THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT, AND EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

Invites you to Attend the Final, Public Dissertation Defense for:

Stephanie Chappe

Titled:

How Campus Housing Impacts College Experiences and Outcomes for Traditional Students

The defense will be held on

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 4:00pm,

in

Gasson 304

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Larry Ludlow (Chair), Dr. Karen Arnold,

Dr. Jessica Greene (Readers)

Please see abstract below
While there was a wealth of research in the 1970s and 1980s that suggests students’ on-campus college housing environment impacts student experiences and outcomes, interest has waned over the last several decades. Since then, the landscape of higher education has changed; a national focus on accountability and the rise in student paid tuition costs has shaped higher education as a marketable good. These changes warrant a need to revisit the impact of on-campus housing environments as postsecondary institutions, often with limited financial and land resources, strategize ways to successfully meet incoming millennials’ housing needs while striving for recruitment, retention, and student success during college. The present study took an exploratory approach to this understudied topic. This mixed-method study explored how residence hall location (i.e., living on the main campus or a satellite campus) and room type (i.e., living in a single, double, triple, forced triple, or quad room) impacted first-year college experiences and outcomes for traditional students. Findings show that housing conditions had an impact, particularly for those assigned less desired housing conditions (i.e., living on the satellite campus or in a forced triple room). Students in forced triple rooms did not frequently study in their room, felt crowded, had significantly lower GPAs than students who lived in double rooms, and engaged in fewer discussions with diverse others than those in triple rooms. In addition, while survey data found no differences in satisfaction by location, focus group participants who lived on the satellite campus expressed frustration with the university shuttle bus and felt removed from university-affiliated and other social activities and events.

Focus group discussions suggest that entering college with clear expectations of housing conditions can prepare students to navigate housing challenges and ease the transition to college. Institutions should consider offering resources and support to students prior to matriculating and then once at college. Furthermore, institutions should be mindful of the social implications of geographically separating the first-year student cohort. Findings have practical implications for institution administrators and policy makers.