

## Introduction

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Through out the course of a student's tenure here at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), they are given the opportunity to explore themselves as well as the many characteristics unique to the University. While boasting around forty thousand Graduate and Undergraduate students here at the UIUC, it is very easy for students to simply let the experiences that they can only have in college pass them by. However, at Weston Hall students are given the chance to help make the University seem a little bit smaller than it really is by providing easily accessible resources. Weston Hall is widely known as being one of the school's most social and fun dorms to live in, but the reasoning behind this is a huge mystery to those who have not experienced Weston Hall on a first-hand basis.

Much of this can be attributed to the Weston Hall "Weston Exploration Living-Learning Community." After analyzing our textual tool, the *Weston Exploration Learning Outcomes* packet (Staff Version), it is clear that the Weston Exploration community is geared towards helping students find themselves and what they hope to get out of the University of Illinois. The packet laid out numerous goals which the program hopes to achieve and will aim to better for the future residents of Weston Hall. It was only after reading this document that our group understood what the Hall's and the Exploration Program's Living-Learning Community hoped to achieve through its social network.

### *Problem*

Even though the Weston Exploration program has numerous resources to be utilized, we found that some of the Weston residents are unaware of these resources.

### *Purpose*

It is our hope that through the study of the Weston Hall activity system, our group can provide students with a better understanding of their options for the University of Illinois Residence Halls Living-Learning Communities. We also plan to explore why the Weston residents are uninformed of the Weston Exploration's many positive attributes.

### *Scope*

By documenting the alternatives that are available to students in the Residence Halls, we can help match students with a Living-Learning Community that will enhance their overall collegiate experience. We believe that this report will benefit prospective transfer students and incoming freshmen to the UIUC when they are making their housing decision. We plan to include a discussion about Weston Hall's mission, available resources, as well as student and staff perspectives. We hope that through the data found, we can discover more about an existing Living-Learning Community and understanding where it is most effective. Moreover, through our evaluations and suggestions, the University of Illinois can improve existing programs and implement similar programs throughout its student-housing environment.

## Discovering Weston's Background

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A Living-Learning Community is residential housing that provides an atmosphere supporting learning and social interaction amongst its residents (<http://www.housing.uiuc.edu/living/llc/>, 2006). There are six programs offered on campus: *Global Crossroads* and *Intersections* at Pennsylvania Avenue Resident Hall, *Leadership Experience Through Academic Development and Service* (LEADS) at Garner Resident Hall, *Unit One* at Allen Resident Hall, *Weston Exploration* at Weston Resident Hall, and *Women in Math, Science, and Engineering* (WIMSE) at Florida Resident Hall.

Weston Hall was built in 1964 and was originally only inhabited by male residents. It is named after Nathan A. Weston, the first Dean of the College of Commerce & Business Administration (<http://uihistories.ncsa.uiuc.edu/buildings/peabodyhalls.html>, 2006). The hall is apart of the Peabody Drive Residence Hall and is located west of Fourth Street. Students, who chose to live in the hall, pay an extra \$180 activity fee per year. Most rooms in Weston Hall are doubles. Each double room has double bed, a desk, lamp, a trash can, chairs, and bookshelves. No air conditioners are allowed, but students are allowed to bring a window or a revolving fan. On the

first floor of Weston Hall, there is a 24-hour computer lab which includes 12 computers for the residents (<http://www.housing.uiuc.edu/living/westonex/>, 2006).

The hall is home to the Weston Exploration, which was implemented in 1996 (Brady, 2006). This program is specifically established for Weston Hall residents. Currently, the Weston population includes about 475 students, all of whom are automatically enrolled into the Weston Exploration Program. It provides opportunities for students to explore and develop their personal interests, academic abilities, and resources. The hall is highly populated with undecided and undeclared freshmen and sophomore students (Brady, 2006). Also, it is characterized as one of the more socially active residences on the campus. The residents at Weston Hall are provided with a variety of classes, courses, and resources that help them to discover their academic career and major.

Unlike most university residence halls, Weston residents can move in two days earlier than the general move-in date. Weston Exploration begins each year with a three-day orientation every August. During orientation, students participate in workshops, fun social activities, and a community service project (Brady, 2006). Since they move in earlier than other residence hall students, they experience an easier transition and have an opportunity to make friends and get to know one another. To be accepted into the Weston Exploration Living-Learning Community, students are required to compose a mandatory essay explaining how and why they will benefit from this program (<http://www.housing.uiuc.edu/living/westonex/>, 2006). Both first year students and students transferring from another hall to Weston Hall must complete the essay. Once accepted, classes, individual, and group activities are provided to help each student enhance their experiences and opportunities to discover more about themselves. An additional incentive is that the program provides easily accessible campus resources for the residents. Weston Exploration Program is geared towards any of its residences who need help with academic and career decision-making.

### Overview of the Activity System

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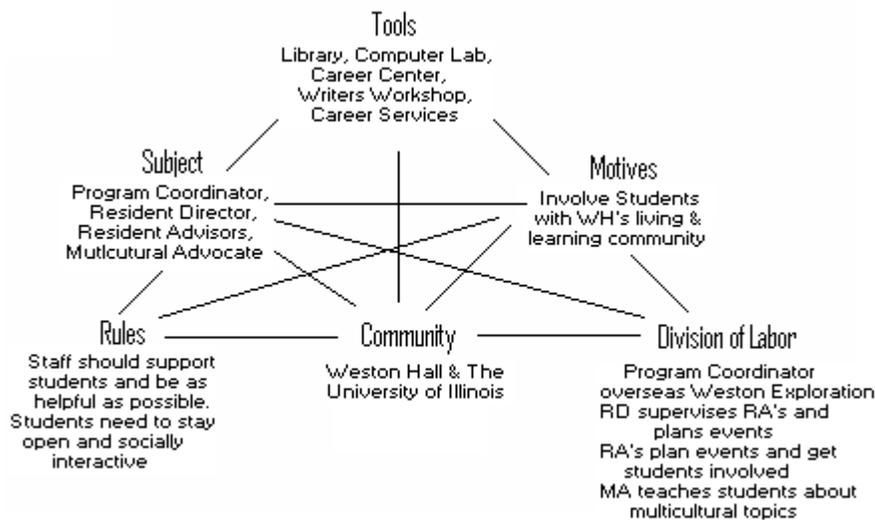


Figure 1

### The Weston Mission

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When analyzing the *Weston Exploration Learning Outcomes* (Staff Version), we found the ultimate goals of the program. This document is a paper packet that provides a working model designed to help each instructor tailor to each student's needs (Maybee, 2005). The program's primary purpose is to help students build meaningful relationships with the staff. There are

several tools provided to assist exploration of their academic careers, majors, personal interests, and skills.

As one of the Living-Learning Communities, the Weston Exploration provides for students a unique experience with programs, activities, and resources. Students are encouraged to develop strong and meaningful relationships with instructors and their fellow students while learning how to utilize a system of resources, such as a leadership or career exploration course (Maybee, 2005). Professionally trained staff members manage appointments and seminars to help students decide a major and a future career. These seminars also work with the students on skill building and internship opportunities. Through participating in different courses and classes, students will better communicate with teacher's assistants, professors, and other Weston faculty. As a result, they will hopefully be able to recognize their areas of expertise and interests (Maybee, 2005).

The Weston Exploration program is trying to establish a diverse range of activities. Students will increase interactions with peers and staff through attending seminars, the hall service project/programs, leadership workshops, or yoga classes. The program does not only develop students' skills and interests, but it also provides a wellness program for students' physical, psychological, and emotional well-being (Maybee, 2005). Students will have an opportunity to attend courses related to issues of stress relief or eating disorders. Participating in activities of the program, students will be able to explore, compare, and contrast their majors, careers, and skills. Students will evaluate their experiences based on their interests and abilities. They will be guided and supported with the program in acquiring the social, personal, and leadership skills needed to understand the job market and learn marketing skills such as resume writing and interviewing skills (Maybee, 2005).

The Weston Exploration program is a vital system for students to discover their interests and career/major possibilities. It offers informative, effective, and educational resources. The program encourages students to evaluate their skills so they can identify what career will best suit their abilities.

### **Tools for Weston Residents**

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Weston Exploration provides numerous resources and services for its residents. These are available to help guide their academic career and major. The programs are created for and by the students. This means whenever there is a suggestion for improvement the program will make adjustments according to its students' requests. The staff members are committed to supporting their students' academic and personal needs. Resources include:

#### *Exploration Courses*

Students are offered university credit courses that encourage students to explore various areas of study and career pathways.

#### *Professional Staff*

Weston Hall has a full time staff devoted to developing mentoring relationship with its residents. They are well-trained professionals that give academic and personal guidance.

#### *Library/ Resource Center*

The center has an extensive collection of career reference materials including books, pamphlets, information about volunteer and internship opportunities, and job-search guides. These materials provided focus on connecting majors with future careers.

#### *Career Services*

Staff schedule appointments and interactive seminars for individual career and academic assistance. They also help students to development important workplace skills.

#### *Counseling Center*

Trained University of Illinois students work with the Counseling Center to conduct Exploration appointments with Weston students. They provide informative workshops, information, and events to help students explore majors and careers.

#### *Academic Advising*

LAS General Curriculum advisors arrange appointments with the students to aid them in their navigation of academic choices.

### *E-Discover*

An online program helps students to make career and educational decisions through the process of self-examination.

(<http://www.housing.uiuc.edu/living/westonex/>, 2006).

## **Weston's Staff Perspective**

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To gain a more thorough perspective, we decided to interview several members of the staff.

### *Program Coordinator*

Claire is the program coordinator for both Weston Exploration and LEADS (Leadership Experience Through Academic Development and Service). She is also an instructor for ACES 260, a leadership development course available exclusively to Weston and LEADS residents. Specifically looking at her role with Weston, her main priorities include developing courses, coordinating workshops, and career advising (Brady, 2006). She is also responsible for training and evaluating the staff and implementing campus committees. Claire also assists the Resident Director in recruiting Resident Advisors who are friendly, energetic, and committed to assisting first year students.

This is Claire's sixth semester as an instructor for ACES 260, Introduction to Leadership Theory. From her observations, the classes seem beneficial to the students (Brady, 2006). They cater to the students' needs and are designed to allow career exploration. Since most of the classes are only offered to Weston residents, this provides them an opportunity to meet and get to know the people they see daily. This allows them to form study group and be more comfortable interacting with one another.

For the other teachers, Claire advises them to construct their classes in ways that are conducive to hyper-learning. The classes should provide a structure that allows the students to explore the subjects. Weston Exploration encourages a student-centered environment with a fun and "hands-on" approach. To ensure that instructors provide creativity in the classroom she bans them from using Power Point in the classroom. Claire also encourages the teachers to personally get to know their students outside of class (Brady, 2005). As an incentive, she offers to pay for the activity and a book stipend.

Claire heard about the program through the Housing Recruitment Conference. This is a convention where all potential university housing employee meet and network. They go through several interviews at the conference. The finalists are then brought back to their respective university placements to go through another round of interviews.

During her undergraduate work, Claire attended Michigan State University, where she lived in a Living-Learning Community. However, since her living-learning experience was not great, she has a passion for helping students plan out their lives. She calls Weston Exploration her "perfect match" because she desired to be a career advisor but could not envision herself being behind a desk all day. During the interview it was evident that Claire is an asset to the program. Students appreciate her openness and jovial spirit and often come back to visit after leaving Weston Hall. Talking with Claire, we found that since the population of Weston mostly consists of freshmen, it has been acclaimed as one of the university's most social dorms, making it easier to meet people and develop friendships. The program offers and promotes exploration inside and outside of the classroom. They even go so far as to push their limits in rock climbing, obstacle courses, and other team and trust building tasks, activities not found in other dorms (Brady, 2006). Additionally, every Friday, participants have the opportunity to participate in the "Get on the Bus" program which allows them to visit numerous workplaces around the Urbana-Champaign community. For instance, on one trip the students visited a chef and his kitchen. These many unique on and off-site activities help the residents to discover various career options.

Claire's main advice to the students is to take advantage of the resources available. The students pay an extra \$180 fee, which goes towards activities and supplies (Brady, 2006). The resources are generated to be easy and accessible to them. If there is a question, Weston Hall students can simply go downstairs to get an answer. The Weston staff is professionally trained and wants to help their students. They take pride in creating a sense of community and safety. They make themselves readily available for students to drop in to discuss academics or personal concerns. Additionally, resources should be used because the Weston Exploration is "created for you [the student] by you." What Claire is referring to is the fact that the program is constantly receiving feedback in order to be more effective in their planning and organizing. They conduct several surveys throughout the semester to determine whether to eliminate certain components or to enhance them. If she finds that something is not working they will stop implementing it. Claire's job requires her to constantly innovate programs to tailor them to her students' needs.

For example, this past fall, Claire noticed that her incoming freshmen kept coming to ask questions about how to register for classes online. She realized they did not know how to register because during the summer their academic advisors did the registering for them. She then designed a program to teach them how to register and found it to be very effective.

### *Resident Director*

In order to understand how the program of Weston Hall operates, we conducted an interview with Dustin Fritsche, the Weston Hall Resident Director. As director, he basically supervises the RAs and helps them to organize and prepare residential programs that are career focused (Fritsche, 2006). Dustin said that he is not really involved in the classes or courses (the academic side) of the hall; he thinks he is still struggling to find his role in the Weston Exploration. He emphasized that he and the staff members of the hall try to serve students better by surveys and orientation programs.

When he was asked about why living at Weston is so much fun, he answered confidently that it is because Weston Hall provides a good social atmosphere for students. Therefore it is easy for them to meet and make friends. The hall also provides a good balance between each student's social and academic interactions by activities provided (Fritsche, 2006).

According to Dustin, residents should utilize the Weston Exploration resources because they pay for programs to have a program director, classes, and courses. This is true specifically for those who are unsure about their career/major. It is good way for them to find what they want to do.

Dustin went to schools where there were no programs like Weston Exploration. Although those schools had counseling programs, he could not find the same level of effectiveness in those programs compared to the programs in the Weston Exploration. He applied for this position because he wanted to be challenged and to have more experiences since he felt like he did not learn anything particular from his previous jobs (Fritsche, 2006). He was interested in Weston Hall because it is known as one of the best Living-Learning Community on campus.

His best advice for students was to come down and check out what the program has, ask questions, and try to be involved in different programs that the hall provides. He believes that participating classes/courses outside of school will enrich college life for students.

### *Resident Advisors*

As a whole, most of the Resident Advisors (RA) interviewed believe that Weston's excellent reputation sparks from its excellent social network. When pressed for further explanation on the matter, many believe that the social network grows because residents of Weston tend to be members of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with undecided majors. This could possibly be due to the fact that the majority of undergraduate students are admitted to the university through this particular department. This allows students to turn to one another, and more specifically, use each other to build their friendships. Additionally, with similar class schedules many students are able to participate in the many extracurricular activities that Weston offers at the same time.

Weston Exploration offers a unique resource to a resident that is not available anywhere else on campus (Anonymous, 2006). The classes and activities that are offered through the system are

geared toward helping students find a career path that best suits their personality. Students can take classes ranging from “how to learn a specific sport” all the way to “how to create a resume”. Additionally, these classes help students network and make it easier for them to get internships and jobs through the university (Cvikota, 2006).

The RAs actually made it quite clear to our group that Weston Hall is not for everyone. It is geared toward students who are still exploring their academic options and future plans. Also, through living in Weston Hall, one can be exposed to all sorts of individuals. It also helps get residents involved in groups that they may not encounter on their own. Many other dorms are more geared towards students who want to get work done, and are very school-oriented. Weston is different in the sense that it helps people who do not know what their plans are get to know others who are in the same boat, in hopes of them growing together (Anonymous, 2006).

Most RAs knew very little about Weston prior to living there. However, they had heard of the dorms social characteristic. None really knew much about the Exploration program or that it was geared toward Undecided Liberal Arts and Sciences majors. The selection process for Weston Resident Advisors is no different from that of any other dorm. The applicants all go through the same basic interview process, however the applicants who seem to be the most outgoing and social, are often placed in Weston Hall. No one applied to be an RA with Weston. They simply interviewed with Resident Life, and from there were assigned to a specific dorm if they chose to accept the positions.

From the Advisor’s stand point almost everyone agreed that the classes were beneficial. However, none of the RAs felt that the classes were more beneficial than a class they could have simply taken at the University and received credit for it. Many of the courses offered in Weston are special because they are offered in Weston. They give students the ability to take courses they may not have experienced through the University of Illinois.

#### *Multicultural Advocate*

After meeting with Seema Kamath, the Weston Hall Multicultural Advocate (MA), our group learned quite a bit about a side of Weston we barely knew existed. While boasting numerous different cultures, and many foreign-exchange students, Weston gives its residents the opportunity to learn about worlds that they may never have experienced before (Kamath, 2006). Kamath is quoted as saying, “Before moving to Weston, I heard that it was very social and culturally diverse.” Seema said she wanted to be an MA largely because multiculturalism has always interested her. Additionally, if people can understand a person’s culture, then it becomes easier to understand the individual. Ms. Kamath also said that dialogue between the students, as well as the advocates, is highly encouraged as an MA. Weston does not feel that by simply reading up on a specific religion one can call themselves knowledgeable (Kamath, 2006). Rather, it takes much discussion between two individuals before someone can truly say they are well versed in a whole new culture.

In addition to working with students, the Multicultural Advocate is encouraged to set up activities that students can take advantage of. An example of one of Seema’s most recent activities was the “Religious Exhibition Workshop.” In this workshop, Kamath had member of many different religions come to Weston and set up booths, while students were able to go around to the different cultures and learn from different individuals. Afterwards, Kamath had each religion put together a small lecture that helped to answer many students’ general questions. This program was not only a success, but it won Seema Kamath won an award for her excellence.

Her role is important to Weston Exploration because as our society becomes more diverse each day, it is important that as educated individuals, students at the University of Illinois are tolerant and knowledgeable of the cultures that surround them now and in the future (Kamath, 2006). Through activities such as the ones Seema has set forth, students have the opportunity to be exposed to lifestyles and cultures that they may encounter in the workplace.

#### *Instructor*

After a brief, but thorough, interview with an Instructor of Weston Exploration, Michelle Burkett, our group was given an excellent insight into the Exploration from the point of view of

one of its top staff members. Michelle believes that the reasoning behind Weston's popularity among students comes from the students themselves (Burkett, 2006). Since residents of Weston are able to live amongst each other, as well as take classes together, the dormitory provides an environment where students get to really feel comfortable with one another. Additionally, since classes in the Exploration program are relatively small, they often lend themselves to a discussion type atmosphere, which in turn produces an environment that is more conducive to learning. This environment, coupled with unique lesson plans that are catered to the students' needs, really allows students to learn more about their goals and aspirations (Burkett, 2006). Michelle also pointed out that these classes are generally not lectures because the Exploration program is more centered on individuals as opposed to the whole group.

In addition to the excellent atmosphere with which the Exploration provides its' students, Michelle feels that Weston Hall is special because it caters to first year students who are unsure of their future plans (Burkett, 2006). This is a surprisingly large demographic. With the use of the career center, academic advisors, multicultural advocate, and the personal advisors, students are given every opportunity to begin their college careers on the right foot. Also, because of the "close knit family" environment that the Weston Explorations offers students, as well as, staff all form relationships that last well beyond the resident's year(s) at Weston Hall.

Michelle's largest concern about the Weston Exploration program is the lack of student interest. She encourages students to take advantage of these resources while they are so cheap and accessible. In fact, every student living in Weston pays a considerable deal to live in the hall, and therefore it is to their benefit to utilize the opportunities given to them. Michelle feels that the reason behind most students' disinterest in the program is due to their lack of knowledge of what the program has to offer (Burkett, 2006). Perhaps if students were better educated on what the Exploration program has to offer, they would take more advantage of it.

## **Weston Students' Perspectives**

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To further investigate the *Learning Outcomes* document, we designed an interview specifically for the students that asked questions according to the program's goals. Weston Exploration takes pride in its ability to build close relationships with its students. So we composed an interview that would give a clue as to if the program is actually a benefit to the students. These interviews also provided us with a better understanding of how much and to what extent the students utilize the resources available through the program.

After meeting with some former residents of Weston Hall, our group was better able to understand why many students do not actively participate in the Weston Exploration program. Dray Patterson and Ryan Barandino both felt that the reason they refrained from participation in the program was largely due to their lack of knowledge (2006). Both gentlemen felt as though in the beginning of the academic year, the Weston Exploration program was highly stressed by the staff, but as the year dragged on, little was mentioned about it. They felt that they rarely received emails or notifications as to what the program was up to, and since they were so busy with regular University courses, they did not take the time to explore much on their own.

Additionally, both young men were unaware of the additional fee that was required to live in Weston Hall. This came as a huge shock to Patterson who firmly believes that he would have not lived in Weston had he know this, or he would have otherwise taken full advantage of the program. When further questioned as to why they were not very active within the Weston Exploration program, the recurring theme in both interviews was lack of knowledge and lack of interest. Perhaps if the coordinators of the Weston Exploration program focused more heavily on educating students as to the facilities located in Weston Exploration, the overall outlook of the program would greatly improve.

However, when we interviewed two students, Amanda Ball and Meagan Mau, who are heavily involved with the Weston Exploration's Hall Council, we found that the more one participates, the stronger relationships are built. As result, both felt very comfortable talking to the staff, in particular Claire Brady, about personal and academic issues. Amanda also mentioned

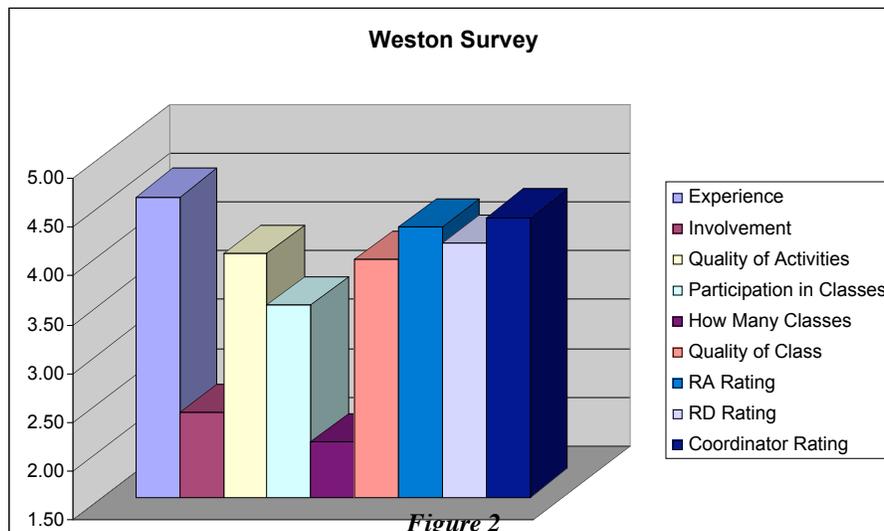
occasionally visiting Megan Hazen, one of the academic advisors, for scheduling purposes (Ball, 2006). When asked how often they used the resources, both responded that they rarely took advantage. They were fully aware they pay an extra \$180 for the classes, library, computer center and other tools available, but did not have the time to frequently use them. Since both are on the council and deal with the hall's funding, they appreciate and understand the importance of the extra \$180 fee for academic and social events.

Throughout the program, the residents have investigated a variety of career options (Mau, 2006). As mentioned before, one program implemented is the weekly "Get On the Bus." One program both participated in was their favorite, the Pizza Crawl, when they visited several pizzerias and sample numerous types of pizza. Even though some students, like Amanda and Meagan, already come into the Exploration program with an idea of their future career goals, "Get On the Bus" and other university courses help students to confirm their dreams and goals (Ball, 2006). As a result of participating in the program, they believe that their workplace writing, communication, and leadership skills have been sharpened. Both also noted that their network of relationships with the staff have helped them tremendously in their academic careers and in reducing stress (2006).

Amanda and Meagan are very satisfied with the excellent services. They suggested that the program should put more effort towards helping the majority of the students become more aware of the resources available. They would also like to see an extra computer lab.

## Surveying the Land

We conducted many surveys pertaining to the undergraduate students of Weston Hall. In total, we had nineteen students fill out surveys. Out of these nineteen, eight were male and eleven were female, twelve were freshmen and seven were sophomores. The overall consensus of why these students chose to live in this dorm was because it was in the "six-pack" which is a nick name for the six main dorms on the Champaign side of campus. Weston Hall is a very social dorm with lots of opportunities for meeting new people. A few of the students also said that they chose this dorm because of the Living-Learning Community, "Weston Hall Exploration," located in the basement of Weston Hall. They all agreed that the living and learning program was very convenient and beneficial compared to the other classes around campus. Weston Hall Exploration also gives students a more personal relationship with the professor because of the small class sizes.



This chart represents the average ratings, from one to five, of what the students thought were the best and worst parts about living in Weston Hall. Many believe that their experience was the best part about living in Weston Hall. The involvement with the activities put on at Weston Hall seemed to be the worst aspect. Many students explained that the reason why they haven't been more involved with Weston Hall is because they were never informed of the benefits that their

residence hall provides. More than half of the residents have been involved with classes in the Weston Exploration program and all of them have said that the classes have been beneficial to their experience here at college. The residents are also very pleased with the way the RA's, RD's, and especially the Program Coordinator do their jobs.

## **Conclusion**

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After studying the Weston Hall activity system, we discovered that the Weston Exploration program accommodates each student's individual academic goals and needs. Through the use of many tools, such as a career advisor, a program coordinator, an onsite writers workshop, additional various classes and structured programs, as well as a Weston library, the hall provides a unique experience for its students. After meeting with the staff and students of Weston, we learned how each person within the Weston Exploration contributes to achieving the program's mission. Each staff member is encouraged to get to know each student on a personal level, while guiding them towards academic decisions they are satisfied with. Weston Hall is focused on students who are unsure of their majors and career paths. It gives them the opportunity to explore different options and take advantage of chances that other students may not be offered.

The Weston atmosphere encourages students to interact not only one another, but also with the staff that works the building. Students are given the opportunity to network so that they can build relationships that may help them later on in their college careers. RAs frequently remind students to take advantage of classes offered in Weston, as well as to leave the room doors open. In addition, the Weston RAs often design programs specifically for their residents, in hopes of getting them to interact with each other. The staff at Weston Hall is very committed to involving students in the Hall-wide activities. However, after all the research our group completed, we felt that the biggest obstacle to Weston Hall's success lies in the students' lack of involvement in the hall activities, as well as in the Exploration program.

In conducting interviews and surveys with past and present students, we believe that the *Learning Outcomes* document is effective in accomplishing its goals only when students realize and take advantage of its resources. However, the main concern is that the majority do not utilize them. But the variety of differences in opinions from past and present students shows that the program is trying make improvements and adjustments according to the students' needs and requests.

As a group, we felt that by studying Weston Hall, many of us would have chosen to live there upon entering the University of Illinois. Additionally, we all would have made a point to use the facilities in Weston Hall to our benefit. Many times upperclassmen look back on their college careers with regrets, and we feel that the Weston Exploration does an excellent job of preventing future academic problems.

## **Recommendations**

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We found that Weston has a lot to offer its students. While our research was extensive, there are many aspects of the program we did not get to explore such as how many students are turned away from due to limited resources. As a means of expanding and attracting students to the Weston Exploration program, we believe that Weston needs to make a few adjustments. They are as follows:

- Make sure Weston Hall residents are aware that they pay an extra fee to be apart of this activity system
- Educate students about what the Exploration program has to offer them
  - Update Weston Exploration website
  - Have RAs explain to residents how the Exploration program works
- Offer more second half eight-week long courses
  - Keeps students from being overwhelmed with classes
  - Exposes them to a variety of classes
  - Helpful when trying to decide a major
- Emphasize that classes are easier at Weston Hall

- Different structure of classes
- More interactive
- Stress the unique experiences of Weston Exploration

If Weston Exploration continues to grow and become a bigger success than what it already is, we feel that the next step would be to implement this program in dorms throughout campus. As a result of the study we have conducted on Weston Hall, the University of Illinois will be able to get a new perspective on the benefits and flaws of the Weston Exploration program. Additionally, the University of Illinois will also gain insight into students' lives and how they view some of the programs it puts together.

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## APPENDIX

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### Weston Hall Project Resident Survey

**Classification:** Freshman \_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

**Sex:** Female \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_

How many years have you lived at Weston 1 2 3 4 5

Have you lived at any other university dormitory yes no

Why did you choose to live at Weston Hall

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Please Rate from 1-5, with 1 meaning poor and 5 meaning excellent

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|---|-----|----|---|---|---|
| 1. How would you rate your Weston Hall experience   | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. How involved are you with the hall's programs    | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. how would you rate the quality of the activities | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Have you participated in the Weston classes      | yes | no |   |   |   |
| 5. How many   | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. How would you rate the quality                   | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. How would you rate your RA                       | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. How would you rate your Resident Director        | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. How would you rate your Program Coordinator      | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If you participated in any classes, were they beneficial? Why or why not?

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Would you return to the program? Why or why not?

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### Weston Exploration Interview Questions

#### *Staff*

1. What is your job
2. Why did you apply for this position?
3. Why is living at Weston Hall so much fun?
4. Why should Weston Hall residents utilize Exploration resources?
5. What would be your best advice for students (who live and who will live in Weston Hall)?
6. Did you live in Weston Hall before?
7. What did you hear/know about Weston Hall before you lived there?
8. Have you participated in any Weston Exploration classes?
  - a. Were they beneficial?
  - b. How?

#### *Residents*

- 1) What kind of relationship do you have with the Weston staff
  - a. How comfortable are you with talking to the staff about your personal life
  - b. How do you use them to create a successful academic career
- 2) Are you aware of any opportunities exclusively available to Weston students
- 3) What academic or career orientated programs have you participated in

- a. How did you benefit from them
- 4) Do you readily use the resources (classes, workshops, etc.) available to you
  - a. Which ones do you use
  - b. How often
  - c. How helpful were they
  - d. What is the most beneficial resource? Why?
- 5) What careers have you investigated
  - a. Are you still searching
  - b. How successful are you in finding a major
- 6) How involved are you with the residential life activities
  - a. Do you enjoy them? Why?
  - b. Have they helped you make many friendships
  - c. Do you feel that you have developed friendships that you can trust
- 7) Did you know that you pay an extra \$180 to live here
  - a. Do you think it's worth the money? Why?
- 8) Have you participated in the wellness programs provided for you
  - a. How beneficial are they
- 9) What skills have you developed through this program
- 10) Are there any improvements that should be implemented
- 11) Is there any thing that should be eliminated