Student Residential Life Staff Compensation at Mount Holyoke College

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Student residential life staff members play a critical role in building an engaging community which is integral to student retention\(^1\). Quite simply, we put the home in MoHome. I have been researching how Community Advisors (CAs) and Senior Community Advisors (SCAs) are compensated for this vital work with the support of professional staff members in the Residential Life department. CAs and SCAs are student staff members that live within the residence halls and work respectively within the context of floor or the entire hall itself. The ultimate goal of this research project is to secure an increase in compensation for next year’s and following year’s student staff members.

Topics of inquiry include: data on how many hours CAs and SCAs worked in the past fall semester, comparing compensation for CAs and SCAs to other jobs on campus with the Assistant Director of Student Employment, comparing CA and SCA compensation to compensation at other colleges, archival research on the history of live in hall staff members at Mount Holyoke, the diversity of CAs and SCAs in comparison to the rest of the college, which was prepared by institutional research, and retention and application rates for CAs and SCAs within the department.

I am modeling possible funding scenarios and critically examining the responsibilities of each position. The research I have done and insider perspective on this topic were used in generating the departmental budget proposal. There are realistic alternatives to current student residential life compensation at other institutions of higher education that better reflect the gravity of the work students are doing.