



# University Housing Services “First Year, First Step” Program Curriculum Assessment Assessment Report

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**Choose One:** Needs Assessment

**Date of Assessment Implementation:** May 2019

**Date of Report:** June 2019

## **Purpose of Assessment**

The purpose of the assessment is to measure the effectiveness of a new programming curriculum in the First Year, First Step (FYFS) program.

**Division Learning Outcome** Model Leaders - intentional learning

## **Targeted Learning Outcome**

The first targeted learning outcome is to increase variance in types of learning opportunities offered for FYFS residents. The second targeted learning outcome is to ensure that divisional and departmental learning outcomes and values were addressed through programming provided to FYFS residents.

## **Assessment Methodology**

The assessment was conducted by classifying programs into eight different programming categories, each derived from research into the learning outcomes and values of the Division of Student Affairs and University Housing Services, as well as from the “Poly Pathway” learning model adopted by Cal Poly Pomona. The following eight programmatic areas were created.

## **Results**

The first learning outcome was to increase variance in types of learning opportunities offered for FYFS residents. Results were mixed, but skewed slightly positive. Programs in the areas of Self-Sufficiency & Skill Building, CPP Resources, & Social Programs increased year-to-year. Programs in the areas of Academic Connections & Diversity & Social Justice were even year-to-year. Programs in the areas of Health & Wellness, Career Exploration, Civic & Community Engagement decreased year-to-year.

An initial goal of this curriculum was to decrease the number of Health & Wellness programs while boosting other educational areas (defined as the other six programming categories outside of Social Programs). The reason for this is that Health & Wellness programs have been identified both within FYFS and the UHS portfolio as accounting for a disproportionate number of educational programs. From this perspective, results were slightly more positive than negative; overall the other six educational areas were collectively 18% net positive and 8% net negative, leading to a 10% increase in variance of educational programming opportunities.

It is important to note that the UHS departmental programming structure, within which FYFS operates, changed from year-to-year, which affects how FYFS RAs program. Where as in AY2017-2018 RAs were required to complete 12 Educational Programs & 3 Social Programs, AY2018-2019 RAs had to complete 6 Educational Programs & 6 Social Programs. This change in structure did away with educational RA programs by 50% and increased social programs by 50%. The RLI educational programming series adds an additional six educational

programs to the area, but this does little to offset the increase in social programming and decrease in educational programming in FYFS when overall target numbers are compared.

- AY2017-2018 Target Program Numbers: 60 Educational Programs & 15 Social Programs
- AY2018-2019 Target Program Numbers: 36 Educational Programs & 30 Social Programs.

Acknowledging the changing structure's drastic impact on social programs, the increase in percentage for Social Programs should have been much higher. FYFS RAs utilized their social opportunities to incorporate more educational material and this accounts for Social Programs not encompassing a full 50% of the program opportunities available for students.

Faculty-In-Residence (FIR) also offered additional programming opportunities throughout the year available to residents, however FIR programs took place exclusively outside the suites communities and mostly on the halls side of the residential campus, nowhere in proximity to FYFS residents.

Lastly, programming budgets from AY2017-2018 to AY2018-2019 for FYFS RAs were cut by 39.4%. Considering that a lot of the field trips and community ventures that fall in the programming category "Civic & Community Engagement" cost exorbitantly more due to the cost of rental transportation. It is possible that this category decreased year-to-year due to the reapportioned budget. If field trips and community ventures are removed from the AY2017-2018 Civic & Community Engagement programs, the 12% percent figure falls to a 6% figure, exactly in line with the prior year. Additionally, more campus-focused Civic & Community Engagement were held in AY2018-2019 than in AY2017-2018, providing further evidence that budget is likely a factor in this decrease.

### **Conclusion**

Given the information above, the new FYFS programming curriculum was moderately successful in creating a more diverse slate of opportunities for FYFS residents. It is likely that external factors played a role in limiting the success of the new FYFS curriculum, but this is easily addressed through future reapplication. Additionally, the new FYFS curriculum was addressed as a loose structure where the team worked together to cover multiple bases. In future application, more structure will be given to the RAs to further make sure target goals are met. Overall, opportunities for learning in many different programming categories were diversified, which helped in better aligning with the values of the Division of Student Affairs, University Housing Services, and the Poly Pathway model.

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### **Implications for Practice**

If adapting a similar practice, it is suggested that more structure be provided to RAs at the beginning of the year in order to better ensure that they have to meet an equal number of programming categories. It is also suggested to continually review updated values, missions, and student trends to ensure that the programming curriculum is in line with institutional priorities and evolving student populations. The last step in further practice would be to begin assessing the quality of programs and their impact on learning in the residential environment.

### **Closing the Loop**

The programming curriculum will be updated with desired changes by August 1<sup>st</sup> if it is still applicable. Given that the RA role is evolving and adapting to a new overarching UHS model, this curriculum may be irrelevant within the new structure.