

CASE STUDY University of Tampa

THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA®



The University of Tampa (UT) is a 4-year, private university that serves approximately 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students annually. In the heart of downtown Tampa, this riverfront institution offers students unique experiential learning opportunities to become productive, responsible citizens. Since most full-time students live in campus housing, UT places a significant emphasis on refining communication skills, balancing "learning by thinking" with "learning by doing," and creating a residential community that promotes student development and academic success.

"We share data so our staff can not only identify opportunities for improvement in their specific area but also work those insights into their interactions with residents."

Nora Jarmon, *Director of Residence Life*

GOALS

Through coursework and co-curricular experiences, UT has developed competencies that support collegial success—effective communication, respect for diverse perspectives, and other pillars. The Office of Residence Life contributes to this strategic plan through their efforts to connect students to a larger community that promotes student development, supports academic success, and build a sense of community.

SOLUTION

To support their department's goals UT's Office of Residence Life uses insights from the ACUHO-I / Benchworks Resident Assessment to:

- ◆ Inform and monitor the impact of their residential curriculum
- ◆ Provide insights in planning and training efforts with both professional and student staff
- ◆ Demonstrate how department initiatives connect to campus-wide strategic goals

KEY INITIATIVES & INSIGHTS

RESIDENTIAL CURRICULUM

In recent years, UT's Office of Residence Life implemented a residential curriculum focused on helping students gain knowledge and skills that can be applied across their college experience. These learning outcomes focus on transferrable skills such as teamwork, equity and inclusion, and self-awareness, and feed into campus-wide competencies.

INTENTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

UT implemented intentional conversations between residents and student staff that take place each month. Student staff focus on topics like academic success, sense of belonging, and academic resources both in the residence halls and other campus locations. With student's best interest in mind, they use RA data to dig deeper into a particular topic and let that inform their work.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Residence Life added full-time live-in staff members in all first-year residence halls beginning in Fall 2019. The added visibility and presence of full-time staff has helped increase the frequency and quality of interactions with first-year students and better support student staff.

LLC INITIATIVES

Data showed some residents were not aware they were in living-learning communities. To address this, UT has been more intentional about messaging, included more faculty into LLC programming, and now hosts some classes in lounge spaces versus others areas on campus. This allows staff to better tie first-year experience classes to LLCs.

SHARING DATA

Hall and floor-level data from the Resident Assessment are shared with professional staff so they can identify longitudinal trends, better understand what their students need, and make adjustments accordingly. Professional staff also share high-level results with student staff during summer and fall training to help inform their work.

DIGGING DEEPER

Each year, the department conducts a follow-up assessment project that dives deeper into a narrower topic. Staff pair data from the Resident Assessment with results from focus groups or other surveys to gain additional insights that can inform their work with students.