DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT:
Housing and Residence Life at California State University, Fullerton provides students with a stimulating, safe, and well sustained environment that supports the pursuit of their individual and collective efforts toward academic achievement. The Residence Halls service as an enlivening space for learning that involves culture and social education; community living; enriching experiences; and leadership training.

PROGRAM/SERVICE OVERVIEW:
Resident Advisor Experience
Housing and Residence Life student staff members, known as Resident Advisors (RA), play a critical role within the housing community. Resident Advisors encourage students’ personal, social, and academic development. In addition to their role of accurately assessing the needs of the community and serving as a campus resource, Resident Advisors gain in-depth leadership training and experience through their position. The Resident Advisor experience includes fall and winter trainings, on and off duty experiences, and personal and professional development over the course of a year. Housing and Residence Life provides a highly impactful leadership role through the Resident Advisor Experience.

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT:
(To check mark any box below, please double click on the square and select “checked”.)
- External Reports
- Needs Assessment
- Program Evaluation
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Student Satisfaction Assessment
- Student Success
- Utilization Data

DATA COLLECTION TIMEFRAME:
April 29, 2014 - May 7, 2014

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:
A post survey was sent to all Resident Advisors. The survey included 25 questions using likert scale and open ended responses to measure student learning. The survey primarily focused on qualitative, open ended questions about various position experiences. Students were given two weeks to respond. Follow up with each RA was done after the survey through exit interviews with Complex Coordinators.

LIMITATIONS:
Like any survey, responses are limited to those who completed it. Although our response rate was 36.36%, there were many RAs who did not complete the survey, leaving out many perspectives.

Another limitation to our data is the type of measurement used. A survey is only able to measure the student’s interpretation of their leadership and response skills. Students may remember an experience and interpret their behavior in a more positive or negative way. As a result, the RAs perspective may or may not have met expectations of professional staff, which may
not be clear based on their responses.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**
Results of the survey concluded that each RA gained a wide variety of intended and unexpected leadership experience. Through answering the reflection questions on the survey, RAs were able to provide advice for themselves looking back on the previous year, express the most challenging part of their experiences, and describe the best relationship they built. The most interesting of the results described the critical thinking skills that were developed by the RAs. The responses to how each RA hoped they would be remembered by their residents described core values of the RA position and qualities that are ideal for success in this position.

Additionally, RAs gave input on suggestions for future improvements with Housing and the RA experience. RAs commented on the areas they would like to change, continue, and create in housing. They also assessed their satisfaction with the leadership of the Complex Coordinator position.

**KEY FINDINGS:**
Resident Advisors described their experience using three words. The figure below is a visual representation of the text data that was used to describe their experiences. Words are arranged based on relative size, those most prominent being reported more frequently.

- Respondents described an increase in their critical thinking skills through the following ways: learning how to think outside the box, time management, problem solving skills, communication, addressing situations in a calm manner, recognizing and analyzing the seriousness of a situation, and approaching all situations in an ethical manner.
- 87.5% of respondents said they had opportunities to practice the skills they learned in RA training about diversity in their position. Those opportunities involved interactions with students who were dealing with sexual orientation or gender identity issues.

**Key Quotes**
- “Be flexible (...) also, challenge yourself to step outside your comfort zone. (...)Know how to prioritize what needs to get done, but also when to say no or reschedule for a better time. Lastly, remember to take time for yourself.” –Question 3
- “This year I was able to resolve issues using critical thinking at a more rapid pace. (...) I am able to more quickly identify the problem, develop a strategy to address it, and make an executive decision about how to resolve the issue.” –Question 6
- “I hope they would remember me in a positive manner. I have been able to reach out to many of them and get to know them in various ways (...) through my interactions, I feel confident that my residents will know they have someone to go to with anything while here at CSUF and in the future.” –Question 10
- “Overall this has easily been one of the best experiences of my life. I know for a fact that I have grown as a person from last year and it is because of the responsibilities I hold and knowing that people are looking up to me.” –Question 25
Resident Advisors were asked what the most difficult situation they worked through this year had been. The following chart displays the list of the most common issues that arose for each RA. The most noted issues were suicidal ideation and mediating roommate conflicts.

![Figure 2: Response to question 7, “What was the most difficult situation you worked through with another student this year?”](image)

In response to Question 8, RAs said that the best relationships they built with another person during their experiences were fellow RAs, themselves, their Complex Coordinator, and/or a resident on their floor. The most mentioned relationship was between fellow RAs.

![Figure 3: Responses to question 8, “What is the best relationship you built this year?” (No particular order).](image)

**APPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS:**

The data gained from the Resident Advisor survey provides some very valuable information into the experience of some RAs. There was both positive and constructive feedback about the policies, procedures, and experiences of each student. This information will assist the Complex Coordinators in addressing the areas to increase training and provide more in-depth support for Resident Advisors.

There was a lot of feedback about increasing the amount and consistency of communication. This will be a focus for the next year for each Complex Coordinator and the department as a whole. Assessment will also be a large focus. It is important to assess RA learning prior to the end of the year so we can understand how development and growth is impacted from holding the Resident Advisor position.

Assessment from years prior were conducted in a more quantitative manner. This year’s data is different from previous years because RAs were asked to give specific situations and describe their development through the course of their experience. Last year, the survey used likert scale for RAs to rate their development in specific areas. Both means are critical for understanding student learning holistically.