

FROM THE EDITOR

Letter From the Editor (Vol. 51, No. 2)

Philip Badaszewski¹ 

¹ University of Delaware

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Greetings colleagues. This year has brought constant upheaval and anxiety for the higher education community. Federal and state governments have targeted diversity, equality, and inclusion initiatives resulting in many of our colleagues being reassigned or, worse, terminated. Cuts have been made or threatened that would shut down important research initiatives related to cancer, HIV, AIDS, and countless other diseases. Thousands of federal employees have lost their jobs, jeopardizing federal aid, civil rights investigations, tribal colleges, and even the IRS. It might be easy to bury our heads in the sand and hope it all goes away, but we have a responsibility to our students, staff, and colleagues.

I encourage everyone to do what you need to do to care for yourself and your own physical and mental health. At the same time, I also encourage everyone to do whatever you can within your own sphere to take a stand, no matter how small, where you see injustice. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by this onslaught, but if each of us picks just one area that matters most, we can make a significant impact.

As housing professionals, one way we can continue to counter injustice is through research and education. The work of the *Journal* has always been important, and I personally see my term as editor as critical in disseminating high-quality research quickly. With that in mind, in addition to the outstanding articles in this issue, we are excited to announce a shift to an online-first publishing model. In the very near future, ACUHO-I members will be able to access accepted manuscripts via our Scholastica platform well in advance of when they will be published in our print edition. This change will allow the *Journal* to bring time-sensitive research to students, faculty, researchers, and housing professionals more expeditiously. Our hope is that this provides even faster implementation and benefit for all the people we serve.

Our spring issue opens with an article by Isaac Hollis and colleagues that takes us back to five years ago and the COVID-19 pandemic. Five Black undergraduate men, who remained in the residence halls during the fall 2020 semester, shared how they turned a time of potential isolation into a time for self-exploration, a time to focus on mental health, and a time to learn new skills and hobbies. The study's findings not only counter traditional male stereotypes but also provide housing professionals with new ideas for Black male engagement. Next, Kelly Hall and Dana Severance discuss the creation

of criteria to determine the difference in performance between sophomore and other upper-division resident assistants. Their findings reveal that, with the exception of sophomore males, sophomore RAs perform just as well as other upper-division RAs regardless of the type of student community for which they are assigned.

The phrase “with great power comes great responsibility” comes to mind in the next article, in which Chris Heasley, Katie Boone, and Kevin Conn utilize the Regional Entry Level Institute (RELI) competencies to examine the RA role and responsibilities. The findings of this study show that RELI competencies could be used as a performance expectation for RAs as well. Marybeth Walpole, Sa-Rawla Stoute, and Felicia Crockett flip the conventional focus on students impacted by peer suicide by interviewing housing professionals who had experienced an on-campus suicide. Suicidality is an unfortunate part of our work as housing professionals, and the results of this study offer recommendations for practice directly from impacted staff.

We close with an article by Ellen Broido, Jo Campbell, Kirsten Brown, and Val Erwin who bring a unique take to faculty-in-residence (FIR) research with insights from the faculty perspective. Their results support previous research on FIR programs and add important insights for housing staff to reconsider how to build out programmatic expectations in FIR job descriptions as well as the intended roles of FIR spouses and RAs in FIR work.

Many thanks to our reviewers and associate editors as well as our copy editor, Christine Freeman, and graphic designer, Ellen Gray, who give their time in support of each and every author and *Journal* issue. Thanks to Camille Perlman and James Baumann in the ACUHO-I Central Office for supporting the *Journal* and our ongoing enhancements. I hope you enjoy all the articles in this issue. Consider using the discussion questions to provide ready-made professional development conversations during your next staff meeting, or send articles to staff and colleagues to better support your students. Go Bucks and Go Dawgs!

Phil Badaszewski, Editor

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