



Envisioning a Residence Life Department That Prioritizes Staff Well-Being

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FOSTERING STAFF WELL-BEING can no longer be the responsibility of individual staff but needs to be built into structures, practices, and social norms in residence life departments. We drew on elements of participatory action research to provide guidance for departments striving to intentionally prioritize staff wellness. First, based on literature and data from interviews with 17 residence life staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, we make the case that current practices are not sustainable. Then we describe strategies for reshaping operations and pose questions that leadership needs to ask to embed staff wellness in everything they do. Our visioning is grounded in Hettler's holistic wellness model, our own conceptualization of radical love based on the work of Freire and hooks, and our personal and professional experiences. We view this manuscript as a starting point for conversations and actions that will change how we engage in residence life work.

Editor's note: The authors have chosen to lowercase the word White, which would normally be capitalized according to APA guidelines, in order to avoid seeming to center whiteness.

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The COVID-19 pandemic created many significant disruptions in the ways that higher education institutions, including residence life departments, operate (Smalley, 2021), but it has also provided an opportunity to re-envision the work environment. Though residence life staff have long been susceptible to burnout due to heavy workloads, late nights, and stressful work environments (Rankin, 2013; Rankin & Gulley, 2018; Reed, 2015), the pandemic exacerbated these challenges (Nyunt et al., 2024), which led to a decrease in staff mental well-being and resulted in many staff considering the possibility of leaving the field (Nyunt, 2021; Scales, 2022).

While individual supervisors may encourage staff to prioritize their well-being or departments may have conversations about work/life integration, few structures have been put in place to foster staff wellness in residence life departments. The purpose of this article is to envision how departments need to reshape their operations in order to embed staff wellness in everything they do. Drawing on elements of participatory action research (PAR; Chevalier & Buckles, 2019), we started by examining existing literature and data from a larger research project to better understand the experiences of residence life staff before engaging in the collective visioning grounded in our guiding frameworks: Hettler's (1984) holistic wellness model and our own conceptualization of radical love based on the work of Freire (2008) and hooks (2001), as well as our personal and professional experiences. We share considerations and examples for centering radical love and prioritizing wellness. Describing both what should be done—based on our current contexts—and what should be considered in future decision-making, this

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article aims to provide guidance that can be applied to different departments and will be applicable beyond our current contexts.

GUIDING FRAMEWORKS

Our understanding of wellness and mental well-being was based upon Hettler's (1984) model, which describes wellness as a multidimensional concept with the following six interrelated dimensions shaping one's mental well-being: (1) *emotional*—an individual's awareness of their feelings and the degree to which one feels positive about life; (2) *social*—personal relationships, friendships, and interactions with one's communities; (3) *physical*—physical activity and healthy eating habits; (4) *occupational*—one's satisfaction and fulfillment through work; (5) *intellectual*—being engaged in creative and stimulating mental activities; and (6) *spiritual*—one's need for purpose and meaning in life. The model is popular in counseling literature and practice (Baldwin et al., 2017; Moe et al., 2012) and has been utilized in student affairs to guide holistic student support by offering programming that addresses one or multiple dimensions of wellness (Long, 2012). In recent years, two dimensions have been added to the model: (1) *financial*—the ability to manage financial resources to live within one's means, and (2) *environmental*—connections between one's wellness and social, natural, and built environments (Stoewen, 2017). Utilizing Hettler's model with the addition of these two dimensions allowed us to consider which dimensions of wellness are impacted by residence life work and how departments can foster staff wellness.

In the past, individuals were expected to figure out their own strategies to negotiate work, familial, and personal responsibilities while ensuring their own well-being. Recent critical scholarship challenges supervisors and organizational leaders to recognize their responsibility in fostering staff well-being (Wever & Zell, 2017). To envision a residence life department that centers staff well-being, we drew on hooks' (2001) scholarship on love and Freire's (2008) discussion of radical love. As hooks (2001) noted, loving incorporates "care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication" (p. 5). Loving others does not happen unless one actively chooses to love; it is "an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action" (hooks, 2001, p. 5). Leaders who subscribe to a love ethic value and invest in human life and well-being and are willing to hear the other's truth and affirm the experiences of those sharing (hooks, 2001).

Freire (2008) emphasizes that radical love is essential to creating change: A radical leader fully immerses themselves into the reality and experiences of others, strives to understand them, and fights alongside others in solidarity to transform realities and experiences through their position of power and influence. Like hooks (2001), Freire

stresses the importance of honest and open communication. Gurin and colleagues' (2013) work on intergroup dialogue, though focused on students, can provide guidance on ways to foster dialogue across differences. Freire and Gurin and colleagues stress the relational nature of dialogue when speaking is accompanied by careful listening, critical reflections, and mindful attention to both the content and feelings that others are conveying. Such dialogue will lead to the development of mutual trust and will become a natural and inevitable outcome, as long as the engagement is rooted in humble, loving, and faithful intentions (Freire, 2008). These ideas are echoed by Adam Grant (n.d.), an organizational psychologist and author, who stresses that meaningful success means helping others succeed. In his recent self-help book, *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*, Grant (2021) challenges readers to actively search for reasons why we might be wrong and to constantly revise our views based on what we learn and know, rather than focusing on how we have always done things.

Drawing on the work of Freire (2008) and hooks (2001), we posit that a residence life department that embraces radical love needs to prioritize care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust in structures, policies, practices, and social norms, not only related to residents but also to staff. Such an approach rejects notions of self-sacrifice in the service of students (Sallee, 2021) and does not place the responsibility for ensuring one's well-being on the individual; instead, through engagement in open and honest dialogue, staff experiences are affirmed, critically examined, and transformed. Radical leaders lead with their hearts over their heads and aim to meet the emotional and psychological needs of their team.

METHODS

As we strove to not only examine current experiences but also to envision changes for the future, we drew on elements of participatory action research, which involves a "collective reasoning and evidence-based learning focused on social action" (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. iii). While ours is not a full-fledged participatory action research project, our research team came together intending to engage in collective inquiry and visioning to advocate for structural changes to residence life departments that foster staff wellness. We view this article as a starting point for conversations and actions that will change how we engage in residence life work.

Our team consisted of a faculty member and three practitioners. The first author, a white cisgender woman and mother, is a faculty member in higher education and student affairs with seven years of residence life experience. Her research interests

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include mental well-being and employment in higher education. The second author, an Asian international cisgender woman with more than five years of residence life experience, currently serves as director of residential living at a small public institution. The third author, a Latinx cisgender woman, is a senior leader within student affairs at a private university and worked in residence life for 15 years before transitioning to general student affairs for the past four years. The fourth author, a white cisgender woman with more than 20 years of residence life experience, held positions in small private institutions and mid-size public institutions and currently serves as director of residential life at a large public institution. Our experiences of working in residence life, with three authors currently supervising residence life staff, informed our approach to this study. We acknowledge that we each hold privileged and minoritized identities that shape how we navigate our careers. As a team, we are committed to working toward structural changes to create more equitable work environments for diverse residence life staff teams.

Examining the Current State of Residence Life Staff Well-Being

To get a better sense of the current state of residence life staff well-being, we examined the literature and qualitative data from a larger mixed-methods study spearheaded by the first author. The study consisted of a survey, distributed via the ACUHO-I listserv in October 2020, with 120 responses (see Nyunt, 2021) and follow-up interviews with 17 participants (see Nyunt et al., 2024). We drew on these interviews to gain insights into the experiences of residence life staff during the pandemic, particularly as they relate to their well-being.

Individuals who were employed as professional staff in residence life or housing, including live-on and live-off staff, were eligible to participate in the study. Of the 120 survey respondents, 45 indicated a willingness to participate in follow-up interviews, while 17 completed the 45–60-minute long, semi-structured, virtual interview with the first author. Participants represented different gender identities, races and ethnicities, and position types. See Table 1 (pages 31 and 32) for their demographics.

Interview questions focused on work experiences during the pandemic, participants' well-being, and how work may have impacted their well-being. The first three authors analyzed interview data using a constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Findings highlighted that the pandemic exacerbated challenges related to transparent communication and decision-making and led to unhealthy work/life integration. In response, participants prioritized their well-being, re-evaluated their careers, and developed creative solutions such as leveraging technology (see Nyunt et al., 2024).

For the purpose of this project, we first reviewed the literature to identify areas of wellness that may be negatively impacted by working in residence life. We then returned to our interview transcripts to analyze the data through the lens of Hettler's

TABLE 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender identity	Race/ethnicity	Living situation	Highest level of education	Years working full time in res life	Type of position	Type of institution	# of students living on campus	Region
Alexis	Woman	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Mid-level manager	Public	3,000-3,999	South
An	Woman	Asian and/or Asian American	On campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Entry-level	Private non-profit	Less than 1,000	Northeast
Barbara	Woman	White	On campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Entry-level	Public	7,000-7,999	Midwest
Becky	Woman	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 15 years but at most 20 years	Mid-level manager	Public	1,000-1,999	South
Charles	Man	White	On campus	Bachelor's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Entry-level	Public	2,000-2,999	West
Christine	Woman	Biracial or multiracial	On campus	Master's degree	More than 5 years but at most 10 years	Entry-level	Public	Less than 1,000	West
Fred	Man	White	On campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Other: COVID Response Coordinator	Public	4,000-4,999	Midwest
Jake	Man	Latina/o/x	On campus	Doctoral degree	More than 15 years but at most 20 years	Entry-level	Public	5,000-5,999	West

Table 1 continues on page 32

TABLE 1 (continued from page 31)

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender identity	Race/ethnicity	Living situation	Highest level of education	Years working full time in res life	Type of position	Type of institution	# of students living on campus	Region
Jason	Man	Asian and/or Asian American	Off campus	Doctoral degree	More than 10 years but at most 15 years	Senior leadership	Public	1,000-1,999	West
Kevin	Man	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 10 years but at most 15 years	Mid-level manager	Public	4,000-4,999	West
Lisa	Genderqueer/ gender non-conforming	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Entry-level	Public	2,000-2,999	West
Margaret	Woman	White	On campus	Master's degree	More than 20 years but at most 25 years	Mid-level manager	Public	Less than 1,000	West
Mark	Man	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 10 years but at most 15 years	Senior leadership	Private non-profit	Less than 1,000	South
Megan	Woman	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 1 year but at most 5 years	Entry-level	Public	4,000-4,999	West
Rita	Woman	White	Off campus	Master's degree	More than 5 years but at most 10 years	Mid-level manager	Public	Less than 1,000	West
Sean	Man	White	On campus	Master's degree	More than 10 years but at most 15 years	Senior leadership	Private non-profit	Less than 1,000	Northeast
Thomas	Man	White	On campus	Master's degree	More than 10 years but at most 15 years	Mid-level manager	Public	3,000-3,999	West

(1984) model of wellness. Next, we compared the emerging themes from our data with the literature, which informed our understanding of the current state of residence life staff well-being and the experiences that influence their well-being.

Collective Visioning Processes

After gaining insights into staff well-being, our research team engaged in collective visioning to re-imagine what residence life work could look like. Participatory action research encourages the use of creative tools for effective problem-solving (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019). Our visioning process was grounded in our guiding frameworks and informed by an examination of the challenges that residence life staff encounter. First, we familiarized ourselves with our guiding frameworks and discussed them during research team meetings. We then brainstormed potential antidotes to the challenges that staff face. Next, we began to map out what a department that centers radical love and holistic wellness may look like. Throughout the process, we returned to our frameworks and examination of the challenges encountered by staff to ensure that our visioning was grounded in evidence and scholarly literature.

RESIDENCE LIFE STAFF EXPERIENCES AND WELL-BEING

Residence life staff manage long work hours, stressful work environments, and emotionally draining job responsibilities, which can negatively impact their well-being (Hodge, 2016; McDaniel, 2021; Rankin & Gulley, 2018), and the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges (Nyunt et al., 2024; Scales, 2022). Guided by our holistic understanding of wellness (Hettler, 1984; Stoewen, 2017), we highlight structures and practices that have the potential to hinder staff well-being, drawing on existing literature and interview data. We then examine how these challenges may impact staff retention, emphasizing the need to prioritize staff well-being.

Work Responsibilities and Workloads

Residence life jobs include administrative responsibilities, programming and education, student support and crisis response, staff supervision, and much more (McDaniel, 2021). Managing multiple responsibilities, many of which require work after hours, can lead to long work days and a stressful work environment (Hodge, 2016; Rankin & Gulley, 2018). As Kevin, a mid-level manager, noted, the pandemic created impossible workloads: “I worked 12-hour days, weekends, straight on through the fall.” He added, “And it was really hard.”

Residence life staff often engage in emotionally draining work, and supporting students in crisis can lead to secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout (Lynch & Glass, 2020; McDaniel, 2021; Perez & Bettencourt, 2023). In 2020, residence life staff experienced not only a global pandemic but also a racial reckoning and

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a highly contested presidential election; supporting students while they themselves were navigating these challenges created emotionally draining work environments, in particular for staff of color (Scales, 2022).

Residence life staff are often tasked with additional responsibilities, many of which fall outside typical job responsibilities and occur outside regular work hours (McDaniel, 2021). During the pandemic, staff were asked to take on additional responsibilities related to creating and enforcing health and safety regulations and addressing student needs. Fred, who served as COVID-response coordinator for his department, recalled being tasked with delivering food to students while the campus food pantry was closed, which led him to ask, “Why is this housing’s responsibility?”

Many responsibilities added during the pandemic carried risks to staff’s health and safety. As Jake, an entry-level staff member, explained, “We’re not health care workers, we don’t do the medical care, but we’re basically on the front line. . . . My family, every single day, is potentially at risk of being exposed to a person with COVID.” The combination of long hours, stressful work environments, and emotionally draining work—compounded by the risks posed to them and their family’s physical well-being—made participants question their future in residence life.

Risks to Emotional, Occupational, Physical, and Social Wellness

Analyzing residence life staff workloads and responsibilities through the holistic wellness model (Hettler, 1984; Stoewen, 2017) revealed potential negative impacts on several dimensions of wellness. Long hours and related stress can lead to burn-out and low job satisfaction (McDaniel, 2021; Reed, 2015), thus negatively impacting emotional and occupational wellness. Prolonged exposure to stress can have physical health consequences (Faragher et al., 2004), and the stress, combined with the risk of coronavirus exposure during the peak of the pandemic, can negatively impact one’s physical wellness.

Barbara, an entry-level staff member, shared how encouragement to take time off often felt hollow. “They say flex your time and then okay, but please tell me when or if I do, don’t ask me why I wasn’t in my office.” A lack of free time can create challenges for developing and maintaining social connections outside of work, thus hindering one’s social wellness. As Lisa, an entry-level staff member who started their first job after graduate school, at the height of the pandemic, explained, “I felt so isolated and so alone.” Not knowing anyone at their institution and interacting only virtually made it challenging to connect with people.

I struggled. I’m still struggling . . . my counselors and mental health professionals [were] like, “You need to go to Starbucks and try to have a three-minute conversation with a barista because you haven’t talked to anyone outside of your parents in days.”

Though Lisa described themselves as an introvert pre-pandemic, they missed in-person interactions with others during the pandemic and felt isolated and alone.

While research often focuses on entry-level staff (McDaniel, 2021; Rankin, 2013; Rankin & Gulley, 2018; St. Onge et al., 2008), staff at all levels can feel the negative impacts of heavy workloads and challenging work responsibilities. Live-in staff in particular

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may struggle with negotiating work and personal life (Rankin, 2013; Robinson, 2020), but senior housing officers' busy and long workdays may also lead to negative health consequences (Scales, 2022). When discussing the lack of support many entry-level staff received, Margaret, a mid-level manager, recalled how supervisors were facing challenges of their own during the pandemic.

Some of the younger professionals that I'm watching around me, I think we probably could have stepped up more with support, just general support of here are your resources. . . . But we were all so busy that I don't know if there were supervisors out there taking the time with some of these entry-level folks [to check on their well-being].

While Margaret was worried about the lack of attention paid to the well-being of entry-level staff, she recognized how staff at all levels struggled with heavy workloads and were thus at risk of experiencing negative impacts on various dimensions of their wellness.

Staff Retention and Departure

Participants revealed that the challenges they encountered led them to re-evaluate their priorities and career paths. As Rita, a mid-level manager, said, "I've also started thinking about, for the first time, if student affairs is for me, not just res life, but if student affairs is something I want to continue on." Rita explained that even before the pandemic she was questioning her future in residence life due to the "work expectations and the long hours," but "the pandemic has helped me get there faster." She was particularly frustrated with her institution's push to return to so-called normal, while other industries used this time to innovate and to alter working conditions. "They're saying we're going back, business as usual, and we're just going to pick up where we left off, and that doesn't make a lot of sense to me."

Our quantitative results indicated that Rita's experience was not an exception, as 41.2% of respondents indicated that, due to their experiences of working in residence life during the pandemic, they were no longer interested in pursuing a career in the field (Nyunt, 2021). Employee attrition has been a challenge in residence life and student affairs for a long time (Davidson, 2012; Evans, 1988; Marshall et al., 2016; St. Onge et al., 2008), an issue exacerbated by the pandemic (Bichsel et al., 2022; Nyunt et al., 2024). Recent surveys indicate that in addition to workload, inflexible working conditions, and burnout, financial wellness in the form of pay may play an important role in staff's decision to leave student affairs (Bichsel et al., 2022; NASPA, 2022). For this reason, addressing various dimensions of wellness is essential to retaining staff.

PRIORITIZING RESIDENCE LIFE STAFF WELL-BEING

Recognizing the need to prioritize staff well-being, particularly as we recover from a pandemic that drastically increased the challenges staff faced, we strove to envision a residence life department that intentionally fosters staff wellness. Grounding

our visioning in Freire's (2008) and hooks' (2001) scholarship on radical love and a holistic approach to wellness (Hettler, 1984; Stoewen, 2017), we discuss approaches that departmental and institutional leadership can take, share examples of promising practices, and highlight questions we need to ponder as we re-envision structures, practices, and social norms in residence life.

Leadership Approaches

Departmental and divisional leadership need to adopt a “radical love” approach to managing and supervising staff guided by hooks' (2001) elements of love: “care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication” (p. 5). Student affairs often encourages self-sacrifice in the service of students (Lynch & Glass, 2020; Sallee, 2021). Leadership needs to challenge these social norms, instead emphasizing the importance of staff taking care of themselves, so they can effectively support students. Leaders can do so by role modeling boundaries and prioritizing personal life. For example, if a senior leader sends an email after hours, they could note that no immediate response is needed. Even better, the leader can simply send the email during work hours. Departmental and divisional leaders should take time off—and truly be unavailable during that time—to highlight that doing so is not only allowed but expected.

Changing social norms require evaluating which approaches to work are rewarded within the department, division, or university—or even within professional associations. Rather than rewarding staff for doing more, recognition should be based on the quality of work completed within a regular work schedule. In recognition of great work, staff could be rewarded with time off or a wellness bonus (i.e., money that staff can spend toward something that fosters their well-being).

When changes are made to policies or practices, leaders need to ask the following questions: How will these changes impact staff well-being? How can I show love for my staff in facilitating and implementing these changes? Leaders should incorporate staff in problem-solving and encourage open and honest dialogue (Freire, 2008). Since staff may have different needs or approaches to fostering their well-being, including them in conversations about potential changes would allow for solutions grounded in care and respect for staff. As Freire (2008) emphasized, senior leadership—in this case, senior leaders in housing and residence life or divisional and institutional leaders—need to immerse themselves into staff experiences, truly listen with the goal of understanding individual experiences, acknowledge that the field has changed and will continue to change, and work alongside staff to transform their realities.

Workload and Job Responsibilities

Student affairs is known for adding significant and ongoing responsibilities to staff's plates (ACPA Presidential Task Force on Employment in Higher Education, 2022). A department that prioritizes staff well-being needs to evaluate job responsibilities frequently, considering whether the workload can be completed in a typical work week. Conversations should focus on determining which job responsibilities support

departmental priorities and whether or not they are needed or can be eliminated. Creative problem-solving could include considerations about what responsibilities can be shifted to other departments or resources. For example, after recognizing the prevalence of students' mental health needs even prior to the pandemic (Kang et al., 2021) and the increase since the pandemic (Nails et al., 2023), one residence life department at a public research university hired graduate students in counseling to support residence life staff in responding to students' mental health needs. Similarly, a large private university in an urban environment adjusted the resident director role to focus on student engagement and community, while additional staff were hired to address accountability and care.

Departmental and divisional leadership need to focus on working smarter rather than harder. The pandemic forced many departments to increase their use of technology, and now leaders and staff should evaluate which practices to continue. They should also determine how to build more flexibility into work schedules by, for example, allowing staff to create their own work hours. In collaboration with their team, leaders could evaluate what work can be done virtually versus what needs to be done in-person, allowing staff to work from home or have hybrid schedules.

Work responsibilities should be aligned with individuals' passions, whenever possible. Engaging in work that staff care about will foster their intellectual and occupational wellness. To do so, leaders could review a list of various tasks that the department needs to accomplish at the start of each year and allow staff to choose which ones they want to be involved in. Creating some flexibility in responsibilities and allowing time for staff to use toward passion projects (e.g., professional association involvement, engagement in university committees, volunteer work with cultural centers) can go a long way in fostering staff engagement and well-being. These projects should be built into job responsibilities and the typical work week, rather than requiring staff to give up free time.

Structural Support for Staff Well-Being

Departments need to create policies and practices that directly support staff well-being. Leadership needs to evaluate time-away policies and procedures so that staff can truly take time away from their job instead of being expected to respond to urgent emails or reschedule and delegate all tasks before taking a sick day. Cross-training could be one way to support staff in taking scheduled and unscheduled time away by ensuring that no staff member is the only person who can respond to an incident (ACPA Presidential Task Force on Employment in Higher Education, 2022). Systems need to be set up to ensure that another staff member can open someone's calendar, see and reschedule or take over their meetings, and address any needs related to their colleague's job

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responsibilities. It is important to recognize, though, that other staff need to be able to do this without having to work beyond their regular hours; staff need to have some time available to respond to needs that may arise from someone else being unavailable.

Given the emotional toll of residence life and student affairs work (Lynch & Glass, 2020; McDaniel, 2021), staff need to be provided access to resources. A university's counseling center or employee assistance program (EAP) could provide opportunities to process secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. For example, in order to proactively address staff well-being, one residence life department at a public research university scheduled monthly check-ins with EAP counselors for their live-in staff.

Residence life staff are often great at creating communities within their departments, but in order to truly foster social wellness they also need to be able to develop and maintain support networks of others who are separate from campus and residence life. Spending all their free time with co-workers can add to feelings of always being at work. Departmental and divisional leadership may pursue ideas about how to intentionally connect staff with other university personnel and how to introduce new staff to the surrounding communities.

Recognizing that financial wellness impacts well-being (Stoewen, 2017), university leadership needs to evaluate residence life staff salaries, which should be regularly adjusted to align with inflation. Departments could also incorporate financial literacy workshops into staff training as a way to support them in identifying ways to live within their means.

CONCLUSION

Residence life staff cannot be expected to develop strategies to prioritize their well-being on their own when the work environment does not provide the necessary structural support to do so (Wever & Zell, 2017). Instead, departments need to ground their practices, policies, and norms in radical love (Freire, 2008) for their staff. Love for students must be more appropriately balanced with love and care for staff. Only when well-being is incorporated into day-to-day practices will staff be able to truly prioritize their own well-being and achieve high levels of wellness.

In this article, we highlighted challenges that need to be addressed, shared examples of current practices, and posed questions to consider as we re-envision structures, practices, and social norms in residence life. This is intended to be a starting point for conversations about how we can change residence life work environments to better address staff needs and foster their well-being. At a time when many consider leaving or have already left the field (Bichsel et al., 2022; NASPA, 2022; Nyunt, 2021; Scales, 2022), we cannot go back to doing business as usual but have to ask the hard questions and think outside the box to develop new approaches for addressing students' needs while not overworking our staff. ■

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The authors recommend that “Fostering staff well-being can no longer be the responsibility of individual staff but needs to be built into structures, practices, and social norms in residence life departments.” In what ways does your department foster staff well-being? What structures, practices, and social norms exist? What could be improved?
2. What ongoing conversations does your department have regarding staff well-being? How is everyone working together for overall departmental staff well-being?
3. Does your department have policies and practices to support staff during long, stressful work hours? What does this look like at each level?
4. If your department doesn’t have these policies and practices or they don’t work well, how can you or your department take steps to work towards those goals?
5. How is your department re-imagining work for housing professionals? What new approaches are they taking for addressing student needs while not overworking staff?

Discussion questions prepared by Madesh Samanu, Clemson University