

Residence Life

Vermont Technical College has two residential campuses, each offering students a different experience. Randolph is in the rural town of Randolph Center. Students at this location are housed, primarily, in traditional corridor style residence halls in double rooms. The campus features a student center, athletic facilities, dining hall, a twenty-four hour computer lab and a working farm. Williston is more urban, with close proximity to Burlington. The one residence hall caters to students who are interested in independent living, the rooms are doubles and singles and it offers a cook-for-yourself community.

The Office of Residential Life, housed within the Division of Students Affairs, is located on the Randolph Center campus. There are four Resident Directors in Randolph. Each position is full-time, but includes other duties. Three positions are 50% Resident Director and 50% other duties (Student Conduct, Student Activities, and the Director of Residence Life who is also the Title IX Coordinator). The fourth Resident Director is in a 10-month position, and that individual also works for Admissions and is the men's basketball coach. In Williston, the position is full-time year round and is individual serves handles Student Conduct, Student Activities, and Residence Life on that campus.

Each campus also has student Resident Assistants who are supervised by the Resident Directors and help to manage each floor during the school year. In return, they receive a single room free of charge. There are 20 individuals in Randolph and 3 in Williston. These individuals are selected through a competitive process and are student leaders. They are trained and play an important role in maintaining college safety and community standards, connecting with and supporting students, and providing information and programming to both entertain and educate the residents.

The residence halls are intended to be microcosms of real life communities. Students have opportunities to make decisions regarding their living environments, practice life skills and socialize. The residence life program is integral to promoting the college's mission, values, institutional objectives, and statement of philosophy regarding an educated person:

- Personal Integrity & Responsibility
- Independence, and Self-direction
- Communication Skills
- Adaptability & Resiliency
- Citizenship, Community & Civic Engagement
- Critical Thinking & Knowledge Acquisition
- Global Awareness & Diversity

In the residence halls student responsibility for their own behavior is stressed. Many face situations which test their integrity, adaptability and resiliency, etc. The Residence Life staff offers support, resources and guidance.

Families also frequently feel challenged as their students deal with this new degree of independence. The Residential Life professional staff serve as liaisons between them and their students. They work

closely with the Office of the Academic Dean, Public Safety and the Center for Academic Success to ensure the student is understood in their entirety, and the most appropriate actions are taken to help address any situations and help to promote personal and educational success.

In the last five years, the residential population at the college has decreased sixteen percent and the student profile has changed. No longer are there only eighteen year olds who just graduated from high school. A resident may be a thirty-three year old who is changing careers or a twenty-one year old who took a few years off to work. These people have been out in the world, often living on their own. These students are used to living an “adult” life and should expect to find the same in the residence halls.

There may be fewer homesick students to comfort or roommate conflicts to mediate, but students will have needs. Regardless of the demographic profile, the style of the residence hall, or the structure of the housing contract, Vermont Technical College has to ensure each student feels connected, confident in their voice, engaged in learning, included and prepared for the future. The living environment should be open, foster respect, communication, innovation and taking risks. It must be clean, comfortable, and safe.

In that context, these are the goals for Residence Life over the next five years:

- Residence halls on the Randolph campus are a vital component of the college master planning process. Renovation, demolition, construction should all be considered in light of national trends and best practices. Single rooms, kitchens, common rooms, labs and study spaces should all be considered. (Year 1)
- Consider operating one or more of the residence halls in a more short-term residential (hotel) format. Rooms could be offered for rent on a nightly or weekly basis. It could be used for conferences and events and students who wish to remain during vacations could stay there, as could individuals who are on-campus only for weekend programming or limited nights during the week. A building manager would run the facility rather than a Resident Director, and there would not be programming or a meal plan requirement. (Year 2-3)
- Explore meal plan and food service options and modifications. A common concern expressed by students is the cost of the meal plan given the number of meals they actually eat. Alternative and more flexible meal plans (e.g., declining balances, weekday-only options) and not requiring meal plans for residents should be explored along with considering there may be less costly local providers, or if it might be less expensive for the college to run the food service. (Year 2-3)
- Study the impact of the increasing “free room” scholarships on RA recruitment and retention. Formerly, being an RA was one of the only ways to get free board, that has changed with VAST scholarships, veteran scholarships, and transfer scholarships. A formal examination and recommendation for financial aid strategy and/or RA compensation needs to be made. (Year 1-2)
- The number of students who have emotional support animals has increased by seven in the past year and the number of students who have applied and been denied went from zero to five. VTC should consider implementing a program of a specific “pet friendly” floor or two. (Year 2)
- Examine the reporting structure for custodial staff in residence halls and consider whether any changes should be made. (Year 2-3)

