



TASK FORCE ON RESIDENTIAL LEARNING

YEAR ONE REPORT

2015-2016

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2015, President Kington charged the Task Force on Residential Learning to evaluate intersecting areas of campus life. (See Appendix 1 for the initial charge.) The following factors created an ideal environment for the Task Force to explore these intersecting issues:

- The structural connection of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, which provides a unique opportunity to create a seamless learning environment for students in our residential liberal arts community
- The institutional opinion that our individually-advised curriculum could be analogous to an individually-mentored co-curricular experience, through enhanced mentorship and advising outside of the classroom
- A renewed effort through a variety of programs (and in advance of our Quality Initiative for accreditation) to increase retention and student success
- Data that shows many students' outside-of-the-classroom experience often falls short of their high-quality academic experience
- A steady change in the national landscape of higher education around the expectations of students, their families, and the US government; explicitly high expectations of a residential liberal arts college to create an all-inclusive experience; a multitude of expectations to mitigate risk to students and to the College
- Members of the campus community were receiving messages of concern from our student body through survey data, exit interviews, and prospective student reflections

Specifically, the President charged the Task Force on Residential Learning to *“explore these questions, discern what clarifications and changes need to be made to the residential learning environment, and to the policies, programs, and staffing therein. Grinnell is justifiably proud of its commitment to self-governance, and a full exploration of its definition, application, and practice will enable the College to improve the well-being of our students, strengthen student organizations, and make the most of the residential setting.”* The four areas for evaluation the President's charge calls for are:

1. Define the goals of self-governance in order to serve the mission of the College.
2. Suggest avenues to infuse the college mission into the residential experience.
3. Help students to thrive, not just survive.
4. Provide leadership development for students.

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE YEAR ONE (2015-2016)

A Task Force was convened with 18 members of the Grinnell College community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and a member of the Board of Trustees. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of members.) The Task Force met regularly over the 2015-2016 academic year, most times as a full Task Force and also through the work of four sub-committees, each aligned with one of the four areas of evaluation in the President's charge to the Task Force. Over the course of the year, the Task Force researched perceptions of Grinnell's campus life, studied the institution's history of self-governance, examined best practices at peer institutions, and discussed the merits of potential strategies for improvement.

The Task Force members also created opportunities to consult with the campus community. More specifically, six Town Halls were held for students, faculty, and staff (two on self-governance and four on student well-being), and smaller focus groups were scheduled with student leaders and Posse members. Consultative meetings were held with constituent groups such as Student Government Association (SGA) Campus Council, Residence Life Student Staff, Student Educational Policy Committee (SEPC) students, Student Affairs staff, Academic Affairs leadership, the faculty at large, Executive Council, academic Department Chairs, the Alumni Council, Alumni attendees at Reunion, and the Board of Trustees.

In April 2016, the Task Force published an *Initial List of Recommendations* that offered 35 recommendations in response to the four areas of evaluation identified in the charge. This initial menu of suggestions served as a starting point for campus discussion around strategies that might address some of our concerns about the student experience. The Task Force sought feedback on this list of recommendations through an online comment form and four in-person open sessions. The list that follows is a slightly modified version of the *Initial List of Recommendations* presented in the April 2016 report; adjustments have been made for clarity and refinement.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Suggest avenues to infuse the college mission into the residential experience.

The relationship between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs creates a unique opportunity to fully realize the potential of a seamless learning environment in our residential liberal arts college. In recent decades, though, the residence halls have evolved to areas where many students “hide” from their looming academic responsibilities, and our alcohol policies have left the lounges to be used primarily for community building around alcohol. Students’ residential environments should not detract from the academic experience, but should instead contribute positively to learning through supporting a healthy framework to focus on academics, and offering additional opportunities to support co-curricular and extra-curricular learning goals. Thoughtful programmatic endeavors can revive the status of the residence halls as a place to learn, govern, and explore adulthood in a mentored environment.

Furthermore, Student Affairs staff has been asked to pack more and more content into the 6-day window for New Student Orientation. Evidence-based “high impact practices” established by the American Association for Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) suggest that a continuation of those lessons into a common first-year experience would be beneficial for both individual students and the community at large. Similarly, AAC&U best practices around living-learning communities have only been loosely explored through theme houses and floors.

We seek to utilize the AAC&U best practices, and others, to create a residential experience that reflects the educational mission of the college.

Initial Recommendations:

- 1.1 Create a community curriculum course that would be required of all first year students. The curriculum would extend learning around NSO topics such as self-governance, diversity and social justice, harm reduction, sexual respect/active bystanderism/consent/violence prevention/healthy relationships, wellness, coping strategies, conflict resolution, etc. The Task Force recommends the faculty consider supporting this as a 1-credit, pass/fail course that would

be offered 4 times a year, in the current “short course” model. This course could be taught by the six master’s-level Residence Life Coordinators (RLCs), and thus would add no additional teaching burden on faculty. This teaching responsibility for RLCs would replace their current collateral duties, which we recommend reassigning later in this document.

- 1.2 Find ways to expose faculty to campus life issues by utilizing Faculty Fridays, New Faculty Orientation, and periodic updates at faculty meetings, for example. Faculty will be better prepared to advise and mentor students if they are more conversant in the campus life issues that deeply affect student success.
- 1.3 Explore other avenues for NSO follow-up, such as a refresher for first-year students prior to the start of their second semester, or a perhaps a second-year orientation.
- 1.4 Pilot interdisciplinary living learning communities or theme floors. Suggested areas of learning include: sustainability/ecology, critical race studies, Iowa prairie and politics, and food/agriculture. Look for overlap with academic departments and centers. Consider creating curricular components such as a short course.
- 1.5 Make physical changes to residence hall lounges and kitchens to increase their use for building community and creating opportunities for learning. Small adjustments that could be made everywhere include flat screen televisions with HDMI cords, mobile whiteboards, an assortment of furniture configurations, and dimmable hallway lighting to indicate quiet hours.
- 1.6 Consider more strategic investments into the physical space in the residence halls, such as: thematic lounges that may be connected to living learning communities or theme floors (e.g. recreation/gaming, performance/arts, commercial kitchen). Build out small conference rooms in residence halls that can be reserved for small group meetings or co-curricular gatherings.
- 1.7 Explore the feasibility of housing a tutorial’s students within the same area of campus. If the 12-14 students in a tutorial were spread among a “cluster” of three/four buildings (which house 180-225 residents total), each tutorial class would have the same tutorial professor, CLS adviser, and RLC without living too close for comfort. This would deepen the commitment to an integrated advising model by facilitating a closer relationship among the trio of advisers.
- 1.8 Create systemic opportunities for integrated advising, especially toward collaboration amongst the tutorial faculty, CLS advisers, and RLCs. Support the efforts of the Student Success Platform team to choose an electronic platform that allows for sharing information so students who are struggling – and all students – experience a strong, integrated support system. Establish regular meetings and training among these groups of mentors, including informational sessions on the tutorial, campus life and the CLS to become conversant in one another’s work.
- 1.9 Train and develop peer educators to meet campus needs. Enhance current programs in active bystanderism and sexual health, and add a peer educator program related to alcohol and other drugs through BACCHUS or another reputable training agency.

2. Help students to thrive, not just survive

The intersections of student mental health, substance use and abuse, sleep, loneliness, and academic rigor are converging in ways that negatively affect student well-being. Data show us that this impact on well-being is affecting the retention and success of our students.

For example, exit interview data from students who opted to leave Grinnell displayed a struggle to find a social niche. In those interviews, many students reported that the prominence of alcohol and other drugs at Grinnell interfered with their ability to make strong social connections, which subsequently negatively affected their sense of belonging and community. Additionally, prospective students and their families report discomfort around Grinnell’s “party culture.”

Furthermore, the 2015 data from the National College Health Assessment returned some concerning statistics about the campus environment:

- the top four negative impacts on academics are stress, anxiety, sleep difficulties, and depression (and were affecting respondents at a rate higher than the national average)
- binge drinking rates and cigarette smoking rates are dropping slightly but marijuana use is on the rise (with a third of students using marijuana in the 30 days prior to the survey, higher than the national average of 19%)
- students who reported drinking alcohol experienced the following over the last 12 months (while drinking alcohol): 38.7% did something they later regretted, and 32.2% forgot where they were or what they did
- nearly half of our students find alcohol and marijuana use more prevalent on campus than they would prefer
- 44% of respondents report that other students' alcohol use had interfered with their studies, and over 61% report that other students' alcohol use had interfered with their sleep
- 46% report that they have experienced unwanted marijuana smoke in their residence, with 14.4% reporting that one or more times per week
- the number of students who report feeling "very lonely" within the last two weeks is 36.5%, and 76% over the last 12 months
- the demand for substance-free residences is on the rise, yet the number of students who initiate drinking alcohol at Grinnell increases at a rate higher than the national average

These data and numerous individual conversations with concerned students have motivated the College to generate meaningful change in response to student concerns. It seems clear that the intersections of mental health, sleep, academic rigor, substance use/abuse, and a sense of community and belonging directly impact the student experience. Additionally, too many students report "barely getting by," and the College has an ethical obligation to provide a residential experience that supports students to thrive in all aspects of their curricular and co-curricular lives.

Solutions to these problems are complex. A public health approach suggests that we must work at multiple levels ranging from individual to interpersonal to institutional levels. We feel certain, however, that our policies related to the student social experience – and some student misinterpretations of self-governance – are creating environments where students do not consistently thrive. The College must make change on a variety of levels to increase flourishing among its students.

While change can be difficult on a campus that values tradition, we feel that it is imperative that the College respond to stated concerns from a quiet majority of the student body. A modern residential liberal arts college must do all it can to create systems and structures that lead to student thriving.

Initial Recommendations:

- 2.1 Address substance use and abuse on campus. Train the staff in SHACS and Academic Advising to institute brief assessments for substance abuse, and to support and refer students who may need additional expertise. Continue to refer students to Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS). Expand these referrals to include the new BASICS for Marijuana program. Increase the campus education around prescription drug abuse and institute annual prescription medication disposals.

- 2.2 Adjust current campus traditions that are focused on alcohol to have a more positive focus, and offer more social/community building activities where alcohol is not served (or is not the focus of the event).
- 2.3 Change policies related to student alcohol use in public areas of the residence halls. If alcohol is present in a lounge, a completed Alcohol Agreement must be in place, and all alcohol at the event must be accounted for in the Agreement. Use of alcohol by persons of legal drinking age in their own bedrooms or houses would still be permitted, and use of alcohol by any student in academic and athletic buildings would continue to be prohibited. Empower Community Advisors (CAs), Residence Life Coordinators, and Campus Safety officers to conduct periodic walkthroughs in the residence halls to uphold the community standards in a non-punitive, educational fashion.
- 2.4 Improve student events where alcohol is served by simplifying the Alcohol Agreement process, examining All-Campus Events Student Safety (ACCESS) training and preparedness, and creating a team of trained servers that will function as bartenders at student events with approved Alcohol Agreements.
- 2.5 Empower off-campus residents to create safe(r) party environments. Currently, an annual harm reduction workshop is offered to off-campus residents; expand this and create more opportunities to educate students about the risks, rights, and responsibilities of living and socializing off-campus.
- 2.6 Increase compliance with the Smoke Free Air Act through strategies such as hanging “share the air” signage and training CAs to address smoking violations.
- 2.7 Post community standards in the residence halls and empower students and staff to uphold them through regular revisiting and active bystanderism.
- 2.8 Investigate the relationship between academic policies and student wellness. Encourage the SGA Vice President for Academic Affairs to convene a student working group to produce a summary of “best practices” for course syllabi from a student perspective. Research the impact on student wellness of courses that meet during scheduled breaks, course assignments that are due during and immediately after fall and spring breaks, assignments that are added or changed after the syllabi is set at the beginning of the semester, and classes or labs that routinely run past 4:00pm. Examine the implications of the recent definition by the Curriculum Committee that sets the normative standards for the amount of work in a 4-credit hour class.
- 2.9 Implement environmental changes that encourage healthier behavior, such as reinstating Sunday hot breakfast in the dining hall. Create an environment that supports students who prioritize getting sufficient sleep by implementing changes in response to the Spring 2015 sleep environmental survey (e.g. dimming residence hallway lights in the evening and ending campus events at a determined time).
- 2.10 Meet more student residence needs by piloting a quiet residence hall with 24/7 quiet hours, offer more gender inclusive spaces, and meet all requests for substance free residence halls. Implement assessments of these pilot projects to inform future continuation of these programs.
- 2.11 Staff up Student Health and Counseling to meet the benchmark of 3.0 FTE counselors and then immediately analyze usage and referral data to make empirically-based decisions about future staffing growth. Continue quarterly updates to campus.
- 2.12 Staff up Campus Safety and Security to maximize our efforts to keep students safe and our campus secure. Increase Campus Safety and Security presence in the residence halls and at student events.

3. Provide leadership development for students

Grinnell is notable for having a large number of student organizations and for providing generous funding from the student activity fee to them through SGA and Student Publications and Radio Committee (SPARC). Presently, there are only a few formal mechanisms by which these groups are structured and most function without significant relationships with faculty or staff. Our recommendations related to leadership development aim to take advantage of the opportunities for mentorship provided in a residential, liberal arts college with engaged faculty and staff, while mitigating risks to the College, staff, and students.

Herein lies an opportunity to meaningfully situate leadership skill development, which is valuable in College and also in post-graduate success. Given the wealth of student organizations, many students are in leadership positions at some point during their time on campus. While it is likely the case that students develop useful skills simply by learning through a leadership position – like learning to swim by being thrown in the pool – we can certainly enhance student learning by providing mentoring and programming around leadership skill development.

The risks to the College, staff, and students that we see are primarily related to the financial resources provided to student organizations. Presently, there is little staff support for helping students think about how to distribute or use these resources. There is also an element of legal risk we are concerned about as the use of funds collected by the College places responsibility on the College for its oversight.

We propose expectations for increased mentoring, the creation of formal mechanisms to ameliorate risk, and dedicated programming aimed at supporting leadership skill development. Finally, we found that student leaders are often overwhelmed by the practical aspects of their responsibilities and offer some recommendations aimed at making those responsibilities more manageable for them.

Initial Recommendations:

- 3.1 Centralize the resources for student organizations, such as college calendar, space reservations, event planning tips, alcohol agreements, travel arrangements, and funding instructions.
- 3.2 Create expectations for increased mentoring through advisers. Encourage student organizations to select a staff/faculty adviser of their own choosing, and require student organizations that receive above a certain amount of funding to have a staff/faculty adviser. Require student businesses (Lyle's Pub, Bob's Underground Café, etc.) and student publications (SPARC, Scarlet & Black (S&B) newspaper, KDIC radio) to be advised by Student Affairs professional staff. Provide training to faculty/staff advisers that specifies their mentorship (not oversight) role and prepares them for guiding engaged student leaders who are learning to govern.
- 3.3 Provide advising and clerical support through Student Affairs for SGA, their subcommittees, and ACCESS. Instead of a RLC liaison, offer increased mentorship through a long-term adviser in Student Activities. Utilize the administrative support professional in Student Activities for clerical and financial support, which will free up SGA Cabinet members to focus on more substantive projects.
- 3.4 Review student organizations on a biennial basis. Utilize an existing student committee (Student Services' Programming Committee of SGA) to regularly meet with student organization leaders to ascertain the continued viability of the organization and provide financial accountability.
- 3.5 Offer a variety of leadership training opportunities, including a series of leadership development workshops open to all students, but particularly useful for students in leadership positions in

student organizations, including balancing a budget, leading an effective meeting, managing conflict, etc. Also offer a retreat to support annual leadership transitions in student organizations and annual training for S&B and KDIC with experts in the field.

- 3.6 Create partnerships with the Wilson Program to better support student leadership development.
- 3.7 Create partnerships with the CLS as appropriate through their CLS 2.0 program, including connecting leadership development to post-graduate planning.
- 3.8 Create new positions within Student Activities to accomplish the structural recommendations above and offer more substance-free social/community building programs on campus. We propose two distinct positions, tentatively titled Student Organization Coordinator and a Leadership Development Coordinator. This would allow for removing the current collateral duties from RLC positions. Their time would be used to support other recommendations.
- 3.9 Enhance administrative support to SGA, student organizations, and a larger Student Activities staff by expanding a current 11-month Technical Assistant I to a 12-month Technical Assistant II.

4. Define the goals of self-governance in order to serve the mission of the college

Our recommendations regarding self-governance are somewhat different from the preceding recommendations. This area of evaluation is more introspective than the others, asking us to consider a core ethos of our community in relation to the institution's educational goals. While we have made progress on this area of evaluation, one of our most significant recommendation is that the Task Force continues to work on self-governance next year and include as many members of the Grinnell community (students, alumni, faculty, and staff) in the ongoing consultation as is feasible.

Self-governance has been and continues to be an important element of Grinnellian identity. Alumni from many eras we have encountered talk about the role self-governance played while they were students and the value they see in it; however, the breadth of the usage of the term as a residential philosophy varies somewhat. The phrase "self-government" was widely used in the first half of the 20th century to describe the system of student governance of residence hall communities. Some alumni do not recall a usage of this term at all but remember the College valuing student voices in governance.

In addition to the value of its historical tradition and role in Grinnellian identity, self-governance provides opportunities to support the educational mission of the College. According to the college's mission statement we aim to graduate individuals "...who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good." At its best, self-governance can support members of our community in making progress toward the goals of learning how to live socially just, ethical lives, how to live in diverse communities, and can support students' cognitive and psychosocial maturity.

However, there is a clear need for the community to engage in some collective introspection around how we understand self-governance. A pattern we see is students interpreting the "self" in self-governance to refer to just the individual rather than to a community that is self-governing, or to an individual who is a member of – and responsible to – a broader community. A 1999 Institutional Research survey of the "student concept of self-governance" characterizes the dominant student understanding of self-governance this way: "*The 'self' in 'self-governance' refers to individuals, not to halls, floors, or the student body as a whole. Its salient feature is an absence of rules and/or rule-enforcement.*" Our data collection indicates this interpretation of self-governance is prominent among current students and recent alumni.

Some students' belief that self-governance means "no rules and/or rule-enforcement" has contributed to many of the issues we aim to address in other areas of evaluation. For example, the data show significant numbers of our students are negatively impacted by other students' use of alcohol and other drugs. Often the negatively impactful behaviors persist because of this incorrect interpretation of self-governance. This misperception around self-governance prompted the Task Force to discuss whether the term can be redefined or whether a new descriptive phrase is necessary.

Self-governance does not mean there are no community standards, rules, policies, or laws upheld in the residence halls and elsewhere on campus. Articulating what self-governance *is not* was a valuable outcome of our work this year. But of course a positive statement – what self-governance *is* – is needed. That articulation must emerge from a broader conversation where many constituencies are empowered to contribute in substantive ways. To date we have talked with students and alumni about how they understand self-governance, but those conversations have been data collection rather than forward looking discussions about a re-articulation of self-governance. We need to engage in a community-wide conversation about what self-governance should mean.

Initial Recommendations:

- 4.1 Maintain a commitment to including student voices at every level of governance of the College. Urge all departments to include students on committees and to seek consultative feedback from students.
- 4.2 Send consistent messages that self-governance does not supersede college policies or local, state, and federal laws.
- 4.3 In the short term, more support for upholding community standards is needed. This should happen at many levels; we must help provide students with the skills to advocate for themselves and others, but in addition CAs, RLCs, Campus Safety & Security, Judicial Council, and ACCESS must all be empowered to serve as agents for addressing residential community disturbances and policy violations within self-governance. These agents should be trained on the effects of implicit bias and have non-punitive roles.
- 4.4 Articulate a vision for self-governance. The Task Force would take the lead on this process during the 2016-17 academic year, with the charge to produce an articulation and an implementation plan by year end. The process should include as many constituencies as possible in substantive conversations about what self-governance means.
- 4.5 Generate a document to communicate a practical articulation of self-governance, such as a "code of community expectations" or "student bill of rights."

THEMES FROM CAMPUS FEEDBACK ON THE APRIL 2016 RECOMMENDATIONS

Themes that have emerged for further discussion include improving the residential experience for students, recognizing the value of sustained professional support and mentoring, and establishing that the individually advised/mentored curriculum can be a useful model for co-curricular learning.

Of the 35 recommendations, many are received positively as the community universally appreciates increased focus on student well-being and success. There are just a few recommendations that garner the most polarizing response from community members. For example, many students deeply feel that the College must do more to educate all students on issues of diversity, social justice, violence prevention, and other 'civic' values. However, many members of the faculty express hesitation about

adding another requirement to the curriculum and structuring these lessons like a traditional course. Students and faculty alike state a need to ensure that any additional expectations of our students through the co-curriculum did not drastically increase an already full workload.

Similarly, many staff and faculty are deeply concerned about substance use and abuse on campus, and feel that the data point toward the need for action and change to mitigate these issues and improve the campus environment for our students. However, a number of the students find the recommendations related to a change in the alcohol policy deeply unpopular, especially those that would increase the parameters around when and where students could use alcohol.

The Task Force members are greatly appreciative of the students, faculty, and staff that attended the open sessions, commented online, or sought members out personally to share their feedback, and we hope for continued and increased engagement in the second year of the Task Force's work.

NEXT STEPS FOR 2016-2017

The second year of the Task Force on Residential Learning will focus on three primary areas:

First, we will refine the recommendations after receiving feedback from President Kington. We will dive deeper into the logistics of implementing each idea, which includes a thorough discussion of the operational budget and staffing implications of the recommendations, along with discussions of governance and oversight of a particular program or policy.

Second, we will invest in collaboration with the faculty to explore the best structure for a community curriculum course that covers a multitude of concepts (self-governance, diversity and social justice, harm reduction, sexual respect/active bystanderism/consent/violence prevention/healthy relationships, wellness, coping strategies, conflict resolution, etc.). Robust discussions about the format of this curriculum are needed, including whether to require and/or award academic credit for this work. As mentioned earlier in this report, this idea has received significant positive feedback from students and hesitation on the part of some faculty.

Third, we will widely engage in consultation with the campus community to rearticulate self-governance, and by summer 2017 will create a definitive text that will be adopted in the Student Handbook and other College publications. New and returning students will be exposed to this definitive text during New Student Orientation, through their residence hall leadership (CAs and RLCs), and possibly through a new community curriculum course.

APPENDIX

1. Task Force Charge from the President
2. Task Force Members 2015-2016

APPENDIX 1

TASK FORCE ON RESIDENTIAL LEARNING CHARGE

INTRODUCTION

Grinnell College endeavors to create an engaging, intellectually stimulating environment where students find academic fulfillment and personal growth. The unique nature of a residential, liberal arts college affords us a distinctive opportunity to create an integrated learning environment both in and out of the classroom, and the realignment of Student Affairs with Academic Affairs furthers that opportunity. While living in residence, and participating in co-curricular activities, students can learn valuable life skills like leadership, conflict mediation, appreciation of difference, and communication.

Nationally, the landscape of higher education is changing. Regulatory mandates, law and policy updates, and accreditation requirements necessarily draw our attention to the institutional responsibility to keep students safe (e.g. ADA, DOJ, VAWA, Title VII, Title IX, Clery). Parental expectations for accountability in this area have grown and are amplified at a small, private, residential campus where we promise a close-knit community with a variety of attentive support resources. In response to these external expectations, colleges like ours have created systems to generate more data about the student experience, and in response we can apply that new knowledge toward engaging interventions that help students succeed. Of course, students also have a vast array of new knowledge at their fingertips thanks to rapid technological change, and thus the way students communicate with each other – in person and over social media – has changed.

Over time, Grinnell has applied a concept of self-governance to the residential environment, allowing students the freedom and space to grow into the young adults that they are becoming. Our approach has had many benefits, most notably the consistent inclusion of student representation and voice in major decision-making bodies at the college. Indeed, student recommendations and insights have frequently resulted in major institutional improvements. Our conduct processes are also educational and developmental in nature, resisting punitive punishments for violations of our Community Standards.

In recent years, however, we have learned from students that their experiences in College-owned residences do not reinforce their academic experience at Grinnell. For example, nearly half of our students report that other students' alcohol use has interfered with their ability to study, and over 60% said that it interfered with their ability to sleep. Nearly half say alcohol and marijuana use are more prevalent than they would prefer. (*American College Health Association – National Collegiate Health Assessment data for Grinnell College in Spring 2015.*) Additionally, our student body has also changed over the recent decade. It is more diverse (around 45% of our students are international or U.S. students of color), more academically successful (over 80% of the Class of 2019 were in the top 10% of their high school class), and drawn from a generation that has been highly scheduled and closely monitored. The demand for substance-free residences is on the rise, yet the number of students who begin to drink at Grinnell increases at a rate higher than the national average. Such evidence suggests

the need for an examination of the ways in which we consider the rights and responsibilities of the community as a whole.

In addition to concerns regarding student wellness and community responsibility, the College has not fully explored the ways in which student leadership can be made most effective. In contrast to many institutions, we have provided little in the way of training programs or other supports that might help new student leaders most effectively define goals, manage budgets, and administer many complex organizations. Nor have we given serious consideration to the ways in which faculty and staff advisers might provide meaningful advice and guidance to empower student groups.

Finally, in contrast to many outstanding liberal arts colleges, we have not considered ways in which the residential setting might promote further, substantial engagement with academic and co-curricular programming. As we pursue an integrated approach to support first-year students by faculty, CLS, and RLC-advisers, we have a valuable opportunity to consider how strategic use of residential space might reinforce that project. Other institutions have pursued integrated learning communities and related models that bridge instructional and co-curricular programming with residential settings to create a more comprehensive learning environment. Grinnell may wish to consider similar approaches, adopting or revising them to our own specific setting and needs.

CHARGE AND AREAS FOR EVALUATION

Grinnell College has the obligation to address the questions raised above. The Task Force on Residential Learning is charged to explore these questions, discern what clarifications and changes need to be made to the residential learning environment, and to the policies, programs, and staffing therein. Grinnell is justifiably proud of its commitment to self-governance, and a full exploration of its definition, application, and practice will enable the College to improve the well-being of our students, strengthen student organizations, and make the most of the residential setting.

1. Define the goals of self-governance in order to serve the mission of the College.

Explore self-governance as the intersection of self and community. Students engaged in self-governance have both rights and responsibilities to others. Give self-governance greater meaning and value for students as a whole.

2. Suggest avenues to infuse the college mission into the residential experience.

Our residential experience should support the academic mission of the institution, both through avoiding disruption to academic success and by value-added learning through residential programs. Consider structured programs like residential curricula, faculty programming, integrated learning communities, or even class-year residential arrangements that might achieve our goals. Enhance the student experience and outcomes through an integrated approach to advising, involving residential, faculty, and CLS advisers.

3. Help students to thrive, not just survive.

Address the impact of the residential environment - and student behaviors - on academic success and student wellness. Explore the intersection between mental health concerns and alcohol & other drug use, the intersection between alcohol & other drug use and sexual misconduct, and the intersection between implicit bias and mental health. Consider our current alcohol and event policies, the roles that RLCs, SAs, and Campus Safety & Security should play in community interventions, and whether

Grinnell's conduct process should be revised in response to imperatives of student wellness and security.

4. Provide leadership development for students.

The student organizations that have staff or faculty advisors express benefits of the support structures when being closely affiliated with an office or employee. Consider whether more - or all - student-directed organizations or initiatives should benefit from this kind of relationship, and suggest programmatic ideas for leadership skill-building for students. Grinnell also needs to increase access to leadership from diverse populations, continue our active bystander program, and explore any areas of risk and liability with our student-directed initiatives that can be mitigated.

APPENDIX 2

TASK FORCE ON RESIDENTIAL LEARNING MEMBERS (2015-2016)

1. Andrea Conner, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (Chair)
2. Paul Hutchison, Associate Professor of Education (Faculty Co-Chair)
3. Sarah Moschenross, Dean of Students
4. Jen Jacobsen '95, Director of Student Wellness and Prevention
5. Annie Butler, Residence Life Coordinator
6. Dan Davis '16, SGA President
7. Dixon Romeo '16 / Bailey Dann '17, SGA Vice President for Student Affairs
8. Ashleigh Bull '17, Student Adviser in Residence Life
9. Isabel Monaghan '16, SGA Services Coordinator
10. Karla Erickson, Associate Dean of the College
11. Aysha Pollnitz, Assistant Professor of History
12. Megan Crawford, Director of Career Counseling and Exploration, CLS
13. Angela Onwuachi-Willig '94, Alumni Council President and Professor of Law, U of IA
14. George Moose '66, Trustee and Vice-Chair of Student Life & Enrollment Sub-Committee
15. Deanna Shorb, Dean of Religious Life
16. Michael Sims, Director of Campus Center Operations/Student Activities
17. Henry Rietz '89, Professor of Religious Studies
18. Lee Sharpe, Associate Professor of Chemistry