



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I hope this spring edition of the *Journal* finds you well and that life (both personally and professionally) is on its way toward returning to a semblance of normalcy. I have been feeling hopeful and enjoying the newness and freshness that spring always seems to bring. It seems just a bit sweeter after a year of closures, lock-downs, and immense changes to our campuses, communities, and nations. In a recently held graduate research symposium at our campus, one student presented work about students' sense of mattering during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her study found that students overwhelmingly felt supported by faculty and staff, noting how many people worked so hard to make sure they still had a college experience during the pandemic. It was heartening to hear that our hard work made a difference to the students we serve. I hope you find that encouraging as well!

In this issue, readers will find articles that center around two common themes: inclusion and sense of belonging. The first three articles focus particularly on inclusion and improving the on-campus living experience and supports for different groups of students. Kathleen Buell, Kaleb Briscoe, and Christina Yao illuminate the food-related experiences of international students living on campus in their first year. This article discusses food quality, cultural differences, and how both food quality and variety can impact these students' decisions about living on campus in the future. Dustin Grabsch, Hannah Melton, and Carly Gilson examine the expectations and experiences of seven students on the autism spectrum in relation to residence life. Their article provides insights on how to fulfill expectations unique to this student population and provides recommendations for practice. Sarah Williams, Matthew Johnson, Ethan Kolek, Anne Hornak, Frim Ampaw, and Kathleen Gardner evaluate how a redesigned inclusion assistant program in the residence halls fostered success among students with underrepresented identities at a public rural Predominantly White Institution in the Midwest. This study also identifies challenges that the

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inclusion assistants faced and provides recommendations to improve the program and similar programs at other institutions. The last two articles focus on students' sense of belonging and how on-campus living spaces affect it. Chris Heasley explores the differentiated community experiences of men and women within residential settings and concludes that community association is actualized differently based on the residents' gender and the design of residence halls. He also emphasizes how important it is for housing professionals and researchers to understand how hall design influences students' sense of community and belonging. Finally, Michelle Samura, Marina Ballesteros, and Sarah Garcia-Gonzalez reveal findings from a project supported by an ACUHO-I research grant: exploring how residence halls and bedroom spaces facilitate or hinder the development of students' sense of belonging. Findings from their study reveal how residential students utilize their bedrooms and bed areas to engage in critical identity work.

As always, we owe many thanks to the volunteers and devoted staff who contribute to the process of publishing *The Journal of College and University Student Housing*. Our associate editors carefully guide and mold the process, overseeing teams of talented and dedicated reviewers. Our copy editor for this issue (and many past issues), Christine Freeman, carefully, quickly, and professionally handles this important step towards publication. Ellen Gray shared her talents as the graphic designer for this issue, as she has for many previous issues. Finally, our reviewers provided thoughtful and insightful discussion questions for each article in this issue. I am confident there is something useful here for everyone who reads it. Enjoy the articles, utilize the discussion questions, and be thoughtful about how you can use and apply the information you learn from these pages.

Sarah Gordon, Editor

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