Strategic Collaborations and Partnerships

Developing an Annual Report

Campus housing departments must strive to identify partners to help develop business operations, enhance the community, provide efficiencies, and improve service. These partners may be found on campus, in the community, or within the larger campus housing industry and vendor community.

One of the outputs developed for strategic partnerships is to develop a template for housing and residence life professionals to use when making presentations to campus administrators. This includes an Annual Report to educate internal and external partners on the highlights, trends, and accomplishments of Housing and Residence Life teams. This document can also serve as archival data for the department.

In addition to creating an information piece for others, the preparation of an Annual Report provides an opportunity for the staff to take a holistic view of the past year and identify those areas of strength as well as those areas that will need some attention in the coming year. Having this information readily available when interacting with others outside of the department, including those in the supervisory chain, can prepare staff to answer questions or share data in an organized and well thought out way and not be caught off guard. This report can also be used for informal conversations or an 'elevator pitch' illustrated in a separate output.

While reports such as this will vary from institution to institution, and possibly year to year depending on circumstances, some area to consider for inclusion are:

- Mission/Vision/Goals
- Strategic Plan highlights and future goals
- Executive Summary
- Notable highlights
- Assessment and Learning Outcomes
- Level of Student Engagement, including student stories and testimonials
- Personnel Activities, including hiring, training, and ongoing development
- Occupancy Data and room rates
- Work Request Statistics
- Renovation and Construction projects
- Dining (if this falls under the department's direction)
- Partnerships with both internal and external parties
- Staff Involvement on and off campus (locally, professional associations, etc.)
- Budget review and YOY historical data
- Audit reports (if applicable)

If applicable, showing changes in these areas over time can be valuable information to share, whether the historical data comes from previous Annual Reports, or you are creating one for the first time.

While a report such as this may tend to lean in the statistical direction, it can be helpful to highlight certain data points with anecdotal examples. As a department, develop a mechanism where these examples can be collected so that they can act as a reference later when the report is being created, especially for those examples that occur in the first term of the academic year. Information from the Campus Housing Index (CHI) may be helpful as well.

As a tool for assuring that all staff are sharing a clear departmental message when speaking with others, having input into the document from as many people as is feasible will increase interest in and buy-in once the document is completed and distributed.

Once the report is created, distribution then becomes important. It should be easily accessible on the department's website and other social media where it can be accessed by various stakeholders – students, families, divisional colleagues, etc. However, targeted distribution will be key to ensuring the right people see the document (hard copy or digital), both for their own information and for sharing with others as appropriate. Specific people/groups to consider include:

- Senior Administration (President/Chancellor, Provost, etc.)
- Senior Administrators in support area (Finance, Facilities)
- Communications/Public Relations offices
- Parent and Family Relations offices
- Admissions and Retention offices
- Key Divisional/Institutional partners (Athletics, Orientation, Student Involvement)
- Deans and Academic Departments (especially those where relationships already exist or ones where partnerships are desired)
- Academic Support departments