

ROOMMATE ASSIGNMENTS: MANAGING THE PROCESS WHILE SUPPORTING STUDENTS OF COLOR



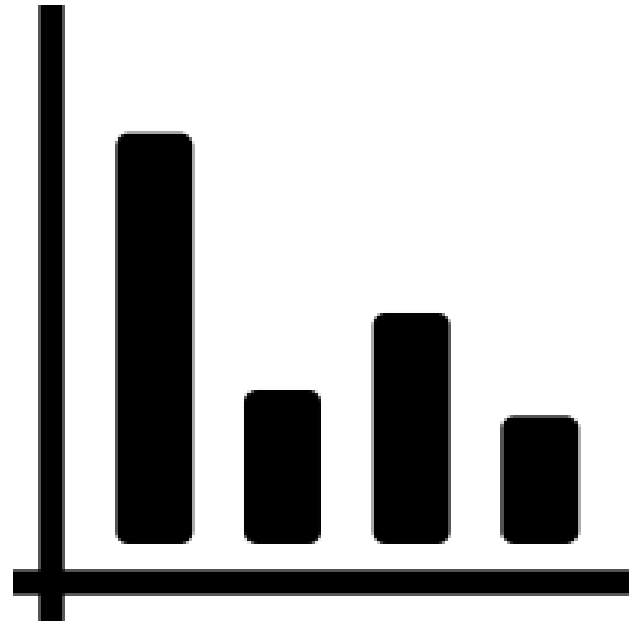
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OVERVIEW OF SESSION

- Project background
- Data source
- Research questions
- Findings
- Q & A



WHAT ROLE DO
YOU PLAY IN
THE ROOMMATE
SELECTION /
ASSIGNMENT
PROCESS?



PLEASE USE THE
CHAT FEATURE

vanderbilt **hustler**

First-year housing selection transitions to fully university-matched system

The incoming class of 2024 will no longer have their own first year roommates

Sam Zern, Managing Editor
October 11, 2019

Vanderbilt is changing its first year housing selection process for the class of 2024, opting to rely entirely on the university matching system and removing the option for students to request first-year roommates.

The change, Director of Housing Assignments Allison Matarese told the Hustler in an email, is intended to align the residential experience with Vanderbilt's institutional goals.

"We believe an assignment system that

The Colgate Maroon-News

The Oldest College Weekly in America Founded 1868

News

First-Years No Longer Able to Choose Roommates

Zoe Frishberg, Maroon-News Staff
April 26, 2018



Colgate will soon join the growing number of universities to be assigned a roommate through Residence Hall Association. This change allows first-year students to request roommates, but the process is similar to that of Duke University, Stanford University, and many other colleges. However, the room assignments will not be entirely random. Instead, they will be based on an extensive "First-Year Housing Preference Form" that asks students to rank their preferences for roommate and residence hall.

"The questions on this survey include topics related to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and other factors that may influence roommate preferences."

INSIDE HIGHER ED

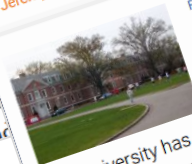
#News

#Diversity

Random Roommates Only

Duke University takes away from first-year students the ability to pick their roommates. This move goes against recent trends – and raises questions about diversity, tolerance and the college experience.

By Jeremy Bauer-Wolf // March 2, 2018



First-year residence halls at Duke

Duke University has removed from students what has become one of the most significant aspects of matriculation at many colleges: picking a first-year roommate. Beginning with the Class of 2022, the roommate-selection process will be entirely governed by the university, with assignments largely made at random – a shift, officials said, meant to stem the recent movement of students self-selecting peers with similar perspectives and backgrounds to their own.

COLLEGES ARE TRENDING TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALLY-ASSIGNED ROOMMATES

THEORY



- Social structure theory
 - **Homophily** - People connect socially with others who are like themselves
 - **Proximity** - People are more likely to connect socially with others who are nearby and accessible
 - **Transitivity** - Individuals are likely to hang out with the friends of those with whom they are already friends
- Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model

WHY LIMIT ROOMMATE CHOICE?



Colleges hope to increase interactional diversity.

- Diverse interactions have been shown to promote a variety of soft skills like critical thinking and empathy.
- Prior research has shown that roommates influence each other.
- Having a roommate of color influences diverse interactions for white students.

Students often come from homogeneous communities.

- The nation is stratified by race, economic, and political lines.
- College is the first time many students interact across lines of difference.

WHY NOT LIMIT ROOMMATE CHOICE?

- Unproven concept (e.g., “We just thought that [randomly selected roommates] would be a better approach.”)
- Successful diversity interventions have well-trained facilitators, not students
- Research focuses on benefits accruing to white students. Do the benefits extend to students of color?
- Recent research has highlighted that counterspaces are critical to the success of students of color. Restricting roommate choice prevents students from creating one in their room.



DATA SOURCE: NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE)

WHO: First-year and senior students seeking bachelor's degrees

WHAT: Student and institutional time and effort toward educational purposeful activities

NSSE ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

- Higher-Order Learning
- Reflective & Integrative Learning
- Learning Strategies
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Collaborative Learning
- Discussions with Diverse Others
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Quality of Interactions
- Supportive Environment



Supplemental questions about student living arrangements

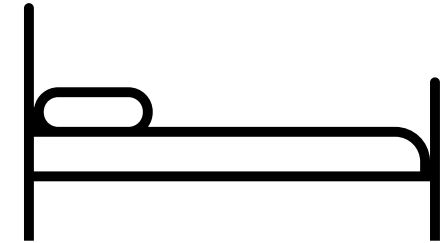
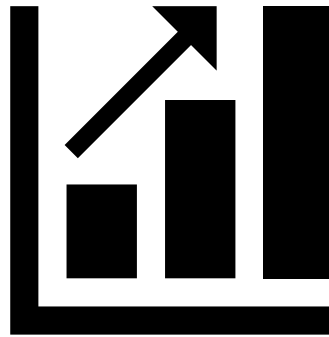
Housing Set

FIRST-YEAR/SOPHOMORE QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION SCREEN LANGUAGE:
You're almost done! Earlier, we asked where you are living while attending college. We have a few more questions to explore your living situation in greater detail. These questions take about three minutes to answer. Your continued participation is voluntary.

1. Do you live on campus or off campus? [HOUfy1801]
Response options: 1=On campus, 0=Off campus
- 2a. Do you live at home with your family? [HOUfy1802a]
Response options: 1=Yes, 0=No
- 2b. About how long does it usually take to get to campus from where you live? [HOUfy1802b]
Response options: 1=0-5 minutes, 2=6-10 minutes, 3=11-20 minutes, 4=21-30 minutes, 5=31-45 minutes, 6=46-60 minutes, 7=More than 60 minutes
3. Whether on or off campus, which of the following best describes where you live while attending college? [HOUfy1803]
Response options: 1=Traditional residence hall (share a bathroom with a wing or floor), 2=Suite-style residence hall (share a bathroom with suite mates), 3=Apartment, townhouse, or other apartment-style residence, 4=Fraternity or sorority housing, 5=House, 6=Institution-owned or managed family housing, 7=Other, please specify: _____ [HOUfy1803_txt]
4. After classes started this school year, how many times did you move your place of residence? [HOUfy1804]
Response options: 0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5 or more
5. How many roommates or housemates do you have? [HOUfy1805]
Response options: 0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5 or more
- 6a. Do any of your roommates or housemates also attend this institution? [HOUfy1806a]
Response options: 1=Yes, 0=No
- 6b. Which of the following best describes how you became roommates or housemates? [HOUfy1806b]
Response options: 1=Matched after creating an electronic housing profile, 2=Assigned by the housing office or property owner, 3=Planned with friend(s), 4=Found through social media, 5=Found through an advertisement, Craigslist, etc., 6=Other, please specify: _____ [HOUfy1806b_txt]
7. Do you participate in a residential program where students take at least one class together and attend common educational or social activities (often called a "living-learning community")? [HOUfy1807]
Response options: 1=Yes, 0=No
8. Some housing options provide opportunities specifically for people who live there. Which of the following, if any, have you done in your place of residence? (Select all that apply.) [HOUfy1808a]
Response options: 1=Selected, 0=Not selected
 - a. Attended a class where you live (not online) [HOUfy1808a]
 - b. Met with a faculty member where you live [HOUfy1808b]
 - c. Met with an academic advisor where you live [HOUfy1808c]

ROOMMATE STUDY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



- How does the method of roommate selection influence first-year students' interactional diversity and perceptions of the college environment?
- Does the relationship between the method of roommate selection and these outcomes vary by race/ethnicity and national origin?

DATA SAMPLE



- **76** institutions participated in housing study



- **14,401** first-year students living on campus *with at least one roommate*

SURVEY ITEM

ROOMMATE MATCHING

➤ “Which of the following best describes how you became roommates or housemates?”

- Matched after creating an electronic housing profile
- Assigned by the housing office or property owner
- Planned with friend(s)
- Found through social media
- Found through an advertisement, Craigslist, etc.
- Other (write-in)

Using these responses, we grouped students into two categories:

1. Matched by school
2. Not matched by school



OUTCOMES

**Discussions with Diverse
Others**

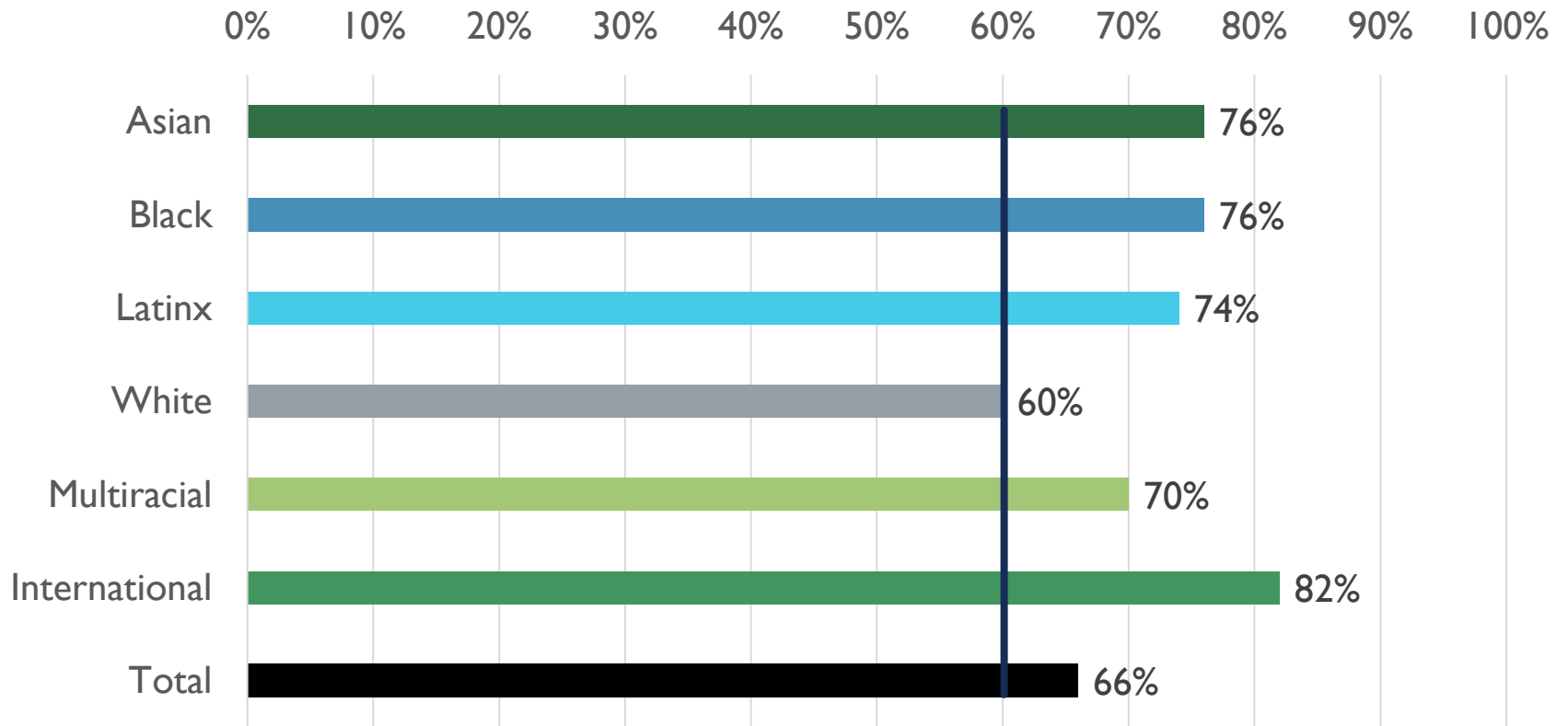


Does the method of
roommate selection
influence interactional
diversity?

**Supportive Environment
& Quality of Interactions**



Does method of roommate
choice influence campus
environment perceptions?



PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS MATCHED WITH A ROOMMATE BY THE INSTITUTION

DISCUSSIONS WITH DIVERSE OTHERS

Overall

No effect of being
matched vs
choosing your
roommate

By Race

Asian: No effect

Black: No effect

Latino: No effect

Multiracial: No effect

White: No effect

International: No effect

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Overall

Trivial negative effect
of being matched vs
choosing your
roommate

By Race

Asian: No effect

Black: **Negative effect**

Latino: No effect

Multiracial: **Negative effect**

White: No effect

International: No effect

QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS

Overall

No effect of being matched vs choosing your roommate

By Race

Asian: **Negative effect**

Black: **Negative effect**

Latino: No effect

Multiracial: No effect

White: No effect

International: No effect

DISCUSSION

- Random roommate polices *do not* improve interactional diversity
- *Negative* consequences for students of color
- Importance of counterspaces
- Low rates of roommate selection for students of color



IMPLICATIONS

- Institutions should not prevent incoming students from choosing a roommate
- Institutions should provide enhanced opportunities for incoming students of color to find a roommate
- When implementing new policies, evaluate both the outcome and negative unintended consequences



Q & A

Please use the chat feature

Read more:

The full manuscript: go.iu.edu/2haa

Talking Stick: go.iu.edu/3jRV

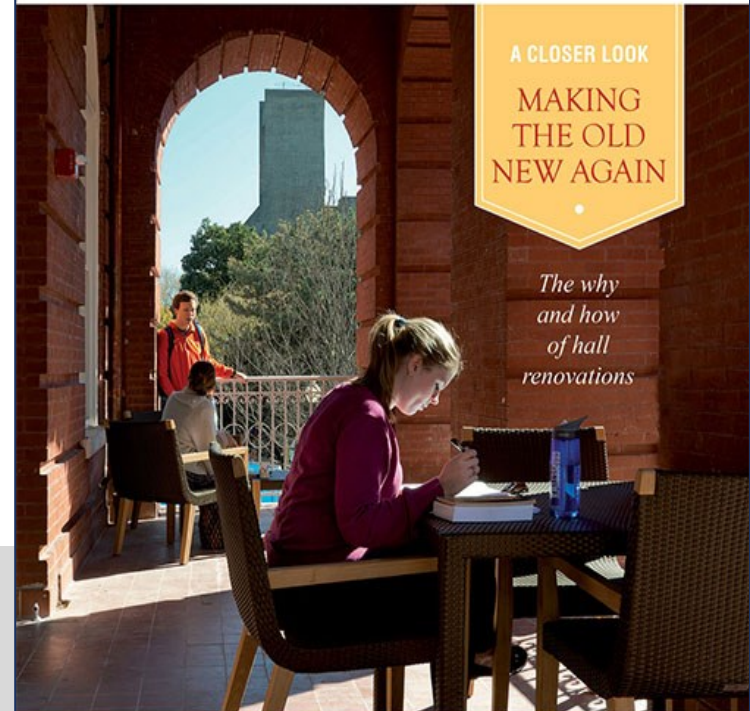
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