

Graduate Hall Director Learning Assessment

Department of Residence Life

Fall 2015 – Spring 2016

Background

The Department of Residence Life provides a variety of housing options for approximately 10,000 undergraduates, graduates, and members of the Corps of Cadets each year; 7,500 of these students live in traditional residence halls and apartments and 2,500 in the Corps of Cadets. According to its website (<https://reslife.tamu.edu/livingOnCampus/meetTheStaff>), “the vision of the Department of Residence Life is to offer Texas A&M University students a world-class on-campus student living and learning experience.”

In order to assist with running the residence halls and university apartments, the Department of Residence Life employs graduate students as Graduate Hall Directors (GHD) to work in the residence hall communities. According to its website (<http://reslife.tamu.edu/jobs/ghd>), Graduate Hall Directors are “live-in staff members responsible for the overall administration of a residence hall. The residence hall population ranges from 115 to 400 and may have three to ten undergraduate Resident Advisors. The Graduate Hall Director works with both the staff and residents to develop a comfortable living and learning environment coinciding with the mission and goals of Texas A&M University.” GHDs fill many roles in their communities including conflict mediation, personal and disciplinary advising, student development programming, and supervision for the Resident Advisors (RA).

Graduate Hall Directors have the opportunity to build supervision skills and develop several transferable skills. Residence Life wanted to explore how the GHD position contributed to the Texas A&M University graduate learning outcomes (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/university-information/>) and understand how this position impacted graduate students’ educational experience. These results will be used to make improvements to the GHD position. This is the second year that Student Life Studies and Residence Life have worked together on this project.

Method and Sample

Two separate surveys were developed using Qualtrics[®], survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. Both surveys were analyzed using SPSS[®], a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel[®]. Each survey invitation was sent to all Graduate Hall Directors and remained open for approximately two weeks. During this time up to three reminders were sent to non-respondents before a survey closed. Additionally, demographic information was pulled from the University student database. Due to branching, not all the respondents saw all questions.

The fall semester survey consisted of 60 questions (42 quantitative and 18 qualitative) and was sent to all GHDs on December 10, 2015. Of the 15 GHDs receiving the survey link, 10 completed it, for a 67% response rate. The 68-question survey for the spring semester contained 55 quantitative and 13 qualitative questions. The spring survey link was sent on May 3, 2016 to the same GHDs as in the fall. Note, one GHD left the position between semesters. Of the 14 GHDs receiving the invitation, 11 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 79% response rate.

Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order unless otherwise stated. Additionally, summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Last year the survey content was divided and administered between six monthly surveys; comparisons to last year will be made where appropriate. This report is broken into three sections: Demographics, Fall Semester Survey, and Spring Semester Survey.

Demographics

Demographics of the Graduate Hall Directors can be found in Table 1. Most GHDs were white, female, Master's students in the College of Education & Health Development.

	Fall 2015 Population [N=15]	Fall 2015 Respondents [n=10]	Spring 2016 Population [N=14]	Spring 2016 Respondents [n=11]
College				
Education & Health Development	87%	80%	86%	91%
Dwight Look College of Engineering	7%	10%	7%	--
Veterinary Medicine	7%	10%	7%	9%
Classification				
Master	93%	90%	93%	100%
Doctoral	7%	10%	7%	--
Gender				
Female	67%	70%	71%	73%
Male	33%	30%	29%	27%
Race				
White	60%	40%	57%	64%
Hispanic or Latino	20%	30%	21%	9%
Black only + 2 or more/1 Black	20%	30%	21%	27%

Table 1: Demographics

Fall Semester Survey

The fall survey covered topics of time, communication, engagement, technology, diversity, social justice, cultural competence, critical thinking/problem solving, and overall experience. Graduate Hall Directors were told that for the purposes of the survey, they were to consider the following for the types of audiences they may communicate with:

- Peers – other Graduate Hall Directors
- Staff – other full-time staff they work with or interact with
- Supervisors – their direct supervisor

When asked how they would rate their time management skills, 20% of the GHDs selected excellent, 70% said above average, and 10% said average. Nobody selected below average or poor. Graduate students were asked to indicate how many hours during a normal 7-day week they spent on various activities. As seen in Table 2, respondents mainly spent 6-10 hours completing academic coursework and attending classes, 11-15 hours for their practicum/internships, 11-20 hours performing structured GHD tasks, and 1-5 hours on unstructured GHD tasks. Compared to 2015, GHDs spent about the same amount of time attending classes. However, they spent less time on academic coursework and structured GHD tasks, but more time on unstructured GHD tasks. The practicum/internship was not an option last year. This could be a reason GHDs reported less time on coursework this year and split that between coursework and practicum time.

How many hours during a normal 7-day week do you spend doing the following activities? (excluding duty)	None	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-15 hours	16-20 hours	20-25 hours	25-30 hours
Attending class	--	--	60%	40%	--	--	--
Completing academic coursework	--	--	40%	30%	20%	--	10%
Practicum/Internship	20%	10%	20%	40%	10%	--	--
Structured GHD tasks (i.e., office hours, staff meetings, etc.)	--	--	--	40%	40%	10%	10%
Unstructured GHD tasks (i.e., incident response, unscheduled GHD work, etc.)	--	30%	20%	20%	20%	10%	--

Table 2: Hours Spent on Activities (n=10)

When asked how the GHD position impacted how they communicated with others, respondents talked about communicating with different audiences for different types of messages and using different methods. Some mentioned giving and receiving constructive criticism, understanding the importance of timeliness, and considering cultural differences when communicating.

GHDs were asked to respond to a series of statements about the improvement of their communication skills. Table 3 illustrates that graduate students generally agreed with the statements. Respondents felt less positive about improving their ability to communicate with advisees through the GHD position. GHDs overall communication and ability to communicate effectively in the workplace were higher than the previous year.

The GHD position has improved my ability to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=15]
Communicate overall	30%	70%	--	--	--	4.30 (.48)	4.13 (.74)
Communicate effectively in the workplace	20%	80%	--	--	--	4.20 (.42)	4.13 (.74)
Communicate with supervisees	40%	40%	10%	10%	--	4.10 (.99)	4.13 (.92)
Communicate with my supervisor	30%	50%	20%	--	--	4.10 (.74)	4.13 (1.06)
Communicate with advisees	20%	30%	50%	--	--	3.70 (.82)	3.80 (.86)

Table 3: Communication

Graduate students were asked about changes in their communication skills since being in the GHD position. Some talked about understanding different methods to communicate, discovering best practices in the workplace, sharing ideas, gaining an awareness of what they say, being more professional, and controlling their nonverbal communication.

The graduate students were then asked in a select-all-that-apply format to indicate which audiences (supervisors, peers, staff) they received feedback from. Respondents were also able to select if they had not received feedback from any of the audiences provided. Over three-fourths (80%) indicated they received feedback from staff, 70% said from supervisors, and 50% reported receiving feedback from peers. Additionally, 10% indicated not receiving any feedback. Compared to 2015, supervisors and peers were selected less often while staff was selected more.

Graduate Hall Directors were asked to provide examples of the type of feedback they received from their peers, staff, and supervisors, based on which audiences they selected in the previous question. GHDs received feedback from their peers on coursework, their staff, and opinions or alternatives when handling situations. One GHD reported asking for feedback from his/her peers and would appreciate a more formal 360-evaluation process. Staff provided feedback to GHDs during one-on-one meetings and through an evaluation process. GHDs received feedback on how they could help their staff, communication styles, job performance, and job duties. Feedback received from supervisors occurred during one-on-one meetings and evaluations was about job performance, duty situations, interactions with RAs, and working with hall councils.

Employees were asked to indicate if they felt connected or engaged in the GHD position. According to Table 4, on the following page, respondents felt more positive about feeling connected to the position. Engagement in the position decreased when compared to 2015.

Please respond to the following statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=16]
I feel connected to the GHD position	40%	40%	--	20%	--	4.00 (1.16)	4.00 (.89)
I feel engaged in the GHD position	20%	50%	10%	20%	--	3.70 (1.06)	3.94 (.85)

Table 4: Connection/Engagement

GHDs were provided the opportunity to explain how they do or do not feel connected and engaged in the position. Respondents reported feeling connected to the position due to relationships with students, their RAs, and peers. Others talked about the GHD position fitting with their career goals and having passion for the work. Those who did not feel connected with the GHD position talked about it not being the reason they were in school and a lack of communication with others. When it came to being engaged, GHDs stated that new challenges, students, and opportunities kept them engaged. Alternatively, GHDs talked about lacking a specific passion, feeling like an adult babysitter in the role, and not making professional progress as reasons they did not feel engaged in the position.

When asked to discuss how their level of connectedness impacted, if at all, their level of engagement, some talked about the two being related. Being connected to their students, wanting to improve, or general connections increased their engagement and enjoyment in the position, as well as having a career in Residence Life. There were some who felt these two were related but from the opposite perspective. Their lack of connection with others or in general led to them feeling less engaged in the position. There were a couple GHDs who did not feel their connection was related to their engagement.

The GHDs were asked to indicate from a provided list how often they used specific technologies for work. Table 5, in descending order by the daily column, reveals that the graduate students used Internet, and Outlook for both email and calendar daily. Microsoft Office, Google Drive, and department databases were used daily and weekly. Qualtrics was used the least. The responses are similar to what was reported in 2015 for the technologies that were listed both years (Internet, email, Microsoft Office, department databases, Communicator/Lync, social media, and Qualtrics).

How often do you use the following technologies for work?	Daily	Weekly	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a semester	Never
Internet	100%	--	--	--	--
Outlook (for calendaring purposes)	100%	--	--	--	--
Outlook (for email)	100%	--	--	--	--
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)	80%	20%	--	--	--
Google Drive	70%	30%	--	--	--
Departmental Databases (Keys, Webhouse, Maxient, SSO, Intranet, etc.)	60%	40%	--	--	--
Share Drive	40%	40%	20%	--	--
Communicator/Lync	20%	60%	10%	--	10%
Social Media	20%	50%	10%	--	20%
Qualtrics	10%	--	10%	40%	40%

Table 5: Technologies (n=10)

Respondents were also provided the opportunity to write in any other tool they used frequently for work that was not listed. Several said none or that they were all listed. A few GHDs said they utilized GroupMe to communicate with their staff. One person said Doodle for scheduling and one person said the electronic format of the GHD manual.

When asked how the use of technology assisted them in completely their GHD responsibilities, many responded that it helped a great deal and made doing work much easier. Some talked specifically about technologies helping with scheduling, communicating, and sharing information with different staff who may not be in the same building. One person felt technology could be used more if it was less structured, however, did not explain what was meant by being less structured.

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they interacted with people whose backgrounds were different from them based on age, gender, political views, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. As seen in Table 6, a majority of the GHDs interacted daily with people whose backgrounds were different based on all the areas provided. Additionally, GHDs reported interacting more frequently with all areas when compared to 2015.

How often do you interact with people whose backgrounds are different from you based on the following areas?	Daily	Weekly	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a semester	Never
Gender	100%	--	--	--	--
Race	100%	--	--	--	--
Religious beliefs	100%	--	--	--	--
Age	90%	10%	--	--	--
Political views	90%	10%	--	--	--
Sexual orientation	80%	20%	--	--	--

Table 6: Interaction (n=10)

When asked to describe situations when they interacted with people whose background was different than theirs, respondents gave numerous examples. They mentioned everyday interactions, in classes, in the halls, with co-workers, in clubs or organizations, at staff meetings, with hall council, and during one-on-ones. Additionally, GHDs were asked how the position impacted the way they interacted with people whose background was different than theirs. Some talked about being more aware of differences and similarities, understanding different perspectives, serving as an advocate for diversity and inclusion, and intentionally communicating with others. One person expressed that the position did not have an impact because he/she had a lot of diversity training at a previous institution.

Table 7 provides the results when graduate students were asked a series of statements about gaining certain abilities through their experience in the GHD position. Respondents were mostly positive with the statements, especially in considering others' viewpoints and engaging in verbal discourse with supervisees. Statements were also fairly similar to the previous year.

Through my experience in the GHD position, I have the ability to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=15]
Consider the viewpoints of others	50%	50%	--	--	--	4.50 (.53)	4.27 (.59)
Engage in verbal discourse with supervisees	30%	70%	--	--	--	4.30 (.48)	4.33 (.82)
Articulate my thoughts professionally	30%	50%	20%	--	--	4.10 (.74)	4.20 (.86)
Engage in verbal discourse with peers	20%	70%	10%	--	--	4.10 (.57)	4.07 (.80)
Engage in verbal discourse during committee meetings or other group settings	20%	60%	10%	10%	--	3.90 (.88)	4.07 (.80)

Table 7: Experience in GHD Position

When asked if the GHD position had given opportunities to understand how their decisions affect others, 40% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, and 10% were neutral (mean=4.30; sd=.68; n=10). Nobody selected the options for disagree or strongly disagree. These results were similar to those in 2015. Furthermore, GHDs were asked to share an example or explain how the position had or had not given them opportunities to understand how their decisions affect others. GHDs provided a couple examples including determining RA requirements, supervising staff, completing staff evaluations, and approving timesheets.

Graduate students were asked to respond to a series of statements about how the GHD position allowed for the application of knowledge, formulation of appropriate response to situations, and to creatively solve problems for issues in their job. Table 8 tells that students felt mostly positive about all statements. However, the level of agreement to all statements decreased when compared to 2015.

The GHD position has allowed me to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=16]
Apply knowledge gained from my coursework to my GHD position	40%	50%	10%	--	--	4.30 (.68)	4.44 (.81)
Take multiple pieces of information to formulate an appropriate response to situations	40%	50%	10%	--	--	4.30 (.68)	4.31 (.70)
Creatively solve problems to address issues in my job	30%	40%	20%	10%	--	3.90 (.99)	4.13 (.89)

Table 8: GHD Position Impact

When asked to provide an example of how they used critical thinking in the GHD role, respondents shared several examples. Some situations included resolving roommate conflicts, creatively advertising a program, responding to emergencies, handling discipline situations, being on duty, and dealing with new situations.

Graduate Hall Directors reported using several resources when solving problems or helping others in their GHD position. The most common resources offered included other people (supervisors, RA staff, and department staff), manuals, coursework, experience, and student development theory.

Respondents were asked to rate a series of statements regarding the opportunities provided by spending time in the GHD role. Table 9 demonstrates that a majority of the graduate students agreed with the role adequately providing opportunity for them to learn from the experiences of the position. However, all statements decreased when compared to 2015.

The time I spend in the GHD role provides adequate opportunity to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=16]
Learn from the experiences of the position	50%	40%	10%	--	--	4.40 (.70)	4.56 (.63)
Invest my time in purposeful tasks	40%	30%	20%	10%	--	4.00 (1.05)	4.19 (.75)
Make a meaningful investment in the position	30%	40%	30%	--	--	4.00 (.82)	4.38 (.62)

Table 9: Opportunities

Graduate Hall Directors were asked to explain their response for each of the three statements related to the time spent in their GHD role. Respondents felt they learned from many experiences in their role such as training, one-on-one meetings, shadowing, and mistakes. A couple GHDs talked about learning every day or always learning. One respondent expressed being able to apply class knowledge to the position. Working with students and being able to identify and pursue

purposeful tasks were examples provided. There were a couple comments about aspects of the position that felt less purposeful such as administrative tasks, not utilizing individuals' strengths, and not always explaining the purpose of some tasks. Many indicated that spending time with students was a meaningful investment, especially when working with RAs and developing them. One felt that in order to be successful, one needed to be invested in their position.

Spring Semester Survey

The spring survey covered topics of feedback, communication, ethics/decision making, social and cultural competence, integrative learning, career preparation, and overall experience. Graduate Hall Directors were asked if their supervisor model was individual or co-supervision. Almost three-fourths (73%) said individual supervision and 27% said co-supervision.

Using a select-all-that-apply format, graduate students were asked to indicate which audiences (supervisors, peers, staff) they received feedback from. Respondents were also able to select if they have not received feedback from any of the audiences provided. All (100%) indicated they received feedback from staff, 82% said from supervisors, and 64% reported receiving feedback from peers. Nobody said they did not receive any feedback. All three audiences increased when compared to the fall semester survey.

Table 10 demonstrates how often the Graduate Hall Directors communicated with peers, staff, and supervisors. Respondents indicated talking to peers and staff weekly, while talking to supervisors daily. This is a change from 2015 when GHDs communicated with peers and staff daily, but supervisors weekly.

Please respond to how often you communicate with the following audiences...	Daily	Weekly	Once or Twice a Month	Once or twice a semester	Never
Peers	--	82%	--	9%	9%
Staff	--	91%	--	9%	--
Supervisors	73%	--	27%	--	--

Table 10: Communication with Audiences (n=11)

GHDs were asked to respond to a series of statements about the improvement of their communication skills. This series of questions was also asked on the fall semester survey; the results for both semesters as well as results from the previous year are reported. Table 11, in descending order for the 2016 spring semester, illustrates that graduate students generally agreed with each statement and felt more positive in their ability to communicate in all areas.

The GHD position has improved my ability to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Spring 2016 Mean (sd) [n=11]	Fall 2015 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2014-2015 Mean (sd) [n=15]
Communicate with supervisees	73%	27%	--	--	--	4.73 (.47)	4.10 (.99)	4.13 (.92)
Communicate overall	64%	36%	--	--	--	4.64 (.51)	4.30 (.48)	4.13 (.74)
Communicate effectively in the workplace	36%	64%	--	--	--	4.36 (.51)	4.20 (.42)	4.13 (.74)
Communicate with my supervisor	36%	55%	--	9%	--	4.18 (.87)	4.10 (.74)	4.13 (1.06)
Communicate with advisees	36%	46%	18%	--	--	4.18 (.75)	3.70 (.82)	3.80 (.86)

Table 11: Communication (spring semester)

From a provided list, GHD were asked again in the spring semester to indicate how often they used specific technologies for work. Table 12, in descending order by the daily column, reveals that the graduate students used Internet and Outlook daily. Google drive, Microsoft Office, and department databases were used daily and weekly. Qualtrics was used the least. The responses are similar to what was reported in fall semester.

How often do you use the following technologies for work?	Daily	Weekly	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a semester	Never
Internet	100%	--	--	--	--
Outlook (for calendaring purposes)	100%	--	--	--	--
Outlook (for email)	100%	--	--	--	--
Google Drive	73%	18%	--	9%	--
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)	64%	36%	--	--	--
Departmental Databases (Keys, Webhouse, Maxient, SSO, Intranet, etc.)	55%	46%	--	--	--
Share Drive	36%	55%	9%	--	--
Communicator/Lync	36%	27%	9%	18%	9%
Social Media	27%	18%	27%	--	27%
Qualtrics	--	--	27%	36%	36%

Table 12: Technologies (n=11)

When asked if there were other tools which they used frequently that were not on the list of technologies, one person said GroupMe. Additionally, one person wished he/she would have utilized Qualtrics in the fall semester.

Graduate Hall Directors were asked about their position contributing to their awareness of how their values/beliefs impacted them in different ways and Table 13 contains the responses. Graduate students were extremely positive about the position contributing to their awareness of how their values/beliefs impact them in each area. All statements increased when compared to 2015.

The GHD position has contributed to my awareness of how my values/beliefs impact me...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd) [n=11]	2015 Mean (sd) [n=14]
Professionally	82%	18%	--	--	--	4.82 (.41)	4.00 (.39)
Interpersonally	73%	27%	--	--	--	4.73 (.47)	3.86 (1.03)
Personally	73%	18%	9%	--	--	4.64 (.67)	3.79 (.80)
Academically	46%	46%	9%	--	--	4.36 (.67)	3.00 (.78)

Table 13: Impact of Values/Beliefs

When Graduate Hall Directors were given the opportunity to explain their responses, they talked about facing ethical situations, needing to stand up and take a stance, learning about themselves, understanding their own values, and gaining awareness of department politics.

As seen in Table 14, on the following page, respondents felt positive about changing the way they thought critically as a supervisor and helping others develop their ethical decision making. Compared to 2015, each statement increased.

The GHD position:	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd)	2015 Mean (sd)
Changed the way I think critically as a supervisor	64%	36%	--	--	--	4.64 (.51) [n=11]	4.63 (.62) [n=16]
Allows me to help others develop their ethical decision making	55%	46%	--	--	--	4.55 (.52) [n=11]	3.86 (.66) [n=14]
Changed the way I think critically as a supervisee	55%	36%	--	9%	--	4.36 (.92) [n=11]	4.19 (.98) [n=16]
Gives me opportunities to make ethical decisions	46%	46%	9%	--	--	4.36 (.67) [n=11]	4.15 (.55) [n=14]
Helps me be more confident in making ethical decisions	44%	33%	22%	--	--	4.22 (.83) [n=9]	3.79 (.70) [n=14]

Table 14: Ethical Decision Making

Those agreeing or strongly agreeing that the GHD position allowed them to help others develop their ethical decision making (n=11), were asked to explain. Several examples were shared including gaining experience from previous situations, knowing their ethics and values, asking questions of others, and serving as a sounding board. A couple people mentioned working with the RA staff.

GHDs who reported the position gave them the opportunity to make ethical decisions (n=11), were also asked to explain. They talked about dealing with issues, holding RAs accountable, considering the impact on others, looking at the bigger picture, and struggling with current policies.

When asked if the GHD position had given them the opportunity to understand how their decisions affect others, 82% said yes and 18% said no. Those stating the position had given them these opportunities (n=9) were asked to explain. Most discussed about being a supervisor, specifically in holding staff accountable and presenting expectations. One mentioned that decisions made at the beginning of the year affected the rest of the year. One respondent talked about the impact one's actions has on the department and the need to be on the same page.

Almost all GHDs (91%) reported they interacted with people whose backgrounds were different from theirs on a daily basis and 9% said on a weekly basis. Nobody selected the options for once or twice a month, once or twice a semester, or never. Furthermore, GHDs were asked a series of questions as it related to their position. Table 15 illustrates GHDs had different opinions on these statements. While at least half felt positive about each statement, many disagreed, especially about being able to articulate their viewpoints and ideology and this evolving.

As a result of the GHD position...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd)	2015 Mean (sd)
I have been challenged in how I approach situations with others	73%	--	--	18%	--	4.27 (1.27) [n=11]	4.20 (1.01) [n=15]
I can articulate viewpoints and ideology	55%	--	9%	36%	--	3.73 (1.49) [n=11]	3.87 (1.13) [n=15]
My personal viewpoints and ideology have evolved/expanded	55%	--	9%	36%	--	3.73 (1.49) [n=11]	3.73 (1.03) [n=15]

Table 15: Result of GHD Position

When asked if the GHD position impacted the way they interacted with people different from themselves, 73% said yes and 27% said no. Those indicating the position impacted how they interacted with others different from them (n=8) were provided an opportunity to describe how. In terms of how the respondents were different from others, one said that they were not from Texas and another expressed concerns coming to a far more conservative campus. When describing how they interacted with others different from themselves, they commented on educating others, growing from challenges, finding value in the differences, and increasing awareness of different populations.

Table 16 provides the results when the graduate students were asked a series of statements about gaining certain abilities through their experience in the GHD position. All respondents were positive with every statement. Additionally, statements that were included on the fall semester survey all increased in the spring.

The GHD position, impacted my ability to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Spring 2016 Mean (sd) [n=11]	Fall 2015 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2014-2015 Mean (sd) [n=15]
Consider the viewpoints of others	73%	27%	--	--	--	4.73 (.47)	4.50 (.53)	4.27 (.59)
Work with supervisees	73%	27%	--	--	--	4.73 (.47)	4.10 (.57)	4.07 (.80)
Collaborate in committee meetings or other group settings	73%	27%	--	--	--	4.73 (.47)	‡	‡
Articulate my thoughts professionally	64%	36%	--	--	--	4.64 (.51)	4.10 (.74)	4.20 (.86)
Engage in verbal discourse with others	55%	46%	--	--	--	4.55 (.52)	‡	‡

Table 16: Experience in GHD Position
(‡ Question not asked)

Graduate Hall Directors were asked if the position gave them the opportunity to integrate information gained through their coursework with the job. Almost three-fourths (73%) strongly agreed with the statement, 18% agreed, and 9% were neutral (mean=4.64; sd=.67; n=11). GHDs were more positive about being able to integrate information when compared to 2015 (mean=4.38; sd=.96; n=16). When asked to explain their rating, GHDs talked about putting theory to practice and that the position added value to their coursework. The specific areas they talked about included counseling skills, student development, and advising/organizational development.

When asked if the GHD position affected the way they synthesized information to solve problems, 18% strongly agreed with the statement, 46% agreed, and 36% were neutral (mean=3.82; sd=.75; n=11). Respondents were provided the opportunity to explain their rating. They mentioned understanding how decisions impact others, that solving problems was a regular part of the position, and looking closer at how to solve problems and thinking on your feet. GHDs were less positive about this concept compared to 2015 (mean=4.20; sd=.56; n=15).

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with two statements regarding how their academic program contributed to their success as a Graduate Hall Director, and how the position contributed to their success within their academic program. Table 17, on the following page, illustrates that while graduate students felt positive about both statements, they were more positive about the academic program contributing to their success as a GHD.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Mean (sd)	2015 Mean (sd)
My academic program has contributed to my success as a GHD	70%	30%	--	--	--	4.70 (.48) [n=10]	4.50 (.82) [n=16]
The GHD position has contributed to my success within my academic program	46%	36%	9%	9%	--	4.18 (.98) [n=11]	4.06 (1.00) [n=16]

Table 17: Contribution to Success

Respondents were asked to explain their responses to both statements. In terms of their GHD position contributing to their success in their academic program, they talked about applying theory learned in classes to practice in their position, gaining real life experiences, and being able to use examples from their position in the classroom. Alternatively, when they discussed how their academic program contributed to their success as a GHD, they mentioned learning skills to use in the position, understanding what duty of care involves, and applying theories learned in classes.

When asked how the GHD position prepared them for their future career, many talked about going into housing after graduation and the position providing practical experience. Some talked about specific transferable skills such as administrative skills, communication, conflict management, emergency response, supervision, and advising.

Graduate students were asked to indicate how many hours during a normal 7-day week they spent on various activities. As seen in Table 18, respondents mainly spent 6-10 hours completing academic coursework, attending classes, on their practicum/internships and in unstructured GHD tasks. Time spent on structured GHD tasks was split between 16-20 and 20-25 hours. Compared to fall 2015 responses, GHDs seem to be spending slightly less time on academic courses, attending classes, and in their practicum. However, it seems they are spending slightly more time on structured and unstructured GHD tasks.

How many hours during a normal 7-day week do you spend doing the following activities? (excluding duty)	None	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-15 hours	16-20 hours	20-25 hours	25-30 hours
Attending class	--	--	91%	9%	--	--	--
Completing academic coursework	--	18%	46%	36%	--	--	--
Practicum/Internship	27%	9%	36%	27%	--	--	--
Structured GHD tasks (i.e., office hours, staff meetings, etc.)	--	--	9%	18%	27%	27%	18%
Unstructured GHD tasks (i.e., incident response, unscheduled GHD work, etc.)	--	27%	46%	9%	--	9%	9%

Table 18: Hours Spent on Activities in the Spring (n=11)

Respondents were asked to rate a series of statements regarding the opportunities provided by spending time in the GHD role as they did on the fall semester survey. Table 19, on the following page, demonstrates all graduate students agreed that the role provided opportunity for them to learn from the experiences of the position. On the fall semester survey, all statements decreased when compared to the 2014-2015 year; however, two statements increased on the spring semester survey.

The time I spend in the GHD role provides adequate opportunity to...	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Spring 2016 Mean (sd) [n=11]	Fall 2015 Mean (sd) [n=10]	2014-2015 Mean (sd) [n=16]
Learn from the experiences of the position	64%	36%	--	--	--	4.64 (.51)	4.40 (.70)	4.56 (.63)
Make a meaningful investment in the position	36%	55%	9%	--	--	4.27 (.65)	4.00 (.82)	4.38 (.62)
Invest my time in purposeful tasks	27%	46%	18%	9%	--	3.91 (.94)	4.00 (1.05)	4.19 (.75)

Table 19: Opportunities – Spring Semester

Graduate Hall Directors were asked to explain their response for each of the three statements related to the time spent in their GHD role. A couple talked about learning from their experience. One shared that he/she is passionate about the position, especially connecting with his/her staff and supervisor. However, one also expressed that it is unrealistic to do this position in 20 hours a week and a couple talked about the heavy administrative role in the position.

The last series of questions asked GHDs to rate the overall experience of their year. The scale changed from the previous year, therefore comparisons are not made. Table 20 demonstrates that respondents felt extremely positive about their experience in their academic program.

How would you rate your overall experience:	Excellent (5)	Above Average (4)	Average (3)	Below Average (2)	Poor (1)	2016 Mean (sd)
With your academic program this year	82%	18%	--	--	--	4.82 (.41)
With the GHD position this year	55%	27%	18%	--	--	4.36 (.81)
At Texas A&M University this year	55%	18%	27%	--	--	4.27 (.91)

Table 20: Overall Experience (n=11)

The final question asked GHDs to discuss their overall working/learning experience this year. Several talked about it being busy or tough, but also enjoying the experience, learning a lot, and getting many opportunities. One expressed feeling supported and enjoying Texas A&M. One commented that being a Graduate Assistant provided time to explore, make mistakes, and network with others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Graduate Hall Director position provides graduate students with professional experience that relates to their academic program, especially for those in the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education (SAAHE) program. Graduate students reported learning various transferable skills and applying what they learn in the classroom to their position.

Graduate Hall Directors could talk about how they have gained skills for each of the graduate learning outcomes measured. GHDs communicate regularly with various audiences and receive feedback from those audiences. They could discuss how they have changed their communication through the GHD position. Graduate Hall Directors regularly interact with people different from themselves. Living in a diverse community allows for regular opportunity for these interactions.

One area that was mentioned was the difficulty balancing their GHD position with their academics. While students felt supported in their academics by their supervisor and Department, several expressed it took more than 20 hours per week to be successful in their position. Alternatively, some discussed that while it was challenging to balance both, they had

experiences that would be beneficial for their future careers. Residence Life may want to look to see if there are additional options to increase support for graduate students with their academics.

The Graduate Hall Director position is approved as a High Impact Practice within the Division of Student Affairs and seems to be doing well in reaching the criteria for being a High Impact Practice, as listed below.

- Students invest time and effort to purposeful tasks.
- Students interact with staff, advisors and peers about substantive matters usually over extended periods of time.
- Students experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves
- Students get frequent feedback about their performance – almost continuously – in settings that allow them to respond to that feedback.
- Students have the opportunity to integrate, synthesize and apply knowledge gained from their classroom/discipline to their co-curricular experience and vice versa.
- Student engagement encourages students to become aware of their values and beliefs and thus to better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world.

The semester surveys were extremely long, and in some cases repetitive. Residence Life might consider reviewing all the questions as one survey initially to look for similarities. The Department is encouraged to remove some qualitative questions, especially the ones that resulted in similar responses. Now that there is two years of benchmark data, the department is also strongly encouraged to shorten the survey to focus on information that can be used and could do something to make program improvements from the results. One option would be to select one or two outcomes each year to assess and have all the outcomes on a rotation.

The Department could also look at using different assessment methods such as focus groups and reflective discussions during staff meetings or one-on-ones with supervisors. Another alternative could be conducting interviews that staff review and score with a rubric. There are several AAC&U VALUE rubrics already designed that related to many of the learning outcomes, as well as integrative learning associated with the university's Quality Enhancement Plan

While the Department started to assess former Graduate Hall Directors who graduated recently, the project was not administered. This could be revisited to learn more about what skills were learned through the position and how those skills have been used since graduating. This could be through a survey or even talking with former GHDs at conferences, especially those who have continued working in higher education.

The department is encouraged to highlight specific changes that have been made after administering this project two consecutive years. These changes should be shared with various internal and external stakeholders. This also might encourage others to provide feedback in the future. Furthermore, Residence Life staff may want to determine what information and in what manner results could be shared within the Department and with different stakeholders. One possible external stakeholder could be the faculty coordinator for the SAAHE program. If not already included, staff may want to consider including this in Department's assessment plan in WEAVEonline.

While this report provides summary themes of the qualitative results, the Department of Residence Life is encouraged to read all qualitative responses to gain a fuller understanding of GHDs' experiences.

Report prepared for: Kyle McCracken, Residence Life
Report prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies
Report prepared on: June 11, 2016
Analysis prepared by: Katie Reed and Xin Dong, Student Life Studies
Survey designed by: Barbara Schumacher and Rachael Hovey, Student Life Studies

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