

MANUSCRIPT

"What I Do Is I Am a Neighbor": Faculty-in-residence Perspectives on Interactions With Students

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Faculty-in-residence promote positive outcomes for residential students, but most research examines faculty-in-residence (FIR) work from the residents' perspectives. Using data from a study of 12 faculty-in-residence at nine diverse colleges and universities, we hear faculty perspectives on their interaction with students, which ranged from planned to spontaneous and extended from disengaged to delegated, delimited, and deep. Faculty who delegated their FIR responsibilities did so by assigning work to their unpaid spouses or resident assistants. Their engagement with students typically fell within four areas—academics, social, life skills, and pets/kids—and they described the outcomes of this work as mentoring, humanizing faculty, and helping students learn to navigate the university. Based on these findings, we propose a new model of student-FIR interaction that expands the understanding of how faculty work in this position and the outcomes of that work. Grounded in those findings, we make recommendations for the selection, training, and management of faculty-in-residence programs. We also found a unique gendered dynamic in the way that faculty spouses engage in FIR programming, raising questions about women's unpaid labor.

Faculty-in-residence (FIR) programs offer faculty the opportunity to live in residence halls and engage with students in formal and informal social environments as well as academic settings (Fullam & Hughes, 2020). FIR programs are valuable because they encourage student engagement with faculty beyond the classroom, which is "positively correlated with enhancing student learning, personal development, cognitive thinking, problem solving, student satisfaction, and academic achievement" (Healea et al., 2015, p. 474; Mayhew et al., 2016). Research on faculty perspectives on FIR work is limited, and most of the research on these programs is based on students' perspectives (e.g., Fullam & Hughes, 2020; Sriram et al., 2011; Sriram & McLavain, 2016) and single-site studies, a limitation given the unique characteristics of FIR programs. The purpose of this study is to understand how faculty-in-residence described and experienced their interactions with residential students. Two research questions informed this study: (1) *How do faculty-in-residence describe their*

student interactions? (2) How might Fullam and Hughes' (2020) typology of faculty-student interaction be used or modified to explain faculty's perceptions of their interactions with students?

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION

Positive student outcomes associated with student-faculty interactions are well documented (e.g., Eidum & Lomicka, 2023; Komarraju et al., 2010; Kuh et al., 2005; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Further, the type of interaction is important; as Browne and colleagues (2009) explained, "Intellectually focused interactions—such as those provided by residence hall programs incorporating faculty involvement—are most beneficial to student learning outcomes" (p. 25). Students involved in living-learning programs had more cocurricular engagement (both in the residence halls and on campus) and more interactions with faculty outside the classroom than did their peers who were not engaged in living-learning programs (Dahl et al., 2022). Despite its benefits, student-faculty interaction is a relatively rare phenomenon (Cox & Orehovec, 2007), which makes research on programs that foster positive experiences of engagement even more important.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY-IN-RESIDENCE

Research on student and faculty interactions within faculty-in-residence programs indicates that these programs successfully meld academic, social, and mentoring experiences. One single-site case study found that interactions with FIRs helped students gain social assurance, build community, and "improved students' confidence in approaching other faculty" by "humanizing" professors (Fullam & Hughes, 2020, p. 53). Interacting with faculty-in-residence allowed students to connect academic concepts to social experiences that happened outside of the classroom. This "bridging the gap" (Fullam & Hughes, 2020, p. 54) provided the benefit of sustained academic engagement that took learning outside of the lecture hall. In a study that focused on the psychometric validation of a survey measuring student-faculty interactions in FIR programs, Sriram and McLevain (2016) found that students did not distinguish between formal (programmatic) and informal (nonprogrammatic) interactions. Both studies noted that "deeper life interactions" (Fullam & Hughes, 2020, p. 54; Sriram & McLevain, 2016, p. 607) were meaningful outcomes of FIR programs that occurred when faculty and students discussed personal topics such as family relationships or complex ideas such as non-binary gender identity.

Sriram (2023) expanded the traditional conceptions of FIR work by recognizing the importance of what he called "hidden helpers": "*Families-in-residence* refers to all family members who live on campus as part of a FIR program" (p. 206), and FIR families are vital to developing community and "help to blur the lines between personal and professional in a healthy, appropriate manner" (pp. 214–215).

In the case of FIR programs, it appears that little research has explored what faculty experience, though there are some exceptions (e.g., ACUHO-I, 2011; McGowan, 2022). Their experiences are not monolithic; FIRs with marginalized identities are already called upon, for example, to perform disproportionate amounts of service work and “may feel the work stress more intensely because there are more demands on their time” (Kennedy, 2023, p. 234). They may not be perceived as faculty, and some of them experience microaggressions as part of their FIR work (McGowan, 2022). Therefore, it is important to consider FIR programs through the lens of faculty.

MODELS OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY-IN-RESIDENCE

Two conceptual frameworks informed this study. The first is based upon Fullam and Hughes’ (2020) investigation of student-FIR interaction from the perspective of students. Using an analytic framework that drew upon Mara and Mara’s (2011, p. 76) research, this typology included context (formal versus informal), substance (academic versus social), purpose (incidental versus functional), frequency (disengaged, infrequent, sustained), and learning outcomes (mentoring interactions, deeper life interactions). Their findings indicated that the discrete binaries of that typology were not evident in students’ reports of their interactions with faculty-in-residence. Instead, they found that the sustained interaction between students and FIRs that integrated the academic and social components had the greatest influence on students’ socio-emotional and academic outcomes. Also, in contrast to their model, they found that frequency of engagement was progressive; that is, initial brief and intermittent interactions grew into sustained contact that enabled faculty and students to build strong relationships with one another, which many students described as familial ones.

The second framework was derived from a survey instrument designed to measure student-FIR interactions. Using exploratory factor analysis, Sriram and McLevain (2016) identified five factors that defined the types of interactions students had with faculty-in-residence: knowledge, value, social interaction, academic interaction, and deeper life interaction (p. 605). Students’ knowledge was assessed in terms of their awareness of the faculty-in-residence, while their perception of the FIR’s value was assessed in terms of their perceptions of the worth of the FIR position. According to Sriram and McLevain (2016, p. 607),

Social interaction comprises casual interactions with the faculty in residence; academic interaction is defined as interactions with the faculty in residence that relate to intellectual stimulation, connections to other faculty, classes, major, or career; and deeper life interaction represents student interactions with the faculty in residence that reflect a relationship on a more personal level (e.g., conversations about relationships, family, spirituality, and meaning making).

METHODOLOGY

The authors of this study used a constructivist worldview that shaped our epistemic and ontological assumptions. Social constructivism presumes that meanings of experiences “are varied and multiple. . . . [Meanings] are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives” (Creswell, 2007, pp. 20–21). In alignment with this world view, we employed a descriptive-interpretive methodology (Elliott & Timulak, 2021), a term for a range of widely practiced qualitative methods with different names that are, in essence, variations on the common core of a highly similar set of strategies and procedures.

We used a stratified convenience sample, seeing maximum variation on both the institutional and individual levels. At the time we recruited participants, there was no comprehensive database of universities with faculty-in-residence programs, so we conducted an extensive Web-based search and initially identified 53 institutions (33 public/12 private secular/8 private religious) having FIR programs. From that set we identified 17 institutions that represented a sample stratified by control, institution size, geography, teaching/research balance, age of FIR program, and size of FIR program. Within those 17 programs, we identified an initial group of 36 faculty to recruit for the study, seeking variation in race, gender, family structure, academic discipline, and tenure status (seeking to maximize the number of tenure-stream faculty). Recruitment letters were sent via email; we asked the 12 respondents, coming from nine universities, to complete a demographic screening form before selected volunteers were scheduled for an interview. See [Table 1](#) for information on the participating institutions.

We conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 and 80 minutes. Interview topics included questions about kinds of FIR-student interactions; the initiator, focus, location, and duration of those interactions; and the FIRs’ perceptions of the outcomes of those interactions for students.

The 12 participants (see [Table 2](#) for complete participant demographic data) included seven men and five women; three people of color and nine White people (including one international), with ages ranging from 32 to 64 (mean = 46.3, median = 46.5). Six of the participants had children who lived with them in the residence hall; seven had spouses (who lived with them or commuted from geographically distant jobs); and the participants collectively had one cat and four dogs. Two participants had faculty appointments in education, three in STEM fields, and seven in humanities fields. Three were non-tenure track, four were pre-tenure, and five had tenure. Years of service as a FIR ranged from 1 to 21 years (mean = 5.3, median = 3.0).

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were returned to participants for approval; participants redacted any information they did not wish included in the data set and provided elaboration on or clarification of their initial responses. Data were coded using Dedoose to determine emerging

Table 1.
Institutional Demographics

Institution #	Participants	Control	Location	Total enrollment ^a	Acceptance rate ^b	Urbanicity ^c
1	Barbara	Private	South	21,000	46% / selective	Midsized city
2	Doug, Melissa	Private	Midwest	5,000	82% / less selective	Large city
3	Anna	Public	Mountain West	22,000	84% / less selective	Midsized city
4	Fredrick	Public	Mid-Atlantic	21,000	90% / less selective	Large suburb
5	Richard	Private	West Coast	<500	47% / selective	Large suburb
6	Bruce	Public	Northeast	18,000	86% / less selective	Large suburb
7	Laurence, Linda	Public	Midwest	32,000	73% / less selective	Midsized suburb
8	Annie, Garrett	Private	Southeast	17,000	6% / extremely selective	Large city
9	Chris	Public	Midwest	34,000	79% / less selective	Large city

^a Enrollments are campus total enrollments, rounded to closest thousand.

^b Acceptance rates are based on NCES data from Fall 2022, selectivity based on 2022 College Board rankings

^c Urbanicity is based on NCES definitions: Large City = "Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population of 250,000 or more"; Midsized City = "Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000"; Large Suburb = "Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more"; Midsized Suburb = "Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000" (NCES, 2022).

themes. Data analysis was initially deductive; we placed segments of the transcripts in categories based on the Typology of Student-FIR Interaction proposed by Fullam and Hughes (2020), focusing on their categories of context, substance, purpose, frequency, and learning outcomes. We found the detailed operational definitions that Sriram and McLevain (2016) provided for the concepts of academic and deeper life interactions to be helpful in guiding our coding.

A second, inductive cycle coding was descriptive (Saldaña, 2021) and involved coding types of engagement or influences that shaped engagement. Each transcript, in each round of coding, had a primary coder and a secondary coder who reviewed initial coding, and thus each transcript was examined four times. We then reviewed all material placed into each coding category, ensuring accurate placement, and determined the need to collapse sub-codes and to develop initial themes. We kept detailed memos of our coding deliberations.

To enhance trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), we engaged in peer debriefing; reflected on our own positionality, including each author's work with faculty-in-residence; and carefully documented in our research journal the development of our thinking from a priori assumptions to the conclusions presented in this article. These strategies all support the

Table 2.
Participant Demographics

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Tenure status</i>	<i>Discipline group</i>	<i>Years as FIR</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Lives with</i>
Anna	Tenured	STEM	1	40-49	W	White	Son, dog
Annie	Non-TT	Humanities	8	50+	W	White	Daughter
Barbara	Tenured	Education	3	40-49	W	White	Daughter, husband, cat
Bruce	Pre-tenure	Humanities	3	30-39	M	White	Wife
Chris	Pre-tenure	Humanities	4	40-49	M	White	Wife, daughter, dog
Doug	Tenured	STEM	21	50+	M	White	Wife (living apart, occasional visit)
Fredrick	Tenured	Humanities	6	40-49	M	African American	Self
Garrett	Multi-year contract	Humanities	10	40-49	M	African American	"The occasional bug I find in my kitchen"
Laurence	Tenured	Humanities	1	40-49	M	White	Wife, dog
Linda	Non-TT	Humanities	2	30-39	W	Caribbean	Husband, 3 kids, dog
Melissa	Pre-tenure	Education	3	40-49	W	White	Self
Richard	Pre-tenure	STEM	1	40-49	M	White	Wife, daughter

credibility of our work. To enhance transferability, we provided rich details about our participants and their institutions. To support our claims of dependability and confirmability, we documented how we reached all decisions, including tentative conclusions we rejected. We also ensured that we clearly defined all codes and used them consistently.

FINDINGS

When answering the question "How do faculty describe their interactions with students?" we focused on four areas: types of interactions, extent of engagement, focus, and outcomes, which are drawn from Fullam and Hughes' (2020) typology of student-FIR interaction. However, we revised this model to more accurately reflect our data. Additionally, we noted a gender dynamic that was not addressed within Fullam and Hughes' framework.

Types of Interaction

Faculty-in-residence participated in many planned and informal interactions with their residents. Planned interactions, which typically involved many residents, were more formal, while informal ones often were spontaneous, involved a limited number of residents, and were usually place-specific (for example, eating in the dining hall, having a conversation in the building lobby). Meals or food often drove both types of interactions.

Table 3.

Revised Model of Student-FIR Interactions

Original typology	Revised typology
Context ^a Formal vs. informal	Intentionality ^b Spontaneous to planned
Frequency Disengaged, infrequent, sustained	Extent Disengaged, delegated, delimited, deep
Substance Academic vs. social	Focus Academics, social, life skills, pets/family
Learning Outcomes Mentoring interactions, deeper life interactions	Outcomes Mentoring, humanizing faculty, learning to navigate the university
Purpose Incidental vs. Functional	

^a Material with strikethrough was deleted or revised from the original model.

^b Material in bold was added to the original model.

Planned activities. All faculty-in-residence in the study conducted planned activities or shared events they enjoyed with their residents, such as formal meals or facilitated learning activities. Additionally, six FIRs described taking students to events planned by another department or a student leader. Garrett described how he planned events: "Every two weeks we have documentaries and discussion. We also have music jams and study breaks where people can socialize and play loud instruments or listen or sing along." Two participants noted that students were "overprogrammed" and that they sometimes encouraged them to participate in campus events rather than a program within the residence hall; they also relied more on informal, spontaneous interactions or offered opportunities that students might not otherwise pursue, such as hiking.

Spontaneous activities. All participants noted having many unplanned interactions with students, like a resident bringing up a class or a problem when running into the FIR in the lobby or the elevator or knocking on the FIR's door to "hang out with me and my cat." FIRs frequently described dining halls, residence hall common areas, or building lounges as specific locations that often led to informal interactions. As Chris remarked,

I meet people all the time when I walk the dog or [am] outside of the building, all the time. When we are in the building ... they just come in and talk with me, or play with the dog, or want to see the baby. It is a lot of interaction, actually.

When talking about these interactions, FIRs often spoke about the feeling of being part of a community or neighborhood. Participants' responses made clear that proximity fostered interaction.

Extent of Engagement

The frequency and intensity of the participating FIRs' interaction with students fell into four categories: disengaged, delegated, delimited, and deep. These categories are not discrete, and some faculty, like Annie, described multiple levels of engagement.

Disengaged. None of the participants in this study felt disengaged from their FIR work, though we recognize that this is possible and are aware of anecdotal evidence about faculty disengagement. It would make sense that disengaged faculty would not volunteer to be in a study about FIRs.

Delegated. Five of the participants described delegating some or most of their programming or other responsibilities to other people, specifically wives or resident assistants (RAs). Three of the faculty (Chris, Doug, and Laurence), all men, talked about doing things as a team with their wives. Laurence said, "My wife works more with the RSA [resident student association] than I do. We both work together, but I would say if someone had to work more it would be my wife." Three other FIRs, two men and one woman, had a spouse living in the halls but did not talk about the FIR role as a partnership or use the word "we" when describing interactions with residents. They described their spouse attending events with them rather than being a partner in the work.

Three faculty (Annie, Chris, and Melissa) delegated some of their responsibilities to RAs, describing how RAs planned some events that the faculty-in-residence would also attend. Annie described her experience:

*One of my RAs has an event that she's doing here... she's totally managing this event, she's invited a person, she'll put up fliers, sometimes the RAs will use their budget because they're organizing an event here, so basically I'm receding into the background
... invisible.*

Chris delegated responsibilities to both the RAs and his wife, while Annie, Doug, Laurence, and Melissa delegated responsibilities only to RAs or their spouses.

Delimited. Faculty-in-residence created clear boundaries by limiting their interactions with residents. Four of them had a specific time of the week for their residential responsibilities or for when they conducted programming. Annie explained that she has a "Monday-night open house and I just do it every single week on a Monday night at 9:00 p.m. . . . I funnel all kinds of activities, guest speakers, [and] conversations [into that time]." Annie's approach was less involved than that of some of the other faculty-in-residence, but it was consistent. While three faculty set clear boundaries for their work and one had a designated time but was also involved in significant unplanned interactions, others talked about being overwhelmed by how much time student engagement entailed. As Richard said, the FIR job "does kind of

eat your life when you are living on campus." Clearly, some participants made deliberate choices to delimit their involvement in FIR work, but others struggled to do so.

Deep. Eight FIRs talked about consistent, extensive, and meaningful involvement with their residents, often hosting programs and participating in informal interactions in the halls. These faculty often described their role as an extension of themselves, and not just a job. As Chris said, "It's not work, it's not a job . . . I am a neighbor basically, that's how I see [it] . . . they come talk to me if they have something and we invite them over to have dinner with us once a week." One participant had been a faculty-in-residence for more than 20 years and described being involved not just while the students were residents in his building but also continuing to interact with them long after they graduated.

Types of Focus

Focus describes the topic or reason for the FIR's interaction with residents. Participants described four types of focus: academics, social, life skills, and pets or kids. Academic interactions occurred when the FIR helped students with academic endeavors or subjects. Faculty also described social activities, with most of these interactions centering around eating or cooking meals. Often the FIR apartment was the only place students could cook, so several faculty would let students borrow their kitchen or host events that involved cooking a meal together. Life skills events—such as time management, laundry, or selecting a career—taught students something that would be useful beyond a strictly academic context. Lastly, pets and children were an important part of FIR interaction. Richard said, "I have a 16-month-old daughter, and I think that seems to be the number one magnet." Linda said, "Of course the most popular member of the family is the dog. Everyone loves the dog." All FIRs with pets or children spoke of the role they played in creating interactions with residents.

Student Outcomes

The outcomes of the FIR interactions with students fell into three themes: mentoring, humanizing faculty, and learning to navigate the university.

Mentoring. Eight of the participants discussed mentoring as an important component of their work as a faculty-in-residence. Fredrick said,

I am used to kind of pushing students to get to that next level. And students, they want to be pushed; they want to be challenged—for the most part. And so I am frequently balancing that—trying to really push the students who want [it] and kind of figure out a way to convince the students who might not respond the same way to being pushed to continue to make progress, and quickly at that.

Most FIRs tried to mentor students regardless of their major; however, there were also examples of cultivating specific relationships with students who were in the faculty member's discipline.

Humanizing faculty. Seven participants described their role in helping students to humanize faculty. As Linda said, the "FIR program is about giving the faculty a human face." Participants described how seeing a faculty member take out the garbage or be a parent humanized them for the residents. Richard said, "I think it helps overcome any nervousness that students may feel about approaching faculty. I have a daughter, and my wife is there and we are very approachable." Participants seemed to recognize the apprehension that students felt about faculty and believed they could help reduce students' fear by showing how they were just people.

Learning to navigate the university. Participants were intentional about connecting students with various aspects of the institution by helping to link students to resources and make other faculty more accessible. Fredrick described helping a student find the appropriate support by saying "Well look, talk to your hall director, talk to the RA. You can do this or that." Additionally, faculty made students aware of resources on campus and in the community that they might need in a specific situation, and six of them described bringing in people to talk to or engage with their students. Bruce said, "I make connections with a student. I find out what their interest is. I can help put them in contact with other faculty." Annie asked residents to recruit potential speakers for gatherings, which benefited both the residents who attended and the individual students.

DISCUSSION

Confirmation of Prior Research

Our research supports Dahl and colleagues' (2022) findings that students in residential learning communities have more interactions with faculty in general (not necessarily faculty-in-residence) than do students living in residence halls that are not learning communities. Our research showed that FIRs are actively connecting students both to themselves and to other faculty. Our findings also support Sriram's (2023) specific argument that faculty family members also played important roles in fostering student-FIR interaction.

Extension of the Literature

In this research we drew upon the experiences of faculty; thus, our findings extended prior research that primarily came from the perspective of students. Participants in this study spoke extensively about the facility and logistical aspects of FIR work, including nearby parking, dishwashers, kitchen size, meal plans, and pet policies. Their comments made clear that the presence, extent, or absence of these factors of the physical and organizational environments could facilitate or hinder the development of student-FIR interaction.

We found extensive gender dynamics within FIR interactions, a topic not addressed in prior research in this area. In our study, three FIR wives were doing the bulk of the labor, including providing emotional support to residents. Notably, it was the female faculty who delegated FIR responsibility to the RA staff; only male faculty delegated responsibilities to their (female) spouses.

Revising the Theoretical Framework

Many of the findings of this study confirm some aspects of Fullam and Hughes' (2020) Typology of Student-FIR Interaction, but others led us to make substantial revisions to the model. As a brief review, Fullam and Hughes' typology included context (formal versus informal), substance (academic versus social), purpose (incidental versus functional), frequency (disengaged, infrequent, sustained), and learning outcomes (mentoring interactions, deeper life interactions) (2020, p. 41). However, their findings indicated that discrete binaries like formal versus informal were not evident in students' reports of their interactions with FIRs. Instead, they found that the sustained interaction between students and FIRs that integrated academic and social components had the greatest influence on students' socio-emotional and academic outcomes. They also found that initial brief and intermittent interactions generally progressed to more sustained contact, which enabled faculty and students to build stronger, more familial relationships with one another.

We revised the Fullam and Hughes (2020) model in four ways. First, we combined their context and purpose categories because the faculty in our study saw both planned and unplanned interactions as having valuable outcomes. Of particular note here was how FIRs mentioned sharing meals with their residents. Often these were planned events and included hosting students in their apartments, interacting with them over meals in the dining halls, and taking them to a local restaurant. For these reasons, we combined the categories of context and purpose into a single category of intentionality and renamed the endpoints of this category as planned and spontaneous (e.g., running into students while walking the dog), recognizing that both had valued outcomes.

Second, the findings of this study indicated that the focus of interactions (labeled "substance" in the original model) extended beyond the academic and social; other kinds of interactions involved building residents' life skills (practicing time management or doing laundry) and occasionally interacting with their pets or children.

Third, the FIRs in this study discussed the extent of their interaction with residents, which differed in a few important ways from those described by students (Fullam & Hughes, 2020). Although we saw no evidence of disengagement (lack of engagement would be surprising in a study of FIRs who volunteered to speak about their experience), we retained this label and offered three new categories of the extent or form of interaction between FIRs and their residents: delegated, delimited, and deep. Many of the faculty

asked other people (specifically, RAs and/or spouses) to carry out much of the programming (delegated), and many set clear boundaries for their responsibilities, generally limiting their work to specific times of the week (delimited). Deep interactions characterized other forms of engagement with their residents, which made the role seem more of a passion than a job; some faculty developed relationships that continued long after students moved out of the residence halls.

The final substantive difference between a model of student-FIR interaction built on students' perspectives and one grounded in FIRs' perspectives concerned the outcomes of those interactions. Faculty described teaching students how to navigate the university, often referring them to or providing information about resources that would support their success and encouraging them to see faculty as human (the ability to humanize faculty was noted by both Fullam and Hughes [2020] and McGowan [2022]). Faculty also described mentoring students on topics related to their academic and personal futures. Because these outcomes are not entirely learning based, we retitled the overall category as outcomes rather than retaining Fullam and Hughes' label of learning outcomes.

While the differences between our findings and those of Fullam and Hughes (2020) are not unexpected, given the different populations in the study, the differences have potentially valuable implications for the work of faculty-in-residence.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Our findings help to clarify the faculty point of view about their interactions with residents and lead to several recommendations for the faculty experience that may allow those interactions to flourish. As institutions develop or refine a faculty-in-residence program, it is important to be clear how the department will support faculty in their engagement with residents. FIR job descriptions should clarify specific expectations regarding programming frequency and type, the duration of the faculty member's commitment, and clear evaluation processes and metrics. When communicating the time commitments of the FIR role, the value of and time given to informal interactions with students should be emphasized. Faculty job expectations should also include fostering interactions between residents and other faculty. Intentional training for FIRs would help them understand and set boundaries around their time commitments and relationships with students and allow them to fully understand the expectations for the job.

The interaction of spouses with residents also merits consideration. Given our finding that wives often carried out the work of faculty-in-residence (although not employed as such and in most cases not employed by the institution at all), it is important that FIR training address the issue of delegating responsibilities to spouses within the residential community. Our research revealed that strong resident assistant and faculty-in-residence association played an important part in faculty development of connections

with students. Finding ways to facilitate and value those relationships is important, and faculty should be made aware of appropriate ways to involve RAs (rather than their unpaid spouses) in FIR programming.

Faculty who are interested in the residential position should be made aware of the logistics of live-on life, and housing and residence life staff should strive to create the physical and organizational conditions that facilitate faculty-student interaction. Our findings indicate that children and pets were a big draw for residents, so policies that allow pets in FIR apartments and providing apartments large enough to house their family and pets are strategies likely to increase faculty/resident interaction. Many faculty hosted events in their apartments, often involving food, and students often cooked in the FIRs' kitchens. Having a living space large enough to host several students is essential, as is having a spacious kitchen with a dishwasher. Faculty parking should be close enough to the building to enable them to easily bring in food and materials needed for their programming. Offering them a meal plan or dining dollars so they can eat where students do or take a student for coffee should also be part of FIR program budgets.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The residents' ability to humanize faculty is worthy of greater exploration in future research about faculty-in-residence. This aligns with the need for some faculty to set clear boundaries for their work. What are reasonable expectations for the time given to the faculty role, and what should be the extent of their personal disclosure? We also believe that the topics of gender differences and the roles of spouses in FIR work merit further exploration. While the value of faculty families in building community was clear in this research, it still is important to determine whether there may be bias against single applicants for these roles and, if so, how this bias should be addressed. Finally, McGowan (2022) raised important questions about the role of faculty-in-residence in enhancing students' understandings of diversity and equity; though these were not topics explicitly addressed by the FIRs in this study, some did provide programming that might be described as cultural appreciation. Future research should examine how faculty-in-residence understand diversity and inclusion and how they can integrate it appropriately into their work.

CONCLUSION

This study updates the Fullam and Hughes (2020) typology with data gathered from faculty about their engagement with students. Bruce described the interaction between FIRs and students best:

We get to interact with wonderful students and help them in ways that my mentor helped me going through my undergrad; there's this community that's formed that's supportive and builds social interaction and really creates a safe place for them [students] to explore and be themselves.

The faculty-in-residence who participated in this study valued the experience and gained from it, a topic we will explore in a future paper. They valued the programs and the opportunity to contribute to students' success. The findings presented in this article provide guidance that can be used to strengthen residential students' engagement with FIRs and enhance the outcomes of these programs for students.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The article discusses how faculty-in-residence (FIR) interactions range from disengaged to deep. What factors do you think contribute to a FIR developing deeper connections with students, and how can institutions support this level of engagement?
2. The research highlights the role of FIRs in helping students "humanize faculty" and feel more comfortable approaching professors. How might this impact student success, and what strategies could be implemented outside of FIR programs to achieve similar outcomes?
3. Gender dynamics emerged in the study, particularly around the unpaid labor of faculty spouses. What are the ethical considerations of this dynamic, and how can institutions create structures that ensure fairness in FIR programs?
4. The study emphasizes the importance of informal interactions, like spontaneous conversations or shared meals, in fostering student engagement. Given the increasing demands on faculty time, how can institutions balance structured programming with space for organic connection-building?
5. The study suggests that FIRs play a crucial role in helping students navigate the university by connecting them to resources and faculty networks. What are some ways that institutions can make this aspect of FIR work more intentional and sustainable?
6. The findings suggest that students do not distinguish between formal and informal interactions with FIRs. What implications does this have for student affairs professionals designing faculty engagement initiatives?

Discussion questions developed by Connor-Michael Weir, Clemson University