

Making Housing and Dining More Affordable
An update report for President's Advisory Council

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

- Over the past decade, little renovation or new construction has occurred to campus residence halls.
- The University now finds itself playing catch up with peer institutions who for the past decade have been building and renovating housing in response to their students' needs and changing lifestyles.
- Building projects over the next decade could involve as many as six construction projects and cost nearly \$100 million. These projects could easily consume any reserves built over the last decade.
- While the housing debt service is currently a manageable \$2 million annually, debt service will increase significantly over the next 10 years as our campus housing facilities are renovated and new facilities are brought on line.
- Utility costs are predicted to increase 16% next year, resulting in little opportunity for cost saving then or in the foreseeable future. Use of alternative resources like wind turbines and solar power cells are being explored through a grant but savings won't likely be realized for years because of the costs associated with purchasing and installing needed equipment.
- Dining services will need to upgrade aging kitchen equipment and remodel existing high traffic dining spaces resulting in little margin for cost containment. Departments could face paying a greater share of catering.
- Modest cost savings to students could also be realized by charging departments a larger share of catering costs.
- The role of Academic Program Assistants (APA) has changed dramatically since last year, as this year APAs have been trained on MAP-Works to be more engaged in working individually with students to help improve first-year retention. Determining the future of the APA program (would impact 35 students who receive room and board in exchange for work) should be postponed for at least a year to measure their success in helping retain more first-year students who live in campus residence halls.
- Budget reductions have reduced maintenance staffs, leaving little room for further reductions without impacting core services to residence hall facilities.
- Initiatives that have the potential to make housing more affordable:
 - Co-op housing:
 - Initially a pilot that would include a mix of lower and upper division students
 - Two floors in Mills Hall could serve as the site
 - By working a set number of hours each week, students would be provided housing and/or meal discounts
 - Work would involve helping to clean and maintain Mills Hall.

- Cost adjustments to housing options:
 - This initiative would review the costs associated with the current living options: basic, enhanced, and premium
 - By adding amenities to the premium option and providing only the most basic essentials in the basic option, some savings could be realized for those who select the basic option, thus making housing for them more affordable.
 - Student-created work in dining services could provide additional cost savings for these individuals.
- A donor naming gift for the in-fill construction housing project could produce cost savings that could be realized indirectly by students.