



# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING SERVICES

### Strategic Plan

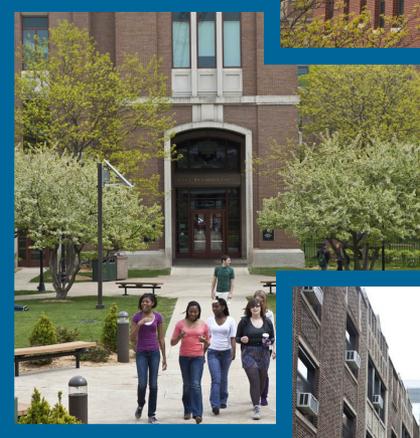


Adopted January 2013

# Services



# Planning



# Outreach

# Assessment

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# Introduction: Letter From the Director

Dear colleagues,

Greetings! If you are in possession of this strategic plan booklet, this means that you are a valued professional or student staff member of the Department of Housing Services, a campus partner or a partner outside of DePaul University with whom we have created a relationship for services. Your investment in the Department of Housing Services is critical to the operation of our department and the success of the students living in our residential communities. I am both proud and excited to be able to share our strategic plan with all of you and sincerely hope that this plan will further illustrate Housing Services' dedication to the students we serve, to the Division of Facility Operations, to DePaul University and to all of you as our trusted peers and colleagues.

Our goals, as you will see in this plan, focus on four major areas: services, planning, assessment and outreach. The staff in Housing Services, many of whom contributed to the writing of this plan, felt that these were the most critical areas for our department to focus on in the foreseeable future. Under each of these areas there is one main goal and then several objectives that provide additional substance to the goals.

This strategic plan is more than a set of goals. It is also about who we are as a department and how we function. Some of you reading this are already deeply embedded in Housing Services and as a result much of this may be familiar to you. For those of you reading this that may not be as familiar with our day to day operations, I truly hope that this provides you with a much better understanding of Housing Services today and who we hope to be over the next several years.

It is also my intention to tie the Housing Services' strategic plan back to the strategic plan of the university, Vision 2018. Although there are not many direct links, I do feel strongly that there are complimentary areas and

reflections between the two. The Housing Services' strategic plan is intended to have a shelf life of three years. During this time, we hope to accomplish all of the goals in the plan and create new ones along the way. This plan will not limit the department from creating new initiatives that are not currently listed, however we do intend to stay focused. With this in mind, I have created a strategic plan task force in Housing Services to ensure our plan's progress and to maintain a commitment to our mission and that of DePaul University.



Rick Moreci, Director

In addition to the task force, I am certain that members of our housing community will also assist in making our strategic plan a reality. Therefore, I thank you in advance for any assistance or guidance you may provide over the next several years as we dig deeper into the plan.

In closing, I thank you all for reading and hopefully participating in our strategic plan. If not for the dedication from our student and professional staff, and of course our resident students, this plan would not be possible. I hope that you all share in our department's excitement about this plan and wish us success as we endeavor to make great strides for the future.

Sincerely,

Rick Moreci

Director, Housing Services

DePaul University

# About the Department of Housing Services

## Our Mission

### **Services + Facilities + Living + Quality**

Grounded in DePaul University's Vincentian values and distinguishing marks, staff of the Department of Housing Services administer the processes for living on campus and partner with others in promoting this experience. We strive to provide exceptional services within our high-quality, residential facilities while also encouraging residents' personal growth and community responsibility.

## Our Vision

The Department of Housing Services aspires to be a valued and vital partner in DePaul University resident students' pursuit of educational success.

We trust that the environment we create will offer our resident students a rewarding experience that will enrich their lives academically, socially and culturally.

## Our Values

As our staff interacts daily with our community, our campus partners, parents, and most importantly our students, we are guided by our values and our principles. A student's educational experience is not reflected simply in the relationship between the student and the university, but also in the relationships with the student's family and within the DePaul community.

### **We value quality and consistency in our facilities and our services.**

High quality work is reflected not only in our physical residences, but also, in the services we provide to students. We believe that consistency is the key to quality customer service.



**We value fairness in how we work with others.**

With an understanding that each student and each situation is different, Housing Services' staff strive to make decisions that are without bias.

Fairness is critical to create a safe and secure environment for our students. The importance of fairness is unmistakable in how our guest policy is upheld and how policies are enforced that reduce the risk of theft and fire. Safety is our paramount concern.

In executing the terms of our housing agreement, whether it be through assigning new students at the beginning of their college career or assisting a resident through the cancellation process, our staff must remain impartial through each process.

**We value transparency and openness in our communication.**

We understand the importance of clear and consistent communication with our students and their parents. Housing Services staff seek feedback from our students, parents and campus partners in order to regularly improve. We engage regularly with others in person, via the internet and over the phone. Our department develops various means to exchange information to parents and students so our operations are transparent.

**We value inclusiveness and engagement in our community.**

Based on the university's values of building community, we aim to be a frequent presence in our residential community and to serve all of our diverse population. We are committed to building a respectful climate where we hear all perspectives and strive to recognize each resident's needs. We are relentless in promoting honest and supportive relationships with our students, parents, campus partners and the public at large.

# Department Area Summaries

## Business Management

The focus of the business management area includes the timely processing, tracking, reporting and reconciling of all financial activity within the departmental budgets for the Department of Housing Services and University Center. Additionally, the business management area strives to ensure that the department's business practices are transparent, consistent and in compliance with DePaul University standards.

## Housing Assignments

The assignments area is committed to providing exceptional customer service to prospective residents and the current residential community. The assignments area's prominent focus is creating new assignments, processing room change requests and managing housing cancellations and cancellation-fee appeal requests. The assignments area strives to be fair, transparent and consistent with all procedures and processes within the Department of Housing Services.

## Marketing and Communications

The marketing and communications area oversees the department's communication and marketing plans and processes. This area is responsible for managing and strategizing marketing and communication campaigns for the entire department. This includes implementing creative direction, developing designs, editing, monitoring university and departmental branding standards, routing, production and distribution. The marketing and communications area, in conjunction with university and vendor partnerships, develops and distributes information that is

designed to keep the various and diverse audiences informed and educated about the Department of Housing Services.

## Housing Technology

The housing technology area is responsible for the day-to-day operations of technology-related issues, user support, and server administration specifically related to all

departmental technology, including but not limited to the Residential Management System (RMS), HELIX (guest registration) and ImageNow. Project management of all departmental technology initiatives is a major component and this area participates in all decision-making processes related to housing technology, as well as pertinent meetings and training sessions.



Student volunteers gather to help incoming residents on move-in day 2012.

## Housing Facilities

The housing facilities area is responsible for day-to-day facility management in the residence halls. The housing facilities area is responsible for coordinating major campus project work like residence hall move-in, residence hall move-out and quarterly facility inspections in the halls. This area also oversees residence hall front desk access control and manages more than 130 student employees. The housing facilities area is responsible for assisting the residents in lock-outs, work orders and has resourceful satellite offices with professional staff for east, west and central campus. Also, they ensure that resident housing facility-

## Department Area Summaries, Cont'd

related issues reported through the work order system or in person are addressed in a timely manner. Finally, the housing facilities area is responsible for responding to daytime and after-hours facility emergencies and coordinating efforts with campus partners in the Department of Housing Services, Facility Operations, as well as with residents directly.

### Facilities Projects

The facilities projects area oversees facility maintenance and projects related to Lincoln Park campus residence halls. This area is responsible for building inspections, the management of work orders from start to finish and developing and maintaining vendor relations. Facilities projects works closely with the Facility Operations Department to provide preventative maintenance and maintenance project work. Through long-term planning, the facilities projects area manages the coordination of long-term housing facilities projects and capital improvements. Finally, this area focuses on sustainability initiatives within the residence halls, including the supervision of a student-run green team.



A new resident smiles with her parent on move-in day.

## Department Committees

The Department of Housing Services utilizes several committees and task forces to facilitate goal progress and completion, as well as enhance overall productivity. Committees began in 2010 and have since grown in number and scope. Currently, there are three active committees and three task forces housed within the department. Through these committees and task forces, staff work closely with the university, housing community and other departments on campus to promote the goals of Housing Services. Committees are dedicated to guiding and strengthening the department, and providing a commitment to specific goal-oriented tasks.

Housing Services' professional staff members, as well as student employees, play important roles as committee chairs and members. The use of committees and task forces has been evolving over the past several years and currently hold much momentum to take us into the future. Housing Services has placed a lot of value and emphasis on its committees and task forces and the work produced will provide continuity as well as new initiatives. These committees and task forces will be particularly instrumental in helping Housing Services achieve the plans and goals outlined in this strategic plan.



Staff make lunches for the homeless during an employee development day.

## Department of Housing Services Goals

### SERVICES

#### **Goal 1: Better serve students, employees and guests by reviewing and improving Housing Services' resources.**

Objective 1a. Intentionally review current resources and processes to ensure efficiency in services.

- Establish a proactive, on-going schedule for reviews of processes.
- Develop reviews for major processes including move-in, move-out, room selection, winter check-in, front desk operations and room changes, among other processes.
- Ensure that committees and task forces that are established in Housing Services have a role in the review process.

Objective 1b. Identify and pursue technology solutions that can be used in the field to expedite information sharing.

- Develop mobile technology with a focus on staff in the field, such as asset tracking, improved facility inspections and check-ins.
- Create online version of housing condition report.
- Remain dedicated to enhancing security measures at residence hall front desks.
- Research and retain other technologies as opportunities are discovered.

Objective 1c. Research and benchmark with other institutions on their services offered to residents and seek out best practices.

- Identify institutions and services in which to benchmark.
- Participate in professional conferences and report back to the department with key findings.
- Leverage research through publications, conferences, list serves and contacts in order to seek out services and practices.

Objective 1d. Promote the value of on-campus housing at Lincoln Park and the Loop in an effort to increase satisfaction and maintain housing demand.

- Utilize and expand our marketing portfolio to educate audiences about the value of on-campus housing.

Objective 1e. Draw upon on-campus housing experiences that in turn adequately prepare students for success when living off-campus.

- Maintain consistency in all residence hall procedures in an effort to teach values and concepts of good citizenship to our resident students.
- Strengthen partnerships with other departments to foster valuable on-campus experiences. Such partnerships may include the Department of Residential Education, Public Safety, Commuter Services and Facility Operations.

# ASSESSMENT

## Goal 2: Determine and execute assessment strategy through the lens of our strategic plan and our mission, vision and values.

Objective 2a. Assess the housing experience of students and utilize results to provide meaningful change in correlation with future planning and goal setting.

- Refine focus groups, surveys and quality assurance controls.
- Utilize data to guide capital improvements and upgrade initiatives to physical facilities.
- Assess the strategic plan to help determine future goals.

Objective 2b. Actively seek regular feedback from Housing Services student and professional employees related to support and resources available in the department.

- Support an environment in which professional feedback and on-going development is cultivated.
- Continue to enhance Housing Services committee and task force groups to benefit staff resources.
- Actively utilize feedback to develop action plan initiatives.

Objective 2c. Examine the current state of our partnerships with campus entities and utilize findings to streamline the student experience as it relates to housing.

- Enhance and strengthen partnerships to benefit student services as they relate to housing.

- Expand support for high-quality, easy-to-navigate processes, particularly when several campus entities are involved.
- Improve the effectiveness of consistent communication to and from campus partners.

Objective 2d. Organize internal data collection plan; create a more transparent environment that improves annual planning and reporting.

- Strengthen internal data communication and organization to prepare for planning and reporting.
- Identify trends with collected data.
- Develop annual report and planning process.



Students enjoying a day on the quad.

# PLANNING

## Goal 3: Ensure effectiveness and success of Housing Services by optimizing internal communication and utilizing feedback.

Objective 3a. Be resilient to the ever-changing work environment by employing deliberate and effective communication strategies in an effort to improve departmental effectiveness.

- Consistently plan and strengthen internal and external collaborations.
- Foster a transparent, inclusive and direct communication environment.
- Develop a shared perspective on how to best communicate laterally across functional areas within Housing Services.
- Maintain and improve upon current practices that promote internal and external communications.

Objective 3b: Improve planning for a variety of processes that ensure departmental and university collaboration and success.

- Proactively seek out collaborative resources to ensure student success.
- Develop a system to track collaborative outcomes and best practices.
- Plan and provide adequate time for effective change.

Objective 3c. Provide additional training for Housing Services' staff on internal department processes and overall understanding of procedures.

- Deepen a realization and understanding of resources (including accessibility and utilization).

- Develop a standard internal on-boarding process for new student and professional employees.
- Ensure that all training is marked with levels of consistency and accountability.
- Maintain departmental awareness and understanding about internal resources such as procedures and processes.

Objective 3d: Continually reference the department and university strategic plans to gauge progress and ensure transparency.

- Embrace a transparent communication standard and tracking system for updates, challenges, adjustments and successes.
- Clearly define regular check-in points, particularly for the department strategic plan, so all stakeholders are aware of the progress being made.



Student Appreciation Banquet, May 2012.

# OUTREACH

## Goal 4: Strengthen relationships with internal and external partners to better serve diverse student populations.

Objective 4a. Research and define populations that have unique needs pertaining to on-campus living.

- Identify diverse student populations, which include, but are not limited to: international, transfer, LGBT, athletes and students with disabilities.
- Expand and utilize knowledge from campus partners to identify unique needs pertaining to on-campus living.
- Consider the needs of students living in DePaul-affiliated properties (e.g., 1237 West and University Center).

Objective 4b. Keeping in mind the needs of these student populations, reconsider and enhance current practices and facilities.

- Strengthen practices and support services to diverse student populations (examples identified in 4a).
- Strategize and plan for prospective students, current students and students transitioning to off-campus living.



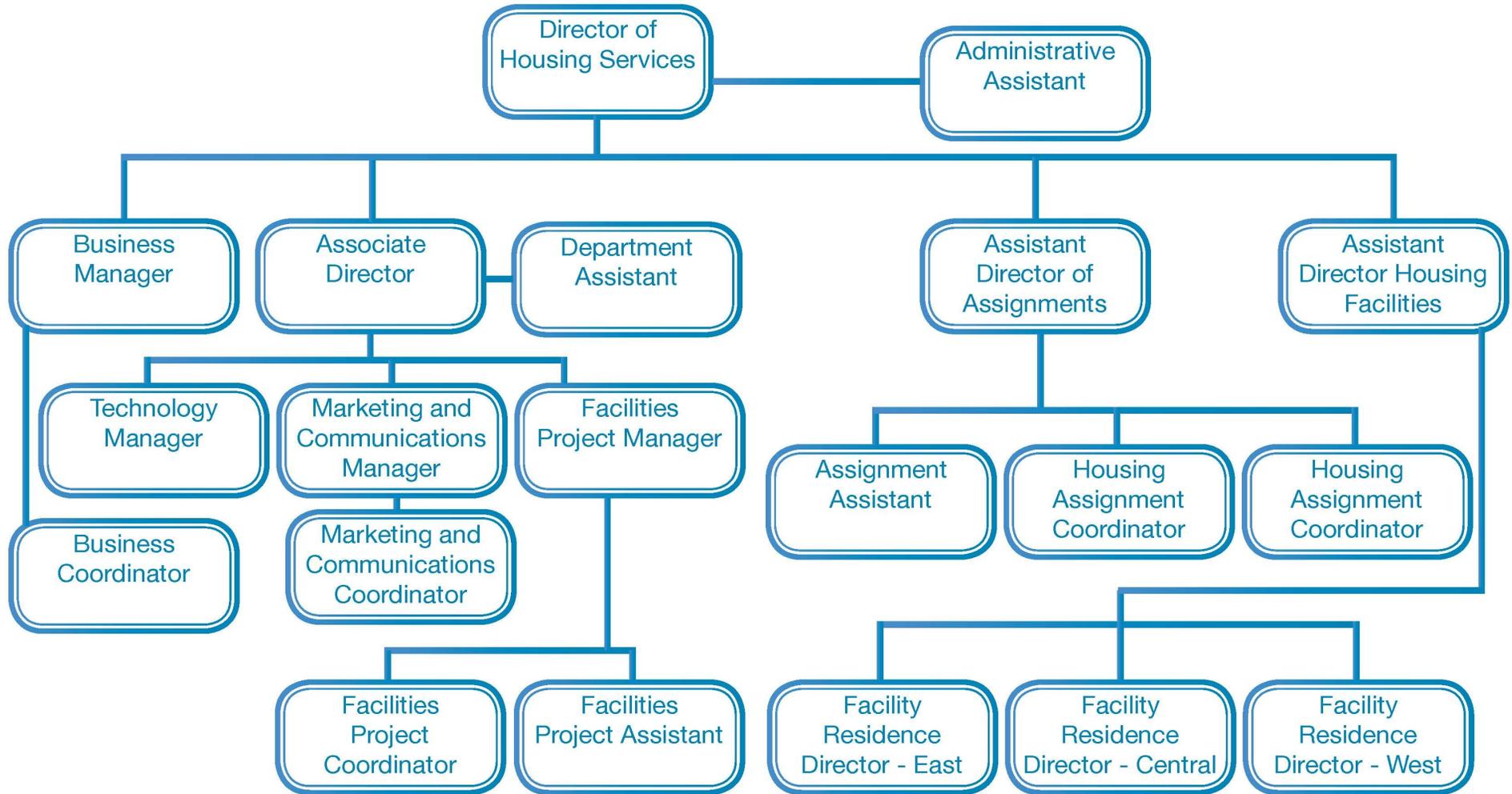
Objective 4c. Strengthen relationships with other university departments through formalized networking, engagement and communication in an effort to partner with Housing Services in serving these student populations.

- Seek consistent feedback, formally and informally, from campus partners to gauge understanding of Housing Services' practices.
- Adopt tools to strengthen relationships such as networking events, intentional check-ins and written communication.
- Manage promotion of Housing Services brand with all interactions, including students, parents, campus partners and guests.

Objective 4d. Develop and implement targeted communication plans to strengthen engagement and connections to student populations.

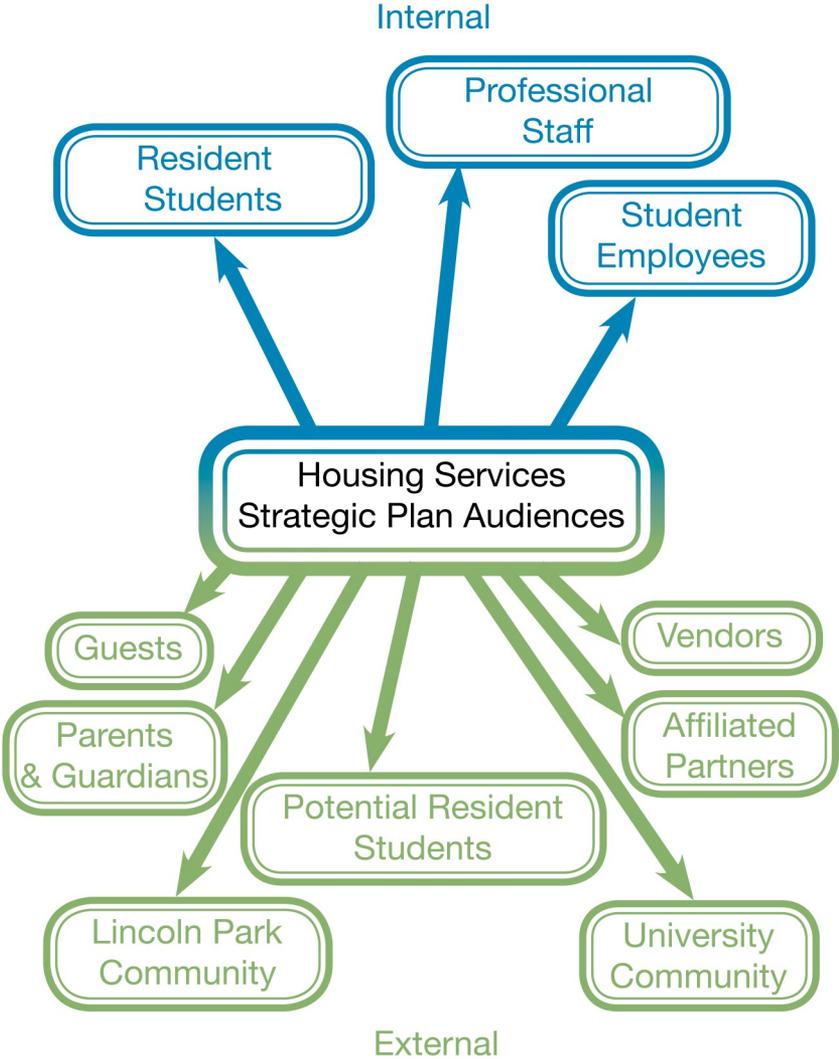
- Create a system that tracks all interactions and communications regarding our diverse populations.
- Focus accountability within Housing Services to strengthen and maintain specific partner relationships as they relate to diverse student populations.
- Utilize two-way communication with student groups such as Student Government Association and Residence Hall Council to tap into the student voice.

## Appendix A: Department of Housing Services Organizational Chart



*\*The Department of Housing Services currently employs more than 150 students in a variety of positions. While these positions are not reflected in this version of the departmental organizational chart, it is important to note that these positions are all critical to the success of Housing Services.*

# Appendix B: Housing Services Audiences



*\*To read more about our audiences, visit our website and click on "About Us".*

## Appendix C: Housing Services Marketing Outlets

### Traditional Marketing

- Letters (mailed)
  - Students
  - Parents
- Letters (hand delivered)
- Post cards
- Newsletters
- Brochures
- DePaulia
- Radio DePaul
- Campus Movie Channel

### E-Marketing

- Website
- Emails
  - Students
  - Parents
- Forums
- E-Newsletters
- Social Media

### Non- Traditional Marketing

- Posters
- Flyering
- Miscellaneous Collateral
- Promotional Items
- Presentations
- Events
- Campus Partnerships
- Word of Mouth



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