Identifying and Nurturing Community

A Survey Instrument

by

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Report on Oral Defense of Project

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Having heard the oral defense of the above project, the Advisory Committee:

XX A) Finds the defense of the project to be satisfactory and accepts the thesis as submitted.

____B) Finds the defense of the project to be unsatisfactory and recommends that defense be rescheduled contingent upon:

Advisory Committee:

[Signatures]

Date: 8/26/98
For Maia, David and Kyle
You opened my eyes to the importance of belonging.
Introduction

Time has passed since the construct of “community” was a media buzzword. Yet, even still, individuals speak of this almost ancient word -- community. Definitions and descriptions vary immensely. For perhaps this very reason, talk about “community” seems to occur quite easily, but a full grasp of the term seems unclear and ambiguous.

If “community” is important to individuals, then it stands to reason that it is important to the groups to which they belong and the myriad of communities in which they interact on a daily basis. These can be their families, their churches, their work settings, their neighborhoods, their towns, their nations; each community nests within and overlaps with others.

Amitai Etzioni, founder of the Communitarian movement, asserts that community “is a place in which people know and care for one another – the kind of place in which people do not merely ask ‘How are you?’ as a formality but care about the answer” (Etzioni, 1993, p. 31). He admits that this description has been criticized as a “warm, fuzzy” approach to the concept of community, but insists “Communities speak to us in moral voices. They lay claims on their members” [emphasis his] (Etzioni, 1993, p. 31). While Etzioni’s views are on a more global scale, they can be used when observing smaller, more intimate groups.

If feeling a part of a community is important to individuals, then it stands to reason that building community is important for organizations. And, if it is important, how do they encourage and sustain it? What does it look like? What does it feel like? How does it sound?

Community is not just “something that happens.” It can be, and is, created. There is often a concerted effort on the part of the founders of a group to cause individuals to drop their barriers and become a cohesive “one.” Sometimes, groups will assert that they did not “do” anything, they just became. In these situations, while they may not be consciously aware of their efforts, they,
too, have found that their group has similar characteristics to others who had purposely set out to become recognizable communities. By defining and recognizing these common traits, groups can learn to build upon their strengths while working to overcome their "weaknesses."

The difficulty here lies in the fact that little to no work has been done on developing an instrument which would assist groups in measuring or benchmarking the level to which their sense of community has grown or lessened. By recognizing key elements related to community, groups and their leaders can respond to their dynamism.

This project develops a tool that identifies key elements found in groups that feel they have attained a sense of community. The instrument allows groups to measure how much "community" they have attained and in what arenas they are strongest. It also assists organizations in looking at the delicate balance between the individual and collective group.

This project focuses on groups that presumably seek the construct of community - residence halls at a mid-sized university. A survey will be developed to determine if residents feel as if they belong to a community.

The survey was administered to residents of two floors to determine how they view themselves in terms of having a sense of "community." It was anticipated that the floor identified (by its residence hall director) as having strong community would demonstrate this by scoring "higher" in the various areas identified as components of community. Conversely, it was expected that the floor which is considered to have little or not community will score lower. The results demonstrated that even a group identified as having "no community" exhibited certain traits identified as key components of community.
Literature Review

Sociological scholars typically trace their discussion of what community is to Ferdinand Toennies' descriptions of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. Toennies (1964) differentiated these two concepts by drawing the analogy of the commonness found amongst family members as indicative of *gemeinschaft* while the urbaneness of "modern" society (Toennies was writing in the 1880s) was representative of *gesellschaft*. Gemeinschaft brought a sense of caring, shared ideals, common history. On the other hand, gesellschaft represented a sense of impersonality, of shared space (but not necessarily values), and a pervasion of individualism. “While Gemeinschaft usually is translated to mean ‘community,’ Toennies seems to emphasize communal spirit or communal relationship rather than the spatial dimension. Gemeinschaft is a form of communing” (Christenson, 1984, p. 162).

Toennies further stipulates that *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* can be found in all kinds of associations since their distinctions are primarily drawn from whether association is through “natural will” (*gemeinschaft*) or “rational will” (*gesellschaft*). “[N]atural will means nothing more than a direct, naïve, and therefore emotional volition and action, whereas on the other hand, rational will is most frequently characterized by consciousness” (Toennies, 1964, p. 249).

Looking at the concept of community through the centuries, Phillips (1993) writes:

Just as today, it is likely that people in the past were involved in networks of overlapping relationships that served as sources of both social constraint and support. Individuals must have oriented themselves to specific persons – and, of course, sometimes to specific groups – who had special significance for them. These special persons and groups would have served as points of reference for the individual, and their norms and values would have helped provide a basis for his or her sense of what was good, right, important, desirable, and the like (p. 191).
Taking an almost geometrical approach to the human phenomenon of community, Buber (1967) compares a community’s essence to the center of a circle. “The real origin of community is undoubtedly only to be understood by the fact that its members have a common relationship to the center superior to all other relations: the circle is drawn from the radii, not from the points of the periphery” (p. 89). Etzioni (1993) makes a similar analogy, comparing the many communities people participate in to the nesting toys popular in China where a tiny figure is nestled inside a slightly larger one which is fitted within an even larger one, etc. People experience community in many different arenas: their neighborhood, churches, work place, volunteer organizations, families.

William Davidson and Robert Feldman (1992) interviewed people from similarly diverse communities on what “community” meant to them. Reactions were drawn from a variety of populations: high school students, businesses, university staff, community leaders, retired individuals. Out of these conversations, a list of “essential concepts” emerged. These include:

- Identification: togetherness, adhesiveness, interdependence, cohesion
- Sacrifice
- Acceptance of others
- Trust, mutual regard
- Familiarity
- Commitment
- Caring, love, compassion
- Open dialogue
- Rituals
- Respect, dignity
- Empowerment, shared power
- Balance in personal life
- Sense of spirituality
- Growth versus self interest
- Diversity
- Multiple generations
- Vision: shared values and responsibilities
- A sense of history
We can also find confirmation of communities in the stories people tell. The essence of the group often can be found in not only what they tell, but also in the way they tell it. Or, perhaps more correctly, the viewpoint of the person telling the story provides insight into that individual's beliefs and needs.

In relating one man's view on exercising "his sense of social responsibility," Bellah et al. (1985) relayed that a former antiwar demonstrator spoke about becoming a "scoutmaster with my kids." He is not interested in exerting extensive energy getting involved in national political causes. "I have a big problem with identifying with hundreds of millions of whatever — people, flowers, cars, miles. I ... see the community around me" (p. 179).

Blending this individual's concept of community with what an organization expects of its members can be a challenge. Most organizational communication research does not use the term "community." Yet they do refer to family, culture, folklore, rituals — all components of the concept of communities. In discussing the Tavistock Institute, a training arena for group leaders, Scott Peck (1987) observes:

A community might also be called a working group, but the term "community" is, on the whole, preferable. "Working group" suggests efficiency and effectiveness, but it does not imply the love and commitment, the sacrifice, and the transcendence required to build community. Had Tavistock leaders spoken of the necessity for such values, I believe they would have been more successful in forming their clients into effective working groups — that is to say, communities (p. 108).

Seeking social structures (i.e., community) within businesses that excelled was eminent in Peters' and Waterman's (1984) research. They found that "the language in people-oriented institutions has a common flavor" (Peters & Waterman, 1984, p. 260).

Companies like 3M have become a sort of community center for employees, as opposed to just a place to work. We have employee clubs, intramural sports,
travel clubs, and a choral group. This has happened because the community in which people live has become so mobile it is no longer an outlet for the individual. The schools are no longer a social center for the family. The churches have lost their drawing power as social-family centers. With the breakdown of these traditional structures, certain companies have filled the void. They have become sort of mother institutions, but have maintained their spirit of entrepreneurship at the same time [while maintaining a respect for the individual]" (Lehr cited in Peters & Waterman, 1984, p. 261).

Peck (1987) suggests perhaps the most successful community in the world is the organization known as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). He asserts that many communities, such as AA, are centered on reaction to crises. "The remarkable success of AA suggests that if we recognized that a crisis is an everyday event in our lives, it would make community a matter of routine" (Peck, 1987, p. 79). AA is a spiritual program in which alcoholics can find support and acceptance in their search for sobriety. AA, and its sister organization, Al-Anon (for the family and friends of alcoholics), state as one of their twelve "traditions" that "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity" (World Service Organization, 1987, p. 374). This is an example where a community responds to crises in a way that transcends an individual's ability to grapple with the issue. For those for whom this works, they are taken beyond individualism and into a realm where the total is greater than a sum of the parts.

In contrast to this crisis-orientation approach, Hillery (1984), in his study of communal organizations (most specifically monasteries), focused on what he called the concept of agapic love. Taking Toennies' *gemeinschaft* theory forward through the concept of family, Hillery asserts that "in those groups where the family is not permitted, agape can be substituted" (p. 328).

Until we have evidence that certain sentiments are peculiar to communal organizations, it would seem best to abandon the concept of community as a sentiment. Nevertheless, though community has not been studied here as a sentiment, sentiment has been shown to be important to communal organizations.
If we are to understand how communal organizations function and change, then such a concept as love is important (Hillery, 1984, p. 329).

Bringing into play such a "nonscientific" concept as love can be difficult to understand, Hillery acknowledges. "What was I to do as a scientist? Refuse to study this phenomenon because it was not scientific? If this course were taken, it would rule out the heart of the study" (Hillery, 1984, p. 315).

This type of impassioned inquiry can be seen applied not just to ephemeral concepts such as love, but also to more concrete issues such as a sense of place.

It has been argued that community can only exist within a sense of "place" (Snyder, 1992; Abbott, 1987; Phillips, 1993), that commitment is dependent upon a sense of shared history. Still others (Scime, 1994) argue that while this may have been true at some point in the history of humanity, this criterion has become archaic; our sense of interconnectivity has been altered by the technological means now at our disposal.

The spatial dimension is an important consideration. Often, discussion centers upon community being dependent upon the locale; as if being in a small, rural village allows community to exist while large metropolises preclude that possibility. As Cohen (1985) points out, "community is that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction we call 'society'" (p. 15).

Cohen suggests that the argument that large metropolises are incapable of attaining a sense of community because their size and complexity is misdirected. He argues that complexity is often greater in smaller locales given the fact that individuals often assume a multitude of roles and interact amongst themselves on a, hence, more intricate level than persons who, by way of living in a large metropolis, typically have only one "role" and very limited interaction.
Peck (1987) agrees. He states, “we tend to speak of our hometowns as communities...[And while they] may well be geographical collections of human beings with tax and political structures in common, [there is] precious little else [that] relates them to each other. Towns are not, in any meaningful sense of the word, communities” (p. 25).

Looking beyond the obvious connection to hometowns, Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1983) have recognized cultural “performances” within organizations. These performances shape the nature of how organizations acculturate personnel and how personnel relate to one another, joining and fusing into a work community. They note that performances are interactional, contextual, episodic and improvisational. There are personal, organizational, task and social rituals designed to provide paths of "expected" interactions. Rituals “not only introduce a regularity into organizational experience, they are texts which display the significances of the culture” (p. 137). Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo also acknowledge that organizational community has dimension through sociality, politics, and enculturation. “From our point of view, a culture is not something an organization has; a culture is something an organization is” (p. 146).

What type of "entity" an organization is is partially determined by the perspective brought by the researcher. Putnam (1983) points out that functionalists cast organizations as “social facts or concrete entities” (p. 36). In this framework, the organization remains constant with members shaping (or re-shaping) their goals and activities within the structure. Contrast this approach to that of an interpretivist who would see organizations as coalitions with varying priorities versus monolithic entities. Putnam finds the interpretivist approach "particularly appealing to organizational communication researchers. By treating organizations as the social construction of reality, organizing becomes a process of communicating. In like manner, communication is not
simply another organizational activity; it creates and recreates the social structures that form the crux of organizing* (p. 53).

What limits must a researcher place upon the construct of community? Must there be a physical environment (such as a town, or school or work site) present before one can label an activity a community-based one? Scime (1994) believes not. In a society that seems to be foundering in its search for a community base, Scime believes that many have found their niche in “Cyberville.” Yet, even in his defense of the reality of community via computer interlinks, Scime warns that we should not passively accept this new community uncritically.

The social sciences have not yet advanced to the point where we can say “this is good for the human condition, this is valuable, this is what makes us human” with absolute certainty. However, neither should we reject the idea of virtual communities out of hand. I contest that “Cyberville,” like Las Vegas, is a nice place to visit, but one probably wouldn’t want to live there (Scime, 1994, n.p.).

How do people begin to identify with particular groups or communities? What are the markers, the identifying touchstones? Viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism, the social aspects of human communication are examined. “Self and society are viewed as process, not structure, to freeze the process would be to lose the essence of person-society relationships” (Littlejohn, 1992, p. 171).

Finding group meaning through symbols is a basic component of Cohen’s approach to community. His work has focused on a number of societies ranging form the Cyrenaican Bedouins to the Naskapi Indians (on the coast of Labrador) to a West Indian carnival. Each of these groups have unique expressions of their essence, whether it be the symbolism inherent in the steel drums used in the carnival or the ritual (communal) sharing and eating of Caribou bone marrow by the Naskapi.
Kreps' (1983) application of Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo's work with the concept of culture (or community) in organizations "suggests that organizations should recognize the importance of organizational folklore and culture in the assimilation of new members into their organization" (p. 255). Use of company folklore assisted the company under review (RCA) in better assimilating new personnel into the "ways" of corporate culture while increasing the chances that new staff will "behave in accordance with cultural norms that are part of the organization's intelligence" (pp. 255-256).

The actions and interactions found in a community are traceable to the shared meaning(s) of symbol(s). The irony is that while there may be basis for a common assignment of meaning, the individual viewpoints may, in actuality, not be consistent. "Community...[a]s a symbol,...is held in common by its members; but its meaning varies with its members' unique orientations to it" (Cohen, 1985, p. 15). Cohen (1985) observes:

A reasonable suggestion of [a] word's use would seem to imply two related suggestions: that the members of a group of people a) have something in common with each other, which b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. "Community" thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference (Cohen, 1985, p. 12).

Boundaries, thus, are a large part of a community's definition. These markers may be invisible to some, but they are important in that they assist community members in distinguishing themselves from other entities (Cohen, 1985). The "consciousness of community is, then, encapsulated in [the] perception of its boundaries, boundaries which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction" (Cohen, 1985, p. 13).

As "easily identified" boundaries (i.e., geo-social) become blurred, community members may seek out new rituals or cling to old ones. This is true even for "members [who] have been
dispersed and for whom ritual provides occasions to reconstitute the community” (Cohen, 1985, p. 51).

And, as other communities encroach, or the demands of societies-as-a-whole push against a community’s boundaries, members are likely to react by clinging to “flourishes and decorations” and “aesthetic frills,” thus strengthening the community’s symbolic base (Cohen, 1985, p. 44).

While this reactional posturing may be viewed as defensive, Cohen remarks on the irony of the relationship:

The most striking feature of the symbolic construction of community and its boundaries is its oppositional character. The boundaries are relational rather than absolute; that is, they mark the community in relation to other communities. It has been argued that the very nature of symbolism itself contains not merely the competence of discrimination, but the sense of negation: in other words, that the very rationale of symbols is that they are different in some way from the entities they symbolize (Cohen, 1985, p. 58).

This reference to the negative points to Burke’s use of the role of the negative in man’s quest for identification, where individuals look to not only what they are, but what they are not.

A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B. Or he may identify himself with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so. In being identified with B, A is “substantially one” with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another. Similarly, two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an ”identification” that does not deny their distinctness (Burke, 1989, p. 180).

Consubstantiality is man’s search for togetherness. Burke asserts that it is in “acting together” that men find their commonness through “common sensations, concepts, images, ideas and attitudes” (Burke, 1989, p. 181).
Awareness of boundaries comes when those limits are tested, either from within or without.

The norm is the boundary: its reversal, a symbolic means of recognizing and stating it. Such awareness is a necessary precondition for the valuing of culture and community. The process of evaluation is accomplished through the use of symbolic devices...and is a pre-condition for its maintenance. It rests upon the contrivance of symbolic boundaries (Cohen, 1985, p. 69).

The "maintenance" of boundaries implies activity versus placidity. The "action" can often be seen in the discourse surrounding a community. A community's rhetoric undergoes constant change, being "born anew" through language's use "as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Burke, 1989, p. 188).

Rhetoric, or discourse, presupposes a dialogue between individuals or factions. These factions may encompass individuals who face a disagreement over a relatively minor issue or a more substantial exchange between factions of community members. "[A] dialogic community may promote an atmosphere of discussion and openness in the midst of multiple visions and numerous answers" (Amott, 1986, p. 10).

Such a multiplicity of views should not be viewed as divisive, but rather community enhancing. In short, the "community of otherness" holds in creative tension the importance of self, other, and principles that ground a community, while encouraging confirmation of persons, even when their ideas clash with those of the majority. Conflict is not feared in a "community of otherness"; it provides the basis for growth of the person and community willing to genuinely keep the triple focus of self, other, and community principle in creative tension (Amott, 1986, p. 8). All community members must feel free to express their thoughts — even if they inflict conflict — or the community will become closed, suffocate, and die.
People must remain open to the ideas of others as well and not remain entrenched in their own "rightness." This openness extends beyond the willingness to listen to the ability to embrace human uniqueness. "Comparative strategies that seek to keep someone down (complementary) or attempt to keep all the 'same' (symmetrical) not only degrade human dignity, but limit the number of unique and new ideas available to a community" (Arnett, 1986, p. 22). Arnett goes on to stipulate that it may even be necessary for people to admit that others may be more "gifted and talented in particular areas." And, that it is as important for groups to recognize and acknowledge the ability of some to lead as it is for those in power to be on guard against the abuse of their power over the led.

Lincoln (1989) would concur with this warning. In fact, he believes that one cannot consider discourse without concurrently looking at the concept of force. He states, "Together, discourse and force are the chief means whereby social border, hierarchies, institutional formations, and habituated patterns of behavior are both maintained and modified" (Lincoln, 1989, p. 3).

The balance of power can be seen within communities such as labor unions, civil rights actions, and the women's movement. These entities seek to balance the hierarchical tendencies within society as a whole (which, in itself, can be viewed as a community) (Arnett, 1986). While these groups may be seen as the subordinate groups of a community, they, too, must be on guard against presupposing that their way is the one and true and way. As Arnett (1986) warns, "If no conflict exists, then, in all likelihood, someone is afraid to disagree" (p. 17).

Striking the balance between self and community is called "walking the narrow ridge" by Buber (1965). Along this narrow ridge, man negotiates the needs of himself, other individuals and society as a whole.
In the most powerful moments of dialogic, where in truth "deep calls until deep," it becomes unmistakably clear that it is not the wand of the individual or of the social, but of a third which draws the circle round the happening. On the far side of the subjective, on this side of the objective, on the narrow ridge, where I and Thou meet, there is the realm of "between".

This reality, whose disclosure was begun in our time, shows the way, leading beyond individualism and collectivism, for the life decision of future generations. Here the genuine third alternative is indicated, the knowledge of which will help to bring about the genuine person again and to establish genuine community (Arnett, 1986, p. 30, quoting Martin Buber, *The way of response*, New York: Shocken Books, 1966, p. 55).

Arnett (1986) elaborates that while I is the beginning of community, it is only when We embrace I and Thou that true community can be born. Further, there are no pure yes' or no's in Buber's definition of how individuals fit within and, thus, create community.

Etzioni (The Futurist, 1991) agrees, to an extent. While Etzioni professes that "the better society...exists when individual rights and community needs are in careful balance" (The Futurist, 1991, p. 36), he also sets expectations for the participation in society. Etzioni calls this balancing the "me-ness" against the "we-ness" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 26) and looks to avoid a reactive pendulum shift from what he perceives to be a well ensconced sense of "me-ness" in American society.

Some (Bellah, et al., 1985; Fox, 1988; Stacer, 1989) believe the individualism which Etzioni is fighting is primarily reflective of white, middle-class America.¹ And this genre of individualism seems to preclude community building.

When middle-class Americans speak in interviews about their deepest feelings or their ultimate goals, they invariably use the language either of utilitarian individualism (every person for himself in the battle to get ahead) or of expressive individualism (to each person his own "growth," "value system," or "lifestyle").

¹ Bellah (1988) stipulates that while *Habits of the Heart* concentrated on white middle-class values, this was done for a variety of reasons. Among them were size of staff, financial limitations on the original research, and a recognition that the white middle class "has a cultural hegemony in contemporary America" (Bellah, 1988, p. 269). Bellah further points out that the has been told by minorities that they are also confronted by "fellow" minorities who subscribe to the middle-class values outlined in *Habits* (Bellah, 1988, p. 270).
dominant language of individualism rules out a conception of shared communal values (Fox, 1988, p. 246).

Fox (1988) elaborates that the language of individualism is borne out of a "therapeutic culture" where "individual feelings become the measure of value" (p. 247). No longer are people held accountable for the deeds they do, but rather for how they, and others, feel about them. And yet, the manner in which Americans speak of individuality may not belie the way they act (Bellah et al., 1985; Fox, 1988). Bellah (1988) elaborates: "while we do believe that our practice is often better than our language, that is because our practice is embedded in actual communities and relationships that resist the pressure of individualist language" (p. 276).

Phillips (1993) agrees that we seek to balance our individualism with our need for connectedness; however, he warns that "Communitarians exaggerate the benefits of communal membership and minimize its destructive potential" (p. 194). Phillips illustrates this by tracing the interaction of individuals in classic Greece (where the need for common defense is the motivation for cooperation) through the Middle Ages (where the feudal system served both security and economic survival needs), into eighteenth century America (again, economic concerns were the primary motivating forces). Today, many of these needs are met by institutions, thus removing the need for individuals to seek others' assistance. "Instead of friendships being viewed as relationships of mutual convenience, as they often were in the past, friendships today are more likely to be informal, intimate, private, and unspecialized" (Phillips, 1993, p. 194). Phillips further argues that it is "attachment rather than membership" (p. 195) that people are seeking.

Applying these constructs in university residence halls, one finds a microcosm available for inspection. Traditional residence hall students have recently graduated from high school and are away from their parents for an extended period of time for the first time. A myriad of
expectations are held by students. Among them, is a priority “to develop a sense of community with students and faculty” (Mosier, et al., 1990, p. 8). Only 4.7% of the respondents indicated that this was a low priority in their college experience. Indicating that this was either a high or their highest priority, was 58.2% of the students.

Residence halls provide a unique setting for study. These are individuals who live in close proximity, who have a similar purpose (pursuit of a college education) and are typically from the same generation. In addition, there is extensive programming and educational opportunities provided in the residence halls to enhance residents’ sense and pursuit of community. Finally, there are identified staff positions (Community Advisors, CAs) who are specifically trained in providing guidance to floor residents on how to interact with one another, govern themselves, and resolve conflict.

The handbook provided to residence hall students at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point states:

Your floor (or “house”) is a group of rooms on the floor where you live. And it's more than that – it's a neighborhood of unique individuals who are living in close [proximity] together sharing ideas and feelings with each other, and working together in planning floor programs and projects. Each house is a community and, like any other community, it will run more smoothly if members cooperate with each other on matters that affect daily life (University Housing, 1997, p. 2).

Evaluating how well residents have learned to become functioning members of a community will help staff and the community itself discover its strengths and weaknesses. Have they learned to balance their “me-ness” against their “we-ness” ? What types of rituals have evolved within the community? Have they learned to communicate their needs, desires and annoyances in a manner such that changes and adjustments can be made? Yet, can they maintain a sense of what is important to them as individuals while hearing the views of others? Do
they recognize and celebrate the differences amongst themselves? What types of issues have drawn them closer as a group?

As the readings have shown, community is spiderweb-like relationship, not a linear one—there is a three-dimensional aspect to it. We have come to take for granted the idea of community and have not always committed ourselves to developing and nurturing the communities to which we belong. If the desire is to have a sense of belonging, then the individual must commit to participating in the creation and evolution of his various communities. There is dynamism in this; the community is in constant change, reacting to and with its individual community members. As members join, they are enculturated and add their own unique perspectives and definitions of roles and rules. Conversely, as members leave, they take with them memories of that community which may influence their interactions with future communities. While these later interactions may be more tangential, the individual must remember to keep them as a part of their own unique past rather than constantly telling their new community how “things were done” in their old community for fear of alienation.

Knowing how well and in what areas individuals feel connected to their community would help community leaders know where their efforts to nurture would be best directed. The survey approach is one palpable means of getting such information. Other means include having open dialogue with community members, providing formal avenues for feedback, maintaining informal communication (such as “water cooler chats”).
Methodology and Results

A survey using a Likert-type scale for responses was developed based upon the concepts derived by the Davidson and Feldman (1992) work. Five major dimensions were used to umbrella the concepts they found in their community work:

Identification
- Multiple generations
- Vision

Commitment
- Sense of history
- Balance
- Sacrifice

Acceptance
- Respect
- Compassion
- Diversity
- Trust
- Economic/class lines

Communication
- Rituals
- Risk-taking
- Safety/security
- Opposition/dissension (ability to deal with ...)
- Empowerment

Organic
- Sense of spirituality
- Wellness
- Life-giving force
- Growth vs. self
- “playing”
- compassion

In creating a questionnaire, Jacobs (1974) advises the developer to consider the five following points:
• Who needs the information?
• What decision will be made based on your information?
• What facts will affect the decision?
• Whom are you asking?
• What are the consequences of a wrong answer?

For the purposes of this study, it was presumed that the information will be valuable to the residence life programming staff in determining the level of success of their attempts to develop a community within the residence halls. Decisions which might ensue include development of new approaches by staff; new programming initiatives; the curtailment or total elimination of particular efforts; and/or a review of programming priorities.

If such far-reaching decisions are to be possible, it is important to remember that the survey is designed to give an insight into a number of variables of community. This way a community might show strengths in certain arenas while needing to focus on others.

The target audience was residents within a University residence hall. "To get good information, not only must you ask a good question, but you also must ask it of someone who has the answer" (Jacobs, 1974, p. 6). The challenge in this lies in developing questions which "make sense" to college students. What might read perfectly logically to the surveyor or an administrator or an educator, might be baffling to the resident. The key is to develop questions which attack the concepts from an ephemeral approach while utilizing no-nonsense language.

Not understanding a question, or misinterpreting a question, might lead to a "wrong answer" – an answer which the respondent might change if he or she better understood the question. Consequences of a "wrong answer" have serious implication in any study. In this project, wrong answers could give a false sense of accomplishment or, perhaps even worse, a
misreading of "no community." In the case of the latter, attempts to "fix" the situation might cause what is actually a well-functioning community to be pulled apart.

Statements were developed to probe the individual's sense of community in each of the five umbrella concepts: identification, commitment, acceptance, communication, and organic. The respondents were asked to note their agreement/disagreement (using a five-point Likert scale) with each of 26 statements. The statements included are found in Appendix A along with notation of which umbrella concept(s) the statement was most closely associated.

The author contacted residence hall directors at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point at the end of the Spring 1998 semester and asked them to identify floors which had exhibited a strong sense of community and floors which had struggled in their attempt. From the responses, two floors were selected. Both were women's floors and both were located in the same residence hall. The hall director believed the second floor had a well-established community while the third floor had "no community."

A cover letter was developed (Appendix B) and sent with the "Community in Residence Halls Survey" (Appendix C). Respondents were provided a business reply envelope in which to return the survey. There was a total of 117 questionnaires mailed (63 to second floor residents, 54 to third floor residents). Of these, 29 were returned by second floor residents and 25 were returned by third floor residents; a return rate of 46% and 46.3% respectively.

Responses were tallied by floor. Each statement's response was weighted and an average for each statement calculated. Tables 1 and 2 show the response rate on each statement along with the average score for the statement.
Table 1. Response Rate and Average Response from Floor 2 Residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #</th>
<th>1 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>2 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Strongly Disagree</th>
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Table 2. Response Rate and Average Response from Floor 3 Residents.
Table 3 compares the responses for each survey statement by floor.

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<th>Statement #</th>
<th>Floor 2 Average</th>
<th>Floor 3 Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.64</td>
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<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.24</td>
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<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.92</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.93</td>
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<td>2.44</td>
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<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>2.92</td>
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<td>1.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Response Average Comparison Between Floors.

Table 4 outlines the demographic information gathered via the surveys. Residents on second floor had spent an average of 2.97 semesters in the residence halls at UW-Stevens Point and an average of 2.66 semesters on second floor. Third floor residents had spent an average of 2.92 semesters in the halls and an average of 2.12 on third floor. Both groups had a comparable split of residents who preferred to work alone versus in a group: 16:13 for second floor, 15:10 for third floor.
Summary of Findings

Floor 2 had the strongest community scores for statement 9 (I appreciated hearing the
different ideas my floormates have) with a 1.79; statement 7 (Someone from my floor went out of
his or her way to help me when I needed assistance with a 1.93; and statement 25 (I enjoyed
spending time with my floormates) with a score of 1.93 also. Additionally, statement 15 (I
participated in floor meetings) scored a 1.97.

Floor 3 scored strongest for statement 25 (I enjoyed spending time with my floormates)
with a 1.64; statement 3 (I enjoyed sharing stories with others on my floor and listening to their
experiences) with a 1.88; statement 6 (I went out of my way to help one or more of my fellow
floormates) with a 1.92; and statement 24 (I enjoyed spending time with my roommate) with a
1.92.

The least strong scores\(^2\) for Floor 2 came with statement 12 (When there was a
disagreement on our floor, we were able to work out a mutually agreeable solution) with a score of

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\(^2\) Statement 13 (Our Community Advisor was often called upon to resolve conflict on our floor) was not included in this
analysis since its higher score reflects a disagreement with the statement, indicating a decision on the groups' part to
not request intervention by the CA. Statement 17 (My parents have no idea what life was like on my floor) was also
omitted in this analysis since it was asked in order to get an idea of how much information residents chose to share
with their parents regarding their residential environment.
3.14; statement 2 (I think that the people on my floor had a strong idea of things we wanted to accomplish as a group) with a 3.07; and statement 22 (The people on my floor attended educational programs together) with a score of 3.03.

Floor 3 had the least strong scores with statement 16 (I am looking forward to coming back to live on the same floor next year) with a 4.00; statement 10 (Our floor had traditions or rituals) with a 3.88; statement 2 (I think that the people on my floor had a strong idea of things we wanted to accomplish as a group) with a 3.76; and statement 22 (The people on my floor attended educational programs together) with a score of 3.52.

While both floors scored in the 2 - 3 (agree - neutral) range for many questions, Floor 3 scored a stronger community score than floor 2 only 7 times. When looking at scores which varied by at least 10%, only five statements remained. Table 5 depicts the five statements and delineates the score differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stmt #</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Floor 2 Average</th>
<th>Floor 3 Average</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I enjoyed sharing stories with others on my floor and listening to their experiences</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My floormates respected my time for studying and private time</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>When there was a disagreement on our floor, we were able to work out a mutually agreeable solution</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I enjoyed spending time with my roommate</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I enjoyed spending time with my floormates</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 5. Statements on Which Floor 3 Scored Higher than Floor 2
Emphasis for interaction on these five statements hinges more upon one-on-one interactions than group dynamics (though 12 could also involve large group decisions).

Stronger community scores for Floor 2 versus Floor 3 occurred in 18 of the 25 statements (again, omitting statements 13 and 17, see footnote on page 23). Table 6 delineates the statements for which there was at least a 10% variance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stmt #</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Floor 2 Average</th>
<th>Floor 3 Average</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel there was a diverse group of people (ages, majors, interests) living on my floor</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I think that the people on my floor had a strong idea of things we wanted to accomplish as a group</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Someone from my floor went out of his or her way to help me when I needed assistance</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My opinions were listened to by my floormates</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I appreciated hearing the different ideas my floormates have</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our floor had traditions or rituals</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I participated in floor social functions</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I participated in floor meetings</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I am looking forward to coming back to live on the same floor next year</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The people on my floor attended educational programs together</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I participated in recreational activities with my floormates</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.55</td>
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</table>

Table 6. Statements on Which Floor 2 Scored Higher than Floor 3

The trend in these responses indicates a group effort from establishing rituals (statement 10) to attending events together (statements 22 and 23) to goal setting (statement 2) to governance (statement 15).
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Floor 3 Average</th>
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<td>2.28</td>
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<td><strong>Organic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.58</strong></td>
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Table 7. Averages by Floor for Each Umbrella Group
Grouping the major umbrella statements together provides an even clearer picture of the trend away from group dynamics by floor 3. Table 7 groups the statements together under their umbrella concept and then provides an average for each of the umbrellas.

Using this approach, Floor 3 fared better than Floor 2 only in the Commitment umbrella and then only by 0.02. It struggled the most with the Identification arena which is most strongly reflected in the low showing for rituals (statement 10) and goals (statement 2).

After the data had been accumulated and analyzed, the author contacted the residence hall director to determine the criterion he used in making his selections earlier in the project. The information he provided followed a similar vein as found in the research. Points made included (Totman, 1998, p. 1):

**Second floor - great community**

**Staff**
- New floor staff
- Very energetic and positive
- Wanted to be involved in residents' lives
- Interested in "knowing" all about people

**Government (student)**
- Government members were returning (but not in same position)
- Government made friends easily
- Government was positive about relationships made on floor
- Government and staff worked together
- Government and staff recruited houseboard [on-floor governing body]

**Residents**
- Open to new ideas
- Returners were welcoming to freshman
- Large number of hall governance staff came from this floor
- Interested in becoming involved in the University
- Interested in meeting new people and making friends
Third Floor - poor community

Staff
- 1 new CA and 1 returning CA
- Energetic, but struggled with presenting positive side of things
- Both more focused on outside life vs. Residents
- Typically waited until residents came to them

Government (student)
- All new floor government
- Government didn't always give 100%; many outside commitments/interests
- Government not interested in making friends on floor
- Government and staff seldom worked together; rather "assigned each other what they were to do"
- Floor government had few people - most unmotivated

Residents
- "Afraid" of authority
- Unmotivated
- Interested in other parts of the University
- Most kept to themselves or within smaller groups

These observations from the hall director underscore the results from the survey showing second floor to have a stronger community while third floor seemed to be struggling. In addition, his notes also lend some insight into each floor's culture. Second floor had the advantage of new staff who were enthusiastic about their roles, residents who were seeking involvement and interaction, and a governance structure that emphasized positiveness and cooperation. Third floor had staff who were committed, but not extraordinarily outgoing; residents who were more withdrawn and not interested in involvement; and a government which was not fully committed and tended to assign versus enroll.

Observations and Comments

Initial reaction to the results of the survey might be to label the third floor as having no community while the second floor could be seen as being well on its way to having a strong
community. But, upon closer examination, the reader can see that community for the third floor is being displayed on many "unseen" levels, primarily in the commitment arena. However, it lags in the identification venue. The third floor lacked the cohesive factors of goals and identity. The floor was not an asocial group, rather it had not yet become an cohesive entity.

It is clear from this inquiry that proximity does not guarantee community. It may assist it or even encourage it, but it cannot ensure that a group of individuals living within close proximity to one another will bond and form a strong community.

While the survey seems to confirm what the hall director believed was occurring, we can see that actually third floor had more of a connection than at first anticipated. This tells us that identity is a very important external component for community. Third floor seemed to have a better handle on confronting each other. Perhaps they had interacted as individuals and were more comfortable holding each other to the norms that they had established as a floor community. And, while they were able to confront one another about behaviors, they also exhibited an enjoyment in hearing about differing views. These two points do not conflict. In fact, they are nicely balanced. They allow a forum in which individuals have agreed to behavioral rules yet feel comfortable hearing differences of opinion. This illustrates Buber’s "narrow ridge" concept. These individuals have begun to engage in a dialogic communication which allows them to retain their individualism while negotiating within a group setting.

Again, the third floor did not register strong community in the identity arena; however, it does not mean that they were not caring or committed to one another, just that they did not feel a need to identify as a group. The hall director saw no community, but that would be readily explained by the fact that the group did not have a cohesive identity.
Buber says we fight to find the balance between our individualism and our belonging – the I-ness versus the we-ness. Given that the study focused on college students who, for the most part, are only two years out of high school, it would be reasonable to argue that they would be intensely enmeshed in this conflict. It may be that residents on third floor were struggling more with this issue than the residents of second floor.

This complexity of community was borne out by the scholars who have struggled to define the essence of community. Searching the literature to find a succinct definition of community only led to more and more fibers being added to what this author views as a webbed definition. Commitment cannot be considered without identity without acceptance without organic without communication. The works reviewed gave insights into each of these components, though often using distinctly other labels.

At first, Tonneis' gemeinschaft and gesellschaft seem significantly outdated. But his premise that associations are analogous to a center of a circle with all of its radii is echoed through much of the literature. Within communities, there are individuals who are balancing their oneness against many, allowing organizations to evolve, and sometimes die.

This web-like premise of communities allows us to see them as intertwined entities. We may move from one to another, but not without an impact upon each of them. This effect is true whether we are talking about a large corporate community or a smaller, more intimate, community.

Cohen argues that smaller communities may have more intricate relationships than vast metropolises – everyone is part of the various subsets. People carry their experiences with one another from one community (e.g., church) to another (e.g., work) with the incumbent positive or negative results. When we are faced with near constant interaction with a set group of individuals we may have a sense of completeness, or a sense of trappedness. If it is a group that we have
come to know, understand, and feel committed to, there is a concurrent sense of belonging – a sense of community. If it is a group that alienates us, is disapproving or generally difficult to work with, there is a claustrophobic sense – sometimes, even, a need to escape.

Can the sense of community be encouraged and the need to escape averted? This paper has argued that community can be fostered and that specific steps can be taken to promote a sense of belonging and responsibility. From Etzioni’s communitarian approach to the agapic communities outlined by Hines and to the cyber communities that Scimes extols, specific steps are taken to foster a sense of community. By identifying which arenas community is working well and which arenas need attention, groups can work to nurture their sense of community.

Most people have experienced community at its various stages. The initial period of acclimation, of learning the “language,” getting to know one’s peers, the structure of the group, where they belong and what the group’s history is. We have experienced being active, contributing members, directly — and indirectly — impacting upon the lives of fellow community members. And, we have experienced leaving a group, breaking ties, leaving a part of our identity and carrying with us an essence of that experience.

One of those experiences for this author was with a support group that shared similar concerns, though not similar backgrounds. Through time and experiences, I learned to appreciate these various individuals. I rarely saw, let alone interacted, with any of them outside of the group setting. My direct involvement with the group has waned yet a sense of connection has not. I can say the same for my experiences as a resident in a university residence hall 25 years ago. Common experiences, sets of symbols, a sense of caring remain with me even though my contact with my fellow floormates has been negligible. Yet, when I reflect upon those years at the university, they are an integral part of my experiences.
This sense of connectedness has not always occurred. During a tenure with a day care center, I cared passionately about the organization's mission and select individuals. The group underwent intense restructuring, thus giving us the "disaster" that Peck postulates would give a group a bonding point and, indeed, there was some bonding. But the group needed time to find its equilibrium and I left before it had a sense to re-establish its balance. Yet, the experience has directly impacted me in my personal as well as professional lives.

Would choosing who joined me in these experiences have changed them? There is an exercise that requires the participants to choose a group of individuals to place in a biosphere-type environment. They are given biographical data on these people and asked to choose who they would place together and why. The process by which a person may select inhabitants requires that they think about whether similarities and dissimilarities should be considered and whether they would be positive or negative in the success of the community. This leads us to ask -- what makes a good community member? Do individual traits matter, or do they matter only in context of who the other community members are? Or is it something else? Would an imposed identity be more important?

Work communities have built-in goals. There is a common goal towards which all work. In this setting, there are some questions: are the goals clearly communicated to the people and do the people "buy into" them? The challenge in these situations is blending the extrinsic, more clearly stated goals with the intrinsic, more humanistic needs of companionship and caring.

Some might argue that a work community and a residence hall floor have little in common, and that would be true on a surface level. But, they share the same qualities of community that have been echoed through the research presented earlier in this paper. They both have a spatial dimension and each have their own unique sets of symbols. They have at least some underlying
purpose and they have structure. Into these more base elements, individuals are placed, thus creating the potential for community.

This leads to a very important question to this writer: Is community a necessity or a luxury or something in between?

If we have community in various venues, need we always have it everywhere? If we are honest, we would probably have to admit that we cannot give of ourselves that fully in many circumstances. Our society affords us the opportunity to be mobile and, as a result, be involved in numerous communities. Our level of involvement (and, hence, our sense of commitment and community) will probably vary amongst all of them.

Could community have been brought to the third floor? To fully know, more time would have been required -- time for dedicated efforts to attempt to give the group goals. I believe it unlikely that a common identity would have emerged. At this point, they may have simply been so focused on themselves as individuals and the goals incumbent with such a focus that the addition of goals as a community was not possible. This does not mean it could not happen. For instance, following Peck's belief that people bond in the face of disaster, should something have occurred that had a profound impact, the group may have rallied and felt a sense of purpose in dealing with the adversity.

The survey instrument acknowledged what the hall director already knew about the second floor; that they had an established identity and working on becoming a very strong community. Yet, it revealed something about the third floor that we did not know prior to the questionnaire's dissemination. Less was "wrong" than presumed prior to beginning the survey process.
Follow-up interviews were beyond the scope of this particular project. But they would be important if the survey questionnaire was to be implemented. Focus groups or one-on-one interviews might reveal what specific steps would be helpful in assisting the process of community-building. It would be unwise to assume that the survey could be used to fully chart a development taskline. It would, however, be beneficial in pinpointing the venues in which the group needed the most assistance.

The next step in testing this instrument would be to administer it to a group of residents early in the semester to identify areas of "weakness" and then provide educational and social programming which would undergrid the arenas which are weakest. Testing at the end of the year would assist in knowing whether the programming components had been effective.

Community is a very personal and a very public entity. People cherish their uniqueness. People seek to belong. People work to blend the two together. Hopefully, this project will make those efforts more successful.
Appendix A

Community in Residence Halls Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete the following survey. Your answers are important! When completed, please return to University Housing via the enclosed business reply envelope.

Using the following scale, please answer each of the questions below:

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

1) I feel there was a diverse group of people (ages, majors interests) living on my floor.  
[Identification]

2) I think that the people on my floor had a strong idea of things we wanted to accomplish as a group.  [Identification]

3) I enjoyed sharing stories with others on my floor and listening to their experiences.  
[Commitment]

4) I felt that I was able to achieve a balance between my time spent studying and socializing.  [Commitment]

5) My floormates respected my time for studying and my private time.  [Commitment]

6) I went out of my way to help one or more of my fellow floormates.  [Commitment]

7) Someone from my floor went out of his or her way to help me when I needed assistance.  [Commitment]

8) My opinions were listened to by my floormates.  [Acceptance]
9) I appreciated hearing the different ideas my floormates have. [Acceptance]
   ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

10) Our floor had traditions or rituals. [Communication]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

11) I felt comfortable sharing different viewpoints with members of my floor.
    [Communication]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

12) When there was a disagreement on our floor, we were able to work out a mutually
    agreeable solution. [Communication]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

13) Our Community Advisor (CA) was often called upon to resolve conflict on our floor.
    [Communication]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

14) I participated in floor social functions. [Organic]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

15) I participated in floor meetings. [Organic]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

16) I am looking forward to coming back to live on the same floor next year. [Identification]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

17) My parents have no idea what life was like on my floor. [Not Affiliated]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

18) I felt comfortable telling my roommate when I disagree with him/her. [Acceptance]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

19) When I objected to something my roommate did, I felt comfortable telling him/her.
    [Acceptance]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

20) My roommate felt comfortable expressing his/her objections to me. [Acceptance]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤

21) I enjoyed working on class projects with people on my floor. [Organic]
    ①  ②  ③  ④  ⑤
22) The people on my floor attended educational programs together. [Organic]
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

23) I participated in recreational activities with my floormates. [Organic]
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

24) I enjoyed spending time with my roommate. [Organic]
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

25) I enjoyed spending time with my floormates. [Organic]
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

26) I enjoyed discussing ideas from my classes with my floormates. [Organic]
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

What classification are you at UW-Stevens Point?
   ① Freshman ② Sophomore ③ Junior ④ Senior ⑤ Graduate Student ⑥ Other

How many semesters (including this one) have you lived in a residence hall at UW-Stevens Point?
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ or more

How many semesters (including this one) have you lived on the floor on which you are now living?
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ or more

Are you
   ① Female ② Male

When working on a project, do you prefer to
   ① Work alone ② Work in a group

What floor did you live on?
   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Additional comments:
Appendix B

Student's Name
Home Address

Dear Student,

I'm writing to ask your help in completing a class project I have been working on. For the past few years, I've been studying what it means to be a member of a community. The final phase of my graduate work is taking a look at how people feel/felt about living in residence halls at UW-Stevens Point. That's where your help is needed!

Included in this letter is a questionnaire that asks you simple questions about what it felt like to live in the residence hall this past year. It should take you less than 15 minutes to complete and a self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided to make it easy to return. I've also included a set of "Stevie Pointer" stickers as a small thank-you for your assistance (yes, I know, corny, but I hope you'll get a kick out them!).

So, please take a few moments and complete the questionnaire. Pop it into the return envelope and hand it over to the U.S. Postal Service.

I can assure you that your responses will be kept confidential — and that they are valuable! I will pass on a synopsis of the answers I receive to the Residential Living/University Housing staff to help them in making future decisions about how to conduct business and programs in the halls.

Thanks and have a great rest of the summer!

Sincerely,

Kathy Reck
715/346-3891

Some important information regarding completion of this survey!!!

It is anticipated that there will be no risks for the respondents in this survey other than the inconvenience of the extra time required to complete the survey. Do not write your name or any other identifying information on the form as it is my intent to keep this information anonymous. However, your completion and return of this form indicates consent to participate in this study and to allow me to use the data gathered for the purpose of this project. On the reverse of this letter is a list of individuals overseeing this project and the name of a person you may contact if you have complaints about your treatment during this process.
Kathleen Reck  
University Housing Office  
UW-Stevens Point  
346-3511

Robert Mosier  
University Housing Office  
UW-Stevens Point  
346-3511

William Davidson  
Communication Department  
UW-Stevens Point  
346-2237

Chris Sadler  
Communication Department  
UW-Stevens Point  
346-3898

**Third Party**  
If you have any complaints about your treatment as a participant in this study, call or write:

Dr. Sandra Holmes  
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subject  
Department of Psychology  
UW-Stevens Point, WI 54481  
346-3952

Although Dr. Holmes will ask your name, all complaints are kept confidential.
Appendix C

Community in Residence Halls Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete the following survey. Your answers are important! When completed, please return to University Housing via the enclosed business reply envelope.

Using the following scale, please answer each of the questions below:

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<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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- I feel there was a diverse group of people (ages, majors interests) living on my floor.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- I think that the people on my floor had a strong idea of things we wanted to accomplish as a group.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- I enjoyed sharing stories with others on my floor and listening to their experiences.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- I felt that I was able to achieve a balance between my time spent studying and socializing.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- My floormates respected my time for studying and my private time.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- I went out of my way to help one or more of my fellow floormates.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- Someone from my floor went out of his or her way to help me when I needed assistance.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5

- My opinions were listened to by my floormates.
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 4
  - [ ] 5
• I appreciated hearing the different ideas my floormates have.
  1  2  3  4  5

• Our floor had traditions or rituals.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I felt comfortable sharing different viewpoints with members of my floor.
  1  2  3  4  5

• When there was a disagreement on our floor, we were able to work out a mutually agreeable solution.
  1  2  3  4  5

• Our Community Advisor (CA) was often called upon to resolve conflict on our floor.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I participated in floor social functions.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I participated in floor meetings.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I am looking forward to coming back to live on the same floor next year.
  1  2  3  4  5

• My parents have no idea what life was like on my floor.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I felt comfortable telling my roommate when I disagree with him/her.
  1  2  3  4  5

• When I objected to something my roommate did, I felt comfortable telling him/her.
  1  2  3  4  5

• My roommate felt comfortable expressing his/her objections to me.
  1  2  3  4  5

• I enjoyed working on class projects with people on my floor.
  1  2  3  4  5

• The people on my floor attended educational programs together.
  1  2  3  4  5
- I participated in recreational activities with my floormates.

- I enjoyed spending time with my roommate.

- I enjoyed spending time with my floormates.

- I enjoyed discussing ideas from my classes with my floormates.

What classification are you at UW-Stevens Point?


How many semesters (including this one) have you lived in a residence hall at UW-Stevens Point?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7 or more

How many semesters (including this one) have you lived on the floor on which you are now living?

1  2  3  4  5 or more

Are you

1. Female  2. Male

When working on a project, do you prefer to

1. Work alone  2. Work in a group

What floor did you live on?

1  2  3  4

Additional comments:
References


