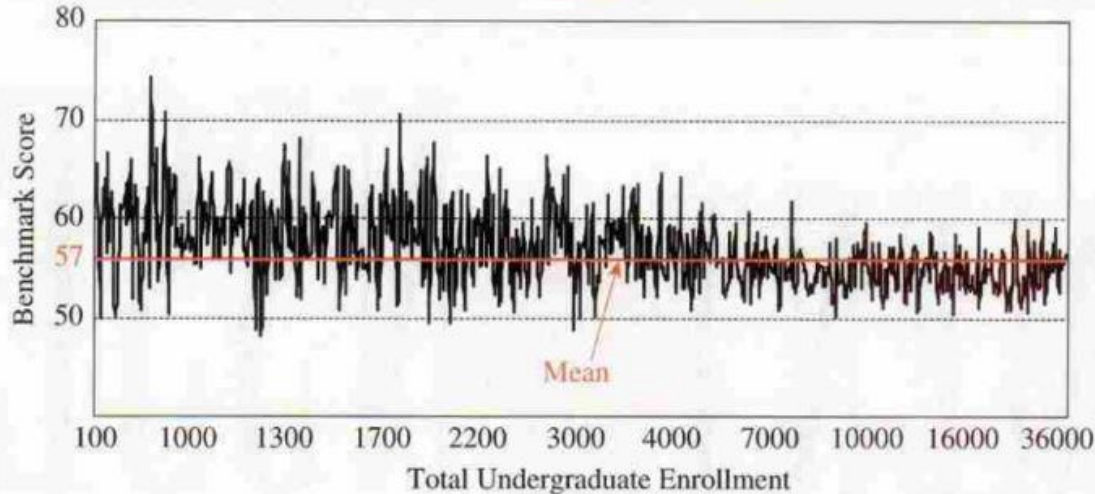
Presented by:
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ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM:

CHART 2. THE EKG OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

" …we've got to probe more deeply into the nature of the student experience at a *particular institution*, and not assume that all colleges of a certain type and size are comparable"

George Kuh, 2003

Kuh, G. D. (2003). What we're learning about student engagement from nsse: benchmarks for effective educational practices. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *35*(2), 24-32.

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WHAT TO EXPECT

- Describe Bucknell
- Describe Residential College program
- Describe the study conducted by Dr. Amy Wolaver, economics
- Share results
- Discussion: what do you think?

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MEET BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

Small, private, liberal arts with both engineering & management

9:1 faculty to student ratio

Around 93% retention rate

Residential campus, just under 4,000 undergrads

Predominately White Institution, located in rural PA

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MEET BUCKNELL'S RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

Founded in 1986

Seminar courses linked by theme

Themes housed together

Two peer mentors per floor - RA and JF

Programming budget for each theme to support outside of class learning

About 30% of FY class opt in

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE LEARNING GOALS

Develop capacities consistent with being a member of a community of engaged learners and citizens

Demonstrate a deep level of understanding as a result of connecting classroom learning with experiential learning

By integrating the living environment with academics, students will understand and appreciate competing perspectives and viewpoints both inside & outside the classroom

PROPOSE OF OUR STUDY:

Measure outcomes of Res College experience on student engagement:

- Participation in other High Impact Practices (HIPs)

- Participation in Leadership positions

- Engagement with diverse groups
  - measured by having serious conversations with students from different backgrounds

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Astin's (1993) "Input → Environment → Outcome" Model

  - Students come to college with skills, or "inputs"

  - Controlling for "inputs" helps isolate outcomes attributed to the environment

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
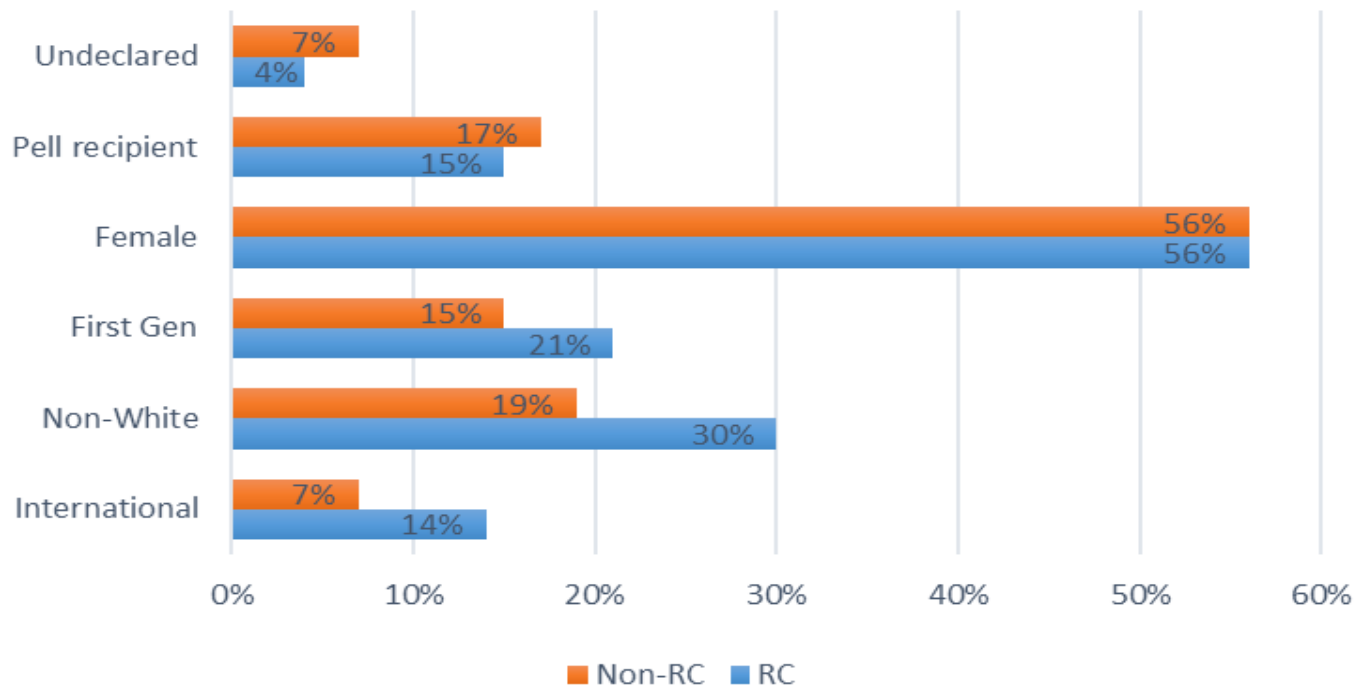
DATA:

Before-College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) & National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data ideal for measuring these outcomes.
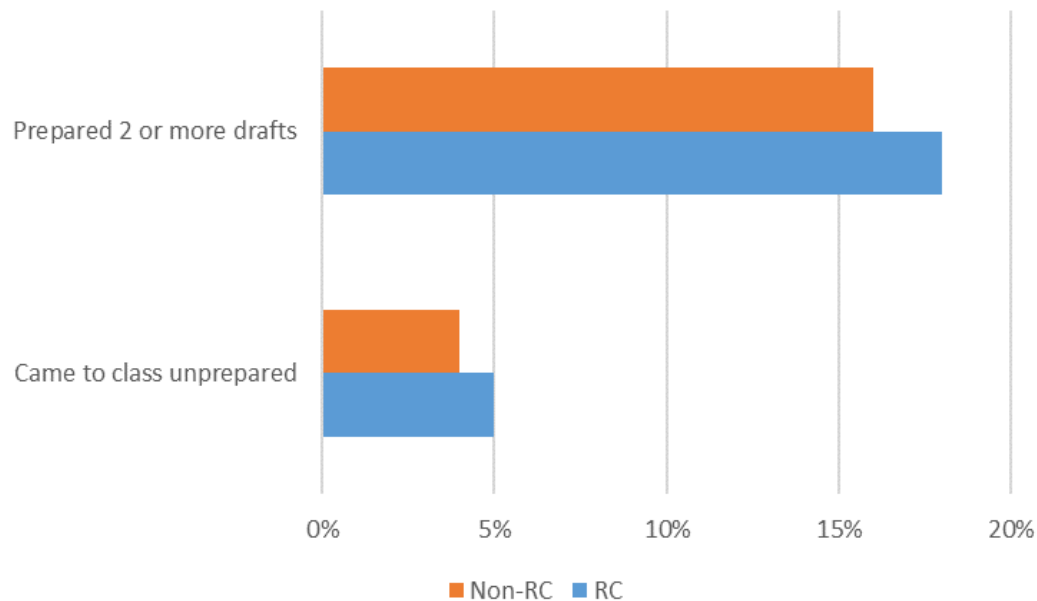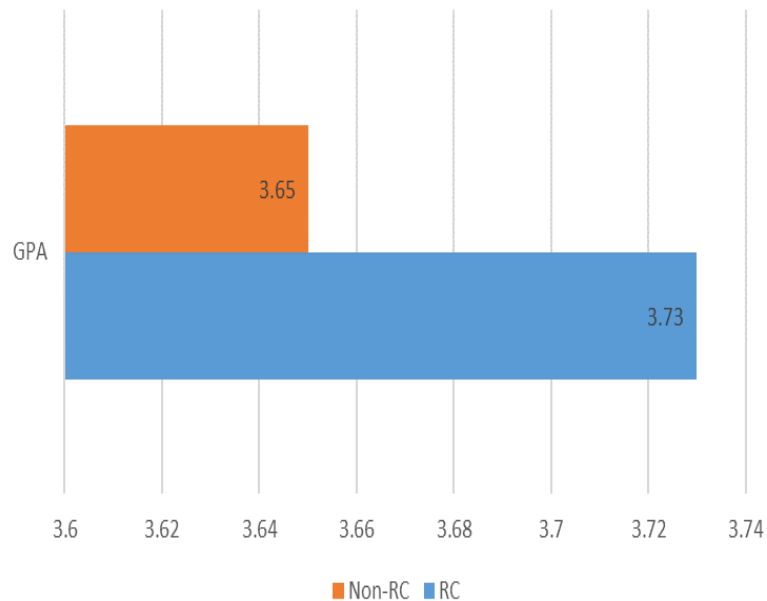
Office of Institutional Research provided de-identified data from the 2010, 2013, & 2016 BCSSE and the 2011, 2014 & 2017 NSSE.

They matched student records from the BCSSE & NSSE using student id numbers, making it possible to examine the affect of the Res College from the end of FY 2011, 2014 & 2017, and the end of Senior Year from 2014 & 2017
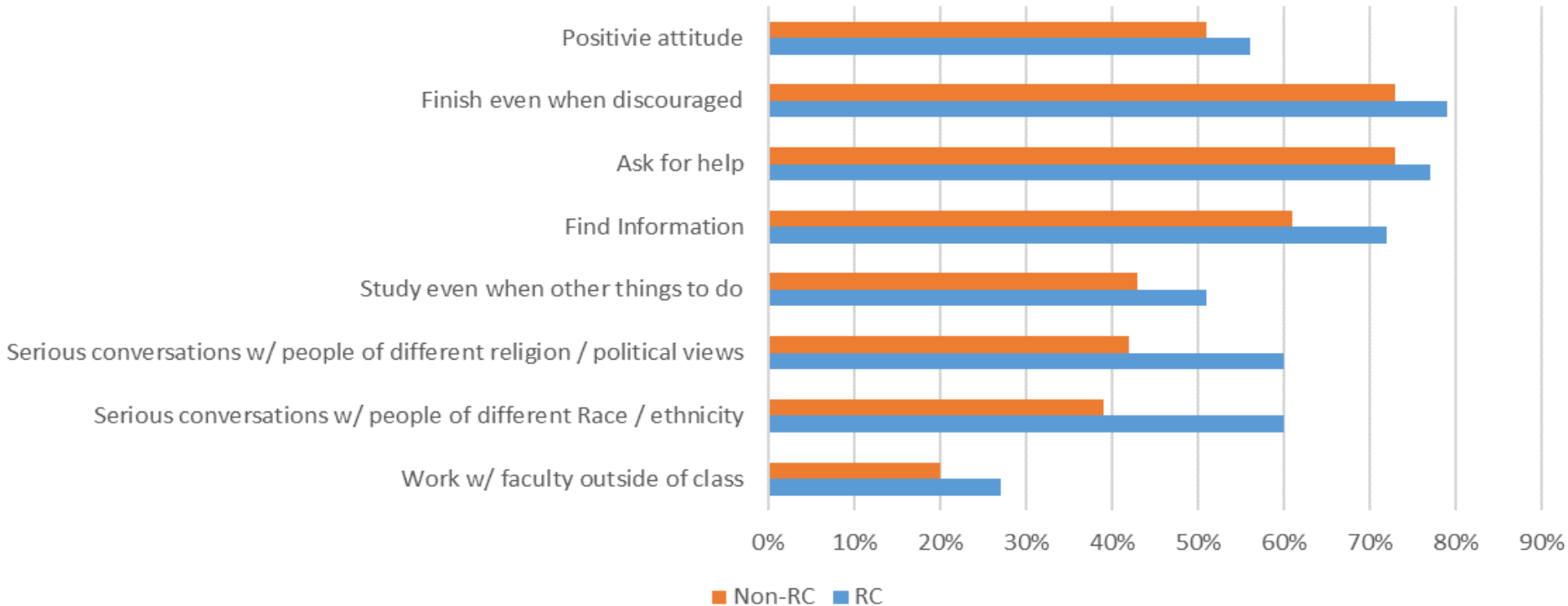
INPUTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

INPUTS: HIGH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

INPUTS: BEFORE-COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS

Bar chart comparing Non-RC and RC responses across the following categories:

- Positivie attitude
- Finish even when discouraged
- Ask for help
- Find Information
- Study even when other things to do
- Serious conversations w/ people of different religion / political views
- Serious conversations w/ people of different Race / ethnicity
- Work w/ faculty outside of class

Legend: ■ Non-RC ■ RC

X-axis: 0% to 90%

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ENVIRONMENT

1. Res College participant
    NSSE sample size: FY= 256, SY = 223

2. Res College Resident, non-participant
    NSSE sample size: FY = 37, SY = 49

3. Non-resident, non-participant
    NSSE sample size: FY = 361; SY =427

Students included in sample size, also took BSSE

Analysis: Multivariate regressions using NSSE outcomes

Regression form controlling for Inputs:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 RLC_i + \beta_2 Resident, nonparticipant_i i + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 HS_i + u_i$$

Y = Student engagement

α = constant term

RLC = Program participant

Resident, nonparticipant = Res College Resident, non-participant

X = Student inputs: Demographics

HS = Student inputs: High school engagement & college expectations

U = Error term

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATION IN OTHER HIPS & LEADERSHIP

By senior year, RC participants :

- Completed 1.15 more HIPs than those who weren't

- 2.55 times more likely to have engaged in research*

- 2.30 times more likely to have held a leadership position*

*significant to .01 level

OUTCOME: ENGAGEMENT WITH DIVERSE GROUPS

Participation in RC increases likelihood White students report engaging often/very often in conversation with student of different race/ethnicity:

- 1.66 times more likely during first year*
- 1.65 times more likely during senior year*

*significant to .05 level

OUTCOME: SPILLOVER EFFECTS

We found that living in a RC community, without taking part in the RC academic components, had no effect on student engagement.

- In First Year, they are more likely to engage conversation with diverse others, but the effect disappears by Senior Year

- Implies both structural diversity and cross-cultural interaction are necessary

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATION IN NSSE

RC participants less likely to take BCSSE, but more likely to take NSSE at end of first year, and at end of senior year.

Taking survey a measure of engagement?

- If so, we're comparing most engaged students, do we fully capture the program effect?

- We don't know about the students that don't take it

CAVEATS:

- One program, at one institution

- Controlling for biases:
  - BCSSE good option, but may not capture all the inputs
  - Just taking NSSE can be associated with engagement

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DISCUSSION:

Thoughts, comments, questions?

FURTHER READING:

Inkelas, K. K., Jessup-Anger J. E., Benjamin, M., & Wawrzynski, M. R. (2018). *Living learning communities that work: a research-based model for design, delivery, and assessment.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Jayakumar, U. M. (2008). Can Higher Education Meet the Needs of an Increasingly Diverse and Global Society? Campus Diversity and Cross-Cultural Workforce Competencies. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*(4), 615-651.

Forthcoming: Special Issue on Residential Learning Communities in *Learning Communities Research and Practice* online journal

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THANK YOU FOR COMING

RES COLLEGE PEER MENTORS 2019-20

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PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR EVALUATION ON GUIDEBOOK!

#FYE20

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