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# THE RELATIONSHIP OF FIRST-YEAR RESIDENCE HALL ROOMMATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY WITH INTERACTIONAL DIVERSITY AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

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## OVERVIEW

This study investigated how the roommate assignment process influences interactional diversity and perceptions of the campus environment for first-year students living on campus, and if these relationships differ by race/ethnicity and national origin. On average, students whose roommates were assigned by the institution (as opposed to choosing their own roommates) did not interact with diverse others more often.

# ROOMMATE-MATCHING POLICIES: FINDINGS

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Asian, Black, and Multiracial students who were assigned roommates by the institution perceived a substantially less supportive campus environment than their same-race peers who chose their roommates. This difference was not observed for White or Latinx students.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

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- Institutions are encouraged to allow students to choose their own roommates.
- Programs should be developed for students of color to make social connections with peers early in their college experience (pre-enrollment, preferably).
- When considering policy changes, be aware of possible adverse effects on historically marginalized groups.

**How might changes to your roommate-matching policy affect marginalized students?**

Full article: Fosnacht, K. J., Gonyea, R. M., & Graham, P. A. (2020). The relationship of first-year residence hall roommate assignment policy with interactional diversity and perceptions of the campus environment. *The Journal of Higher Education*, advanced publication: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1689483>

For questions contact [NSSE@indiana.edu](mailto:NSSE@indiana.edu)