

Notes on Residency Related Crisis Potential

70-80% of freshmen live on campus compared to 23% of the total student population.

This creates a residency based social structure which leads to a two phased culture shock in terms of student living situations for the majority of students; which is to say students typically experience a dramatic change in the social structure provided by their living situation. First, as freshmen they experience displacement due as they move to campus. This initial living situation holds some benefit as it often leads to built-in relationships with roommates and friends who live very close by within the same building or the same housing community. This may help ease the transition to a new area, but does not completely address factors which lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness from the change in location and community. After the typical student spends freshman year living in a highly concentrated student housing community, the majority of students move to off-campus housing. Many of the built-in social supports of on campus housing do not transfer to off campus housing, once again leaving students with a drastic change in living environment and the related relational dynamics. Both of these points of transition can lead to crisis and increased feelings of loneliness.

An intentional, official, structured approach to helping freshmen match with other students they are getting to know at Bama Wesley with the following year's living arrangements in mind could help address the second, less obvious residential crisis point, reducing the risk of isolation and loneliness among second year students while facilitating community and relational growth between Wesley Students. This also lends itself to connectionalism within the annual conference and denomination as it potentially connects UMC young adults in ways that often lead to lifelong relationships.