

Impact of Single-Sex Floors vs. Co-ed Floors in Residence
Halls on College Campuses

In Terms of Damage Billing and Documented Incidents

By

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Abstract

This study set out to find if there is a “best” practice in terms of housing arrangement style, either single-sex or co-ed, in terms of damage fines assigned to students and incidents involving students. Determining if one style or the other influences student behavior could allow for the determining of “best” practices; whether single-sex housing leads to lessening of alcohol incidents, or co-ed housing decreasing the likelihood of community space damages, would be useful information for any institution. The current literature leaves a gap on which style is better from damage fines and incident perspectives; different studies sight both styles as “best” for different reasons.

Permission to conduct this study at Wagner College allowed for data to be collected over five years in three first year residential student housing communities: all male, all female and co-ed floors in Harborview Hall. The study looked at the incidents occurring on each floor over that period of time, and which students were involved. It also examined the fines assigned to each floor; both fines for individual students and fines assigned the entire community for larger scale damages. These findings were analyzed for significance to answer the questions posed.

It was found that neither housing style can be awarded the title “best” in terms of lessening incidents or damage fines. Both housing styles have their merits, but there is not a style which lessened both incidents and damage fines in a consistent way. This outcome indicates that either style is a viable housing option for an institution.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgments	2
Chapter 1: Conceptual Framework.....	6
Introduction	6
Damage Billing Policies.....	6
Incidents on Campus	9
Residence Hall Living Arrangements	10
Why It Matters	11
Finding Answers and Limiting Variables	12
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	15
Introduction	15
All Male Residence Halls or Floors within Residence Halls	16
Indirectly Related Research.....	16
Directly Related Research.....	17
All Male Residence Halls: Conclusion	18
All Female Residence Halls	19
Indirectly Related Research.....	19
Directly Related Research.....	20
All Female Residence Halls: Conclusion.....	21
Co-ed Residence Halls	21
Indirectly Related Research.....	21
Directly Related Research.....	23
Co-Ed Residence Halls: Conclusion	26
Conclusions.....	27
Chapter 3: Methods.....	29
Introduction.....	29
Location of Study & Population.....	29
Permissions	30
Confirming Data Sets.....	31
Breaking Down the Data Sets	32

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

Follow Up on Data	34
Chapter 4: Findings & Results	35
Introduction	35
Conduct Report Results: First Glance	35
Conduct Report Results: Major & Minor Incidents	38
Conduct Report Results: Incident Types.....	47
Conduct Report Results: Conclusion	49
Damage Billing Results: First Glance	50
Damage Billing Results: Conclusion	57
Survey to Current Residents: Result	57
Chapter 5: Discussion & Implications.....	59
Discussion	59
Limitations of the Study.....	61
Implications and Next Steps.....	64
What Is Left to Learn	65
Implications: Conclusion.....	66
References	67
Appendices.....	70
Appendix A: IRB Approval	71
Appendix B: Survey	72
Appendix C: Survey Responses	75
Appendix D: Survey: Reaction to Floor- Pre/Post	76
Appendix E: Survey: Pre Opinion.....	77
Appendix F: Survey: Reaction to Past Study Data.....	78
Appendix G: Survey: Reaction to Study	78

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

Figure 1: Average number of individuals involved in incidents per year by floor type over five years.	36
Figure 2. Total individuals involved in incidents on single-sex female floor compared to the average number per year.....	36
Figure 3. Total individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floor compared to the average number per year.	37
Figure 4. Total individuals involved in incidents on single-sex male floor compared to the average number per year.....	37
Figure 5. Number of individuals involved in 'major' incidents on each floor over five years.....	39
Figure 6. Number of total separate incidents which occurred on each floor type over five years.	39
Figure 7. Number of individual students involved in all types of incidents over the course of five years, by the three floor types studied.	40
Figure 8. Number of individuals on single-sex female floors involved in major v. minor incidents.	40
Figure 9. Number of individuals in single-sex male floors involved in major v. minor incidents..	41
Figure 10. Individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floors, both major and minor.....	41
Figure 11. Males involved in major incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.	42
Figure 12. Females involved in major incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.	42
Figure 13. Individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floor, v. mean.....	43
Figure 14. Females involved in minor incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.	45
Figure 15. Males involved in minor incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.....	45
Figure 16. Individuals involved in minor incidents, by floor and gender.	46
Figure 17. Individuals involved in incidents with alcohol by floor.	47
Figure 18. Males involved in incidents with alcohol, single-sex v. co-ed floors.....	48
Figure 19. Females involved in incidents with alcohol, single-sex v. co-ed floors.....	48
Figure 20. Individuals involved in incidents with alcohol on co-ed floor.....	49
Figure 21. Total charges per floor by semester, over five years.....	51
Figure 22. Number of semesters an entire floor was charged for community damage billing, by floor type.....	51
Figure 23. Average annual total charge by gender population.....	52
Figure 24. Average annual total charges by floor.	53
Figure 25. Shows total yearly charges by floor type over five years.....	54
Figure 26. Total damage charges assigned to males, single-sex v. co-ed.	55
Figure 27. Average male charge per student, per year in damage billing, by floor.....	55
Figure 28. .Average female charges per student, per year in damage billing, by floor.	56
Figure 29. . Average charge per student fined, annually by floor.....	56

Chapter 1: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Institutions nationwide spend large portions of shrinking budgets to account for maintenance and damages to residence halls on campus. Many hours are spent counseling and adjudicating students involved in incidents, or educating and sanctioning those involved in perpetrating those incidents. Time is frequently spent by administrators attempting to find a way to change a culture of a student population to better align with college policies and college goals; this practice is also typically reactive, after an institution experiences certain behaviors on a large scale. An institution might see a rise in underage drinking and poor decision making, leading to more alcohol fueled incidents like physical assaults and residence hall damages; this would incite administrators to try to create different outlets for students to bring down the increasing rate of incidents. Institutions handle campus hall damages and incidents in varying ways, but most follow similar practices to be reflected upon here.

Damage Billing Policies

Each fall on college and university campuses across the country students take up residence in halls maintained by the institution; each spring students leave these spaces, often in worse shape than when the students arrived. Many institutions handle the rising costs of repairs and general maintenance with required deposits from each student prior to moving into the hall. At the end of the year college administrators or student workers, and often times both, inspect each room for damages after move out and determine fines associated with those damages. Most institutions have set costs for specific damages,

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

ranging from furniture replacement costs, wall damage or repainting costs, to costs for keys not returned. These fines are then removed from the deposit given by the student based on how many fines are incurred; at times the fines may total a higher cost than the deposit, at which point the institution sends a new bill with charges to the student.

Individual damage billing might occur when a student gets charged for a desk chair being broken when she moves out of the residence hall in May. Damage billing policy requires that an officer of the institution note on a form that the furniture is broken and in what way. If the chair can be repaired, the student will be billed the cost of parts and labor required by maintenance staff to fix it. If the chair is beyond repair, the student will be billed the cost of replacing the chair entirely. Most institutions have set prices for replacement items or cost of fix each item with estimations on labor required. Though the pervasive assumption is that male students cause more damage to their living spaces, there is a gap in the literature providing any evidence to prove or disprove this notion; this study hopes to add to the literature with possible findings.

While damage billing policy seems pretty straightforward, things turn out differently in practice. College officers have a habit of being customer service professionals who aim to help the students they serve as much as possible; this means that more often than not if a residence hall has extra chairs in storage or lounge areas, college officers will replace the chair that was broken with one from another location, forgoing damage billing all together. While this is a nice practice from the student perspective, eventually institutions run out of extra chairs, and students to hold accountable for the destruction of the chairs in use.

More common examples of damage billing policies involve responsibility; students in most residential housing arrangements share a bedroom or common space with at least one other student, which can sometimes make it difficult to determine which roommate cleaned his desk and refinished the wood, and which punched a hole in the drywall. When room damages, like large fist sized holes, are discovered students are given the chance to explain themselves. Often after meeting with residence hall staff one student will step up and take responsibility for the damage to the room, thus incurring all of the charges associated with that damage. In some instances both students will somehow have no inclination of how that damage occurred, and are certain that the wall was like that on move in day, in which case hall staff generally assigns responsibility to each student equally, which goes the same for the bill. The last of the three most likely options is for both students to feel equally responsibly and claim responsibility together, for which the result is the same as the previous – both parties split the bill.

Another common practice for funding repairs is community damage billing. Community damage billing is used when responsibility for damages cannot be determined or damage is done to a common space or shared living area. At times community billing might include all students living in a suite or set of residence hall rooms, all students living on a specific floor or all students living in a particular residence hall; it is all dependent on the type and location of damages. Effectiveness of community damage billing is debated at times as it can be seen as a punitive measure, but is typically so small a charge for each incident that students do not feel the impact. At this point there is very little literature available which suggests that one housing style, single-sex or co-ed, is more prone to be assigned community damage billing.

When community damage billing occurs (for example if a couch is torn or destroyed in a floor's common room) the entire community involved (a single floor) is notified that the cost of the couch will be applied to each student's bill or deducted from each student's deposit, depending on how the institution assigns fines. At this point students are offered the chance to come forward with information on what happened to the couch; the hope is that the guilty party will emerge and take responsibility, at which time the fine would be reassigned to only the individual involved. Typically, however, what happens is that other students come forward with information about the person they believe to be responsible for the damage. Community damage billing policies require that college officials have some type of proof or evidence indicating the guilt of a particular party before reassigning fines; more often than not a simple conversation with the individual accused by his or her peers is enough for a student to own up. Due to the large number of students living in each community that is affected by community damage billing however, students rarely come forward to have the \$0.45 removed from their bill. These policies are enforced equally on each floor, regardless of gender or floor population; it would be interesting to learn whether male or female students are more likely to be involved in community damages, or more likely to come forward with information about those damages.

Incidents on Campus

Institutions deal with a vast range of incidents, from small damages to common rooms and bulletin board vandalism to physical and sexual assaults. These incidents are generally perpetrated by students or their guests, against other students and their guests or

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

the institution itself. Of all the types of incidents possible on campus, most have corresponding policies specifically outlining what is asked of the student and repercussions if certain standards are not met. Only a small number of incidents correlate with damage billing or community billing, and while these are typically less serious than incidents where other students are the victim, these incidents still cost the institution financially. There is a gap in the current literature about whether or not single-sex housing or co-ed housing assignments can influence increases or decreases in incidents of certain types.

Residence Hall Living Arrangements

On most campus there are two overarching styles of residential living, co-ed or single-sex. A small number of campuses have only one or the other style, for example Catholic University has all single-sex style floors in residence halls (Murphy, 2011). While the debate remains over which type of environment promotes the best grades, the lowest rate of depression, the highest quantifiable amount of happiness per student, the lowest incident rate and much more, many institutions have a mix of both styles throughout the halls. This use of both types throughout most institutions is a strong indicator of the inability of any institution to determine a 'best practice' in terms of which living arrangement promotes what the institution most needs. Within these types there is also variation on the structure of a floor or building; some institutions create entire single-sex residence halls, others have co-ed halls but single-sex floors, and still others have co-ed floors where students live next door to the opposite sex students or floors where men live on one end and women live on the other. Further variation between institutions

includes whether students can choose to live in either single-sex or co-ed for all of their time at the institution, or only after a certain year, and whether all classes are separated in housing or mixed.

Research indicates that, with the exception of strongly religious affiliated campuses, most institutions use both co-ed and single-sex residence halls, depending only on which building is in question (Grasgreen, 2011). Some institutions offer only single-sex residence halls, like the University of Notre Dame and Catholic University, and others offer only co-ed residence halls (Murphy, 2011). According to the Association of College and University Housing Officers- International 90% of colleges have co-ed residence halls (Grasgreen, 2011). That is not to say that they do not also have some single-sex halls or halls that have single-sex floors in a co-ed building, but that indeed *most* institutions offer co-ed residential living in some form or another.

Why It Matters

Institutions are always looking for new ways to improve student life on campus while at the same time saving money for operating costs and basic upgrades. The data here might be able to indicate whether students were more or less likely to be involved in incidents or cause damages to their rooms or surroundings, based on their residence hall living environments. With enough evidence institutions could arrange living situations for all students that was both beneficial to the students' wellbeing and beneficial to the institutions' finances. As it stands the research (as shown in Chapter 2) is conflicted about which styles of living arrangements benefit students the most, struggling with weighing pros and cons of all types. While the evidence suggests that students more

readily choose to live in co-ed housing, there is little to indicate whether this is the most fiscally sound option for institutions or not.

While damage billing policies are well written, they are not always followed to the letter. In some instances a student may damage or mark up a wall that needs repainting, and not be charged for it. The institution will still need to have painters come and refinish the walls in the halls and rooms, as most campuses do each summer or every other summer, and will still have to purchase the paint to do so, however that cost is now coming out of pocket. This study hopes to find evidence that certain living arrangement might possibly decrease the likelihood of the wall being damaged in the first place – eliminating the painter and paint cost or need to bill the student all together. There may be a type of housing arrangement that decreases destructive incidents, which might also be the most cost effective for institutions. At this point most of the research done into which living arrangement is more beneficial has focused on the students themselves - which arrangement decreases eating disorders, which increases sensitivity toward others, etc. (seen in Chapter 2). A study on reported incidents and damage billing has not yet been done across the different housing styles with limited variables.

Finding Answers and Limiting Variables

The studies to be discussed here are interesting, well thought out and produced a wide range of conclusions on housing assignment types. Many studies fell short with limiting variables however; the majority of the studies conducted were at institutions which allowed for students to select the type of residence hall before attending – meaning that students chose to live in either single-sex halls or co-ed halls. Often the studies noted

that this might be a contributing factor in the findings, that students were predisposed to the outcomes discovered because they chose to live in the specific environments that they did. One study concluded that first year students in co-ed residence halls were more mature than students in single-sex residence halls; the study was also careful to include that students chose their housing style and that it might also be true that the more mature students chose the co-ed halls, and were in fact not influenced by the co-ed environment but rather were already more mature than students who chose single-sex halls (Schroeder, 1973).

There are of course other factors that influence student behavior besides gender make-up of a residential living environment; involvement in certain activities, outside pressures, interpersonal interactions, academics, home situations, alcohol and drug use, are among a few of the most prominent behavior modifiers experienced by college students today. These influences may be affecting the research done on differences in living arrangements, but are typically seen to occur in students in single-sex residence halls and in co-ed residence halls alike.

The most recent study discussed here came to the conclusion that students having the choice of which hall to live in was one of the most telling factors; after examining the students and determined that students in co-ed residence halls were more prone to risk taking and reported having more sexual partners than students at the same institutions in single-sex housing the study was clear that choice of residence hall could be a factor (Willoughby, 2009). At the institutions examined students were able to pick which style of housing they preferred, again allowing for the possibility that students who are already risk takers chose to live in co-ed halls, rather than the hall having any influence on risk

taking (Willoughby, 2009). This dilemma is seen throughout many of the studies, which challenges a number of the conclusions drawn.

The aim of this study will be to look at a school where first year students do not pick which type of environment they are assigned to, but rather are randomly sorted into all-male, all-female or co-ed floors within the same residence hall. The study will focus mainly on impact for the institution based on different housing types. This will be shown in terms of damage billing and incidents recorded on each floor over time. This study seeks to determine if gender is a factor in whether an institution can expect certain types of incidents, or large numbers of incidents, or if gender indicates likelihood of incurring damage billing over the course of an academic year. The research may show that gender plays no roll in incident, that some floors, regardless of housing style, have more incidents than others; it may show that gender plays no roll in whether a floor will sustain damage during the year. This study might find that men living with men or with women, and women living with women or men are all as likely to violate policy, meaning housing style has no influence at all.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The question of whether or not there is a ‘best practice’ for residence hall assignments based on gender has been pondered for years. Opinions in the studies range from morality improvements, seen on single sex floors (Moors, 1975), to men behaving better when they are living with women (Boyd, 2008). Studies have been conducted on many topics surrounding the benefits of both single-sex residence hall living and co-ed residence hall living. Most of the research on the difference between the two housing styles relates to how the environments affect student life and behaviors. There were no studies found that focused on damage billing and incidents directly, but anything that indicates a change in student behavior relates to the same behaviors that increase the likelihood of damage to residence halls or involvement in policy violating activities. The research here is separated into two areas, ‘directly related research’, which shows behaviors that can connect to ‘major’ incidents and ‘indirectly related research’ which may related to ‘minor’ incidents or not connect to student conduct or damages. The studies with findings considered ‘major’ are those which might correlate to this study, increasing or decreasing likelihood of students being involved in incidents or damages to residence halls. Those considered ‘indirectly related research’ are findings that may not affect behavior enough to relate directly to this particular study. The research cited here offer a wide range of evidence, both for and against, for the different housing arrangements, with no concrete answer one way or the other for which is best for the student or the institution.

All Male Residence Halls or Floors within Residence Halls

Indirectly Related Research

A study of ten colleges and universities followed first year students living in different housing assignments. The study, conducted at a state-supported university in a rural community, found that men in single-sex residence halls were less likely to describe themselves as easygoing or “on top of the world” than men in co-ed residence halls (Moos, 1975, pg. 451). The study also found that when students were resurveyed in the spring term, men in all male residence halls were more likely to aspire to demanding careers in the future than men in co-ed housing (Moos, 1975).

A study conducted at a midsized, southeastern university established that males who chose to live on all male floors had different attitudes towards sex and sexual assault than men living in halls with women. The study questioned whether living in all male environments increased the likelihood a man would have rape-supportive attitudes, or if men with similar views chose to live together, and that the environment had no effect (Schaeffer, 1993). This study again found that men in all male environments considered themselves to be more competitive, nonconformist and “accepting of more traditional orientations” than men in co-ed housing (Schaeffer, 1993). “Traditional orientations” were defined as men assuming the ‘manly role’ or breadwinner, and the women assuming the role of housekeeper and mother – a view leaning toward heteronormative gender role stereotypes (Schaeffer, 1993).

Research conducted at one institution with a variety of housing options, including houses for groups of students, found that single-sex housing was an indicator of improved GPA for men (Wang, 2003). Men living in houses or halls with all males were shown to

have higher GPAs than men living in co-ed halls, however the study noted clearly that these men also often indicated in the survey that they chose single-sex housing to be “more serious about doing better academically and wanted to avoid the distractions” of women (Wang, 2003, pg. 18). The male students in this study showed a predisposition to academic achievement, having stated that housing was a factor in their educational success; they chose to live in a single-sex environment because they felt it would allow them to do better work academically (Wang, 2033).

Directly Related Research

A study found that men living in all male housing assignments “perceived a very low level of emotional support” (Ballou, 1986, pg. 10). This lack of support can manifest in many different behaviors and lead students to feel less connected to the hall itself and the community – which can cause destructive behavior without feelings of responsibility. The study also found that men in an all-male housing environment felt an extremely high level of internal competitiveness, higher than any of the other living arrangements on the ten campuses (Ballou, 1986). The highest levels of competition were seen by first year males living on single-sex floors with students of mixed years; combining upperclassmen to the housing arrangement increased levels of conflict perceived by the first year student males (Ballou, 1986). The Ballou (1986) study compared findings with another study conducted earlier, by Gilligan (1982) which indicated that men in all male groups tended to develop personal autonomy faster than students in any other living situation on campuses (Ballou, 1986).

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

A study at a northwestern public university found that men living with other men, especially in a fraternity living arrangement, were much more inclined to partake in risky drinking or binge drinking activities (Page, 2006). The same male students were also reportedly more likely to experience alcohol related consequences like “hangovers, getting nauseated or vomiting, having memory loss, getting into arguments, missing classes, performing poorly on tests or important projects, and driving a car while under the influence” than men in a co-ed living arrangement (Page, 2006, pg. 21).

Research conducted at a large Midwestern research university found that males living in an all-male residence hall environment were the most likely group to engage in heavy drinking episodes, on a more regular basis than males in co-ed halls or in co-ed residential learning communities (Boyd, 2008).

More recently a study was conducted with first year college students at a number of institutions which supported the idea that men in single-sex halls are less likely to engage in risk taking behaviors than men in co-ed residence halls (Willoughby, 2009). The study found that, at the institutions involved, men in single-sex residence halls reported having fewer sexual partners and were less likely to engage in binge drinking, defined for men as having more than five standard drinks in two hours (Willoughby, 2009).

All Male Residence Halls: Conclusion

The studies show the inability of the research community to come to one conclusion about single-sex or co-ed housing assignments. Some evidence shown might indicate that all male floors will experience fewer incidents, or will have limited or no negative impact on the institution in general. Some of the other evidence, however, found

indicates that all male floors have more evidence of negative impacts on the institution than other housing arrangements.

All Female Residence Halls

Indirectly Related Research

Research conducted at a large public state-supported university in a small rural community determined that women living in all female residence halls were less likely to continue on in their education past a bachelor's degree than women living in co-ed residence halls (Moos, 1975). Women in single-sex residence halls were less likely to rate themselves happy, calm and easygoing than women who lived in co-ed halls (Moos, 1975). In fact women in single-sex halls were more likely to use medications and health supplements, as well as more likely to complain of symptoms like constipation, fever and upset stomach (Moos, 1975).

In a study conducted over ten institutions it was found that women living with all women in residential housing felt the highest level of emotional support of any of the living arrangements (Ballou, 1986). At the same time the first year women reported that they felt as though they had little influence or control over their environment, despite being supported in it. The study found that the women in single-sex housing scored at a moderate level in innovation, in comparison to the other housing variations (Ballou, 1986). Citing another study Ballou (1986) agreed that women living in single-sex housing developed relationships with others before personal autonomy, which connects to their high sense of emotional support.

Directly Related Research

A study resurveyed students in the spring term and found that women in single-sex residence halls had increased their propensity for impulsive-deviant behavior like skipping class or drinking hard liquor (Moos, 1975).

Berg (1988) concluded that women in single-sex residence halls showed notable lower incidence of eating disorders, specifically bulimia, than woman in co-ed housing at the University of Western Ontario. The study also referenced other works which indicated that women on single-sex floor had a better body image and felt more secure in their self-worth than women on co-ed floors (Berg, 1988).

Research at a public northwestern university concluded that women in a single-sex environment, especially sorority style living, were more likely to engage in heavy drinking than women in a co-ed residence hall housing arrangement (Page, 2006). The same female students were also reportedly more likely to experience alcohol related consequences like “hangovers, getting nauseated or vomiting, having memory loss, getting into arguments, missing classes, performing poorly on tests or important projects, and driving a car while under the influence” than women in a co-ed living arrangement (Page, 2006, pg. 23).

A study conducted at a Midwestern university found that women in single-sex residential learning communities were the least likely to engage in risky drinking or heavy drinking when compared to students in all other living arrangements at that university (Boyd, 2008). The study also found that women living in learning communities outside of traditional residence halls were more likely to engage in heavy drinking than students living in co-ed residential learning communities (Boyd, 2008).

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

More recently research found that women in single-sex residence halls were less likely to take risks than women living in co-ed residence halls (Willoughby, 2009). In fact the study concluded that women in single-sex residence halls were less likely to engage in binge drinking, defined for women as four or more standard drinks in two hours, than women in co-ed residential housing (Willoughby, 2009). It was also discovered that women in single-sex housing reported having fewer sexual partners than women in co-ed housing (Willoughby, 2009).

All Female Residence Halls: Conclusion

The research here points toward female single-sex residential housing having the least negative impact on the institution; showing that women in this housing arrangement feel supported and are less risk prone. This might also be an indication that they are least likely to be involved in incidents or in activities which might cause damage to college property.

Co-ed Residence Halls

Indirectly Related Research

At the University of Nebraska a study was conducted that found co-ed residence halls to “promote a more natural living environment than sex-segregated residence halls... [with] greater potential for fostering student ... social development” (Brown, 1973, pg. 99). Co-ed housing arrangements give men and women a better chance at building friendships not based in sexuality or sex-oriented. According to the study at the University of Nebraska, men who lived in a co-ed residence hall were less likely to be involved in male only activities and spent less time discussing “male topics” than men in

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

an all-male environment (Brown, 1973, pg. 99). Women in co-ed housing involved in this study were more involved in campus activities than women on single-sex floors. The study concluded that men living in co-ed housing were “less likely to feel a need to prove their masculinity and to engage in predominantly male activities” (Brown, 1973, pg. 99). Also concluded was that in co-ed halls students were less likely to date other students within the hall, and tended toward ‘brother and sister’ relationships (Brown, 1973, pg. 100).

A study at a large public university in a rural community found that women living in a co-ed residential housing assignment were more likely than women in a single-sex housing assignment to further their education after completing their bachelor’s degree (Moos, 1975). In fact more women in co-ed halls aspired to reach a PhD or an MD in their future than women in single-sex residence halls. Women in co-ed halls were more likely to rate themselves as happy, calm and easy-going than women in single-sex residence halls. The study also found that men in co-ed halls were more likely to describe themselves as “on top of the world” and easygoing than men on all male residence hall floors (Moos, 1975, pg. 451). Women in the co-ed hall used the student Health Center more than women in the single-sex halls. The study concluded after examining the data and data of other studies that “co-ed living groups are more enjoyable, satisfying, friendly, relaxed, [and] causal... independence (for females) and intellectuality (for males) is higher in co-ed units” (Moos, 1975, pg. 463).

Research conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini concluded that students of both sexes in living learning residences experienced positive influences on personal development and experienced the highest levels of educational aspiration of any students

(Pascarella, 1980). The study found that a large contribution to the success of the students was the relationships built with each other and with the living learning professors.

Results of a study looking at first year students in ten institutions found that emotional support levels perceived by the students were moderate, but that the co-ed housing arrangement led to the highest levels of innovation among any of the housing variations. The first year students also indicated that in the co-ed living environment they perceived moderate levels of competitiveness, when compared to other housing types. When the study looked at halls that were co-ed and mixed classes of students, it was determined that this was the least competitive environment of all the variations (Ballou, 1986). Students in a mixed class co-ed living arrangement also indicated high levels of student influence on their environment. The conclusions drawn from this study by the researchers indicated that while single-sex living might be best for women, it was clearly not for men, and that the benefit of co-ed living was well perceived by the first year students involved (Ballou, 1986).

Directly Related Research

Research conducted at a large land-grant university of almost 3,000 first year students found that “students living in co-educational residence halls exhibit more mature behavior and establish more meaningful relationships with members of the opposite sex than students in traditional single-sex halls” (Schroeder, 1973, pg. 108). The study was conducted twice at the university, once at the start of the year and again at the end, to help measure growth in the students; it was determined then that students in co-ed housing changed the most in their first year (Schroeder, 1973).

Women in co-ed halls were more likely than their single-sex housing female counterparts to engage in “impulsive-deviant behavior” – for example: breaking school rules, cutting class or drinking hard liquor (Moos, 1975, pg. 464). In this case the likelihood of each ‘deviant’ behavior was different, for example 44 women in the co-ed hall answered that they sometimes or often cut class as opposed to 32 women in the single-sex hall (Moos, 1975). Similarly 48 women indicated that they sometimes or often broke school policy in co-ed halls compared to only 34 women in single-sex halls (Moos, 1975). While the number differences were not astronomically high, they were consistently higher in every category considered under ‘impulsive deviant behavior’ for women in co-ed halls than in single-sex halls. This study also found that when the students were resurveyed in the spring term men in co-ed residence halls had a decreased likelihood of breaking college policies (Moos, 1975).

Berg (1988) found that women living in co-ed housing assignments indicated a higher incidence of eating disorders as compared to women in single-sex halls at the University of Western Ontario. A survey conducted for the study found that of those who responded 79% of the female students and 49% of the male students admitted to engaging in binge-eating (Berg, 1988, pg. 127). A further survey that sampled a large number of first year college students found that 8% of women and slightly more than 1% of men qualified as bulimic (Berg, 1988, pg. 128). When the data was looked at by residence hall type it was discovered that 17% of women surveyed in the co-ed residence hall met the criteria for bulimia while only 14% of women respectively in the single-sex hall and on single-sex floors in a mixed sex residence hall presented as meeting the criteria for bulimia (Berg, 1988, pg. 128). While this study was conducted at only one institution the

results were comparable to conclusions drawn in other studies cited within Berg's. Women who lived on mixed gender floors had "significantly higher levels of body dissatisfaction" (Berg, 1988, pg. 125).

Another study conducted at a midsized, southeastern university found that students living in a co-ed residence hall perceived themselves to be more supportive and less competitive than students living in single-sex housing (Schaeffer, 1993). Men who lived in co-ed halls were less accepting of traditional rape myths than men in single-sex housing (Schaeffer, 1993). According to the study, co-ed living arrangements led to "deeper understanding of attitudes concerning sex roles" (Schaeffer, 1993).

Research conducted on 5000 students at 'a large Midwestern research university' found that women living in a co-ed environment, outside of a learning community, were more likely to have two or more additional drinks in a night than their counterparts living in single-sex housing. However in the same study it was found that men in co-ed halls were less likely to drink as much as their single-sex housing male counterparts (Boyd, 2008). The study also found that students of both sexes were less likely to engage in heavy drinking if they lived in a residential learning community (Boyd, 2008). Students in a co-ed residential learning community reported that 37.7% might partake in behavior that qualified as heavy drinking compared to 57.1% reported by students in learning communities outside of traditional residence halls (Boyd, 2008, pg. 981). The researchers were surprised to find that students in co-ed residential learning communities were less likely to engage in risky drinking or heavy drinking than women living in single-sex learning communities outside of traditional residence halls (Boyd, 2008).

A more recent study conducted with first year students at a number of institutions found that women in co-ed residence halls were more likely to engage in risk taking than women in single-sex residence halls (Willoughby, 2009). Conversely men living in the same co-ed residence halls were less likely to be involved with risk taking than men in single-sex residence halls (Willoughby, 2009). The same data was not true for halls that were co-ed but had single-sex floors; women on single-sex floors within co-ed buildings were less likely to take risks while men on single-sex floors within co-ed halls were more likely to take risks (Willoughby, 2009). This study also found that students, both men and women, in co-ed residence halls were more likely than any students in single-sex residence halls to binge drink, defined as for men having five or more standard drinks in two hours and women having four or more standard drinks in two hours (Willoughby, 2009). Students in co-ed residence halls reported more sexual partners than students at the same institutions living in single-sex housing, both men and women (Willoughby, 2009). This study also suggested that perhaps the style of housing was allowing for more sexual partners and opportunity for sexual encounters, thus influencing the students through availability (Willoughby, 2009).

Co-Ed Residence Halls: Conclusion

These studies could indicate that students on co-ed floors might be more likely to be involved in incidents, based on the studies which claimed that students in this housing arrangement were more social and were more influenced by their peers. This evidence might also indicate that a group on a co-ed might influence the rest positively, making the whole less likely to be involved in damages or incidents.

Conclusions

The studies discussed here offer limited insight into the differences between the types of housing on college and university campuses. While the studies have varied findings which are not always congruous, change in effects of housing styles over time can be seen. The variation in conclusions is one of a number of reasons for this specific study, to add to the wealth of knowledge on the effects of co-ed halls versus the effects of single-sex halls on both students and institutions. When one study finds a positive to one style of housing, another study finds a negative. Searching through all of the research to draw any kind of conclusion is a daunting task when each study claims something different depending on how the data is examined.

Most important is that all of the research is on how students interact with their environment and each other, how students behave in the halls and how they feel about the spaces that they live in; whether they are sharing it with the same sex or different. Completely lacking is the research on the halls themselves, especially in terms of the incidents and damage disparity between different types of residential housing arrangements. How residents fit into their environment and their comfort with it is directly linked to student behavior, which is the key when examining damages and incident types: well behaved students rarely cause damage or become negatively involved with other students.

When the data from the current study is properly synthesized it might say that men living in co-ed residence halls behave better than their male counterparts in single sex halls, while females in co-ed residence halls behave worse than comparable women in single-sex housing – at least in terms of drinking, sexual activity, and violating campus

policy. There are studies here and there that don't fit into that specific conclusion, but overall the research suggests a version of the aforementioned statement to be true.

The connection of incidents and damages is then clear – students are affected by their environments, which can cause a change in their behavior, which for some increases the likelihood of behaviors that cause residential living space damage and that influence students to become involved in negative situations between peers. Single-sex housing or co-ed housing does not cause a student to break a desk chair before moving out at the end of the year; housing placement doesn't indicate whether a student will be involved in a fist fight or not. It is the effect the housing arrangements have on the students that influences these events. This study aims to add to this body of research, indicating that certain residential living arrangements lend themselves to more or less damages and incidents than other types.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

The important first step was to identify a gap in the research- something that needed to be learned; in this case: to determine what the relationships are between single-sex or co-ed housing arrangements and incidents of damages to the residence halls and college policy violation. Then studies were found on the differences between those two types of housing. This determined if there was any indication already as to which style was preferred in housing; synthesizing all of these found that housing arrangements do influence students in a number of ways, negatively and positively – indicating that behaviors are changed based on the population of peers a student lives around. With that information this study set off to find if this conclusion correlated to certain arrangements increasing a student's chances of receiving damage billing charges or being involved in campus policy violating incidents.

Location of Study & Population

Wagner College offered a unique opportunity to study these different kinds of housing styles. One particular residence hall, Harborview Hall, has all male, all female and co-ed floors within the overall co-ed, first year building. This was helpful as it limited a number of variables; mainly, students do not select which floor they live on in their first year, outside of a few Learning Communities. A reoccurring gap in the aforementioned studies was often that students chose the environment they lived in, so they may have been predisposed to the behaviors each study was finding. The floors in Harborview Hall are also comparable in size, have the same types of reporting staff,

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

ranging only from one Resident Assistant to two Resident Assistants, and were governed by the same policies. These attributes made Wagner College a great location for this study.

The population looked at, three floors per year, makes up between 20% and 25% of the first year residential population annually at Wagner College. The students found on each of the floors are representative of the entire community, both in Harborview Hall and on campus in general.

Permissions

A proposal for this study was submitted to the Human Experimentation Review Board, containing a plan and copies of questionnaires and informed consent forms. After HERB permission it was important to reach out to Wagner College, the institution at which the survey was distributed and where the data was collected.

The data required for this study was stored on a virtual drive used by the College's staff and administration. Conduct reports for these three types of floors over the past five years, and damage billing reports for the same floors over the same time period were required to examine if housing type has an influence on damages and incidents. Also helpful were rosters from the corresponding years, to confirm that each floor maintained its housing identity year to year. Permission to obtain these reports from the drive came from the Dean of Campus Life and Engagement. The Assistant Director of Residential Education ran and created Conduct Reports from 2008-2009 academic year, until the 2012 – 2013 academic year, which was added to by the Graduate Assistant specializing

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

in conduct. The total number of incidents examined was 113, over the five year span, averaging just over 22 incidents per year. The system running conduct reports, CX, was not able to break down the data by floor of incident, so it created a document with every incident on campus over the course of those five academic years. The same was collected from the Damage Billing Archives, for the same years.

Confirming Data Sets

From the report generated it was a matter of locating original rosters for those years and comparing them to be sure each floor had indeed fit into the 'single-sex male,' 'single-sex female,' or 'co-ed' designation it was given. The rosters indicated that for all but one academic year the third floor in Harborview Hall was single-sex male, the fifth floor was co-ed and the tenth floor was single-sex female. The one year in question had moved the single-sex male floor from the third floor to the first floor, so the data for that floor was requested. Once the rosters confirmed which floors would be a part of the study, the conduct report created had to be whittled down to only the relevant floors.

This proved to be more difficult than expected, as many of the cases in earlier years were coded differently than the most recent cases, meaning that sometimes location of incident was not initially available. This also meant that at times incidents were duplicated, or some individuals were given different case numbers for the same case. It was important to sort through each case to determine where the incident occurred and when it occurred. The incidents were further sorted by academic year, and color coded for data gathering. Then all the names of those involved were redacted and replaced with

phrases, like “Male Male 2” or “Female Co-ed 6” to indicate gender and location for future reference while protecting the identity of the individuals involved.

Once all of the data was collected on incidents over time on each floor identified for the study, the same was done for damage billing reports. Damage billing reports are stored in the virtual drive archives, and so could be pulled easily for examination. These reports were already stored by semester, so it was just a matter of adding the data from each term together for an academic year, then pulling out only the relevant floors being studied. Again, as with the conduct reports, names were changed to basic designators to protect student identity.

Breaking Down the Data Sets

The data sets were broken down to more comparable sets for analysis. For instance, all incidents considered ‘minor incidents’ and all those considered ‘major incidents’ were separated. ‘Minor Incidents’ were cases of students in possession of prohibited items, minor fire safety incidents like failure to evacuate in a timely manner during a fire drill, quiet hours violations, failure to sign a guest in properly, and removing residence hall common room furniture from its intended location. ‘Major Incidents’ were defined as incidents involving alcohol possession or use, physical assault, verbal harassment, theft, and drug use or possession. Defining incidents in this way gave a better understanding of the significance of the data. The difference between a floor where there were ten minor incidents and a floor that experienced six major incidents was important when looking into the impact these incidents had on a community or the institution.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

After all the data was gathered the numbers were scrutinized and exported to Excel and made into graphs to accurately show any patterns over time. Graphs of the data were made for each portion, for example a graph was made of the incidents from the 2008 – 2009 academic year, showing the number of incidents per floor, and incidents by gender. The graph showed men involved in incidents on the single-sex male floor, compared to women involved in incidents on the single-sex female floor, compared also to all the students involved in incidents on the co-ed floor, which was then broken down into men involved on the co-ed floor and women involved on the co-ed floor. This was done for each data set per year, and for the set over all, showing incident numbers for each floor over the course of five years. Data comparing ‘major’ and ‘minor’ incidents allowed for a better understanding of the types of behaviors seen most on each floor over time. The many data sets were analyzed for significance, and all suggestions of a trend were vetted further.

Damage billing reports were broken down by floor and academic semester as well. Each set was broken down into the number of students per floor who received a fine each term, and the total fine for the entire floor. Also shown was the mean charge incurred. For example in the Fall 2008 semester the single-sex male floor was charged a total of \$1,114.92, a bill that was shared across 44 students on the floor, averaging a mean charge of \$25.34 per student. Having a mean charge helped to compare the average level of damage done per student on each floor. Some floors had higher fines, but many students charged while others had lower fines but only a small number of students responsible, showing that those involved in the latter were more destructive than the first group, despite the total charge being lower.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

The data sets presented from the damage billing reports were then analyzed by creating more comparative graphs. Data sets per semester, and comparing the data sets over the five year period showed trends in charges by floor and by gender. Graphs were created to compare specific data sets, for example single-sex female incidents in comparison to co-ed female incidents. Data was compared by floor and by gender over time, noting interesting trends.

Follow Up on Data

Trends found through both overall data sets, conduct reports and damage billing, were used to create a survey, shown in Appendix B. This survey aimed to gauge the reaction to some conclusions from the students who currently live on the floors under scrutiny in this study. The survey was given to students via email, which included a virtual permission form, allowing them to remain anonymous while collecting the necessary identifying information. The reactions were to be considered the third major data set and compared to the conclusions of the first two data sets; however the response was too low for comparison. This survey had very limited information, as the response numbers were almost insignificant.

Chapter 4: Findings & Results

Introduction

This study set out to find if single-sex or co-ed residential housing arrangements were an influencing factor in student behavior. This behavior was determined based on reported incidents and damage billing on each floor in the study, one single-sex male, one single-sex female and one co-ed floor, over the course of five academic years, 2008 to 2013. Incidents reported were defined as either major or minor, depending on the policy violation and severity. Damage billing was shown as a total of all fines incurred by each student on the floors involved in the study. All these sets of data were compared in order for conclusions about housing arrangement influencing behavior to be drawn.

Conduct Report Results: First Glance

The conduct reports showed that despite what some of the studies in Chapter 2 had indicated, the single-sex male floor averaged fewer incidents overall than both single-sex female and co-ed floors, both of which averaged about the same. All floors fluctuated each year, rising and falling with each other until the last academic year, 2012 – 2013, when the single-sex female floor reached an all-time high, the opposite of this declining trend was seen on the other two floors. Some of the fluctuation may be attributed to change in the reporting staff, change in student population on each floor, variation in campus culture year to year and any number of outside factors.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

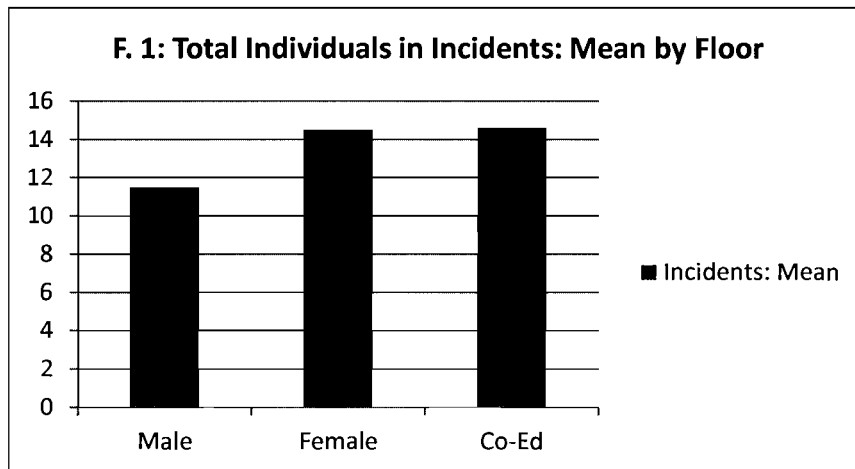


Figure 1: Average number of individuals involved in incidents per year by floor type over five years.

Here it can be seen that the single-sex male floor averaged less students involved in incidents per year than the other two housing arrangements. The single-sex male floor was the only floor that each year the total number individuals involved in incidents stayed relatively close to the average. Both the single-sex female floor and the co-ed floor fluctuated up and down, away from the average each year, as shown in Figure 2 and

Figure 3.

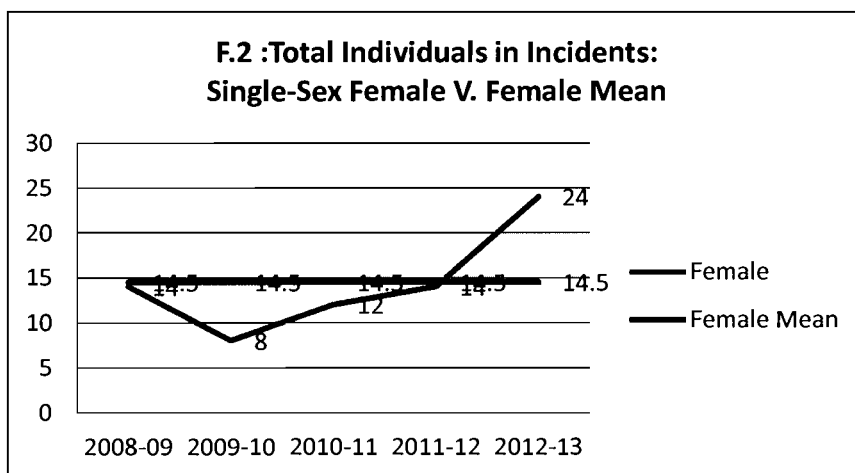


Figure 2. Total individuals involved in incidents on single-sex female floor compared to the average number per year.

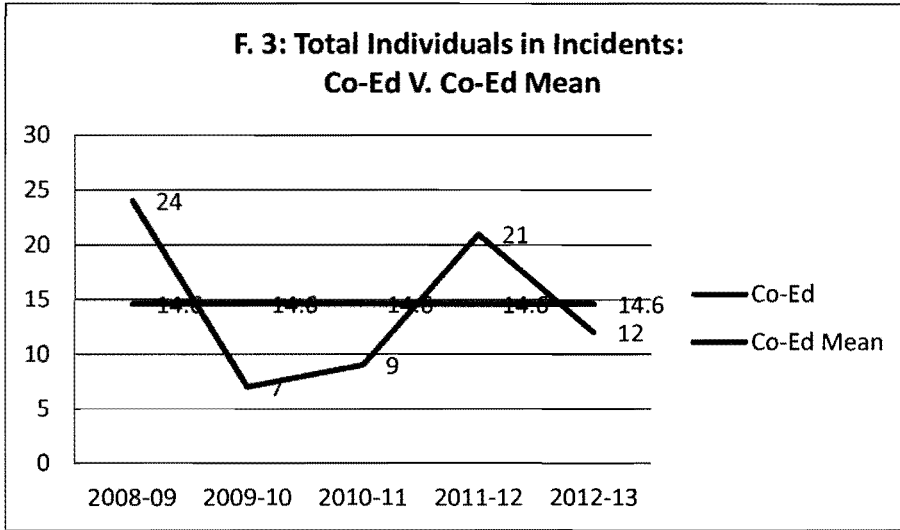


Figure 3. Total individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floor compared to the average number per year.

The single-sex male floor fluctuated much less over time, as seen in Figure 4, offering an insight into the behaviors of those who lived on a single-sex male floors. Although the students who lived on these floors changed each year, the number of students involved in incidents each year (with the exception of the first year in the study) varied very minimally.

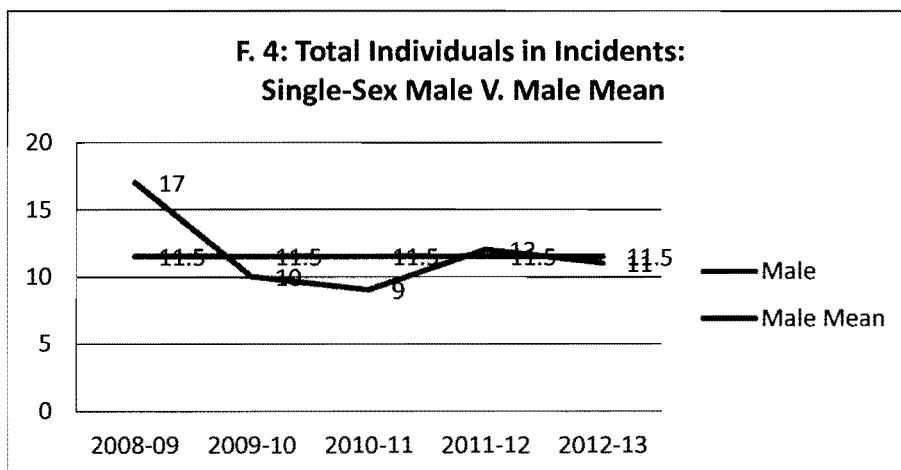


Figure 4. Total individuals involved in incidents on single-sex male floor compared to the average number per year.

Conduct Report Results: Major & Minor Incidents

After comparing the number of individuals involved in incidents on each of the three housing styles over five years it became necessary to determine severity of the incidents, to better understand behaviors per floor type. The individuals involved in incidents were separated into individuals involved in major incidents and in minor incidents; major incidents were considered to be incidents involving alcohol possession or use, physical or sexual assault, verbal harassment, theft, and drug use or possession, while minor incidents were incidents of student possession of prohibited items, minor fire safety incidents like failure to evacuate in a timely manner during a fire drill, quiet hours violations, failure to sign a guest in properly, and removing residence hall common room furniture from its intended location. By defining these two categories the study showed which floors have more individuals who were involved with incidents that are considered to be more harmful to the institution and the community. As Figure 5 shows, for most years the single-sex male floor had more individuals involved in major incidents than the others in the study, with the dramatic exception of the co-ed floor in the 2011 – 2012 academic year. Further inspection into why there was a spike in individuals involved in major incidents on the co-ed floor just in that year found that almost all of the individuals in the twenty were involved in the same incident with alcohol. This finding prompted comparisons of how many individual incidents occurred on each floor, regardless of how many students were involved. This new comparison showed the single-sex male floor to have declined in number of individual incidents, and the single-sex female floor numbers to be increasing in the last year of the study, see Figure 6.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

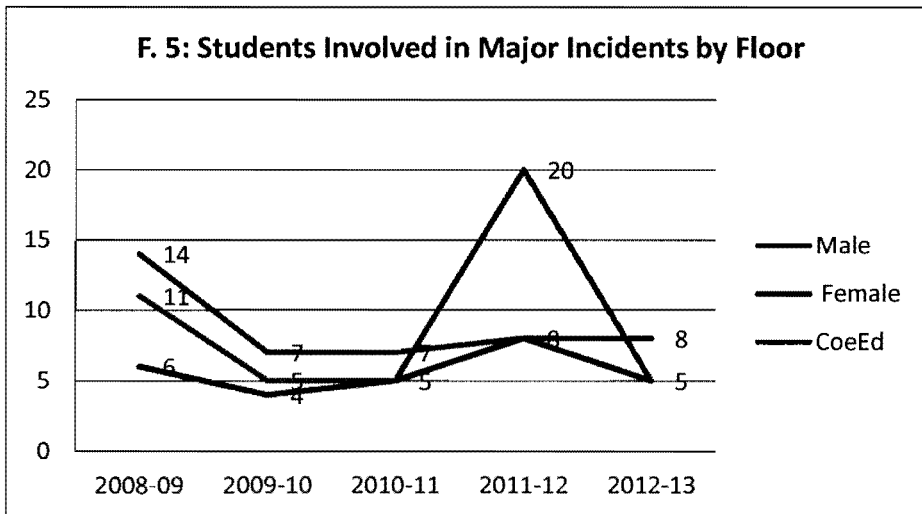


Figure 5. Number of individuals involved in 'major' incidents on each floor over five years.

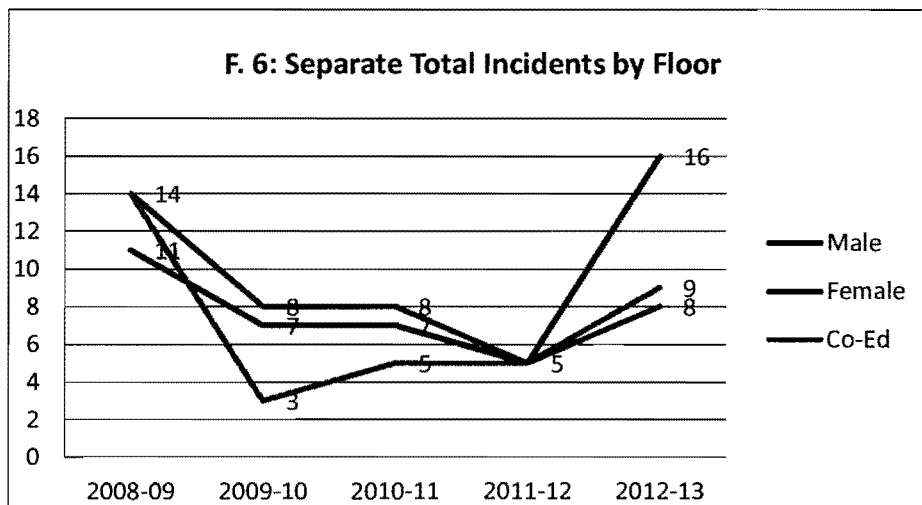


Figure 6. Number of total separate incidents which occurred on each floor type over five years.

The above data set corresponds with the trends seen in the total number of individuals involved in all types of incidents on these floors (as illustrated in Figure 7) for all years except the 2011-2012 academic year for the co-ed floor; this was seen earlier with the unusually large number of students involved in major incidents on the co-ed floor for only that year, the cause of which was determined to be one incident involving a large number of students.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

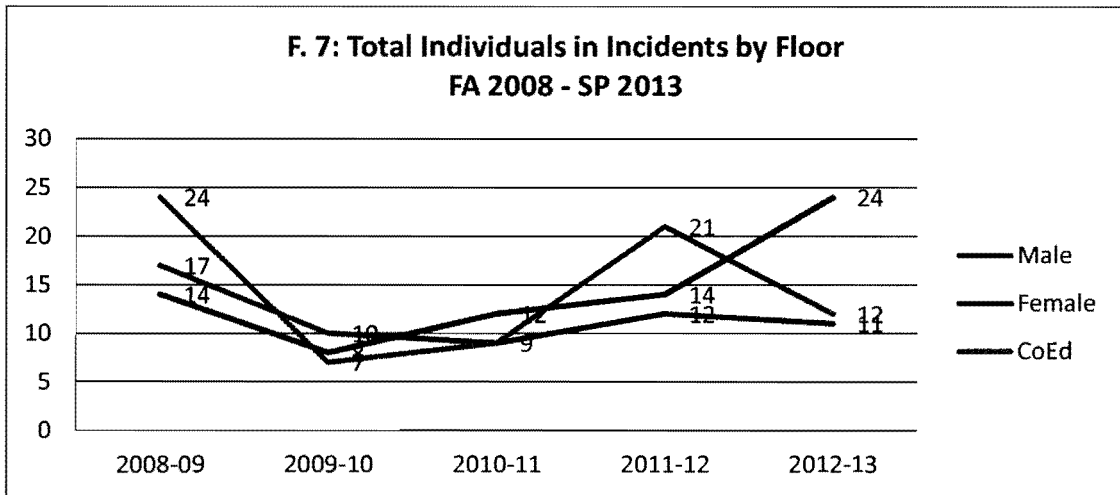


Figure 7. Number of individual students involved in all types of incidents over the course of five years, by the three floor types studied.

In Figure 7 it is also seen that the number of students involved in all types of incidents over the five years remains close on both single-sex floors until the final year of the study. While this number seems large and therefore significant to the institution, only a small portion of these students were involved in a major incident. This study finds that females on the single-sex floors were involved in generally more incidents than males on the single-sex floors, these incidents tended to be fairly evenly distributed between major and minor incidents, as seen in Figure 8.

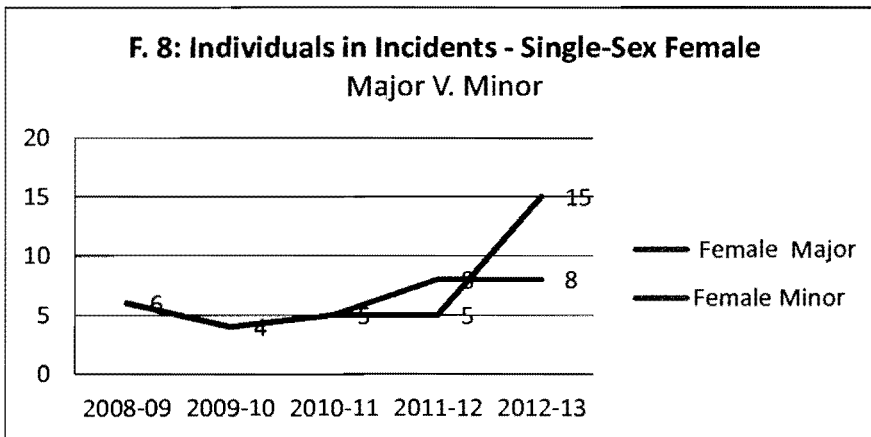


Figure 8. Number of individuals on single-sex female floors involved in major v. minor incidents.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

For the single-sex male floor the same cannot be said; more males were involved in major incidents than were involved in minor incidents (see Figure 9). Here the number of major incidents on the single-sex male floor is notably in decline.

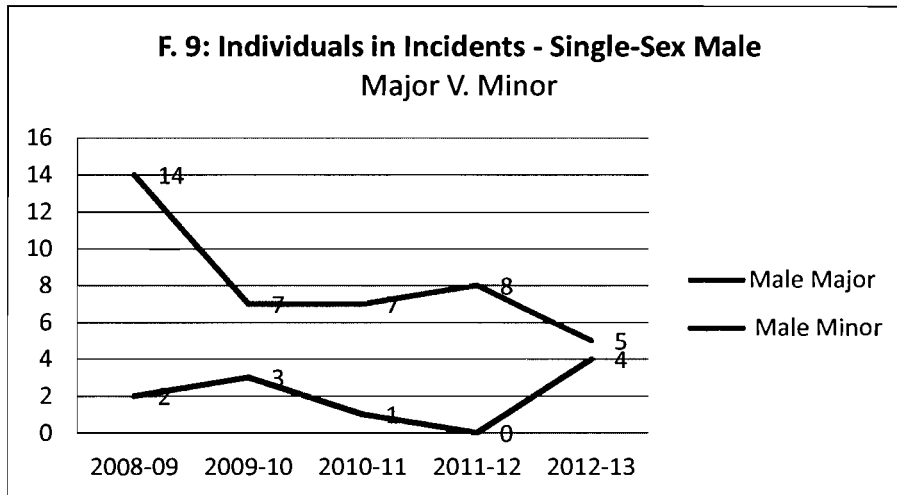


Figure 9. Number of individuals in single-sex male floors involved in major v. minor incidents.

Similarly the individuals involved in incidents on the co-ed floor were more often involved with major incidents than minor, as Figure 10 shows.

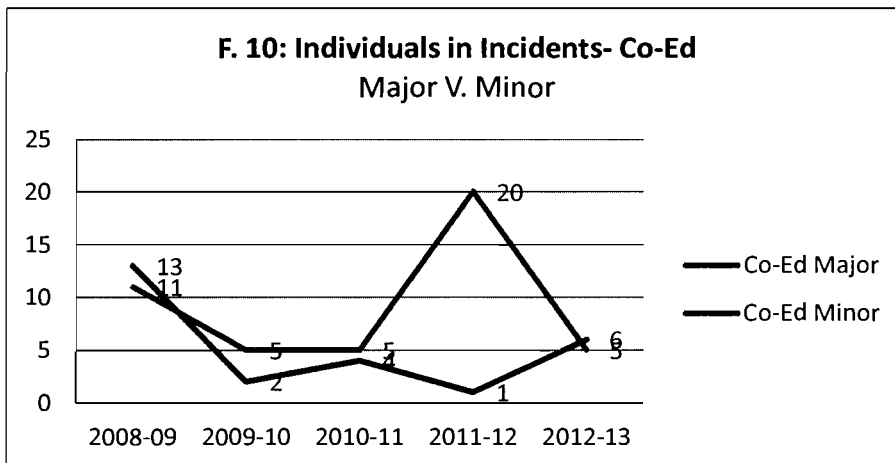


Figure 10. Individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floors, both major and minor.

Research shown in Chapter 2, although often varying in conclusions, at times indicated that males living in single-sex environments tended toward more destructive and competitive behavior (Ballou, 1986). The data here found that more men on single-

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

sex floors were involved in major incidents on the whole than men on the co-ed floor, and that both floors are showing decline in major incidents, Figure 11; though it cannot be overlooked that the co-ed floor also is home to nearly half as many males as the single-sex floor.

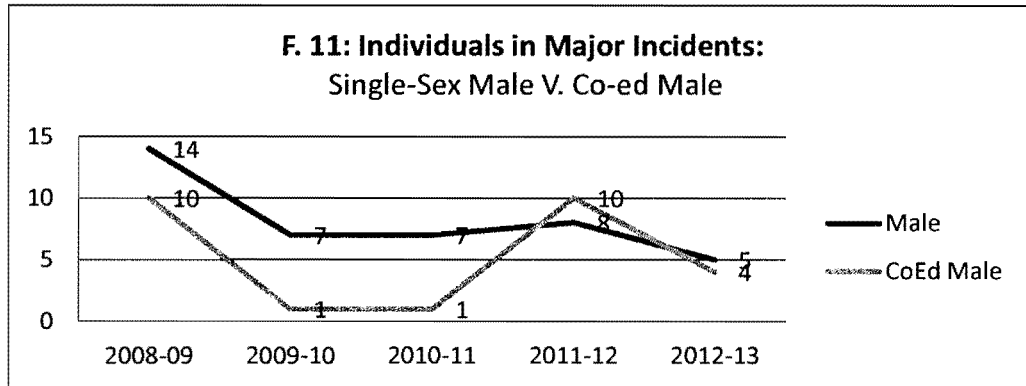


Figure 11. Males involved in major incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

The correlation between women on the single-sex floor and women on the co-ed floor has minimal variation with the exception of the last year in the study when the number of females on the co-ed floor involved in major incidents declined and those involved on the single-sex floor did not (Figure 12).

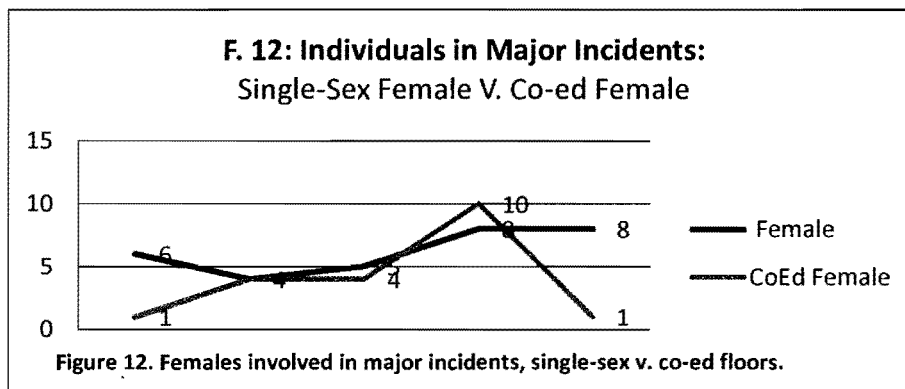


Figure 12. Females involved in major incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

As major incidents have a larger impact on both the community and the institution it is important to know that based on this study it seems the environment that lends itself

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

to consistently more students involved in major incidents each year is the co-ed floor. However, the numbers are not significant enough to say that this is because of the housing style. While the numbers appear lower than those on single-sex floors, as in Figures 11 and 12, it is critical to remember that, for example, in Figure 11 when the data shows that in 2008-09, 10 males on the co-ed floor were involved in major incidents and 14 males on the single-sex floor were involved in major incidents, what it actually says is that 14 males out of 38 on the single-sex floor were involved in major incidents, versus 10 males out of 19 on the co-ed floor. Looking at the variation in men and women involved in major incidents on the co-ed floors it seems to show a trend of influence between the peers in that in years (with the exception of the first year of the study) when more men were involved in major incidents, more women were also involved; the same is true for years showing incline, as in Figure 13.

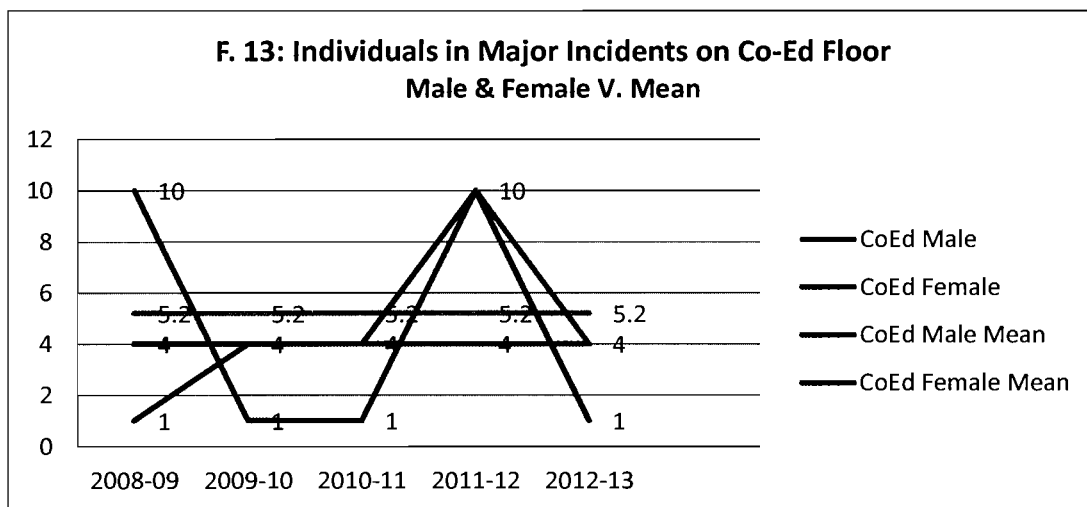


Figure 13. Individuals involved in incidents on co-ed floor, v. mean.

The data here also shows the mean number of individuals involved in major incidents on the co-ed floor each year; the mean for females on the co-ed floors was four students involved in major incidents per year and for males it was just over five per year. While it

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

might hold true that the up and down of this data set shows influence between peers, the data is not outside of the trends seen on the other floors. The mean number of men involved in major incidents on the single-sex floor is higher, at just over eight, and the mean for females on single-sex floors is also higher, at nearly five and a half.

Interestingly the mean number on the co-ed floors of individuals of both sexes involved in major incidents was just over nine. Showing that, on average, more individuals were involved in incidents on the co-ed floor each year, even though the floor experienced less separate incidents annually.

This indicates that, while it may be true that behavior of peers influences choices, sometimes negatively, the entire population of the residence hall should be considered peers with the ability to influence. The data shows that while the number of students involved in major incidents on the co-ed floor seems to correlate between male and female, a similar fluctuation is seen in the same years on other floors, indicating that the population of that year or the reporting staff may be a factor. On the co-ed floor what the data displays is that per incident, there are generally more students involved than in incidents on the single-sex floors. The data here is influenced greatly by one particular incident wherein twenty students were involved in an alcohol incident on the co-ed floor. This incident has increased the mean for the co-ed floor, and without this incident's influence the mean for the co-ed floor is right in line with the two single-sex floors.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

The same is not true of minor incidents across the three floor types. Females on the single-sex floor had consistently higher rates of minor violations than their counterparts on the co-ed floors (Figure 14). Males on the co-ed floor have a higher incidence of being involved with minor incidents only in the first year of the study, after that the variation was only one student or less (Figure 15).

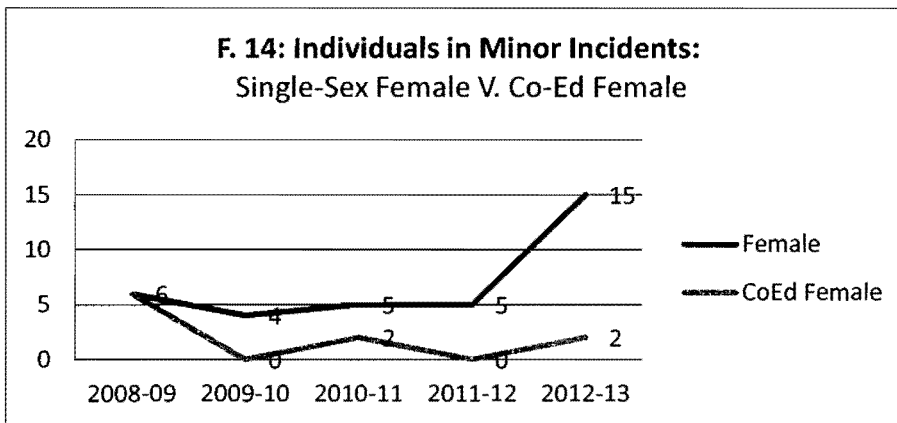


Figure 15. Females involved in minor incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

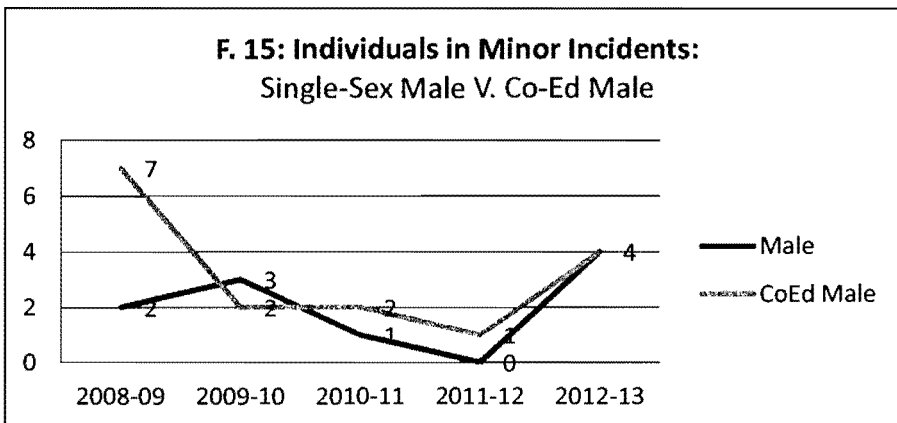


Figure 14. Males involved in minor incidents, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

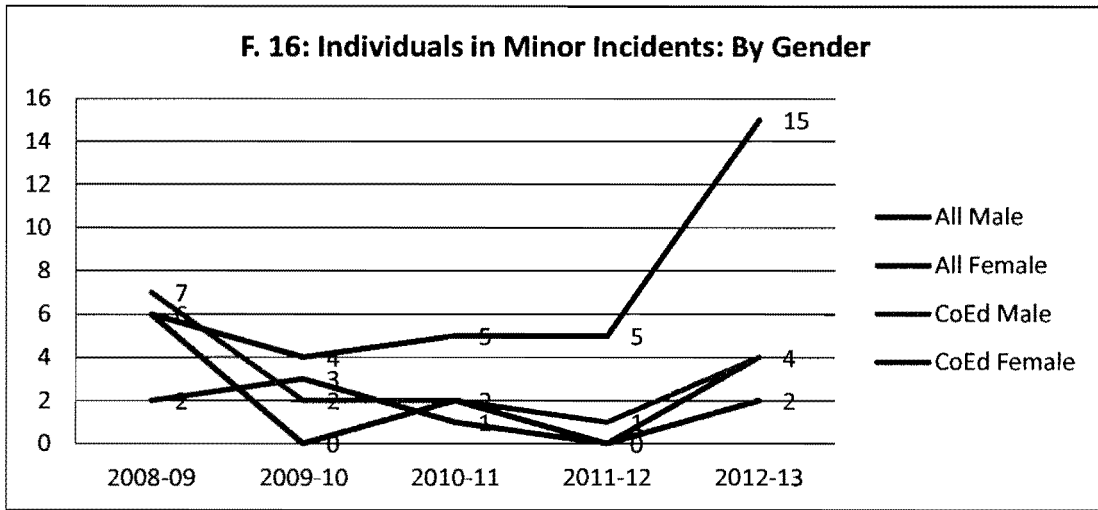


Figure 16. Individuals involved in minor incidents, by floor and gender.

Incidents that are considered minor have less of an impact on the institution as a whole, but can have an impact on the smaller community in which they are happening. Students are often influenced by their peers, this is especially so in small, seemingly insignificant ways. For example students who see their floormates fail to sign a guest in properly might attempt this behavior themselves, having seen it normalized by a peer. More women in the single-sex floors were involved in minor incidents than any gender on any floor type, Figure 16.

This data set also shows that, after the first year of the study, males on the single-sex male floors, males on the co-ed floors, and females on the co-ed floors were involved in similar numbers of minor incidents over the years. This indicates that for most, the environment does not seem to be influencing the likelihood a student will be involved in minor incidents. Although females on the single-sex floors, 2008 – 2013, were more

inclined to be involved with a minor incident than the others, this was not a consistent pattern.

Conduct Report Results: Incident Types

The separation of major and minor incidents helped to examine overall trends and look at data to find which environment experienced the highest frequency of serious incidents. Taking the data sets further, it was helpful to break the data down into incident types, like violations involving alcohol or drugs use, to find trends that affect the institution.

Alcohol use is something that affects greatly both the institution and the community of a residence hall. This study found that no one housing type had more incidence of alcohol use consistently over time than another, Figure 17. It did show that some years alcohol incidents were higher than others, which seems to have been a trend on each floor in those particular years.

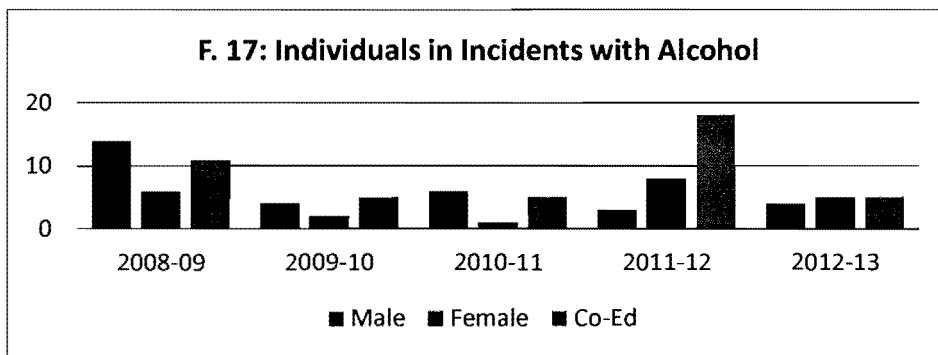


Figure 17. Individuals involved in incidents with alcohol by floor.

Even the comparisons between males on single-sex and males on co-ed floors found that the numbers went back and forth, showing no significant trend (Figure 18) and the same

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

can be said of the relation between females on single-sex and co-ed floors (Figure 19).

Similarly there does not appear to be a relation between females on co-ed floors and males on co-ed floors in terms of individuals involved in incidents recorded here (Figure 20).

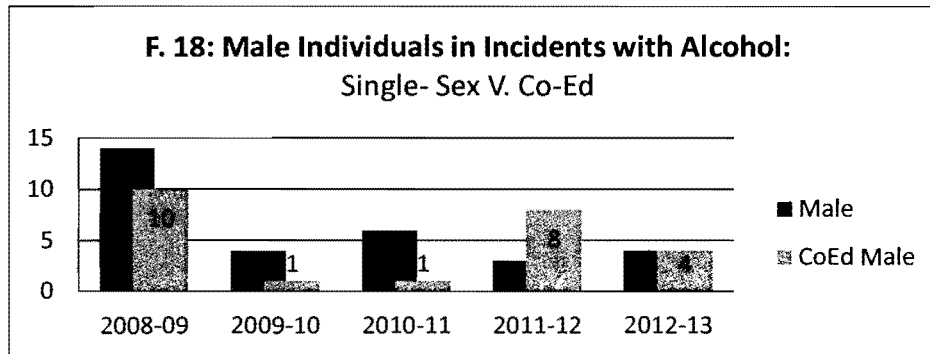


Figure 18. Males involved in incidents with alcohol, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

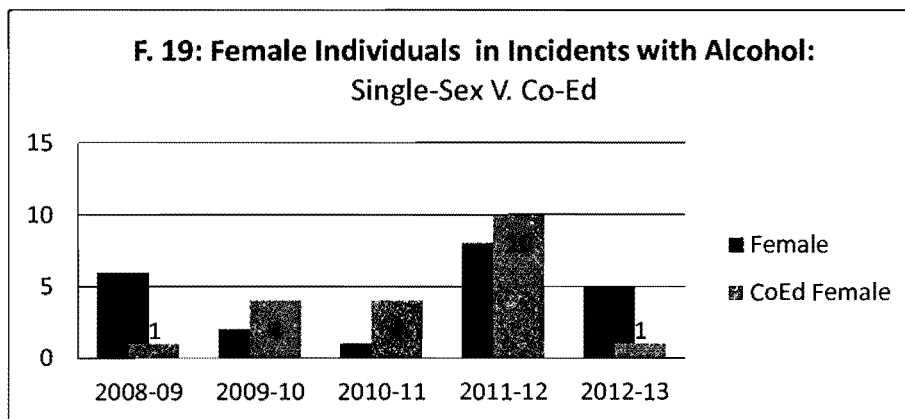


Figure 19. Females involved in incidents with alcohol, single-sex v. co-ed floors.

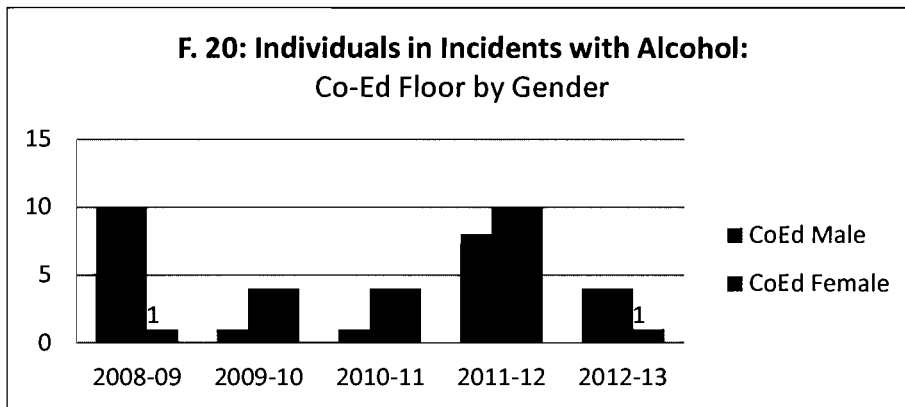


Figure 20. Individuals involved in incidents with alcohol on co-ed floor.

Another type of major incident significantly impacting students were those involving drug use or possession. Luckily the data on incidents with drugs was extremely limited; some years having no incidents with drugs reported on any floor, and the most being three incidents in a year. No conclusions about housing arrangements and incidents involving drugs could be drawn with such limited information.

The most reported incidents each year of the study, on all three types of floors, was overwhelmingly incidents involving alcohol. It is important to note that these incidents can range in severity from possession of alcohol paraphernalia (for example a beer funnel, empty alcohol containers, beer pong table, etc.) to the student requiring transport to the hospital for alcohol poisoning treatment. Behind incidents with alcohol the most frequently reoccurring are violations of quiet hours and fire safety violations, both considered minor.

Conduct Report Results: Conclusion

This study finds that male students are involved in more reported major incidents annually than female students, however residential housing style, be it single-sex or co-

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

ed, has no impact either way. Men living with other men do not have a consistently higher instance of being involved with significant policy violations any more than men living with female students, female students living with female students, or female students living with male students. The conclusion that neither single-sex housing nor co-ed housing were related to policy violating conduct in any significant way indicates that there is no preferred housing style for an institution looking to minimize incidents in their residence halls.

Damage Billing Results: First Glance

The fines which students incur over the course of an academic semester or year can be very telling about the types of behaviors taking place in a community. Community Damage Billing takes place when there is some type of destruction in a shared space and no individual responsibility can be determined. Personal Damage Billing takes place when an identifiable student causes damage to his or her own space or a common space, and Personal Responsibility Billing takes place when a student is charged a non-damage related fine, for example lock-out service or key and key replacements. All the aforementioned billings and fines are collected and stored under the overarching title of Damage Billing and is charged to students responsible at the end of each academic term. At the institution in the study, Wagner College, for the five years researched, the fines are taken out of a deposit the students submit in order to gain housing; fines that are larger than the amount in the deposit are added as damage billing to the students account and paid at a later date. An important trend to note in the data is that, with the exception of one semester on a single floor, the spring term of an academic year has a higher damage

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

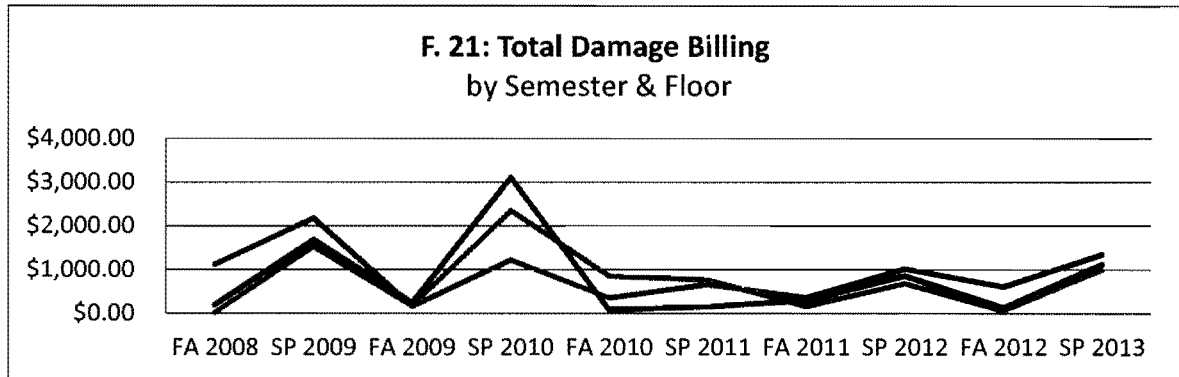


Figure 21. Total charges per floor by semester, over five years.

billing price for the floor (Figure 21) damages done in individual rooms is not assessed until the spring term, so that charge is naturally larger.

Over the semesters examined the single-sex male floor received community damage billing more semesters than any other floor, shown in Figure 22. The single-sex female floor was charged for community damage with the least amount of frequency. This indicates that the male single-sex floor had more damages each semester that could not be assigned to a single responsible party, but instead were charged to the entire population of the floor.

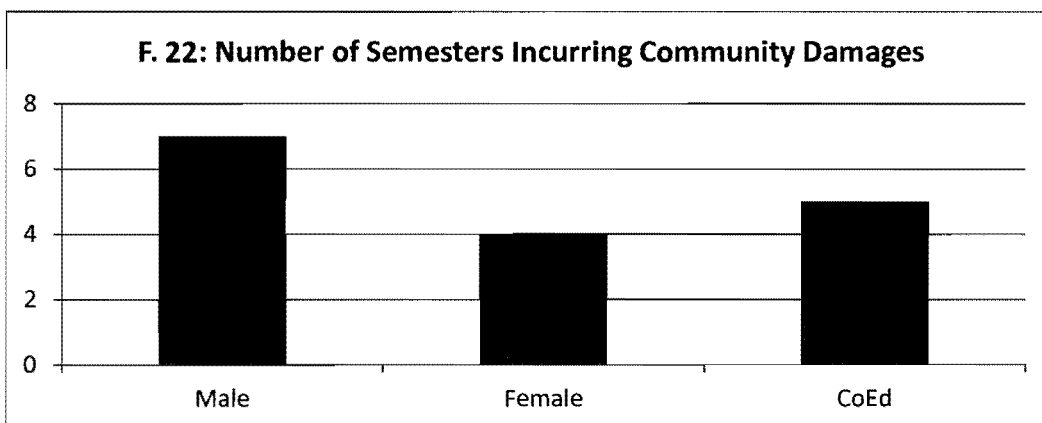


Figure 22. Number of semesters an entire floor was charged for community damage billing, by floor type.

Due to the amount of data given in the overall set it became necessary to combine the fall and spring semester charges for each floor, to help examine the annual costs per

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

floor in a more understandable way. From here on all data will be discussed by year, and the figures will reflect the combined totals of each semester per academic year.

The group of students that incurred the lowest annual charges were the female students living on the co-ed floors. These students had less lock out service charges, lock change charges and personal responsibility charges for room damages than any of the other groups. This population had mean annual charges of only \$388.72, while the other three (single-sex male and female, and co-ed male) populations averaged between \$1,000.00 and \$2,000.00 annually, shown in Figure 23. Figure 24 shows the annual mean total fines by each floor; of the fines assigned to the co-ed floor, most were assigned to male residents.

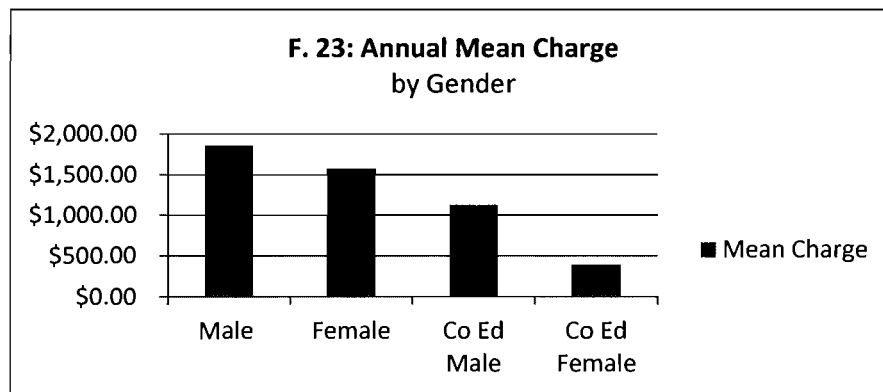


Figure 23. Average annual total charge by gender population.

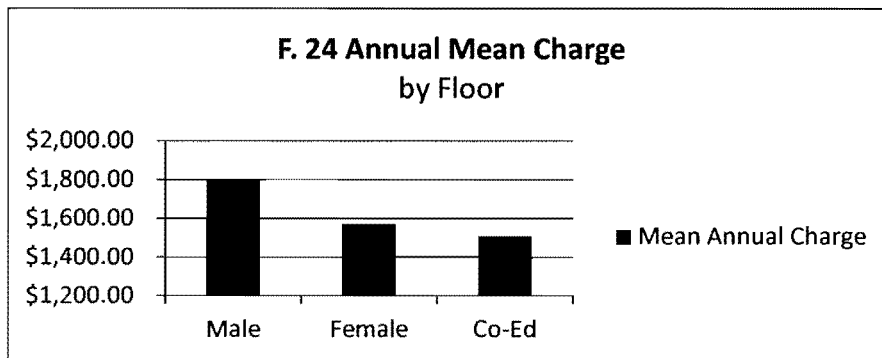


Figure 24. Average annual total charges by floor.

Each year total charges by floor went up and down, following different trends than the reported incidents trends discussed earlier, but following its own pattern. As seen in Figure 25, the three floor types tended to go up and down together with annual charges, which might be an indicator of the peer group in housing each year. Other factors for this included the same that influenced reported incidents, change in reporting staff, change in student population, culture shifts at the institution and administrative staff change. Often times minor end of the year room damages are overlooked on years where the institution intends to do a repainting of the entire building; these years students are not charged for marks or minor holes in walls, as the room will be painted anyway. Decisions like these are generally dependent on the administration staff of the residence halls. Change in student reporting staff is also a factor; students (at the institution on the study, Wagner College) are given one free lock out per year, all lock out services required after this incur charges which rise exponentially each time a lock out is needed. The same student reporting staff is responsible for reporting floor damages as they appear and the personal room damages of their peers during check out times at the institution. The change in this

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

staff can account for small variations in annual charges per year, though it is unlikely to be large enough to affect the totals noticeably.

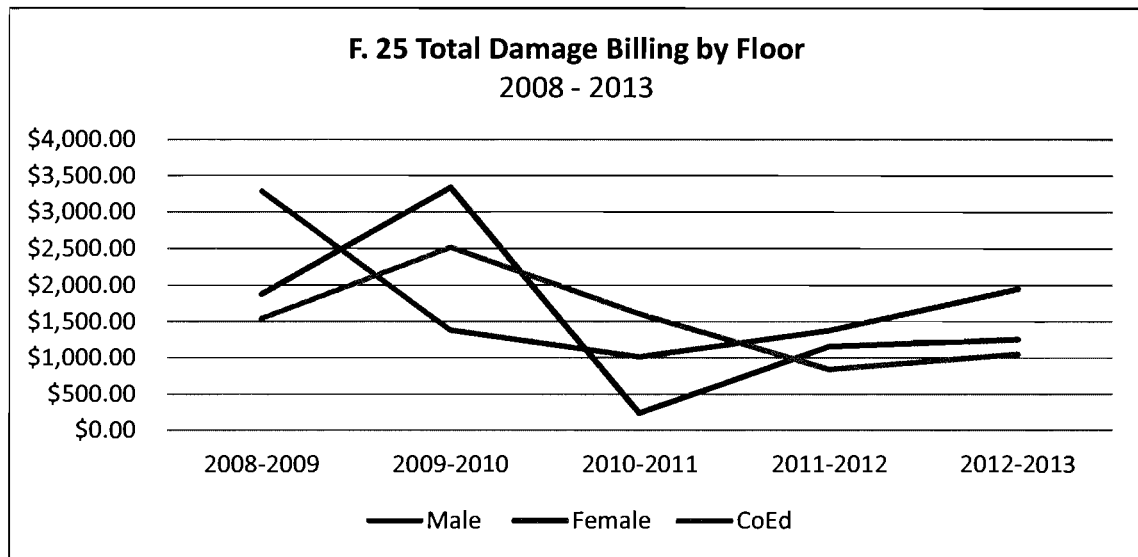


Figure 25. Shows total yearly charges by floor type over five years.

Here in Figure 25 it can be seen that for the most part the co-ed and single-sex female floors rise and fall in annual charges together, while the single-sex male floor lies just outside that trend. As noted in Figure 23, the least responsible group for damages were the women on the co-ed floor, meaning the majority of the damage billing on the co-ed floor is assigned to the men, which is comparable to the damage charges incurred by the men on the single-sex floors, Figure 26. It is interesting that here, while it appears men on the single-sex floor are charged more, what it truly shows is that individually males on the co-ed floor incur more fines, as there are nearly half as many per floor; indicating that men, regardless of environment, are assigned more fines for the damages to their personal spaces and community spaces.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

When it is considered that less men can be charged on the co-ed floor because there are nearly half as many living in those floors, it is determined that men on the co-ed floor pay more fines per male on the floor than men on the single-sex floor (Figure 27).

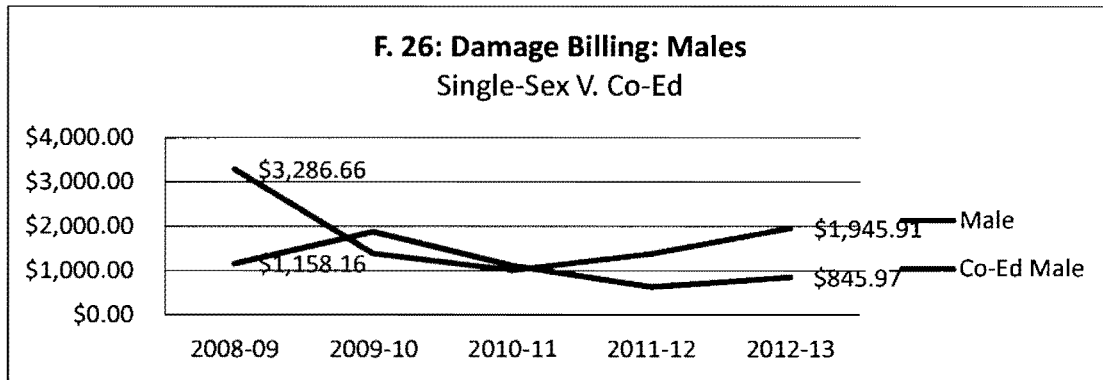


Figure 26. Total damage charges assigned to males, single-sex v. co-ed.

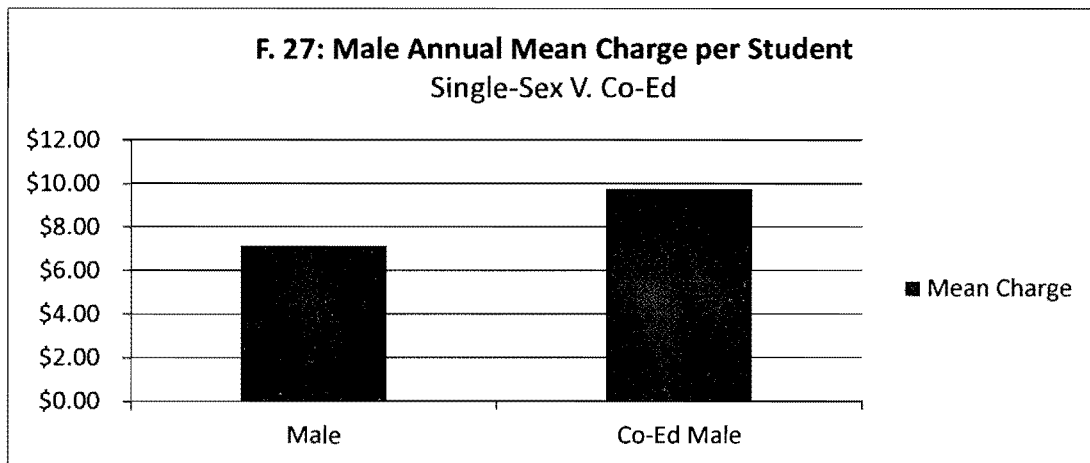


Figure 27. Average male charge per student, per year in damage billing, by floor.

This shows that while more men are being charged annually on the single-sex floor, the men on the co-ed floor are incurring higher fines from lock outs and personal room damages. The opposite is true between the women of the single-sex and co-ed floors, Figure 28. In this figure women are being charged more for damages on the single-sex floor; even though there are more women on the single-sex floors to share the charges.

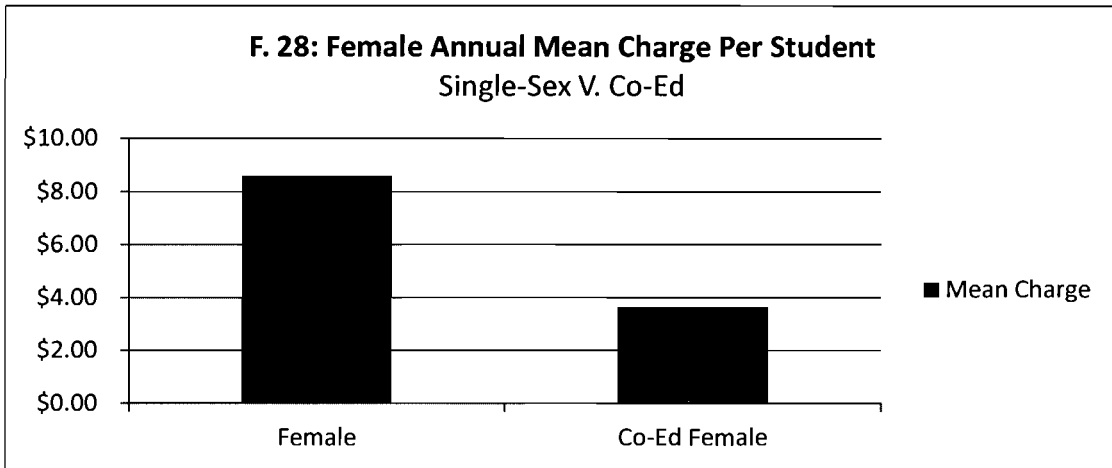


Figure 28. .Average female charges per student, per year in damage billing, by floor.

In fact, the highest annual mean charge per student fined is for females on the single-sex floor, Figure 29. Over the five years in this study more men were charged on the single-sex floor than students on any other floor. The total average annual fine is largest on the single-sex male floor, however those fines are shared by more students fined, thus having a lower annual mean charge per student than the single-sex female floor.

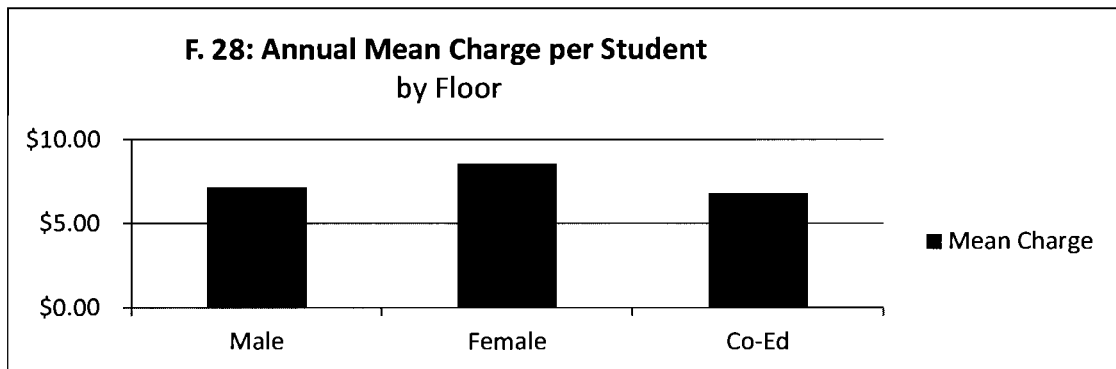


Figure 29. . Average charge per student fined, annually by floor.

Damage Billing Results: Conclusion

This study concludes that again there is no housing arrangement which creates an environment wherein damages are lessened. The single-sex male floor incurred the most fines over the years in the study; however the men on the co-ed floor were singularly the most destructive. Although the fines assigned the men on the co-ed floor did not equal those of the men on the single-sex floor, there were considerably less of them involved, meaning that individually they were fined more. Those who were fined the least were women on the co-ed floor, and they were least likely to be assigned full floor community damage billing. This might be an indicator of a higher chance of determining responsibility, or that the staff assigned fines to only half of the floor after determining general responsibility. While lock-out and lock-change fines are included in the current study, they are not truly the result of damages, and further data analysis could determine more specific damage billing charges. All in all, neither single-sex housing nor co-ed housing styles were preferential for an institution lowering damage billing charges.

Survey to Current Residents: Result

After all the data was collected and conclusions were drawn, a survey was sent to the students who currently live on the types of floors examined in the study. Students on the male, female and co-ed floors were emailed a short ten question survey to gauge their opinion on what they thought might be true, reaction to what the survey found and reaction to what other studies indicated. The survey also asked how they personally felt about their housing assignment coming into the year, and how they felt now that they have lived in that environment for a year.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

The survey was sent to over 100 current students, and six answered. There is not enough data here for sufficient findings to compare to the rest of the study. Those who responded believed the single-sex male floor to be the most likely to have more incidents than the rest and higher fines for damages. However they were easily willing to believe that this was not the case when presented with the basic conclusions of this study. Overall almost nothing can be learned to be of use to this study from the reaction survey.

All the survey questions and responses can be found in the appendices, specifically Appendix B – Appendix G, broken down by question.

Chapter 5: Discussion & Implications

Discussion

The results of this study combine to form a conclusion that was outside the current literature. There was not as consistent conclusion across the literature about which housing style, single-sex or co-ed, is “better.” Most of the studies concluded that one style or another was more beneficial for one reason or another; some found that women were less likely to have body-image issues when they lived with only women, and some argued that men behaved better and treated women with more respect when living with the opposite sex.

Similarly, this study cannot conclude that one style is better than another. The data from five years of reported incidents and damage billing at Wagner College showed that neither housing style was “better” for limited major incidents or damages to the residence halls. The information found in this study is very interesting, but cannot offer suggestions for change that would benefit an institution significantly.

At Wagner College the male students on the single-sex floors were involved more frequently in major incidents, like alcohol violations, theft, drug violations and threats to other students, than any other group. However there were more students involved in incidents, both major *and* minor, on the single-sex female floor and the co-ed floor in total than the single-sex male floor.

The reality that this study affirms is that there is always a trade off with each housing type. The positives of the single-sex floors are that women are involved less frequently in major incidents. Also on single-sex floors there are fewer students involved

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

in incidents, of all types. The negatives of single-sex housing were damage billing: the male floors incurred the largest amount of fines, and charged for community damage more than any other group in the study.

The positives for co-ed housing show that responsibility for damages is determined more frequently, which leads to fewer students on the floor being fined for damages. This also keeps the total value of fines on the floor lower than single-sex male floors. The drawback for the male residents of co-ed floors is that they pay more in fines individually. On co-ed floors more women are involved in major incidents, and annually more students are involved in incidents of all kinds. There are fewer total incidents, but those which occur have more students involved than on single-sex floors, this might be linked to the study which found that co-ed floors foster more social interactions and bond building (Brown, 1973).

If an institution were looking to only lessen the total number of incidents, and was not concerned with whether these incidents were minor or major, based only on the data here the intuition could switch all of its housing to be co-ed. If an institution were looking only to lessen the number of individuals involved in incidents, single-sex housing would be the way to go based on the data here. In the event an institution was hoping to decrease the amount of damage billing being assigned to each individual student, co-ed floors would be the choice based on this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study aimed to limit the number of variables examined so as to limit the number of outcomes being studied. With that there are still a number of uncontrollable factors which stand to influence the study and the data analyzed.

The study looked at three floors each year for five years. For the majority of the study these floors were the third floor, fifth floor and tenth floor of Harborview Hall. One year the third floor was not a single-sex floor, and that year the data for the male single-sex floor came from the first floor. The change in location might be a factor, as the third floor was also the lobby level. This fact might have influenced all of the comparisons to floors that were not on the lobby level and therefore had less traffic. The lobby floor also consistently had a smaller number of students living on it because it is a slightly smaller size. All three floors also have a very small number of upperclassmen in residence, ranging from none to four depending on the year. It is unlikely they were a significant influence in the data, although they selected their housing assignment.

The study also considered some individuals involved in incidents on floors to be insignificant, and only complicating the data set. For example there was an incident of women involved in an alcohol incident on the single-sex male floor, where no men were involved. To include this data in number of incidents would have added an incident wherein men on the single-sex floor were not responsible. For this reason incidents like this were overlooked on both single-sex floors. Also on the single-sex floors there were occasions where the opposite sex was involved, but these were rare. It is possible that the exclusion of this data has affected the outcomes in small ways. This data could be examined in the future if there were more to compare it with.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

For one of the years the male single-sex floor was populated by a large majority of the first year students entering into the football athletic program. While they did not choose this location it was determined that keeping a number of them together made the most sense because their move in date was earlier than the rest of their peers. There may be something to be learned from this, in that students with a similar interest and background in football might change the data in some way. It would also be interesting to determine if this was a practice over the years or only sometime done in recent history. From the current data there does not appear to be an increase in incident or fines on the year where this housing arrangement was confirmed, this may indicate that it is not significant in any way, or that this was a consistent practice throughout the years.

This study also does not account for students who changed rooms throughout the year. This may not have had a big impact, but without further examination it is not certain. Students change floors throughout the year when they have issues with roommates or other conflicts. This does not influence the incidents, as they are recorded by location, however the damage billing might be influenced in minor ways. For example if a student incurred significant fines in the fall semester, then moved onto a floor found in the study for the spring, depending on the year and who was working the damage billing in the building the fines from the fall might carry over to the spring, or they might not. In terms of damage billing, the fact that different administrators are responsible for determining fines also influences the data in small ways.

The data was also influence by the student reporting staff. It is possible that, with the change in staff, there was a change in the reporting rates. Some student staff are more inclined to report incidents than others. Most of the floors were home to two student staff

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

members, but those who were not might have a change in behavior, or a staff member may be more or less present year to year. Past experience has shown that the variations in ability of student staff ranges greatly, from simple presence on the floor, to ability to identify prohibited items and correctly document the incident. These differences between reporting sources influence the numbers of incidents on each floor.

This study examined only incidents that occurred on the floors. The residents of each floor may have been responsible for incidents that occurred on other floors, in other locations in the building or elsewhere on campus. For the study most of the data looked at were individuals involved in incidents, however it is possible that some of the individuals who were involved in the incidents were not residents of the floor where the incident took place. For example there was a large incident involving alcohol and twenty students on the co-ed floor, a number of those students were residents of another floor; however the majority of the students involved were residents of the floor in question. Without further examination and the collection of more data it cannot be determined if these numbers are large enough to influence the outcomes found.

None of these factors are likely to cause enough influence in the study to change the outcome one way or another. Each might account for variations in the data due to the small sample size. The variations in data collection make it difficult to determine whether subsequent studies would have different results. Collecting the data over five years mitigated these variations and allow for a reasonable amount of confidence in the conclusions presented.

Implications and Next Steps

Based on this study, if an institution were looking to only lessen the total number of incidents, and was not concerned with whether these incidents were minor or major, the institution could make all housing co-ed. If an institution were looking only to lessen the number of individuals involved in incidents, single-sex housing would be the way to go. In the event an institution places priority on the preservation and maintenance of facilities, than co-ed floors would be the choice. Institutions have many other goals outside changing incidents or lessening damages, many of which focus on student interactions; this study confirms earlier findings that co-ed floors lend to more social interactions.

While the trends seen here indicate that, in terms of damages and incidents, there is no perfect housing arrangement, this may not hold true across a larger study. Further research could entail the collection of data from a number of institutions, varying in types. A study which included both large and small, private and public, liberal arts and STEM institutions would help to determine if the data set was a fair representation of what is actually happening nationally. Such a study could provide additional information to determine if single-sex housing or co-ed housing really influences behavior in terms of building damages and violating campus policies.

It would be interesting to see if this trend does hold out at larger institutions or over a larger scale. This survey studied only three floors of residents each year, an average of only just over 115 students for each year of the study. While the study seems to be on a small scale, it is a good sample of the first year population at Wagner College.

It might also be worth looking into trends at Wagner College in other residence halls, where the students have chosen their housing style, to see if the same can be said.

What Is Left to Learn

Is there truly a housing style that is “better?” For some, better means a preferred experience for the students, while for others better can refer to benefit only to the institution. There is no evidence that indicates a “best” housing arrangement that creates the “best” possible environment for the students. It may be that there is no universal “best” or even “better” because different students have different needs.

It is yet undetermined from this study whether incidents or community damage affects the community in a residence hall or on a floor more than the other. While this study found that certain floors had higher frequency of individuals involved in major incidents, it is not known whether students being involved in incidents affect the larger community in a way that can be measured. From personal experience it is known that consistent damage or vandalism to a shared space or community area does affect the community negatively, even more so when the students are all being fined for the actions of others. This might indicate that, from the student perspective, community damage billing impacts other students and the floor environment the most. Without further study into this theory, there can be no definitive conclusions, but that is certainly something worth finding out.

From this study it could not be determined if one environment improved a student’s relationship to drugs and alcohol, but that is certainly something worth learning.

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

This study found that some years had higher numbers of students involved in reported alcohol incidents than other years; it might be worth looking into the causes of these increases, and how to combat them. The years where incidents like these rose on all floors deserve more looking into; this study could not conclude if these increases in instances of alcohol use in the hall were due to change in the student population, reaction to the culture of the campus, due to better training of student staff and therefore better reporting, or a number of other influences.

Implications: Conclusion

Institutions, or at the very least Wagner College, can rest easy knowing that the choice to have both single-sex and co-ed residential housing options has not created an environment where students are more likely to become involved with major incidents or be fined because of involvement in community damages or vandalism. This study found no significant evidence that one housing style was better than another in lowering damages or policy violations. This study should be conducted on a wider scale, to determine if the finds hold nationally and over a more significant time period.

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Appendices

Contents:

Appendix A: HERB / IRB Approval

Appendix B: Survey for Current Residents

Appendix C: Survey Responses

Appendix D: Survey: Reaction to Floor – Pre/Post

Appendix E: Survey: Pre Opinion

Appendix F: Survey: Reaction to Past Study Data

Appendix G: Survey: Reaction to Study

Appendix A: IRB Approval

WAGNER COLLEGE

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Reference: Human Subjects Proposal #: Julie.Liss.001

Project Title: Comparative Cost of Single-Sex Floors vs. Co-ed Floors in Residence Halls on College Campuses in terms of Damages, Billing and Incident type and Numbers

Dear Julie:

Your application for research involving human subjects has been reviewed under federal guidelines as a project qualifying for the following type of review:

Expedited

The outcome of the review is as follows:

Approved as submitted

If your study changes in any substantive way regarding your work with human subjects, you must submit a proposal to revise your IRB application. Please work with your advisor to submit an appropriate application tailored to the changes that you propose.

If you have any questions, please contact the faculty member with whom you are working on this research.

On completion of your study, you must fill in the study completion form, found on the Student Resources page of the Education Department's website.

The Department wishes you a productive study, and we look forward to learning from your research.

Sincerely,

Karen DeMoss

Education IRB Chair

IORG#: 0003977 Education IRB#: TIRB50100

Appendix B: Survey

Survey Sent to Students Currently Living on the Floors in this Study

Thesis: Housing & Behaviors

***1. As part of my master's degree requirements at Wagner College, I am conducting research on Residential Housing Assignments: Single Sex Floors vs. Co-Ed Floors in order to learn if there is a cost benefit to either living arrangement, or if either is indicative of incident types or increased numbers. You are invited to participate in this research project, and this document will provide you with the information that will help you decided whether or not you wish to participate. Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary.**

For this study participants will be given a questionnaire with questions and statements around the issue of residential living arrangements. During the course of the project, I will research the topic of single-sex residential living vs. co-ed residential living, with the help of other previous studies, data collected at Wagner College and the aforementioned questionnaire results. If you were to participate, I would ask you to answer questions in regards to your living situation, reactions to it and reactions to other research results. All information you provide during the project will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. My thesis will also be cleared of any possible identifying information in order to ensure your confidentiality.

Please email me at julie.liss@wagner.edu with any questions.

I wish to indicate my understanding of the project and my consent to participate

Next

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

***2. When you first received your housing assignment, how did you feel about the floor you were assigned?**

***3. I am...**

- male on single-sex floor
- female on single-sex floor
- male on co-ed floor
- female on co-ed floor

Prev Next

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

4. The floor I believe would have the most incidents is:

- single-sex male
- single-sex female
- co-ed

5. The floor I believe would have the most fines for damages is:

- single-sex male
- single-sex female
- co-ed

Prev

Next

***6. A study, of data collected over five years, conducted at Wagner College determined that on average the single-sex male floor pays the most in damage fines, and the co-ed floor pays the least. What is your reaction?**

***7. A study, of data collected over five years, conducted at Wagner College found that the co-ed floor had, on average, more reported incidents. What is your reaction?**

Prev

Next

8. A past study indicated “women living on co-ed floors showed significantly higher levels of body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, and self-induced vomiting [than on all female floors].” What is your reaction to this research?

***9. In a past study students reported:**

- a. “males that lived in all male residence halls saw themselves as more competitive, nonconformist, [and] independent ... than all-female residence halls”
- b. “co-ed housing residents perceived themselves to be more supported, independent, intellectual, and lower in competition than other residence halls”

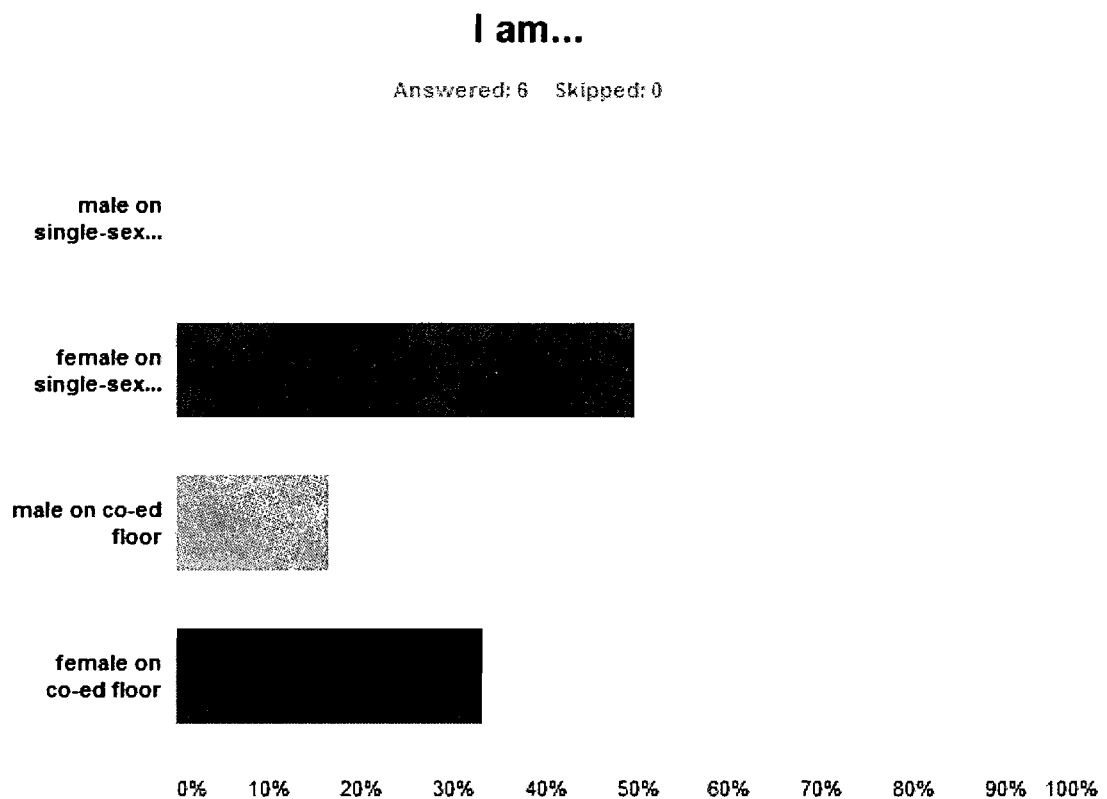
Do either of these statements reflect anything you have personally experienced?

Prev

Next

10. After this year, how do you feel now about the floor you live on?

Appendix C: Survey Responses



This figure shows that the most students who answered the survey were women on the single-sex floor, and equal responses were given from co-ed males and females. Having only six students reply to a survey which was sent to over 100 students is a terrible reply rate. Based on this there is almost nothing significant to be gained from the survey.

Appendix D: Survey: Reaction to Floor- Pre/Post

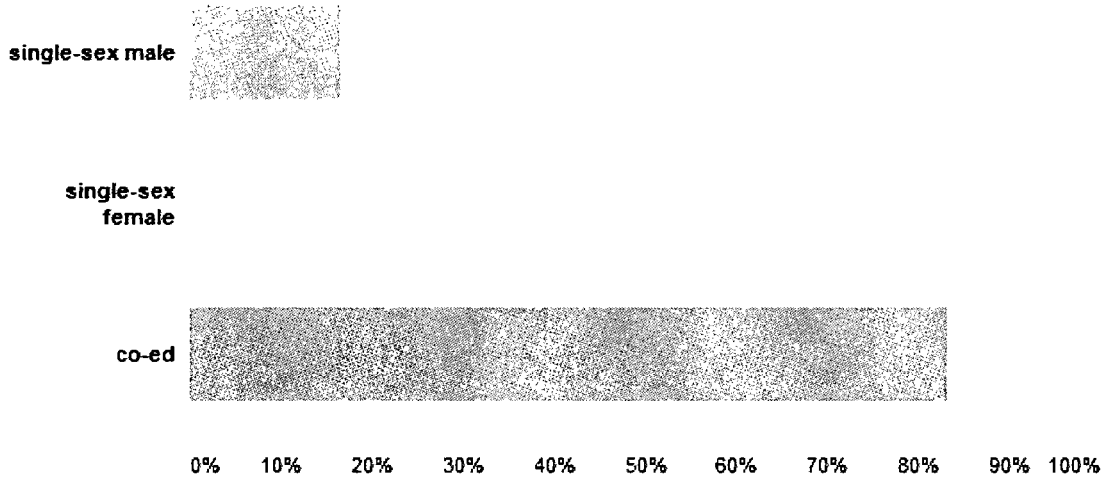
When you first received your housing assignment, how did you feel about the floor you were assigned?	
Positive Response	Neutral Response
“Good” (male co-ed)	“Neutral” (female single-sex)
“I was excited – I liked the mix-of guys and girls, though I was happy that the sides are separated.” (female single-sex)	“Fine. I didn’t know what kind of floor I was on.” (female single-sex)
“optimistic” (female co-ed)	“Nothing in particular” (female co-ed)

After this year, how do you feel now about the floor you live on?	
Positive Response	Neutral or Negative Response
“Good” (male co-ed)	“Nothing special.” (female single-sex)
	“I strongly dislike the floor I live on now” (female co-ed)

Appendix E: Survey: Pre Opinion

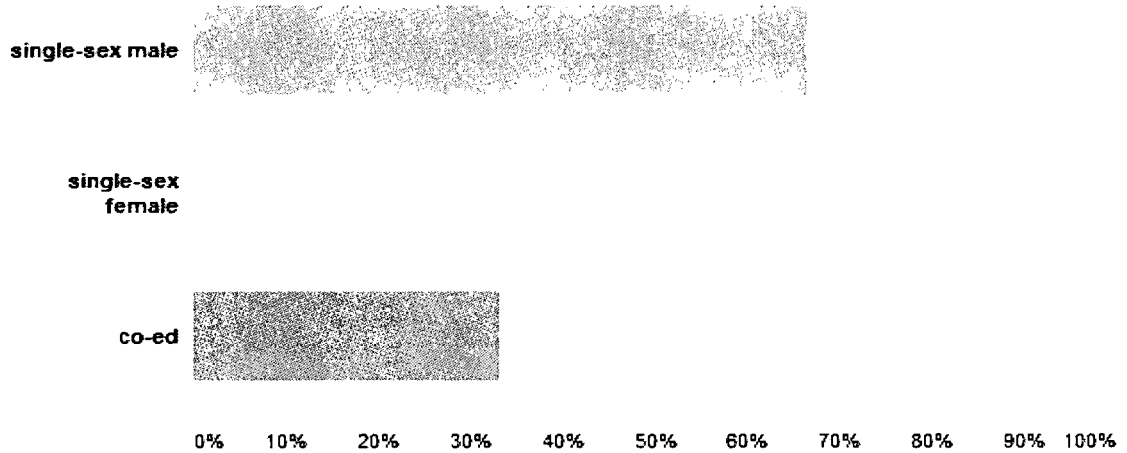
The floor I believe would have the most incidents is:

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



The floor I believe would have the most fines for damages is:

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



Appendix F: Survey: Reaction to Past Study Data

A past study indicated “women living on co-ed floors showed significantly higher levels of body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, and self-induced vomiting [than on all female floors].”
What is your reaction to this research?

“Sad” (male co-ed)

“Typical” (female single-sex)

“not very believable” (female co-ed)

In a past study students reported:

a. “males that lived in all male residence halls saw themselves as more competitive, nonconformist,[and] independent ...than all-female residence halls”

b. “co-ed housing residents perceived themselves to be more supported, independent, intellectual, and lower in competition than other residence halls”

Do either of these statements reflect anything you have personally experienced?

“No” (male co-ed)

“No” (female single-sex)

“B” (female co-ed)

Appendix G: Survey: Reaction to Study

A study, of data collected over five years, conducted at Wagner College determined that on average the single-sex male floor pays the most in damage fines, and the co-ed floor pays the least.

What is your reaction?

Belief

Disbelief

“Not surprised” (male co-ed)

Impact of Single-Sex vs. Co-ed Floors: Damages & Incidents

<p>“Seems about right. Not sure about co-ed being least though.” (female single-sex)</p>	
<p>“Makes sense” (female single-sex)</p>	
<p>“believable” (female co-ed)</p>	

<p>A study, of data collected over five years, conducted at Wagner Collect found that the co-ed floor had, on average, more reported incidents. What is your reaction?</p>	
<p>Belief</p>	<p>Disbelief</p>
<p>“Not surprised males are more crazier then girls like” (male co-ed)</p>	
<p>“Seems about right.” (female single-sex)</p>	
<p>“Makes sense that the co-ed floor would have more incidents.” (female single-sex)</p>	
<p>“understandable” (female co-ed)</p>	

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