Off Campus Housing Survey
Adult, Graduate, and Off Campus Student Services
Department of Student Life
Spring 2003

Background
Every spring Off Campus Student Services hosts the Housing Fair, which provides students an opportunity to interact with a variety of property managers, so they can make housing decisions for the summer and fall. This is the second year that Student Life Studies has worked with Off Campus Student Services in assessing students and property managers.

Method
The survey was developed using Teleform®, survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package.

Of the 518 surveys distributed, 518 were returned, yielding a 100% response rate. However, more people attended the Housing Fair than responded to the survey, so the responses indicate only those who attended and took the time to fill out the brief survey.

Results
Results will be reported as means and frequency percentages. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Qualitative themes are reported here; the entire list can be found in a separate document. In addition, standard deviations, which describe the spread of the data, are found in the statistical tables in a separate document.

Students were asked for their name and contact information to be entered into a drawing. That data will not be reported here.

Of the 455 participants who answered the question about classification, 18% were freshmen, 29% were sophomore, 24% were juniors, 23% were seniors, and 6% were graduate students.

The on-campus students were asked whether they were thinking about moving off campus. Of the 246 who responded, 82 said that they were contemplating moving off campus. The reasons included more space, the ability to cook, privacy and lower expenses.

Of the 306 off campus students who responded, 72% were planning on moving to a different location next year. The reasons included dissatisfaction with current location (poor maintenance, problems with the landlord, etc.), location (bad neighborhood, not on a bus route), changing roommates, expenses, and space.

When asked if they had attended the Bee a Good Neighbor Carnival, 85% had not, while the other 15% had attended.

In addition, 37% of the respondents knew about Aggie Search, an on-line roommate and housing database. Of those who did know about it, 85 people learned by word of mouth, while 57 used
the Off Campus Student Services website. In addition, 48 read about it in *The Battalion*, 27 found it in the Off Campus Survival Manual, and 8 heard about it at orientation. The 22 people who checked “other” wrote in comments such as the Off Campus Student Services website, friends, or campus administrators. Four people heard about it on the radio.

Of the 446 who responded to the question, “Have you used Aggie Search?” 28% had used the service, while the other 72% had not. Students were asked about suggestions for the site, and several people indicated that it should be updated more often. Other suggestions included the ability to search by washer/dryer connection, more explicit pet policies, listing rent by person or total, and adding photographs or floor plans. Several people positively commented on the website and had used it successfully. Over 76% of the respondents who used Aggie Search said that it was user friendly.

When asked if they had heard of Adult, Graduate, and Off Campus Student Services, 40% of the 432 respondents had heard of the office, while 60% had not. Of those who had heard of it, word of mouth was the most frequent response (78) followed by *The Battalion* (54). Thirty-four visited the Off Campus Student Services website, 32 used the Off Campus Survival Manual, and 19 found out through their orientation. Fifteen respondents marked “other” and listed specific people, classes and visiting the office.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Off Campus Student Services may want to capitalize on the marketing methods of word of mouth, the office website, and *The Battalion*. Based on the comments from students who live on campus, seniors in the Corps may be an untapped target audience, since some of them will not be graduating after their four years in the Corps.

These results should be shared with the Department of Residence Life, so that they have more information about why students are moving off campus. There may be opportunities for co-programming to make moving off campus a smooth transition.

A recommendation for the next survey: the questions need to be more clearly delineated whether all students or just off campus students should respond to particular questions. Some off campus students answered the on campus question and vice versa, and there may have been confusion about who was supposed to answer the rest of the questions.

Off Campus Student Services should continue to poll students about their living experiences and use of services to improve programs and services for students.

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