



Increasing Retention Rates for South Hall Residency

Cody Johnson and Catherine Rivette

Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract

Stephen F. Austin State University's Residence Life Department aims to improve resident retention in South Hall through renovation and interior design. By improving the spaces meant for student use, we hope to increase the involvement and comfort of the residents. The existing structure was not designed for today's amenities and accessibility standards. By enlarging doorways, adding an elevator, and de-compartmentalizing the community spaces, the building becomes much more accessible to people with disabilities. These open spaces also fit into the contemporary styles of living and promote interaction between the residents and other occupants.

Purpose of the Study

This focus of our study is to provide an insight to strategies into how SFA Resident Life can increase retention rate. Designers aim to provide the Director and Assistant Director with a foundation of ways to do so.

Literature Review

Studies concerning retention rates based on design is far and in-between. Because of this, designers focused on ways to design the space to bring a level of comfortability to students in the space. The main data that was accessed was from students who currently live in South Hall. Along with this data, designers also researched the trends concerning residencies conducted by. KSA Interiors, University of Wisconsin, and the Gilbane Building Company. All three studies provided evidence that showed spaces such wellness spaces, flexible spaces and large open spaces are ideal and trending in the students life inside resident halls.

Methods

Research Design: Quantitative

In the life of a South Hall Student:

Designers went to the students to get a feel on the way students utilize the space. From this data, the designers can find out ways to improve the residency to make life in South Hall feel more like home.

Sample

The sample participants include 52 college students currently living in the South Hall Residency. Both male and female students were sent a survey concerning their life in the residency.

Research Question:

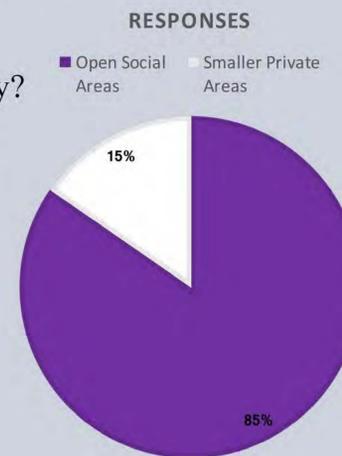
What would you rather have in the lobby?

Trends in the Student Housing from KSA Interiors:

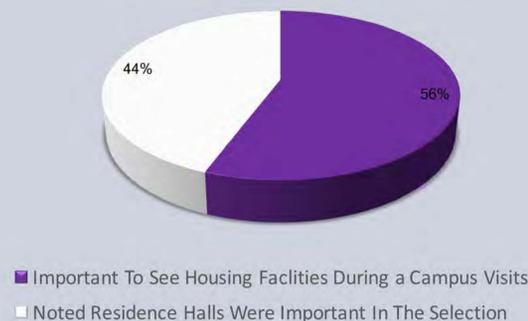
- Incorporating spaces with technology and a wellness mindset, will encourage students to engage with the campus population
- Combine hospitality design and higher-educational design to balance the needs of students with luxury apartments

Data from Wisconsin University:

From the data Wisconsin University collected, they concluded that size and light were important. The following is data collected concerning campus visits:



Campus Visits and On-Campus Housing



Results

The result of this study provided designers the starting point on how to achieve what the students desire. The data pointed out that students do not have accepted social spaces to be more involved in the resident life community. Because of the layout of the building, the students do not have the ability to socialize as much as students who live in other campus on the dorms, such as Landing, Lodge, and Village.

Conclusions

- Social Areas allow for more socialization for students.
- Wellness areas along with social areas will engage students with the campus community
- Size and light are important factors for students when choosing a resident hall to live

Recommendations and Future Studies

- Take away the wall between the lobby and the hall
- Take away rooms to expand the first floor lobby
- Add an addition on the front of the building
- Take away rooms on the second and third floors to add a lobby

References

KSA Interiors. (2016). Not your average dorm: Trends in student housing. *KSA Interiors: Create Change*. Retrieved from <http://ksainteriors.com/2016/08/29/not-average-dorm-trends-student-housing/>

Roskos, B., & Sickler, S. (2013). Factors that play a role in first year students' on campus housing decisions. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 39(2), 10-32. Retrieved from http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/acuho/journal_vol39no2/index.php?startid=5#/6