

COEDUCATIONAL LIVING IN ON-CAMPUS SUITES AND APARTMENTS

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

Submitted to the Faculty

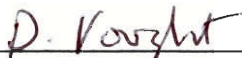
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by



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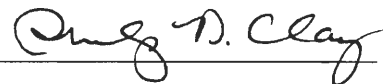


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ABSTRACT

This IQP argues that coeducational housing in suites and apartments on-campus, where bedrooms were separated by gender with shared common rooms and bathrooms, should be an option for interested students. Social involvement is increased between the genders; sexual promiscuity is not prevalent; and the student's psychological well-being is enhanced. We conclude that coeducational housing in suites and apartments on-campus should be an option to students because it will enhance their college experience and lead to a growth in maturity.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coeducational housing in suites and apartments on-campus should be an option for interested students. Worcester Polytechnic Institute does not currently offer co-ed housing for students on-campus in suites and apartments due to several assumed factors:

- Lack of interest on the part of the students.
- Issues with significant others that may live together.
- Privacy issues (with shared bathrooms and common areas).
- Possible sexual promiscuity.

Interviews of housing directors from other selected colleges belonging to the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (Acuho-I) revealed that other schools had different views on this co-ed living option: some were not offering this option, some already allowing it, and some having no intentions of even considering the option. Our study established how insignificant these negative issues are in co-ed living environments. The literature review in fact, established many positive reasons to allow coed housing: social involvement was increased between the genders, increases sexual responsibility, and the student's psychological well-being was increased. The WPI student survey determined that there is a large interest in co-ed housing in suites and apartments. Factors that affected student interest and attitudes were based largely on gender stereotypes and parental influence. We concluded that coeducational housing in suites and apartments, where bedrooms were separated by gender with shared common rooms and bathrooms, should be an option to students who are interested because it will enhance their college experience and lead to a growth in personal maturity.

Introduction

Upon entering college, students are faced not only with deciding a major and developing a course of study that complies with that decision, but are also faced with worries about what residential facility they will be placed in and whom they will be sharing their room with. Housing for first year students can be nerve racking because students are housed with roommates through random processes. Generally, students fill out a questionnaire about themselves so that school officials can more properly place them in an environment in which they would be more comfortable. However, there are always a few students who are unhappy with the living conditions or roommates that are chosen for them. After the first year of college, students are allowed the privilege of choosing their own housing. Many colleges and universities offer on-campus housing for upper-class students. This housing can include residence hall rooms that are single sex, suites that are either single sex or coeducational (single gender rooms with coeducational facilities i.e. study room, bathroom, kitchen etc.) and apartments (also single gender or coeducational). However, upper-class students at WPI, unlike other colleges and universities, do not have the option of living in a coeducational suite or apartment. Some residence halls provided by WPI are coeducational, separating genders either floor by floor, or by splitting the hall in half with one gender on one side and the opposite on the other. Upper-class student housing, mainly suites and apartments offered by WPI on-campus, only allow for single gender living. We believe this policy should be changed.

While WPI offers on-campus housing for upperclassmen, it does not give them the opportunity to live with the opposite gender, thereby limiting the friends that students can choose from to live with. The men to women ratio at WPI is presently 5:1, which makes the odds of women finding enough female friends to form an on campus apartment or suite group rather difficult. This forces students to look into finding off-campus housing if they want to live with friends of both genders. Living off campus induces several expenses that students who live on campus do not have to worry about, including food costs, rent not covered by tuition loans, as well as the inconvenience of living away from campus.

Several questions are raised when considering the living facilities offered by Universities:

- How do certain living conditions impact the student?
- What environments positively affect the student in promoting a “good college experience?”
- How do college students interrelate with one another in different living environments?
- How much intervention into a student’s life should the college be responsible for?

The last question raises an interesting situation that universities find themselves in. There are no set rules to decide how much a college or university should take an active roll in a student’s non-academic life. However, some colleges and universities take it upon themselves to act *in loco parentis*, an example of this is limiting the availability of some living arrangements such as co-ed suites and apartments. It is important for the college to promote a healthy living environment for students. However, it is not the job of the college to act as a parental figure. Institutions should provide options to students and students should be free to decide whether or not those options are right for them. Students are sometimes monitored by their own parents/guardians who place restrictions on what is acceptable college behavior. Some parents do not allow coeducational living before marriage and therefore students comply with their parent’s wishes in their choice of housing options. However, if the parent is comfortable with the maturity level of their child and the child’s ability to make decisions regarding their living situation, we believe the school should not push the student to off-campus housing if in fact he or she decides to live with a person of the opposite sex.

Living with the opposite gender does necessitate a certain maturity level. Schools are often worried about increased sexual activity within a coeducational environment and therefore refuse to allow coeducational living within their jurisdiction. It cannot be denied that some students are sexually active, but when choosing roommates, is that really a student’s motivation? Schools need to take into consideration that students are in a transition stage between adolescent and adulthood and that they need to learn to take responsibility for their own decisions. By limiting on-campus housing options, the school is preventing the student from making one of these important decisions.

There are many types of housing designs that affect study and living situations for students. Aside from the residence halls, suites and apartments, there are several housing options open to students, which allow for various experiences. Such living facilities include thematic housing (housing students of similar majors, religious backgrounds, and living interests), fraternities (housing provided to males with similar interests), and sororities (housing for females with similar interests), as well as other options. These will be discussed thoroughly later in this investigation of coeducational college living. The design of the building structures for each of these living arrangements is taken into thorough consideration when discovering what works best in the students' interests. Every type of housing facility offered to the student, whether it be on campus housing or off, must be weighed against the wants and needs of the students. In this study we will examine the various housing options offered to students by colleges and universities in order to better understand the effects of coeducational environments as compared to single gender living arrangements.

Another aspect of on-campus housing is the responsibility of the school to provide a safe living environment for students, but should that give the school authority to prevent students from living with the opposite gender? Liability is a chief concern of universities when considering living opportunities for students. Universities must consider how much responsibility to place on the student. Students come to college in order to gain knowledge in a specified area of study, as well as to develop life skills. They do not, on the other hand, come to school to be monitored as if their only intent is to engage in promiscuous sexual activity. As stated previously, students are between the stages of adolescent and adulthood, and in order to complete their maturation as adults, they need to be treated as adults and allowed freedom to make their own decisions. Many students are still financially dependant; this often means that they have insufficient funds necessary to live off campus so they are forced to live on-campus. By investigating the sexual tendencies of college students, this paper will determine whether college students live in coeducational environments primarily to engage in sexual activities or simply to live with others, regardless of gender, whom they are comfortable sharing a suite or apartment with.

One of the largest issues with students is stereotyping, more specifically stereotypes placed on social groups and genders. Such tendencies toward stereotyping includes placing certain types of students into certain social categories. These include, but are not limited to: the popular, sexually active; the less popular and less sexually active group; the unpopular sexually inactive group. Many of these stereotypes are based on gender. By preventing students from living with those that they choose, is the school actually encouraging further segregation of the student body into these stereotypes?

It is not simply gender stereotypes that segregate students; it is also, the psychological development of the students' minds that places them into certain categories. Students develop their emotional minds and attitudes at different rates which allows for some to feel more comfortable in a coeducational environment rather than in a single gender setting and vice-versa. If a student thinks of himself or herself as emotionally sound and perfectly capable of living with the opposite gender does the school have the authority to tell the student that they can't? This investigation will be conducted in order to determine the responsibility of the university to intervene in the emotional/psychological aspect of a students' life.

In this paper, the effect of building design, sexual maturity of the student, and college-age psychology will be discussed. We will also conduct several surveys in order to obtain the positive and negative effects of coeducational living as it relates to the students. One survey will question colleges and/or universities as to whether they allow coeducational housing facilities for students and the reasoning they have behind what they offer to the students. Another survey will question WPI students about their opinions on coeducational housing in order to determine if in fact there is a demand for coeducational housing. These surveys were followed up by personal interviews to clearly specify questions. These included how far the school should intervene when deciding what options they should provide the students with, and what the general feeling about what coeducational housing has offered students who have had the opportunity to live in such conditions or those that wish that they had had the opportunity to live in such arrangements.

Throughout the paper we will discuss the current situation at WPI and how it relates to this subject matter in order to prove that coeducational living allows for a

positive experience and personal growth for students attending WPI and other institutions. This study demonstrates things by scholarly studies and factual data gathered by our surveys in order to show that coeducational living on-campus will positively impact the students' educational experience. We will discuss: building designs and how they can attribute to educational aspects of student interactions; what types of residential housing are offered to students and how they are organized in order to provide a positive living experience; and college-age psychology (concentrating on sexual activity and gender stereotypes) and how it relates to certain living conditions. Within this paper we will also determine: what the reasoning is behind certain institutions offering coeducational living within their residential facilities as compared to those who do not allow it; whether or not there is a demand for coeducational living; and the positive and negative aspects of living in a coeducational environment as compared to living in a single gender one. .

Literature Review

Introduction

Two of the biggest questions students have entering college are, “Where am I going to live,” and “With whom will I be living?” For students entering their first year, the main concern is whether or not they will get along with the roommate that they are paired up with. First year students are typically placed into a living facility, dubbed residence hall, which can be co-ed or single sex. After their first year, they usually have formed friendships and the question of where to live arises yet again. Most colleges and universities offer on-campus housing for upper-class students as well. Suites and apartments, in addition to other housing facilities, are available for students to choose from. However, not all campuses offer coeducational upper-class housing, meaning suites and apartments where students of opposite genders share common rooms such as the kitchen, bathroom, and study/living room, while having single gender bedrooms. Some administrators and parents have the general fear that coeducational housing will promote increased sexual activity. Is there, in fact, more sexual activity within a coed residence than a single-sex residence? Also, does the layout of the suite or apartment have any effect on certain tendencies of students including, but not limited to, sexual activity, academic performance and social skills? And how are students’ emotional and intellectual needs met by their housing environment? In order to obtain answers to these questions, several areas need to be explored. Different types of building design as well as housing options available to the students must be studied, as well as a thorough investigation of the emotional, psychological, and sexual identities of students to determine what is necessary to obtain the best college experience possible.

Building Design

The nature of student residential living on campus, and the impact that it has on the student, has been proven to be of great importance in the intellectual, social, and emotional development of the student. The effects of various living situations on the student are the focus of our project. Residential buildings, including dormitories, thematic houses, coeducational housing, living-learning centers, co-op housing, house

systems, and a few other options are often compared when studying the general effects on the development of the student. Within a residence hall, socio-psychological skills are acquired that are necessary in the transition from adolescence to adulthood that are often not presented to students who commute or are unable to live on campus. In fact, living on campus creates a social context that is much different from that of commuters or students who live off-campus. On-campus residential facilities maximize opportunities for social, cultural, and extracurricular involvement. According to Roger Winston and Scott Anchors, authors of Student Housing and Residential Life,

Residence life offers an ideal context for fostering development because intensive interactions with peers can lead to questioning one's way of looking at issues, moral values, and even identity (Anchors, 113).

Moral development can be defined as the conforming to standards of what is right or just in behavior and determining the best techniques for applying it to society. When exposed to divergent perspectives, moral conflicts, and new responsibilities, students are able to obtain a higher moral development. What exactly are the effects of living on campus in regard to the student's college experience?

Designing residential living for students that is beneficial to the growth and development of the student can be difficult. Many things have to be taken into consideration when designing living accommodations. According to Apartments and Dormitories: an Architectural Record Book, absence of good residential systems may lower student academic performance, decrease integration between students, abate student social life, and cause a lack of interest in campus activities (176). Jens Larson and Archie Palmer, authors of Architectural Planning of the American College, argue that "residence life may influence manners, develop tasks, and offer training in the courtesy and cooperation necessary in group living" (137). These studies in their entirety show that residential housing can and do affect students in both positive and negative ways. The nature of this influence on students is typically related to the design of the building as well as the program and staffing of the building.

No building type stands out as the best, architects need to take into consideration that people may respond differently to various environments. The Student Housing Report explains that

[Housing Design] is based on the belief that the environment has an effect on people and their behavior and that people also have an effect on their environment.

This means that ultimately students are strongly impacted by their living arrangements, thereby making building design of great importance. Variations in housing designs and programs provide opportunities for aiding in the development of student lifestyles and also in their preparation for adult life (Anchors, 249). Therefore, housing administrators have developed several different options for residential building designs for students to choose from.

Housing Options

First year students, excluding those that commute, are typically placed into dormitories. Dormitories, as defined in a college setting, are uniform, ordered, regularized, and designed with a motive of cost-efficiency. Dormitories are designed typically with long corridors, with rooms placed adjacent and staggered to each other. They provide community bathrooms and showering facilities. Students sharing rooms are the same sex, and the floors can be organized either as a single sex floor, or half of a hall one sex while the other half is the opposite sex, or co-ed by alternating rooms. Unfortunately, due to the number of students being housed in dormitories, personal space is usually sacrificed, which in turn reduces the needed space for students to “escape” and concentrate on their own personal/private affairs. Statistics show that students spend up to 80% of their time outside of the classroom and much of that is spent in their rooms. Therefore it is imperative for administrators to take into consideration the privacy needs of the student and yet allow ample community involvement within the dormitory (Anchors, 138). Not until after the 1940’s was it realized that dormitories, referred to now as residence halls, had more importance to the students than just being a place to

sleep (Anchors, 250). The term “dormitory” which is a Latin word meaning “a place to sleep,” is no longer applicable to modern day residence living, because residence halls are more than just a place to sleep. Residence halls are places for students to interact with other students, study, relax, etc. They need to be designed to allow students room for privacy, freedom from noise, and personal space in order to aid in student development. Rooms for socializing are now part of residence halls so that the student’s room can be utilized for more private/personal affairs, or personal time.

Students attending college are strongly influenced by their environment. When surrounded by people with varying backgrounds, political views, and social values, they tend to think more openly and maturely about different subjects (Anchors, 252). Research has shown that students who live in residence halls have higher levels of participation in social activities. Living on-campus also has a positive effect on student self-esteem, personal growth and development, and their perception of the campus social climate. In addition, students living in residence halls have increased participation in extracurricular activities, and have fostered a stronger dedication to college than those living off campus (Anchors, 84). On-campus living overall has more positive outcomes for the student, than experienced by those students living off-campus.

Jens Larson noticed that dormitories that are gender-mixed have the tendency to influence students’ manners, help them in developing tasks, and even give training in the courtesy and cooperation necessary to group living (Larson, 137). Residential life also must focus on developing student social connections. Larson comments that residence halls tend to promote greater social interaction, but studies are now showing that apartments, suites, and single rooms seem to be the most desired housing options. Comparing residence halls to suites has shown that long corridors lead to inhibitions, a sense of overcrowding, and give the perception of a lesser quality social climate (Anchors, 139). M.E. Bennett, author of College and Life, found that it is not always easy for students to shut out excessive noise while living in dormitories, which can contribute to ineffective studying, whereas suites are more accommodating for the student due to the more adequate space for quiet study (Bennett, 116). However, many students upon entering college typically have no personal connections, friends, or family at the school, making residence halls more preferable. Many are living on their own for

the first time. Residence halls provide an environment suitable for developing friendships, finding study partners, and allow an easier transition into college living. Suites and apartments tend to provide kitchens, assuming that the people living in them will buy their own food. Residence halls, on the other hand, tend not to provide a kitchen and encourage students to go onto a meal plan. This also aids in easing first year students into college living and living away from parents. After the first-year, however, students should have developed friends and finding a suite or an apartment is more ideal.

Suites, by the definition of Anchors and Winston, house four to eight students. The students share the bathroom and the living room/study room, while the bedrooms accommodate one to two people each (50). Some colleges and universities allow students to live together in suites regardless of gender while others only permit same-gender suites. While studying the effects of suites as compared to residence halls, Bennett and Terman discovered that while it is difficult to shut out noise in a dormitory setting, suites provide the necessary space for privacy and a quieter atmosphere for studying (Bennett, 116). They also allow an environment suitable to teach students to be more outgoing when interacting with others. In turn, this will help students develop more social interaction skills and learn to develop closer relationships (Anchors, 50). Jens Larson and Archie Palmer agree with Anchors and Winston by stating that suites “offer training in social relationships while allowing opportunities for interest and variety in arrangement” (139). In addition to suites, colleges/universities also provided thematic housing to the students.

Thematic housing is campus-provided housing that groups inhabitants according to areas of interests like languages, cultures, academic fields, healthy alternatives, or environmental awareness. A theme house brings students together who share a common interest. They typically consist of 10-20 people in a house, regardless of their gender, sharing a kitchen and several bathrooms. Thematic housing allows students to interact with each other in a more personal environment. This type of housing has been shown to improve the level and quality of achievement and participation in academic events. Through a study done by Anchors and Winston, the GPA of students living in thematic, on-campus housing was significantly higher when compared to commuters (off-campus residents) (Anchors, 253). As stated by a student involved in the study, “[Thematic

housing allows] an atmosphere conducive to study and the motivation provided by living close to other high achievers,” which can help explain why differences in GPA are evident in the study (Anchors, 253). But there are drawbacks to thematic housing that must not be ignored for the well being of the student. Students’ social-psychological needs are satisfied more completely than students of non-theme residential units, but that is due to an emphasis on organized activities among people that are all connected by a certain area of interest. One problem associated with some thematic housing is a reduced interest in career development. There is also a reduced satisfaction with friendships, as students are spending more time in formal study-groups instead of developing social relationships with people of different views (Anchors, 253). This can hinder the development of the social attitudes of students, especially in a technological environment like WPI where most work is done in groups.

Some of the other housing options colleges and universities offer include living-learning centers, co-op housing, a house system (like a fraternity or sorority), and other options. Anchors and Winston have noticed certain characteristics that are adopted through each type of facility. Living-learning centers are designed on a dormitory-basis, but house faculty act as in-house tutors as well. This allows classes to be held within the common rooms, and provides the students with academic advising from within the residence (Anchors, 254). Through living-learning centers, students were more likely to change their career choices, have a greater appreciation for cultural events, and showed a higher progress rate than others in developing social skills (Anchors, 255). With the integration of faculty into the living environment, students are provided with “an opportunity to take full advantage of the residence environment without divorcing themselves from the academic programs and departments of the university” (Anchors, 255). Programs at Cornell University, Purdue University, and Yale University, as well as several others, all have faculty in-house programs. These programs also help teachers better understand how class work is processed and understood by the students (255).

The co-op housing option is preferable to students with lower incomes because the students perform some of the maintenance and custodial work to reduce their expenses (Anchors 257). It also offers a kitchen for the students, giving them more sense of freedom and independence than a regular housing facility (Anchors, 257). One

variation of co-op housing is the house system. It houses anywhere from 20-80 students and allows for a house government for basic functioning, chores, monetary issues, and keeping the house and its people organized. (Anchors, 258). An Iowa State review of its house system, observed that

Students emphasized that the development of community in the house depends not just on events and activities but rather on the process by which many house members are involved in the planning and development of the major events of the house each semester (Anchors, 258).

The University of Georgia also has a house system and claims that it helps to develop neighborhoods and communities to personalize the campus (Anchors, 258).

Other less common types of housing facilities are not as important in this study but are still important to those that live within them. A wellness hall is a facility for students that prohibit alcohol and cigarettes while requiring students to attend seminars on nutrition and stress management (Anchors, 259). This is an environment created to separate students from drugs and alcohol that may hinder a student's progress through higher education, especially those in the younger classes. The University of California, Irvine, has a cooperative outdoor program for students who are environmentally concerned. Within the hall, students have a heightened environmental awareness and responsibility, while offering special classes to those students pertaining to the environment (Anchors, 259). Depending on student demographics, housing for students with families is also necessary at some schools. Empire State College provides a hall to students with families so that greater access to the campus is available for these students by allowing short-term residency, such as a weekend workshop. They help to increase the students' social interaction, shape their ideas, increase their knowledge, and give them more of a feeling of belonging to the institution (Anchors, 259). These types of housing facilities, while increasing the intellectual, social, and emotional development of the student, are not typically a major focus of campus housing. Instead, residential

officials are becoming more aware of the benefits that living in a coeducational environment has to offer. In fact, coeducational living is becoming a much more desired living arrangement within a campus environment.

Coeducational Housing

Coeducational housing integrates students of both genders, male and female, into the same building. While studying coeducational housing, Asa Knowles, author of the Handbook of College and University Administration, found a number of variations. Co-ed buildings had single sex floors with men on one floor and women on another, adjacent floors, half the floor occupied by women and the other by men, or even mixed units (men living in rooms next to or across from rooms occupied by women (Knowles, 8-360)). Compared to segregating genders into separate housing facilities, Knowles has found that coeducational housing offers a number of advantages to the student besides just a place to live. Students have a higher participation rate in social and recreational programs and show enhanced group spirit and morale within the building (Knowles, 8-360).

Coeducational housing allows men and women not only to live together, but also teaches them to see each other in a variety of roles, rather than just a social/sexual one. In turn, this helps to develop students' feelings of respect and appreciation for the other sex as human beings, rather than sexual objects (Knowles, 8-360). Through this, a greater appreciation for the concept of marriage--living with and loving one person--is obtained without showing any change in the normal dating habits or sexual activity between students, which is a general fear of administrators (Knowles, 8-361). In fact, Anchors and Winston also show that coeducational housing helps develop a greater number of heterosexual platonic relationships than single sex halls, while not affecting the academic achievement of the students (Anchors, 254). Anchors and Winston state that "Coeducational living is advocated as a vital component of residential education on the basis of students' developmental needs," because a coeducational environment promotes student maturity as well as a more positive attitude toward sexuality (Anchors, 254). Another more extensive study of coeducational living was conducted through the research and information committee of the ACUHO-I. Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) is a professional organization for

administrators responsible for housing students attending institutions of higher education. Through their study comparing co-ed halls to single sex halls, they discovered that

Coed halls apparently have little or no effect, either positive or negative, on the academic achievements of residents. [However] living in coed halls appears to have a positive effect on developing students' maturity level. For the most part it appears that sexual activity in coed halls is either no different or is less emphasized than sexual activity in single sex halls. The research clearly indicated that residents in coed halls are more satisfied with their living environment than residents in single sex halls (Anchors, 254).

Coeducational housing has been becoming more and more attractive to housing administrators as well as to students when compared to interest in other housing options. In 1988, Billing's "meta-analysis" showed that coed residence halls provide a better social climate and more social involvement with the opposite sex, without hindering academic performance, personal growth and development, or involvement in extracurricular activities (Anchors, 145). A meta-analysis is a technique of synthesizing research results by using various statistical methods to retrieve, select, and combine results from previous separate but related studies. This test not only gives details on what living in a coeducational facility does, but how it affects the students as well. The effects of building design and social climate on students are not the only things that housing administrators have to worry about. Emotional development and certain student behaviors must also be taken into consideration when designing specific housing in order to capture specifically the growing needs of the student in a college setting.

Student Psychology

Psychology is the emotional and behavioral characteristics of an individual or a group. Psycho-sociology involves both psychological and social aspects of human experience; e.g., age, education, and marital status (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, 943). Psychosocial development theories have particular relevance for housing professionals as

they describe developmental changes and challenges students as a group face when they interact with their environment. Anchors and Winston developed a theory of student psychosocial development when studying the effects of residential housing on students. They claim that individuals develop through a sequence of developmental stages, which define the life cycle. Developmental stages--forming new attitudes, skills, and roles--are critical because they combine social expectations and physiological maturation--thinking, feeling, and behavior (Anchors, 66). Adjusting to college is no small task for any student. As Bennett and Terman describe the process, college happens just when students are beginning to grow from adolescent to adult and they are faced with the responsibility of learning how to become an adult in society while developing skills and techniques of self-direction (Bennett, 26). On top of that, students may acquire feelings of shyness, loneliness, and unhappiness as they try to gain social acceptance and approval (Bennett, 21). This social acceptance is crucial to the student. Margaret Barr realized while studying student affairs that without close bonds between students, programs and policies do not work (Barr, 307). Typically, students learn better when involved in activities, therefore residential housing needs to provide opportunities for students to interact with others while engaging in real projects (Barr, 309).

Competition among students is another aspect of student life that is always present as students' academic performances are often public and the subject of much discussion among peers. However, this doesn't always prove to be a bad aspect of student life. Robert Feldman noticed that higher achievement is often gained through competitiveness among students. Through intense study of the effects of education as it relates to social psychology, Feldman discovered that competition promotes task-focus which in turn promotes learning (Feldman, 192). Differences between peers also aids in student development. These differences can include personality, gender, attitudes, background, social class, reasoning strategies, cognitive perspectives, information, ability levels, and skills. During their first year in a residence hall students are strongly influenced by these differences. These are seen as positive influential differences as they lead to a more diverse organizing and processing of information and experiences, which, in turn, integrate controversy into the learning environment, as Robert Feldman discovered (Feldman, 219). Living in a coeducational facility aides in student learning

even more so as heterogeneity leads to potential controversy, and controversy leads to achievement through questioning different views on controversial subject matters (Feldman, 219). Social psychology is dependant on environmental influences including physical setting and behavior of others in particular surroundings, but the idea of sexual activities is also very closely related to the development of the student.

For many parents and housing administrators alike, sexual activity and promiscuity tend to be of great concern. However, sexual promiscuity characterizes only a few individuals on each college campus because compulsive sexual activity generally represents a deep seated emotional problem according to Sex and the College Student (47). Max Siegel, an author who studies college students and their problems, explains that the “adolescent drive to fulfill sexual/emotional hunger cannot truly be applied to college promiscuity” (Siegel, 25). The problem with sexual promiscuity is that society mores now say that it is alright to engage in sexual activity before marriage, therefore making sex more acceptable and less degrading (Siegel, 25). Besides social mores “allowing” students to feel comfortable with casual sex, college happens at a time when the first strong outwardly directed sexual impulses are experienced by the student (Blaine, 120). Sex by itself doesn’t provide the whole picture. Administrators are so worried about sexual promiscuity that they tend to forget that students still need a good balance of the opposite gender, and often intensify sexual drives by keeping genders separated.

In the heterosexual context, sex is the drive originating at puberty toward genital union between men and women with the biological purpose of procreation. Emphasis is placed on stimulation and gratification in forms of kissing, embracing, caressing, and direct genital contact. However, according to Sex and the College Student, it can also mean a physiological and psychological manifestation, which can occur at any age, bringing about a force for pleasure, tenderness, and human relatedness (12). When applying the notion of sexual activities to the college student, the study of identity and intimacy must also be looked at. Anchors and Winston explain that identity includes confidence, sexual identity, and personal conceptions about body and appearance (Anchors, 80). One’s own sexual identity is developed early in childhood mostly from being rewarded/punished for acting certain ways (Campbell, 33). Identities are learned

from watching parents, and other adults, and adapting to how they live their lives and are portrayed. Society in general, through television and movies, also model behaviors that help to develop identity. Intimacy, on the other hand, measures the extent to which students establish an affectionate relationship with another that is based on mutual respect, honesty, and trust (Anchors, 80). Colleges and universities must help students to develop not only educational abilities, but also the capacity for establishing a meaningful relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Students often see sex as a way of asserting adult status and it is the college setting that tends to have the greatest impact on the intensity of the “raging sexual drive” (Sex and the College Student, 103).

In order to understand what drives students towards casual sex, the emotional mind of the student as it relates to sex must be explored. Generally speaking, a college student body is comprised of stereotypes that explain why some students are more sexually active than others. To start, the female and the male must be closely examined in order to determine why certain genders are placed into certain stereotypes. Author Graham Blaine describes females in three stereotypical categories: The popular females--those that date often and have many males on the line; the old-fashioned type--shy, sexually active but not promiscuous, immature, and typically do not date; and the unattractive females--females that overeat, and dress without style (Blaine, 202). Males are simply seen as immature, adolescent, and dependent upon the comfort and support from affectionate young women (Blaine, 202). However, males too are categorized into stereotypes that place them in groups relating to sexual activity. There are those males that are popular, date often, like the first female category; males that are less popular, which prevents much of the interaction with females; and those males that are unattractive, dress without style and rarely date (Blaine, 202). Because females tend to be vulnerable, sensitive, emotional, and inclined to compare themselves to men whose good opinion means a lot to them, they usually attach to males quickly in a college setting. Many of the first type of males tend to latch onto these needy women. However, the stereotypical behavior is not sexual promiscuity. Many students are simply looking for another person that will give them support, confidence, and love (Blaine, 203). Upon entering college, students turn to peers for support as they become independent from their families. They explore new ideas, attitudes, and experiment with possible new roles for

themselves. Friendships made within the college setting tend to place adolescents under strong pressures to conform to the values of their peer groups (Sex and the College Student, 29). These pressures can lead to patterns of sexual conduct as communication is increased about sexuality (Sex and the College Student, 29). Friendships can also lead to new relationships which further the process of the individual's maturation within the society at large. Administrators need to understand that sexual promiscuity is typically misused when depicting the sexual activity levels of students. A good gender balance in housing is necessary for the development of the student.

Conclusions

Through studying the various effects of housing on students one can conclude that a coeducational environment is well suited for students attending college. While various residential designs also aid in the students' transition from adolescent to adult, students that can interact with both genders are more apt to be involved with school activities. Social involvement is heightened through new friendships and campus related activities. First year students living in residence halls develop a wide variety of friends, but those that live in co-ed halls show an even greater circle of friends, which increases awareness of campus activities as well as campus social connections. Housing administrators must also be sensitive to the emotional development of students. College is a time for students to grow emotionally, intellectually and socially. If the psycho-social needs of students are ignored due to an unwarranted fear of sexual activity and promiscuity, then the school is hindering the personal growth of the student. Sexual promiscuity need not be feared as it doesn't affect a large segment of the student population. Upper-class students that are given the option of living in a coeducational suite or apartment choose to live there primarily on the basis of friendship, rather than how many times they can engage in sexual conduct.

In conclusion, a coeducational living facility, be it an apartment, a suite, or a residence hall, is an opportunity for students to expand their horizons, mature, and live in an environment that is suitable to their wants and needs. WPI is an engineering institution that does not offer coeducational living in the upper-class housing facilities. Taking into consideration that coeducational living doesn't hinder the growth of the

student, Universities should consider the benefits that offering co-ed living would provide.

Methodology

Research for our IQP was done through a literature review, interviews of housing officers, and a survey of the WPI student body. We chose housing officers from the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) who work at schools in the northeast. The survey of students was done online after being advertised in the web newsletter that goes out to all WPI undergraduates.

When doing benchmarking, WPI traditionally uses a list of universities mainly centered in the northeast. For this reason, northeast ACUHO-I members were chosen for our interviews because they most closely resemble the benchmarking institutions. A few housing officers from outside of the northeast were interviewed because WPI often uses their schools for benchmarking. The survey was done over e-mail. Ninety-three housing officers were contacted electronically. They were asked five questions about the housing practices at their respective institutions. The data we were looking to collect was whether or not co-ed living in suites and apartments existed already at some schools and whether or not interest had been expressed by students for such housing options. The questions appeared in the interview in the following order.

1. Do you offer suites or apartments to upper class students?

We asked this to find out if the school we were interviewing even offered suites and apartments as a housing option.

2. Do you permit men and women to share a suite or apartment?

This question was asked to determine if other schools are already offering the option of coed suites and apartments. Questions three and four were posed as questions asking why the schools chose to offer different options in order to achieve a better understanding of their responses to question two.

5. Do you offer thematic housing, and if so, how are the genders separated?

This question was asked to find out if other schools allowed co-ed themed houses but not suites and apartments, as is the case at WPI. We were also looking to find the reasons behind whether an institution had decided to allow co-ed living or not.

The data was then compiled into a Microsoft Access database where the results could be easily queried. Access was chosen over Microsoft Excel because queries, which

are computer searches into the data so that data can be organized and presented, can be done in Access, but not Excel. Excel is limited to the table view of all the data unlike Access where data can be separated using easy commands. For instance, using Access the survey data could be narrowed to only private schools that allow co-ed living.

The responses to the survey were categorized according to the reasons presented as to why colleges did or did not have co-ed suite and apartment housing. Queries were run on the number of schools that have co-ed residential housing on-campus and the category the responses fell into. Using Microsoft Excel, charts were developed for easy referencing of responses. Interesting or different responses were noted, which included responses that were incomplete or responses that led us to more questions about the reasoning behind them. A follow-up interview was done to explain the reasons for these beliefs could be explained. The data compiled by these interviews was not included in the database but kept in a separate document to be used when comparing the replies of housing officers to those of the students and to research found in the literature review.

The student survey was posted online using mailform.cgi written by Todd Kuebler, a WPI student and CS major. Mailform.cgi is a common gateway interface (cgi) that allows the results of a survey conducted on a webpage to be sent via e-mail. This means that whenever a student completed the survey and clicked *submit*, the results were immediately sent to an e-mail collection point. The survey was posted on the WPI student newsletter that is distributed electronically weekly. Students were asked to answer a variety of demographic questions such as class year, current housing, and whether or not they are international students. The focus of the survey was to determine: If co-ed living in on-campus suites and apartments were available at WPI, would students want to take advantage of it? We also asked a question on what students perceive their parents would think about this housing option. Finally, we asked students about their own experiences with co-ed living. Just as with the housing officer's responses, the survey results were then inputted into Microsoft Access where they could be categorized and queries could be run. The data was separated into many different categories by running queries of the database. Counts were taken of how women responded compared to men, how many students would take advantage of co-ed suite and apartment living, how many students thought their parents would allow it and how many responses in each

of our categories there were. The data was compared to determine the differences between how men and women responded. In particular we examined the reasons given by each group as to why they would or would not live in this housing option.

We categorized the similar responses into a number of categories, to be explained below, that include *friendships*, *gender stereotypes*, *favorably neutral*, *convenience*, *already live off campus*, *significant other*, *morals/upbringing*, and *other*.

The *friendship* category includes any response where the student wanted to take advantage of co-ed living because they do not want their group of friends to be separated. An example of this would be a response from a male such as “I think co-ed living should be allowed because two of my friends are women and they should be able to live with us if they want to.”

The *gender stereotype* category is any response where the student was either for or against co-ed living based on existing positive or negative stereotypes of men and women.

The *favorably neutral* category was created to group together all of the students who didn't really care either way or who thought that coed suite or apartment housing should be offered, but did not explain.

Convenience is the category where students expressed that it would be easier to find housing if the suites and apartments were co-ed. Also included were students who had already taken another housing option because co-ed suites and apartments were not available.

The *already live off-campus* category is for those who would have taken advantage of the opportunity but since they are already in apartments off-campus they are not going to move back onto campus.

Significant other is the category where students said they either wanted to live in co-ed housing because then they could live with their boyfriend/girlfriend or who didn't want to live in co-ed housing because their boyfriend/girlfriend would not approve.

Morals/Upbringing grouped together the students who had moral objections to the idea of co-ed living because of their upbringing or because of other personal ethical beliefs.

Responses that seemed intriguing in the different categories were noted and follow up interviews were done with the respondents. Data collected from these interviews was used when comparing all of the data from the surveys and interviews.

Data Analysis

Housing Officers' Survey and Interviews

Ninety-three housing officers were interviewed over e-mail about the current housing practices at their schools. Thirty-eight responses were received out of the ninety-three, which translates to a response rate of forty-one percent. The first question asked if their school offered suites or apartments to upper class students.

Table 1.

Do you offer suites and apartments?	
No	5
Yes	32

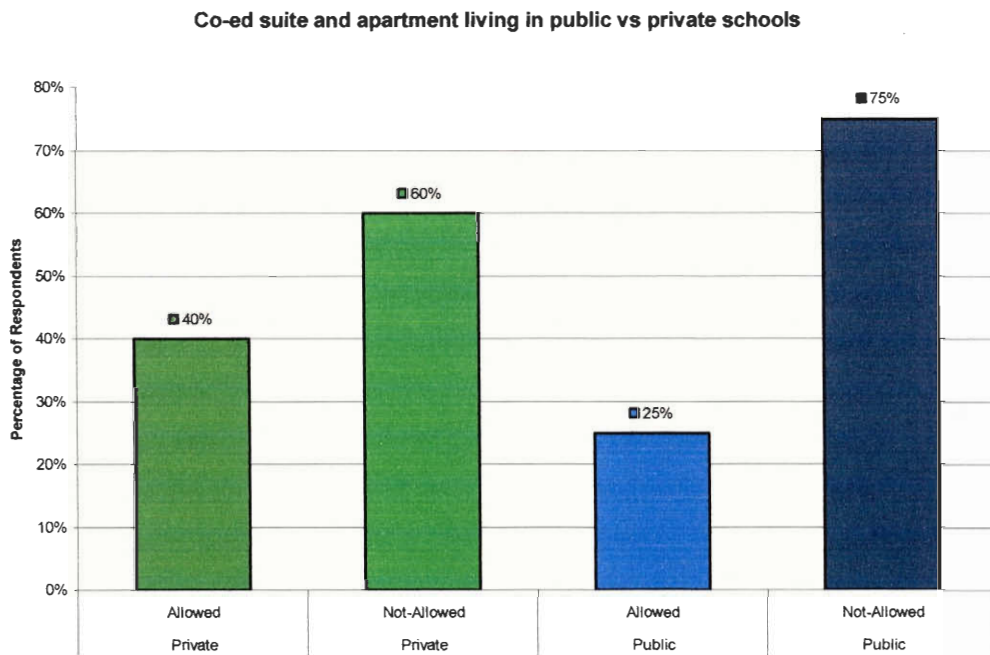
As seen in table 1, five of the schools said “no” they do not offer suites and apartments and thirty-two said that “yes” they do. The respondents who indicated they do not offer co-ed suites and apartments were then removed from the data of the next question because their responses are not relevant to our study. Graph 1 shows the responses to the question of whether or not co-ed suite and apartments were available at the current time. 66% of the respondents replied that such coed housing was not allowed on their campuses. 34% offered co-ed suites and apartments in various forms.

Graph 1.



Of the 11 colleges that currently offer co-ed suites and apartments to upper-class students, eight of these schools were private schools and three were public institutions. This information must be taken into consideration because private and public colleges follow different rules and regulations. State schools generally have much stricter guidelines set forth by the state lawmakers regarding student life. This gives private schools the chance to be more flexible when new ideas arise. In fact, as can be seen in Graph 2, more private institutions allow co-ed living than public ones. However, the change to co-ed suite and apartment housing is taking place relatively evenly among private and public schools.

Graph 2.



The 11 schools that do offer co-ed suite and apartment housing were asked what prompted them to offer the option and whether it had been successful. Many of the schools did not have it in their institutional memory as to when or why they began offering this type of co-ed housing. All of the schools that commented said that it is successful. Those that could recall what prompted them to institute such co-ed housing gave reasons like student demand for the option and the desire to have on-campus housing resemble off-campus housing. One school quoted studies that say co-ed living is good for students. The schools that did not offer suite and apartment co-ed housing were

asked what the reasons were for not offering it. The responses fell into several categories:

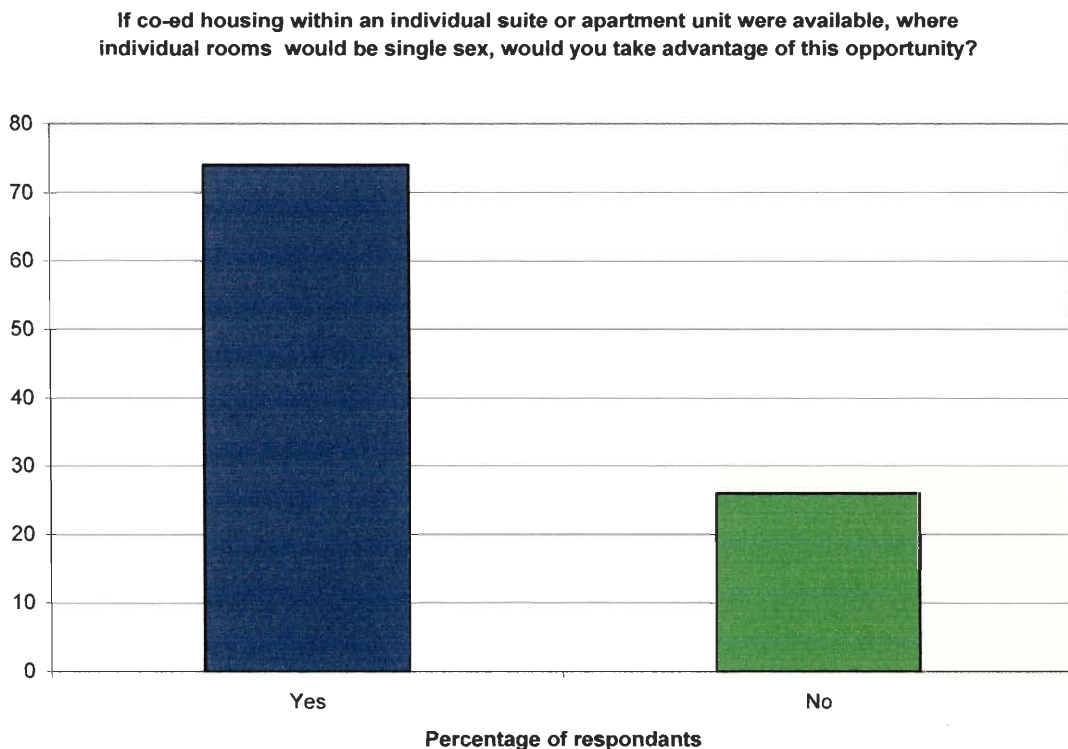
- Many schools said that they had simply seen no interest from students
- Three schools cited religious reasons
- One was worried that “It is difficult to justify to some of our constituencies such as family members and upper administrators”
- Two schools are in a housing crunch and worried about what happens if a co-ed student drops out and they need to replace them fast.

From the housing officers surveyed, the major objections to co-ed living in suites and apartments on-campus are for moral reasons such as religious beliefs and parental objections, as well as technical problems like trying to replace a student living in a co-ed environment when a vacancy occurs. It was clear, however, from the interviews that many, if not most, of the schools that objected to the co-ed housing option had never really discussed the issue, and had dismissed it at first thought.

Student Survey

After conducting a survey on co-ed living at WPI, 333 students responded out of 2767 undergraduate students, which represents a 12% response rate. The demographics of the respondents were a good mix of genders and different living situations. 126 females responded to the survey, calculated as 20% of the total undergraduate women along with 206 males or 10% of the undergraduate males. 80 students responded that they currently live in residence halls, 83 responded who currently live in on-campus apartments and suites, 24 who live in the Greek system (fraternities/sororities), 8 commuters, and 124 people who live off-campus in apartments. The numbers of responses were divided pretty evenly for each class year.

Graph 3.



As seen in Graph 3, of those who completed the survey, 258 students replied that they would take advantage of co-ed living on campus if it were available. 66 respondents said that given the opportunity, they would not. This demonstrates that 75% of the students who responded to our survey were interested in co-ed living in suites and apartments.

The next question delved into the reasoning behind their answer to the question as to whether they would take advantage of co-ed on-campus housing. These responses can be broken down into seven major categories, as seen in Table 2.

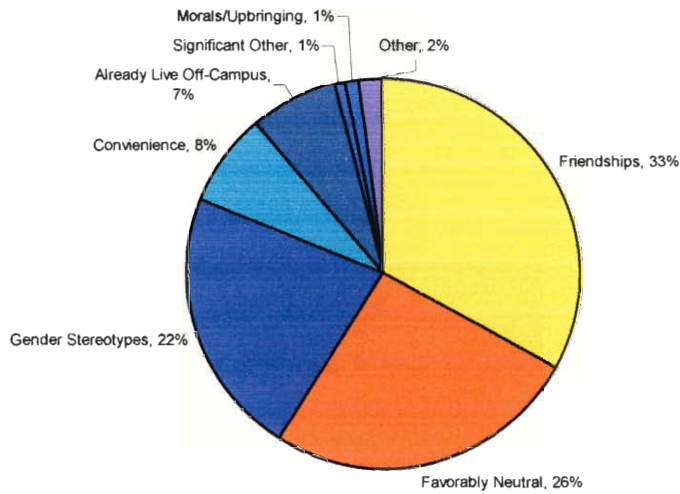
Table 2.

Category of Responses		
CATEGORY	Percentage	Response Count
Friendships	28%	78
Gender Stereotypes	23%	64
Favorable Neutral	22%	62
Convenience	9%	25
Already Off-Campus	9%	21
Significant Other	3%	9
Morals/Upbringing	3%	7
Other	3%	9

The friendship category and the favorably neutral category respondents were positive about co-ed living, where as, some of these categories can in turn be broken down into those respondents who favored co-ed living in suites and apartments and those respondents who did not. The following graphs show the distribution of the favorable and unfavorable responses to the question of co-ed living being allowed in suites and apartments on campus. As can be seen in Graph 4 *friendships* make up the largest reason for wanting co-ed living. *Favorable Neutral*, Those students who really wanted the option to be available but didn't give a clear cut reason as to why, was the second largest response category.

Graph 4

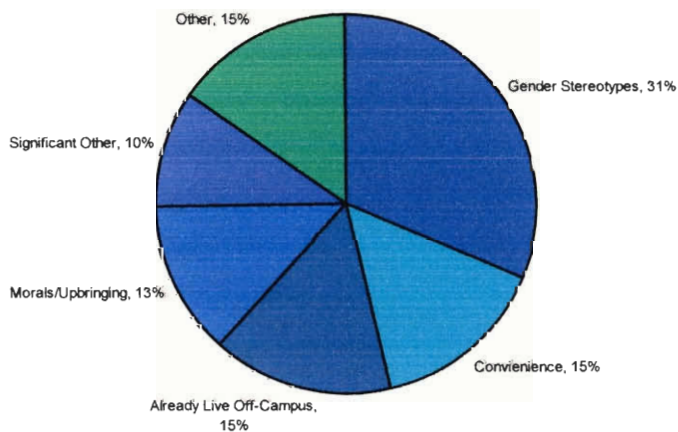
Catagories of Favorable Responses



As can be seen in Graph 5 there were not as many types of unfavorable responses and the reasons were more evenly distributed. Gender stereotypes is the largest response type with 31% of respondents.

Graph 5.

Catagories of Unfavorable Responses



The most common reason for a positive response is based on *friendships*. 78 of the students responded that they want to be able to live with their friends and their friends are both genders.

Common female examples of this include:

- “I have some good male friends that I would like living with more than some of my female friends.”
- “Some of my better friends are men and I really don't see why I shouldn't be able to live with them instead of some women that I might not like as much.”

Along the same lines, a male response was:

- “A suite or apartment should be shared by friends, regardless of gender.”

Gender stereotypes make up the second most common reason for wanting or not wanting co-ed living. 23% of the students responses could be grouped in this category. Gender stereotypes include any stereotype, positive or negative, that may lead the student to answer the way they did based on their gender perceptions. 22% of the students who wanted to live in co-ed suite and apartment housing cited reasons based on positive gender stereotypes. 31% of students who responded negatively to co-ed suite and apartment housing gave reasons based on negative gender stereotypes.

Some notable female responses were:

- “A lot of times in an all women apartment there's a lot of backstabbing, side-taking, and bickering that no one needs.”
- “Living with all women creates tension, drama, and gets boring.”
- “I would feel safer in an apartment in Worcester if there were men present.”

Some notable male responses were:

- “Women are in general much neater than men.”
- “Women help to fill areas where men are lacking, emotional, social, or whatever.”
- “They cook better than men.”

62 students were *favorably neutral* with their responses. They thought that co-ed living should be available but didn't have a clear-cut reason why. Responses like “I see

no reason why males and females can't live together," "I don't see why not," or "it is a good idea to meet more people" were common.

Another category was dubbed *convenience*. This category was chosen for those students who believed that finding an apartment would be easier if they were allowed to pick roommates of both genders. Also included were students who had already taken another housing option because co-ed suites and apartments weren't an option. 9% of students gave convenience as their answer. Responses in this category included statements like:

- "Given the ratio it's hard to find the right number of women to room with"
- "Its cheaper to live off campus."
- "More flexibility in arrangements in finding roommates."

Already live off-campus is the category that covers those students who have already moved off campus and don't plan on returning to an on-campus residence. Their reasons for living off-campus included: co-ed on-campus living was not available, moving into Greek housing, the cost and freedom. 21 students expressed that they think it is a good idea, and maybe if they were freshmen again they would think about it, but that they themselves don't want to move back to campus.

The remaining response categories are statistically smaller but still very important. Nine students said that they would or would not like to live in co-ed housing because of their significant other. 3% of students responded that their decision was based on their significant other, 1% of these students favored co-ed suites and apartments because of their significant other. 10% of students who were unfavorable to co-ed suites and apartments cited their significant other. The overwhelming idea of these negative responses was not that the students wanted to live with their girlfriend or boyfriend, but that their current significant other would not approve of them living with the other gender. Responses included:

- "I don't have a problem with it, but I do not think my boyfriend would like that"
- "If my girlfriend went to WPI, I would choose to live with her"
- "[I would] if I didn't have a boyfriend that disallowed it."

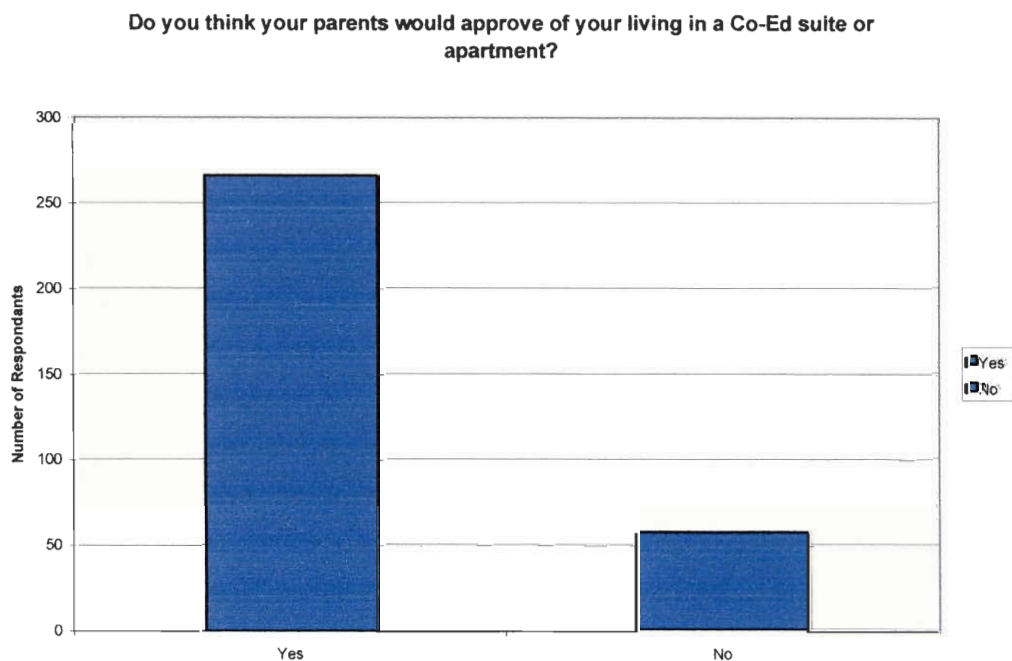
Morals, either developed over the student’s lifetime and/or based on their upbringing, played a role in seven of the responses. These included responses like:

- “It is against my values”
- “I do not think it appropriate for WPI students to be coed, without parent’s permission. If they so wish [to live] in off campus apartments, that is their choice, but I don't think WPI should promote it as an option in their housing.”
- “I think it would be a breeding ground for immoral acts, in an already moral corrupted environment.”

Some responses did not fit well into any of the aforementioned categories and were therefore dubbed *other*. Responses from Residential Advisors (RA) who thought this was a good idea but who don’t want to stop being RA’s fell in this category. Other responses included some from men who thought it would be nice to live with women but don’t know any.

The next question on the online survey was “Do you think your parents would approve of your living in a co-ed suite or apartment?”

Graph 6.



The graph above shows that 266 students said that they thought their parents would approve and 57 said that they did not think their parents would approve. Broken down by

gender, 20% of female students thought that their parents would not approve as well as 16% of male students. Interestingly, when looking at class year of the responses to this questions, there is not a discernable pattern that as the student gets older the parents plays less of a role in the student's decisions. Among the reasons why students thought their parents would not approve, included "men are pigs," and a few said it would be because "they [the parents] are too traditional." A very common response was that living with the other gender would be "too much distraction." The common phrase used throughout the majority of the responses is parents being "old fashioned." On the other hand, among the reasons that students thought parents would approve of co-ed suites and apartments are "I'm not sleeping with them, I'm just living with them," and "They would want me to have the protection."

At the end of the survey, off-campus students who were currently living in co-ed arrangements were asked what the positive and negative aspects of co-ed living are. Some of the negative aspects include comments on sharing a bathroom with the opposite gender:

- "the women get loud."
- "women think we don't clean enough, the men think the women are too picky."
- "I broke up with one of my roommates, so there was a (mild) bit of tension."

The positive aspects include:

- "a more interesting and interactive atmosphere."
- "sometimes you feel more protected because the men that live with you are your friends and they take care of you."
- "less drama"
- "cleaner"
- "usually men have tools and can fix things around the house."

The survey responses represented a large range of people from a variety of stages in their college life. For those students who thought that co-ed living in suites and apartments on campus should be allowed, *friendship* produced the largest number of responses (28%). Of the students who thought that co-ed suites and apartments shouldn't be allowed, morals was the most common reason why. According to our results,

student's perceptions were that most parents would support their decision about their housing regardless of it being co-ed or not. Of those students who thought that their parents would disagree, only a small majority said they would actually let that stop them from making that decision. Students who were thinking of taking advantage of co-ed living in the future sometimes brought up the issue of cleanliness. Of the people who already take advantage of this off-campus co-ed opportunity, many found that cleanliness issues were not a big concern. In conclusion, the data shows that the majority of students are for living in co-ed suites and apartments on-campus and they perceive that their parents would approve of it. We will return to this conclusion at greater length in our discussion of the results of the student interviews.

Student Interviews

The survey we collected and our literature review shows positive evidence for developing coeducational residential housing for upperclassmen. These results are also clearly supported by interviews of students that we conducted as follow up to the survey. Several students were interviewed to look further into their views about the suggested coeducational living option. Many complained of unfairness in the lottery system that WPI uses to select housing for upperclassmen. This lottery is held every spring at WPI in order to assign on-campus housing to upper-class students. Each student interested in on-campus housing is given a randomly generated number. Students choose the housing of their choice in the order of their numbers, beginning with the lowest number and continuing until all of the numbers have been picked or until all available housing has been selected. Unfortunately, there aren't as many smaller suites for the students as there are larger suites and apartments. Currently at WPI, the male to female ratio is 5:1. Due to the shortage of women, the typical female student tends to have more male friends than female. If a female student wants to take advantage of on-campus housing, she then needs to find enough females to fill a suite or apartment. However, our survey concluded that in fact the majority of the women did not have enough female friends to live in a larger suite or apartment. Using the lottery system therefore decreases the chances for women on-campus who have only enough other female friends to rent a smaller suite. Kate, a female junior at WPI, states that

I might actually have been able to get into the upper classperson dorms. [However], I don't have enough female friends to get into the large suites or apartments and there are so few small upper-classperson dorms that I figured that I would have to live off campus.

Kate, as well as many other female students, was therefore forced to look for off-campus housing due to the inadequate selection of the smaller suites and apartments. Katie, a female sophomore at WPI, concurs with the statement: "had coed living been an option I

would have lived on campus, because the one thing preventing me from living on campus is not having enough friends who are women to fill an apartment.”

Maturity was a topic many students voiced their opinion on. Some claimed that college students lacked the maturity levels to live in a coeducational facility. Chris, a male sophomore at WPI, stated that college students “[lack] the proper maturity levels in order to cope with living with the opposite gender.” In contrast to Chris’s position, Melani, a female senior at WPI, responded that “students in college are at a maturity level in which they can make their own decisions regarding their living situations.” Upon further inspection of this disagreement, parents were found to play a strong role in the students’ decisions. Many students claimed that their parents were “conservative” and “old fashioned” and would not allow them to live in a coeducational environment. Kendra, a female freshman at WPI, explained that her parents were extremely influential in decisions that she made while at school. She stated that “my parents pay for me to go to school; I can’t go against their wishes because I depend on their support.” Other students claimed that their parents would at first disagree with living in a coeducational environment but would eventually accept the idea. Matt, a male sophomore at WPI, claimed that “they would likely not agree with it at first, but once it was explained to them that it is virtually the same as living down the hall from them anyway, I believe that they would be ok with it.” Other students took a more independent stance on the matter. For example David, a freshman at WPI, replied “[my parents] would not approve because they do not think that the opposite sex should live together before marriage, however I would not allow their thinking to stop me from getting into a co-ed living situation.” Todd, a junior at WPI, took a different approach with his statement: “My parents are very old fashioned....they wouldn’t approve of this idea and would think that it is unethical or something along those lines. But if you think about it, gay and lesbian men and women live in all male or all female floors and rooms—isn’t that the same idea? I think it is up to me where I live at college.” Students who felt that the maturity levels of college age people were sufficiently developed to make their own housing choices had strong rationale for their opinion as well. “College is an experience to prepare [students] for the real world. If [students] are incapable of making the decision as to whether or not coeducational living is right for them, then college hasn’t been doing its job.” This

comment was made by Melani who has an “open relationship” with her parents, meaning that her parents trust her to make the right decisions.

Although WPI is not a religious based school, students still speak of religious beliefs when deciding about living arrangements. Students of strong religious background were found to be more against coeducational housing than for it. Many religions hold that it is improper for a man and a woman to live together unless married. This belief would restrict some students from choosing to live in a coed living facility. But not all students have these types of strong religious beliefs and should not be prevented from having the option of making a mature decision about their housing interests.

Some of the interviewed students had had the experience of living in both a single gender housing facility and a coeducational residence. Most of the students responded positively to both living situations. Women in particular said that they enjoyed the calmer environment of coeducational living, where stresses remained low. For example, Carrie, a junior at WPI, proclaims that “a lot of times in an all women apartment there’s a lot of backstabbing, side-taking, and bickering that no one needs; in other words, bitchiness. Men don’t take sides most of the time, and when there is a guy in the same apartment there tends to be less complications.” From the male perspective, Ben, a sophomore at WPI, replied that “[A coeducational environment] provides for a standard of living higher than [housing with] all men: a natural practice of males is to impress females. This atmosphere helps men to make the living environment cleaner and more organized. Clearly, there have been drastic benefits of this style of living.” A common statement that men gave referred to the emotional benefits of living with a woman. Steve, a senior at WPI stated, “it is nice to be able to talk to a girl once in a while about girl problems that I am having; it provides a good balance between the genders.” Neatness was found not to be affected by gender arrangements within housing. A general stereotype found when analyzing the survey conducted on campus was that men are messy and women are good for cleaning. When exploring this concept further with students about the overall appearance of their living arrangements, it was found that it is not the gender that causes messiness or creates cleanliness; rather it is the styles of the individuals themselves. Some men complained of living in a pigsty whereas others said

that their apartments/suites were just as clean as a well-kept women's living facility. Some women replied in exactly the same stereotypical manner about men.

Students chosen for follow-up interviews were chosen on the basis of how clear and direct their responses to the survey questions were presented. All students made good points regarding the benefits and problems relating to living in a co-ed environment. Some complained of inadequate single gender housing provided by the campus while others complained that finding enough people to fill single gender housing was difficult. Students made several comments regarding parents and how their relationship with them affected their decision as to whether or not to live in a coeducational environment. But the comments that were most abundant related to gender stereotyping. These interviews were conducted in order to gain a further understanding as to why certain positions were taken by students regarding living in a coeducational environment. Those students who didn't agree with living in a coeducational facility had reasons mostly related to religion, parents, or personal beliefs. It is clear from the survey results and the interviews that introducing coeducational housing facilities would be greatly accepted and wanted by the majority of the students attending WPI.

Results and Conclusions

The research question of this project was, “Should co-ed living be offered in on-campus suites and apartments to interested upper-class students, and how will this option impact the student’s college experience, both academically and socially?” Our WPI student survey indicated that there was a considerable demand for this option from students for a variety of reasons, the largest being friendship. Our survey of housing officers indicated that those schools that didn’t yet offer this housing option, as well as the students who didn’t think it should be offered, cited reasons based on “college dorm” misconceptions. In order for any changes within the structure of the school to be made which in turn may benefit the student, misconceptions must be challenged.

The most common assumption that we heard was that if a man and a woman live together then they will engage in sexual intercourse. As shown in our literature review, there have been many studies that demonstrate this is not the case. Our own campus survey of WPI students also shows that only 1% of our respondents wanted to live in co-ed housing so that they could be with their significant others. This indicates to us that students are not interested in living in a co-ed environment primarily to engage in sexual activity; they are interested in this option because of its social benefits.

A few schools were also quick to cite religious reasons for not implementing co-ed housing. If this rationale is probed more deeply, the underlying issue is that these schools are concerned that they have no way of monitoring whether or not the co-ed suites would be shared by couples. If monitoring co-ed living were possible, and there could be a guarantee that no couples would sleep together, then it would eliminate virtually every argument against the co-ed living option. Even religious institutions or typically conservative schools might not find fault with two friends living together regardless of gender. Policing such relationships, of course, is not feasible without violating a student’s privacy. Since this practice isn’t desirable, institutions that are willing to offer the option of co-ed living in suites and apartments are doing so with the understanding that perhaps some of the roommates might date, they might have sex, and they might break up. However, the fact is, colleges can never completely police the private lives of their students.

Based on the survey of housing officers, one of the concerns that respondents had was that it would be difficult to fill an open-spot in a co-ed suite and apartment. Not all institutions have the ability to offer the option of co-ed living in suites and apartments on campus because of housing shortages. There is approximately a 58% chance at WPI that an applicant would not be able to be placed if there was only one opening in an apartment or a suite. This is in contrast to the 32% chance that an applicant would not be able to be placed in an all single-gender housing situation (Appendix 3.1). So, a student looking to fill a residential opening is much more likely to find one in a single-sex housing situation when compared to a co-ed. What these statistics don't take into account is that there is never just one opening in a residence hall. Residential Services keeps several vacancies on hand so that they can place a student where they fit best. By extension, the model used the WPI gender ratio and the data collected about demand for co-ed housing, to determine the likelihood that an opening would be co-ed or single sex. However, as we move from the model to real life, our research has shown that students will be more satisfied and happier in co-ed living situations. Thus, they should be less likely to leave because their residential life will be more balanced. This fact alone should help to allay some of the concerns expressed by housing officers regarding their ability to fill a vacancy in a co-ed living situation.

The greatest strength of co-ed living is that it creates a gender balanced environment that promotes student development and emotional growth. By living in a co-ed environment, the student is more likely to mature faster on issues such as gender equality and sexual behavior. It is a well-known fact that one of the best ways to learn a language is to go to a country where it is spoken and immerse yourself in it. This is also the case with gender relations. The best way for a man to learn how to act around a woman, as well as for a woman to know how to act around a man, is through immersion in a "real world" living situation, which will promote emotional learning and the development of attitudes that are free from gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, our study shows that the majority of the WPI student body would prefer co-ed living in suites and apartments. This housing option can raise the morale of students because they will be able to live with their friends, regardless of their gender. The university will be able to better fulfill their broad educational obligation to the

student. Students will be less likely to move off-campus in order to live with their friends because they will have the same options on campus. Finally, students will be able to live in an environment on campus that better reflects the lifestyle they will experience after they leave college. Ultimately, the choice falls to the individual schools as to whether they have the resources and support that they need to make this desirable and beneficial option for students a reality on their campus.

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numbered in original

IQP/MQP SCANNING PROJECT



George C. Gordon Library
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

1.1 Housing Officers Interviewed:

COLLEGE	LAST_NAME	FIRST_NAME	E-MAIL
Becker College	Cooley	Tom	tcooley@beckercollege.edu
Binghamton University	Terry	Webb,	twebb@binghamton.edu
Brandeis University	Balch	Maggie	balch@brandeis.edu
Bridgewater State College	Beth	Moriarty,	BMORIARTY@bridgew.edu
Canisius College		mulville	mulville@canisius.edu
Colby College	Johnston	Paul	pejohnst@colby.edu
Colgate University	Baldwin	Rachel	RBaldwin@mail.colgate.edu
Cornell University	Zinder	Pamela	pz11@cornell.edu
Elmira College	Burlingame	Laura	lburlingame@elmira.edu
Emerson College	Randall Lee	Valerie	Valerie_Randall_Lee@emerson.edu
Fitchburg State College	Bry	Jay	jbry@fsc.edu
Franklin Pierce	Ervin	Kenneth	ervink@FPC.edu
Hampshire College	Freedman	Renee	rfreedman@hampshire.edu
Iona College	Mahoney	Kerri	KMahoney@iona.edu
Ithaca College	Prunty	Bonnie	bprunty@ithaca.edu
Johnson State College	Whitmore	Michele	whitmorm@jsc.vsc.edu
Julliard School	Tanbara	Sabrina	stanbara@juilliard.edu
Le Moyne College	Godleski	Mark	GodlesMG@lemoyne.edu
Manhattan School of Music	Raynis	Cathleen	craynis@msmny.edu
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	Manning	Dianne	dmanning@mcla.mass.edu
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Nilsson	Karen	knilsson@MIT.EDU
Mitchell College	Kelly	Kevin	Kelly_K@mitchell.edu
Monroe Community College	Baker	Susan	sbaker@monroecc.edu
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Peter	Snyder,	snydep@rpi.edu
Salve Regina University	DelGizzo	Dennis	delgizzd@salve.edu
Southern Maine Technical college	Lainoff	Amy	ALainoff@smccme.edu
St. John Fisher College	Panepento	Terri	tpanepento@sjfc.edu
SUNY Cobleskill	Asselin	Edward	asselie@Cobleskill.edu
SUNY College at Oneonta	Logan	Steve	LOGANSE@oneonta.edu
SUNY College of Technology at Canton NY	Mason	R.Phillip	masonrp@canton.edu
SUNY Delhi- College of Technology	hawes	matt	hawesmr@delhi.edu
SUNY Geneseo	Carrasquillo	Ralph	carrasq@geneseo.edu
Syracuse University	Longcore	William	WjLongco@syr.edu
Unity College	Nason	Stephen	snason@unity.edu
University of Maine-Machias	Page	Kimberly	kpage@maine.edu
University of Rochester	Hazen	Logan	loga@reslife.rochester.edu
Western Connecticut State University	Griffin	Maribeth	griffinm@WCSU.EDU

1.2 E-mail Sent to Housing Officers

My name is Ernie Begin and I am working on an interdisciplinary project at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The focus of my project is to examine co-educational residential living options for upper-class students. More specifically, we are investigating whether or not schools should permit co-ed housing within an individual suite or apartment unit, where individual rooms would be single sex, but the suite would be co-ed. I am hoping that you can assist me in my research

by answering a few questions:

1. Do you offer suites or apartments to upper class students?
2. Do you permit men and women to share a suite or apartment?
3. If mixed gender living within a suite or apartment is allowed what prompted you to offer this option? Has it been successful?
4. If mixed gender living is not offered on campus what are the reasons for why it is not permitted?
5. Do you offer thematic housing, and if so how are the genders separated?

Thank you for your time. As this project is time sensitive please respond by October 12th.

Ernie Begin

1.3 Housing Officer Interviews Responses

Can be viewed using access. The file can be found on the attached CD-ROM. File name is InterviewData.mdb

CO-ED LIVING AT WPI

Please enter your E-mail address so you may be entered in the raffle to win a \$50 gift certificate to the campus bookstore:

What is your gender?: Male Female

What is your expected graduation date? 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

Are you an international student? Yes No

What is your current housing situation?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Daniels | <input type="radio"/> 26 Hackfeld |
| <input type="radio"/> Morgan | <input type="radio"/> 16 Elbridge |
| <input type="radio"/> Riley | <input type="radio"/> 22 Schussler |
| <input type="radio"/> Founders | <input type="radio"/> 25 Trowbridge |
| <input type="radio"/> Ellsworth | |
| <input type="radio"/> Fuller | |
| <input type="radio"/> Fraternity or Sorority | |
| <input type="radio"/> Off-Campus | |
| <input type="radio"/> Commuter | |

If co-ed housing within an individual suite or apartment unit were available, where individual rooms would be single sex, would you take advantage of this opportunity?

Yes No

Why or Why Not?

Do you think your parents would approve of your living in a Co-Ed suite or apartment?

Yes No

Why or Why Not?

If you currently live Off-Campus in an apartment is it Co-Ed?

Yes No

What have been the positive aspects of this Co-Ed living situation?

What have been the negative aspects of this Co-Ed living situation?

Are willing to be interviewed concerning co-ed living options?

Yes No

Submit Survey

Reset

2.2 Source Code for WPI Student Survey

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Co-Ed Living at WPI</title>
</head>
<body>
<font size="6"> CO-ED LIVING AT WPI</font>
<hr><form action="http://www.wpi.edu/cgi-bin/mailform.cgi"
method="post">
<input type="hidden" name="mailformToEmail" value="ebegin@wpi.edu">
<input type="hidden" name="mailformToName" value="Ernie Begin">
<input type="hidden" name="mailformSubject" value="survey data">
<input type="hidden" name="mailformURL"
value="http://www.wpi.edu/~ebegin/coed/thankyou.html">
<input type="hidden" name="mailformFromName" value="survey respondant">
<br>Please enter your E-mail address so you may be entered in the
raffle to win a $50 gift certificate <br>to the campus bookstore:
    <input type="text" name="mailformFromEmail"
value="someone@somewhere.com">
<br><br><br>
    What is your gender?: <input type="radio" name="gender" value="m">Male
    <input type="radio" name="gender" value="f">Female
<br><br><br>
What is your expected graduation date?
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2004">2004
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2005">2005
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2006">2006
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2007">2007
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2008">2008
    <input type="radio" name="gradDate" value="2009">2009
<br><br><br>
Are you an international student?
    <input type="radio" name="international"
value="yes">Yes
    <input type="radio" name="international"
value="no">No
<br><br><br>
What is your current housing situation?
<table border="0" width="360" cellpadding="10">
<tr>
<td width="50%" valign="top">
<input type="radio" name="housing" value="Daniels">Daniels
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="Morgan">Morgan
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="Riley">Riley
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="Founders">Founders
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing"
value="Ellsworth">Ellsworth
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="Fuller">Fuller
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="greek">Fraternity
or Sorority
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="offcampus">Off-
Campus
<br><input type="radio" name="CurrentHousing" value="commuter">Commuter
</td>
```

```

<td width="50%" valign="top">
<input type="radio" name="housing" value="26 Hackfeld">26 Hackfeld
<br><input type="radio" name="housing" value="16 Elbridge">16 Elbridge
<br><input type="radio" name="housing" value="22 Schussler">22
Schussler
<br><input type="radio" name="housing" value="25 Trowbridge">25
Trowbridge
</td></tr></table>
<br><br>If co-ed housing within an individual suite or apartment unit
were available, where individual rooms <br>
would be single sex, would you take advantage of this opportunity?
<blockquote>
<input type="radio" name="WouldYouLiveCoEdOnCampus"
value="yes">Yes
<input type="radio" name="WouldYouLiveCoEdOnCampus"
value="no">No
<br>Why or Why Not?<br>
<textarea name="wouldyouwhy" rows="3"
cols="50"></textarea>
<br><BR></blockquote>
Do you think your parents would approve of your living in a Co-Ed suite
or apartment?<br>
<blockquote>
<input type="radio" name="WouldParentsApprove"
value="yes">Yes
<input type="radio" name="WouldParentsApprove"
value="no">No
<br>Why or Why Not?<br>
<textarea name="parentswhy" rows="3"
cols="50"></textarea>
<br><br></blockquote>
If you currently live Off-Campus in an apartment is it Co-Ed?<br>
<blockquote>
<input type="radio" name="CurrentlyinCoEd"
value="yes">Yes
<input type="radio" name="CurrentlyinCoEd"
value="no">No
<br>What have been the positive aspects of this Co-Ed living
situation?<br>
<textarea name="positive_coed" rows="3"
cols="50"></textarea>
<br>What have been the negative aspects of this Co-Ed living
situation?<br>
<textarea name="negative_coed" rows="3"
cols="50"></textarea>
</blockquote><br>
Are willing to be interviewed concerning co-ed living options?<br>
<input type="radio" name="Interview?" value="yes">Yes
<input type="radio" name="Interview?" value="no">No
<br><br>
<input type="submit" value="Submit Survey">
<input type="reset">
</form>
</body>
</html>

```


2.3 Student Survey Results

Can be viewed using access. The file can be found on the attached CD-ROM. File name is SurveyData.mdb

3.1 Statistical Analysis of WPI suite and apartment availability

ANALYSIS BASED ON SINGLE SEX HOUSING

Table 3.1.1 Applicant Pool

MALE	80%
FEMALE	20%

Opening Pool

MALE	80%
FEMALE	20%

Table 3.1.2 Random Applicant in Random Opening

		MALE	FEMALE
		80%	20%
MALE	80%	64.00%	16.00%
FEMALE	20%	16.00%	4.00%

Table 3.1.3 Chance of being placed

68.00% Will be placed
32.00% No opening

ANALYSIS BASED ON CO-ED LIVING AS AN OPTION

Table 3.1.4 Applicant Pool

		MALE	FEMALE
		80%	20%
Co-ed	74%	59.200%	14.800%
Single sex	26%	20.800%	5.200%

Table 3.1.5 Opening Pool

		MALE	FEMALE
		80%	20%
Co-ed	74%	59.200%	14.800%
Single sex	26%	20.800%	5.200%

Table 3.1.6 Random Applicant in Random Opening

			MALE		FEMALE	
			co-ed	single sex	co-ed	single sex
			59.200%	20.800%	14.800%	5.200%
MALE	co-ed	59.200%	35.046400%	12.313600%	8.761600%	3.078400%
	single sex	20.800%	12.313600%	4.326400%	3.078400%	1.081600%
FEMALE	co-ed	14.800%	8.761600%	3.078400%	2.190400%	0.769600%
	single sex	5.200%	3.078400%	1.081600%	0.769600%	0.270400%

Table 3.1.7 Chance of being placed

41.8336% Will be placed
58.1664% No opening

EXPLANATION OF ANALYSIS BASED ON SINGLE SEX HOUSING

What we see in Table 3.1.2 is an applicant from Table 3.1.1 being placed in an opening from Table 3.1.2. The term applicant refers to a person who is looking to fill an opening. Using our current ratio said applicant is 80% likely to be a male and 20% likely to be a female. Opening refers to the vacant space in a suite or apartment that must be filled. The opening's gender is also based on the current WPI ratio of 80% males and 20% females. In order to find how likely it is an opening will be Male for a Male applicant the percentages are multiplied by each other.

EXPLANATION OF ANALYSIS BASED ON CO-ED LIVING AS AN OPTION

Table 3.1.6 is an applicant from Table 3.1.4 being placed in an opening from Table 3.1.5. The data on the diagonal is the chance that the applicant will be placed where they want to be. These are added together, above the totals of those applicants who did not find what they wanted, in Table 3.1.7

ASSUMPTIONS

The model assumes that there is only one opening, and one applicant. It assumes that the applicant will have an 80% chance of being male and 20% chance of being female. The model also assumes that based on the WPI student survey 74% of openings will be co-ed and 26% will be single sex. The final conclusion is that the applicant and opening are random and that no other factors come into play.