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Examining Within-Group Differences of Black Students' On-Campus Housing Experiences and Engagement

PREVIOUS LITERATURE DEMONSTRATES THE WIDESPREAD IMPACT OF ON-CAMPUS LIVING FOR BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS in terms of a sense of belonging, community building, and campus engagement. In contrast, this study specifically explored within-group differences (e.g., gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability status) in Black undergraduates' housing experiences and their influence on student engagement. Utilizing data from a special 2018 National Survey of Student Engagement administration, the study examined the housing experiences of 3,693 Black students. Researchers conducted multiple regression models that examined how these students' housing experiences (Residential Learning Activities, Belongingness and Safety, Perceived Housing Impact, and Financial Stress) relate to three NSSE measures: Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interactions, and Perceived Gains. Findings suggest that results for Black students varied by their identities and experiences in terms of gender, sexual orientation, and ability status and that belongingness and safety contributed the most to their sense of a supportive environment.

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.

On-campus housing has various benefits for college students, as proximity to campus can improve their engagement (Graham et al., 2018). Students who live on campus receive exposure to intimate environments, which provides space for community building, support, sense of belonging, and learning outside of the classroom (Foste, 2021; Graham et al., 2018). On-campus housing is also related to increased student-faculty interactions and discussions with diverse peers, as well as improved academic performance (Graham et al., 2018; Simpson & Burnett, 2019). However, while residence halls are lauded for their benefits, they can be problematic environments for Black students (Foste, 2021; Harper et al., 2011).

Higher education institutions are often viewed as environments that mirror current racial climates in the broader society. Campus climates can be hostile environments due to the racialized nature of campus cultures and ideologies, particularly at

As is true of higher education in general, student affairs was initially created as a means for white professionals to support white students. In the 400+ years since then, there has not been any significant change in that philosophical foundation, even with the advent of professional standards, organizations, and accreditation processes created and implemented over time.

predominantly white institutions (PWIs; Gusa, 2010; Mwangi et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2011). This explains why on-campus housing experiences can exacerbate existing patterns of racial segregation (Foste, 2021; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2017; Volpe & Jones, 2021). Several studies revealed that racially minoritized students frequently experience racism and isolation while living on campus (DePouw, 2018; Patton et al., 2017; Volpe & Jones, 2021; Yao, 2018), and many have had to confront racial microaggressions and the lack of a sense of belonging. At the environmental level, housing where a larger number of racially minoritized students reside is viewed as inferior to other living arrangements (Harwood et al., 2012). Given the negative impact of these experiences, it is imperative to understand their lived experiences and to determine the actions higher education can take to rectify these racialized issues.

BLACK STUDENTS' ON-CAMPUS HOUSING EXPERIENCES

Some studies have already revealed that these negative experiences can be ameliorated by creating a healthier residential environment, which can be accomplished, in part, by allowing Black college students to choose their own roommates (Fosnacht et al., 2020). Moreover, when residence halls were intentionally designed to promote socialization with students who look like them, Black students benefited academically (Brown et al., 2019). They are also more likely to gain a sense of belonging when they deem their campus environment to be a safe space for authentic self-expression (Museus, 2008). In fact, higher education scholars have noted that the persistence, retention, and educational outcomes of minoritized students are impacted by the inclusiveness of the campus climate, and Black students are more likely to consider transferring or dropping out of college when an institution's diversity climate leads to feelings of isolation and a lack of community (Diehl et al., 2020).

Rather than focusing on negative experiences, Volpe and Jones (2021) analyzed how residential programs can support Black students' academic success through what they call Black-centered affinity housing. Such spaces are critical for Black students because they serve as *counterspaces*, environments where Black students are less often subjected to racism and isolation (Volpe & Jones, 2021). However, there is sometimes a backlash against Black residential counterspaces, which can be viewed as spaces that actually encourage the racial segregation of Black students from their peers and can result in a decline in interracial interactions (Patton et al., 2017; Volpe & Jones, 2021), even though students of color tend to have more interracial interactions and friendships on college and university campuses (Park, 2014). Perhaps their daily experiences with non-Black peers prevent them from feeling the need to find refuge in less harmful counterspaces. For this reason, it is imperative to understand what types of residential spaces Black students can thrive in when these spaces are intentionally designed.

STUDY PURPOSE

More studies of Black students' experiences in on-campus housing have recently emerged, but research is still needed to understand and improve the residential conditions necessary for their success. More information is needed on within-group differences (e.g., gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status) for Black students' on-campus housing experiences and their impact on engagement. The purpose of this study is to contribute knowledge from a large-scale, quantitative dataset to understand how Black undergraduate students experience on-campus housing. Our research questions are as follows:

1. *What are Black students' experiences with on-campus housing in terms of residential learning activities, belongingness and safety, housing impact, and financial stress? How do these experiences differ by gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability status?*
2. *How do the housing scales from RQ 1 and roommate selection relate to Black students' perceptions of a supportive environment, student-faculty interactions, and perceived gains?*

METHOD

Data Source

We analyzed data from a special 2018 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to examine Black students' experiences in on-campus housing. The NSSE is administered annually at 4-year colleges and universities across the United States, U.S. territories, and Canada and gathers information from undergraduates about their educational experiences, perceptions of their college environment, and time spent inside and outside the classroom. The special administration (Gonyea et al., 2021) appended additional questions focused on student housing experiences and the relationship to student outcomes and was given to first-year, sophomore, and senior students at 76 participating institutions. Our analysis focuses primarily on 3,693 Black students who took part in this special administration.

Measures

The primary variables of interest come from the additional questions about housing. Four main scales were used to examine first-year and sophomore students' housing experiences: Residential Learning Activities, Belongingness and Safety, Perceived Housing Impact, and Financial Stress. The Residential Learning Activities (RLA) scale consisted of eight items asking about opportunities students engaged in while in their place of residence. The RLA scale was computed with a composite score from response options that ranged from 0 (*not selected*) to 1 (*selected*). The Belongingness and Safety (BAS) scale consisted of six items that asked students about their agreement with statements regarding the safety, comfortability, and conflict resolution process of their residential environment. The BAS scale is a mean score calculated from response options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Perceived Housing Impact (PHI) scale consisted of four items that asked students about how much impact their

living situation had on their well-being and academic success. The PHI scale is a mean score calculated from response options ranging from 1 (*strong negative impact*) to 5 (*strong positive impact*). Lastly, the Financial Stress (FS) scale consisted of five items that asked students how frequently they had to worry about various expenses, academic purchases, and food security. The FS scale is a mean score calculated from response options ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*). The seniors included in this study received a slightly different item set related to their housing experiences, and therefore only scores on the BAS and FS scales are included in their analyses. Table 1 includes reliability information for each scale.

TABLE 1**Housing Experiences Scale Information**

		SCALE INFORMATION
<i>First-Years and Sophomores</i>	Residential Learning Activities (RLA)	Mean (SD) = 1.6 (1.9) Cronbach's α = .75 Min. = 0 Max. = 8
	Belongingness and Safety (BASfy)	Mean (SD) = 3.8 (.7) Cronbach's α = .83 Min. = 1 Max. = 5
	Perceived Housing Impact (PHI)	Mean (SD) = 3.7 (.8) Cronbach's α = .86 Min. = 1 Max. = 5
	Financial Stress (FSfy)	Mean (SD) = 2.6 (.9) Cronbach's α = .85 Min. = 1 Max. = 4
<i>Seniors</i>	Belongingness and Safety (BASsr)	Mean (SD) = 3.7 (.8) Cronbach's α = .87 Min. = 1 Max. = 5
	Financial Stress (FSsr)	Mean (SD) = 2.6 (.9) Cronbach's α = .88 Min. = 1 Max. = 4

In addition to the four housing scales, NSSE scales that focus on climate experiences were included in the study. Three scales were used, two of which are NSSE Engagement Indicators (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2021). The Supportive Environment (SE) scale is an Engagement Indicator that asked students how much their institution supports their learning and development, while the Student-Faculty Interaction (SF) scale, also an Engagement Indicator, asked students how often they have both formal and informal interactions with faculty. The Perceived Gains (PG) scale asked students about their perceptions of how much their institution has contributed to their knowledge and skills in both curricular and cocurricular areas. All three NSSE scales used in this study are scored by NSSE on a 0 to 60 scale.

Respondents

Respondents were Black/African American students who were first-years, sophomores, and seniors, lived on campus, and responded to the additional housing items included. Out of the 3,693 students in the sample, 59% were first-years, 25% were sophomores, and 16% were seniors. Table 2 (*see page 16*) includes a breakdown of demographic information by class year. A majority of the Black students in this sample identified monoracially as Black/African American, women, and continuing generation. Approximately 16% of the first-year students were in health profession majors, while 19% of sophomores and 18% of seniors were in social science majors. About 78% of first-years had roommates assigned to them by their institutions whereas only about 55% of sophomores indicated that roommate assignments were made by their institution.

Analyses

To answer our first research question about Black students' on-campus housing experiences based on the four scales, we examined descriptive statistics of the scales where first-year and sophomore students were analyzed together and seniors were analyzed separately. To answer our second research question, a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models were utilized. For the combined first-year and sophomore student group, three OLS regression models were utilized, with each NSSE scale (SE, SF, and PG) serving as a dependent variable to the four housing experience scales (RLA, BAS, PHI, and FS) and roommate selection that were independent variables in the models. For the senior group, three OLS regression models were conducted where each NSSE scale (SE, SF, and PG) served as a dependent variable to the two housing experience scales used for seniors (BAS and FS). For all OLS regression models conducted in this study, each dependent variable was standardized before entry into models so that unstandardized coefficients like effect sizes can be interpreted.

... the rates of Black staff departure, even within the current context of "The Great Resignation" and its corresponding increased rates of departure within most institutions, can be attributed to organizational structures and environments ill-suited to appropriately support Black staff in campus housing.

There is a clear dissonance between how Black individuals experience the oppressive space of higher education and how non-Black people interpret and validate the experience that Black individuals have within the same space.

TABLE 2
Demographic Information for Black Students Living On Campus (N = 3,693)

		FIRST-YEARS	SOPHOMORES	SENIORS
		%	%	%
Race	Black/African American	79.1	80.7	82.6
	Multiracial	20.9	19.3	17.4
Gender identity	Man	25.9	26.0	27.5
	Woman	73.1	71.7	69.8
	Another gender identity	0.6	1.3	1.5
	I prefer not to respond	0.4	1.0	1.2
Ability status	No diagnosis	87.8	88.0	82.6
	Diagnosed with disability/impairment	9.0	8.9	13.5
	I prefer not to respond	3.2	3.1	3.9
Sexual orientation	Straight (heterosexual)	82.4	79.9	81.4
	Bisexual	8.4	8.5	5.6
	Gay	1.3	1.5	2.4
	Lesbian	1.2	1.1	1.2
	Queer	0.6	1.7	1.4
	Questioning or unsure	2.1	1.9	1.5
	Another sexual orientation	1.0	1.2	2.7
	I prefer not to respond	3.1	4.3	3.8
Roommate selection	Assigned by institution	77.5	54.6	—
	Self-selected	22.5	45.4	—

LIMITATIONS

The current study is not without limitations. First, institutions self-select to participate in NSSE in any given year and can customize which item sets their students receive based on institutional interests. This suggests that institutions that chose to administer the housing experience item

set may have more interests and/or intentional programming centered on improving housing experiences, and that may factor into these results. Another limitation in this study is the exclusion of information on students classified as juniors. More data and information on their on-campus housing experiences could have bridged an evident gap between early college experiences and experiences for those closer to graduation. Lastly, although researchers conducting this study aimed to analyze Black student experiences in on-campus housing through a racialized lens, we acknowledge that the housing study survey was not necessarily created with this lens in mind. Therefore, analyzing these results through a racialized lens is our attempt to provide more context for how Black students reported experiencing on-campus housing at their institutions.

RESULTS

First-Years and Sophomores

Table 3 includes descriptive statistics for the four housing scales for first-years and sophomores. First-year and sophomore Black students participated very little in residential learning activities, taking part in only one or two of these activities in their place of residence ($M = 1.6, SD = 1.9$). They agreed somewhat with feeling safe and that they belong in on-campus housing ($M = 3.8, SD = .7$). They also perceived on-campus housing to have a somewhat positive impact on their well-being, ability to make friends, and ability to academically succeed ($M = 3.7, SD = .8$). Lastly, they have sometimes worried about finances while living on campus ($M = 2.6, SD = .9$).

Table 4 (*see page 19*) includes descriptive statistics for the four housing scales by gender identity, ability status, and sexual orientation. For the RLA scale, there was not much variation in mean scores within the identity characteristics. For gender identity, Black women ($M = 1.7, SD = 1.9$) and Black students who preferred not to respond to the gender identity item ($M = 1.7, SD = 2.3$) had the higher means. For sexual orientation,

TABLE 3
Housing Experiences Scale Scores for Black Students Living On Campus

		MEAN	STD. DEV.	MIN.	MAX.
<i>First-years and sophomores</i>	Residential Learning Activities (RLA)	1.6	1.9	0	8
	Belongingness and Safety (BAS)	3.8	.7	1	5
	Perceived Housing Impact (PHI)	3.7	.8	1	5
	Financial Stress (FS)	2.6	.9	1	4
<i>Seniors</i>	Belongingness and Safety (BAS)	3.7	.8	1	5
	Financial Stress (FS)	2.6	.9	1	4

Black students who identified as bisexual ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 2.0$), gay ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 2.1$), or lesbian ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 1.8$) or preferred not to respond ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 2.3$) had the highest means. For the BAS scale, a little more variation was shown on mean scores. Black men ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .7$), Black students with no disability diagnosis ($M = 3.8$, $SD = .7$), and Black straight students ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .7$) had the highest mean scores, while Black students with another gender identity had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.1$). For the PHI scale, Black men ($M = 3.8$, $SD = .8$), Black students with no disability diagnosis ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .8$), Black straight students ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .8$), and Black gay students ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .9$) had the highest mean scores while Black students with another gender identity had the lowest mean scores ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.0$). Lastly, for the FS scale, Black students with another gender identity ($M = 3.3$, $SD = .7$) and Black queer students ($M = 3.1$, $SD = .8$) had the highest mean scores, while Black men ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .9$) and Black straight students ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .9$) had the lowest mean scores.

For the second research question, three OLS regression models were used to examine the relationships between the four housing scales and three climate-based NSSE scales: Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains (Table 5, *see page 20*). The adjusted R^2 for all three models indicated that a small proportion of variance (8–20%) was explained by the independent variables, suggesting that other factors are contributing to these relationships. RLA, BAS, PHI, and roommate selection were all significant predictors of a supportive environment for Black students in on-campus housing. BAS ($B = .44$, $p < .001$) predicted supportive environment the most, followed by PHI ($B = .19$, $p < .001$), roommate selection ($B = .12$, $p < .01$), and RLA ($B = .04$, $p < .001$). For student-faculty interaction, RLA, PHI, FS, and roommate selection were significant predictors. PHI ($B = .30$, $p < .001$) predicted the frequency of student-faculty interaction more than did roommate selection ($B = .18$, $p < .001$), FS ($B = .10$, $p < .001$), and RLA ($B = .03$, $p < .01$). All independent variables were significant predictors of perceived gains for Black students in on-campus housing. PHI ($B = .39$, $p < .001$) predicted how much Black students perceived that their institution helped them gain specific skills more than did BAS ($B = .26$, $p < .001$), roommate selection ($B = .11$, $p < .01$), FS ($B = .10$, $p < .001$), and RLA ($B = .03$, $p < .01$).

Seniors

Table 3 also includes descriptive statistics for the two housing scales for seniors. Senior Black students reported some agreement with feeling safe and feeling that they belong in on-campus housing ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .8$). They also experienced some financial stress while living on campus ($M = 2.6$, $SD = .9$).

... Black staff are continually being harmed by the effects of living in an environment where hate speech is often responded to with merely educational efforts, and very little community care takes place afterward—and, even rarer still, the care that also includes and centers the Black staff within the community.

TABLE 4

Housing Experience Scale Scores for Black Students Living On Campus by Gender Identity, Ability Status, and Sexual Orientation

		FIRST-YEARS AND SOPHOMORES <i>M(SD)</i>				SENIORS <i>M(SD)</i>	
		RLA	BAS	PHI	FS	BAS	FS
Gender identity	Man	1.3 (1.8)	3.9 (.7)	3.8 (.8)	2.5 (.9)	3.9 (.9)	2.7 (.9)
	Woman	1.7 (1.9)	3.8 (.7)	3.6 (.8)	2.6 (.9)	3.7 (.7)	2.6 (.9)
	Another gender identity	1.2 (1.6)	3.1 (1.1)	2.8 (1.0)	3.3 (.7)	3.2 (1.5)	2.5 (.9)
	I prefer not to respond	1.7 (2.3)	3.5 (.6)	3.3 (.8)	2.6 (1.0)	3.3 (.2)	2.3 (1.0)
Ability status	No diagnosis	1.6 (1.8)	3.8 (.7)	3.7 (.8)	2.6 (.9)	3.8 (.8)	2.6 (.9)
	Diagnosed with disability/impairment	1.6 (1.9)	3.7 (.8)	3.6 (.9)	2.6 (.9)	3.7 (.8)	2.8 (1.0)
	I prefer not to respond	1.6 (1.9)	3.7 (.8)	3.4 (.8)	2.7 (.9)	3.5 (.9)	2.4 (.8)
Sexual orientation	Straight (heterosexual)	1.5 (1.8)	3.9 (.7)	3.7 (.8)	2.5 (.9)	3.8 (.8)	2.6 (.9)
	Bisexual	1.8 (2.0)	3.8 (.7)	3.6 (.8)	2.8 (.9)	3.6 (.9)	2.8 (1.0)
	Gay	1.8 (2.1)	3.8 (.9)	3.7 (.9)	2.7 (1.1)	3.9 (.5)	3.3 (.7)
	Lesbian	1.8 (1.8)	3.7 (.7)	3.6 (.8)	2.9 (1.0)	3.7 (.6)	2.7 (.9)
	Queer	1.4 (1.5)	3.4 (.8)	3.2 (.9)	3.1 (.8)	3.0 (1.2)	2.9 (1.0)
	Questioning or unsure	1.6 (1.9)	3.5 (.6)	3.2 (.7)	2.6 (.9)	3.7 (.6)	2.6 (.7)
	Another sexual orientation	1.4 (1.7)	3.4 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)	2.8 (.9)	3.4 (.9)	2.5 (.8)
	I prefer not to respond	1.9 (2.3)	3.6 (.7)	3.4 (.8)	2.7 (.8)	3.5 (.7)	2.6 (.9)

Table 4 includes descriptive statistics for the two housing scales by gender identity, ability status, and sexual orientation. For the BAS scale for seniors, Black men ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .9$) and Black gay students ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .5$) had the highest mean scores, while Black students with another gender identity ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.5$) and Black queer students ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.2$) had the lowest mean scores. For the FS scale, Black gay students had the highest mean scores ($M = 3.3$, $SD = .7$), while Black students who preferred not to respond to the gender identity item had the lowest mean scores ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.0$).

TABLE 5

OLS Regression Estimates for Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	FIRST-YEARS & SOPHOMORES
		Unstd. <i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)
<i>Supportive Environment</i>	Residential Learning Activities	.04 (.01)***
	Belongingness and Safety	.44 (.03)***
	Perceived Housing Impact	.19 (.03)***
	Financial Stress	-.03 (.02)
	Roommate Selection	.12 (.04)**
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	Residential Learning Activities	.03 (.01)**
	Belongingness and Safety	.03 (.04)
	Perceived Housing Impact	.30 (.03)***
	Financial Stress	.10 (.02)***
	Roommate Selection	.18 (.04)***
<i>Perceived Gains</i>	Residential Learning Activities	.03 (.01)**
	Belongingness and Safety	.26 (.03)***
	Perceived Housing Impact	.39 (.03)***
	Financial Stress	.10 (.02)***
	Roommate Selection	.11 (.04)**
		SENIORS
<i>Supportive Environment</i>	Belongingness and Safety	.32 (.05)***
	Financial Stress	-.07 (.04)
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	Belongingness and Safety	.15 (.06)**
	Financial Stress	.05 (.05)
<i>Perceived Gains</i>	Belongingness and Safety	.30 (.05)***
	Financial Stress	-.08 (.04)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Dependent variables were standardized so unstandardized *B* can be interpreted as effect sizes.

There is no recruitment without retention, and there is no progress without evaluation. The commitment that housing has to adding dimensions of diversity to all their roles and positions must also be executed in a way that creates a sense of belonging, safety, and care for their current Black staff.

Similar to analyses for first-years and sophomores, three OLS regression models were used to examine the relationships between the two housing scales and three climate-based NSSE scales: Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains (Table 5). The adjusted R^2 for all three models indicated that a very small proportion of variance (1–7%) was explained by the independent variables, suggesting that other factors contribute to these relationships significantly more than do these variables. BAS was the only significant predictor of Supportive Environment ($B = .32, p < .001$), Student-Faculty Interaction ($B = .15, p < .01$), and Perceived Gains ($B = .30, p < .001$).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to contribute more within-group information regarding Black students' experiences in on-campus housing using a large-scale dataset. We examined how Black students responded to a series of questions about their housing experiences and analyzed differences by class year, gender identity, ability status, and sexual orientation. The housing scales were also examined in terms of their relationship to engagement variables, such as Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains. Residential spaces can be difficult environments for Black students to navigate, and gathering more nuanced information about their experiences can contribute to the continued development of these spaces.

Generally, the relationships between the housing scales (Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains) for both first-years and sophomores and seniors were not very strong. These results suggest that there are undoubtedly other factors that must be explored in conjunction with these housing scales in order to understand how these scales relate to student engagement. Given our limitations and previous literature on the racism and microaggressions that Black students experience in on-campus residential spaces (Foste, 2021; Harper et al., 2011), a more racialized conception of these scales—one that considers how identity will impact perceptions of on-campus housing experiences—may present stronger relationships between these variables in future research. Examining gender identity, ability status, and sexual orientation for the four housing scales provided some insights. Results showed that Black men, Black students with no disability diagnosis, and Black straight students tended to have slightly more engagement with residential learning activities and sense of belonging while experiencing lower financial stress. On the other hand, Black students with

another gender identity had lower engagement with residential learning activities, lower belongingness and safety, and higher financial stress. Although more information is needed to understand the results, these are potential areas worth exploring to demonstrate how Black students are not all having the same housing experiences.

Black students across class years felt a sense of belonging and safety in their on-campus housing spaces. For first-years and sophomores, belongingness and safety in housing was related to supportive environment and perceived gains. These relationships are similar to those found in previous literature, as living on campus is related to more student engagement (Graham et al., 2018). Although Black students felt a sense of belonging in these housing environments, they did not engage in residentially based learning experiences, and this result was evident regardless of identity characteristics examined. This may suggest that Black students find learning opportunities and support systems outside of their on-campus residence. However, these results can also suggest that these activities are not readily advertised or available for this Black student sample. Residential learning activities are often integrated in residence halls through residential learning communities, which are associated with curricular and cocurricular gains and more positive perceptions of the campus environment (Hurtado et al., 2020), but these results show that more intentionality is needed to ensure that Black students are aware of and engage in these advantageous activities. The RLA scale was also not a strong predictor of student-faculty interaction, which can point to a need for more opportunities for Black students to get engaged in these learning experiences once a sense of belonging is solidified.

For first-year and sophomore Black students, the PHI scale was a significant predictor of Perceived Gains, followed by Student-Faculty Interaction and Supportive Environment. The relationship between perceived gains and housing impact is unsurprising, given the items making up the housing impact scale that specifically focus on academic and social success. On-campus housing is an important factor in first-year students' experiences, as these are environments where meaningful connections are formed (Bowman, 2010). Based on our results, the importance of housing experiences is evident for Black students. However, an interesting result was how roommate selection for Black students did not have a strong relationship with Supportive Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Perceived Gains. This result differs from previous research showing how Black students who chose their own roommates in on-campus housing experienced more supportive environments (Fosnacht et al., 2020). Perhaps roommate selection should be considered with other factors about the housing environment that were not captured in this study but are worth exploring.

... we must question why the experience for Black staff is harmful, unduly taxing, and, ultimately, in direct conflict with the stated missions and goals of housing departments.

Due to the more limited set of scales for seniors, there was not as much information to extract from our analyses, but this is not surprising given that seniors are less likely to live on campus (Graham et al., 2018). Additionally, all regression models had very weak effect sizes, and these results suggest that there are other factors in the senior on-campus housing experience that were not captured in this study. These results may also reflect the negative experiences that Black students have in on-campus housing early in their college careers. Black seniors may have already decided to seek support and validation outside of their housing experiences, which can explain why more factors would need to be integrated into our models to better understand these connections. They may not be so worried about making friends and adjusting to their college environment and are more concerned with graduation and plans post-graduation. More research is needed to determine whether on-campus housing is an important factor in seniors' college experiences and what components may be more relevant for their engagement. ■

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Black students residing in campus housing define sense of belonging?
2. How did participation in residential community opportunities vary by student classification groups?
3. While roommate selection did not have a strong relationship to how supportive Black students found their institution, how might the roommate selection process impact their sense of belonging in their housing experience?

Discussion questions developed by LaFarin Meriwether, University of North Carolina Greensboro, and Chandra Myrick, University of Tennessee, Knoxville



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