

Resolution 82-4
COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING
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COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING

Authors: Jack D. Smith
Edmund Jordan
Lisa Borden
Emman Abidoye

Sponsored by: Associated Student Government
Inter-Hall Council

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY STUDENT HOUSING IN THE UNITED STATES:

BY THE

JOURNAL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The 1960's and early 70's in the United States were marked by considerable discord and social protest. College and university campuses were early rallying points for expressions of social discontent in the 1960's; in the process of debate and demonstration on these issues, the fundamental relationship of students to universities and colleges underwent a dramatic and, it now appears permanent shift. By the mid 1970's the concept of in loco parentis was disavowed as an operative principle at most institutions in the country, especially the most highly regarded and prestigious.

COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING:

Coeducational housing a phrase referring to the housing of men and women in the same living unit, had long been discussed, and in the mid and late 1960's cautious experiments in coeducational housing began at some leading institutions. Soon coeducational housing was the dominant form at many institutions. The phrase is used to cover a variety of arrangements—men and woman in separate buildings but with some common lounge and dining areas, and men and women on the same floor with adjacent rooms plus full sharing of all facilities except plumbing. Many schools began with the first type and quickly moved to the second type.

The changes in the basic nature of student housing from highly regulated, single-sex units to coeducational units where students are accorded adult liberties and responsibilities has not occurred at the same rate across the country. At many schools coeducational housing does not exist, and parietal regulations of some variety are maintained. There are significant variations from institution to institution, but those institutions that have traditionally set the standards for innovation and are acknowledged for academic excellence have been the first to move to coeducational housing without parietal hours.

KNOWLEDGABLE OBSERVERS OF STUDENT HOUSING PROGRAMS
IN THE UNITED STATES EVALUATE THE CO-ED HOUSING ISSUE:

Observers of student housing programs in the United States see the trend toward coeducational housing continuing to spread throughout the country. In the late 1960s there was a brief concern over occupancy rates in student housing but in the mid 1970s occupancy rates at all schools were very high. At many schools with traditionally strong residential education programs, new student housing was being planned or was under construction. Experiments in residential education continued to develop at many institutions, and these programs were being looked at carefully to see if they would set the tone for future developments in student housing.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING
COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING

I. WOULD COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY?

According to a 1974 survey conducted at East Texas State University by Francine and James R. White, which was published in The Journal on University Student Housing, the co-ed residence hall, by promoting a "sense of community encourages the development of broad based relationships with many different people." Stanford psychologist Joseph Katz, in his book Search for Relevance, found that ... "co-ed living does not lead to promiscuity. Co-ed housing creates an atmosphere where brother-sister or platonic relationships are formed."

White and White also found that interacting on a daily basis in a "relaxed atmosphere" the members of both sexes had the opportunity to discover the various aspects of the human personality that were "previously masked in artificial, sexually motivated dating relationships."

The findings of the study conducted by White and White at East Texas State University emphasizes one of the most important aspects of coeducational housing while answering the major argument against it. It is our belief that coeducational housing at Western Kentucky University will promote the incidence of meaningful interpersonal relationships among the residents of the hall while allowing them to develop a mature appreciation of one another as individuals.

II. WOULD SECURITY PROBLEMS ARISE, AND WOULD THERE BE AN INCREASE IN VANDALISM?

This is a common complaint of parents and as well of students. Everyone wants a safe and secure place to reside in. Coeducational housing has shown that it provides for a more secure residence hall.

Joe Green, head of security at Murray State University, said that "security problems have practically disappeared at Woods." Woods Hall is a temporary coeducational housing facility. Before going co-ed, Woods was one of the worst residence halls on campus. It had the highest rate of vandalism on campus. Fire alarms were pulled, exit signs were stolen, and items were removed from individuals rooms. But since going co-ed, these problems are almost non-existent.

Students tend to police themselves. A residence assistant at Woods Hall said that "Women feel more secure knowing that if they need to walk somewhere on campus late at night, they will be able to find a male to escort them." This could add an extra benefit in that rapes and other violent crimes could possibly be eliminated, thereby making the campus more secure for everyone.

III. WOULD COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO STUDYING?

As stated in this proposal, the primary purpose and goal of coeducational housing at Western Kentucky University is to provide for the education of the "total person." Education does not end when the student leaves the class room, nor begin when he or she enters it. It has been estimated that a student spend sixty (60) to seventy-five (75) percent of his or her time in their living environment. The atmosphere, in so far as its "conduciveness" to studying is concerned, is of extreme importance.

In a study conducted at North Carolina State University (the most extensive study on co-ed housing to date) from 1974 to 1975 respondents stated that they experienced a high degree of satisfaction with the informal academic atmosphere of their residence hall. This high degree of satisfaction can perhaps be attributed to the extensive sense of community produced by coeducational residence halls. Since class rooms are not composed of only males or females, the chances of finding someone with the academic experience necessary to help them with a classroom related problem increases in a co-ed dorm.

IV. WOULD COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM PLACE A STUDENT IN AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH HE/SHE MAY NOT BE EMOTIONALLY PREPARED TO COPY WITH?

Maturity. No one can say if an individual is mature enough to live in a coeducational environment. The numerous factors influencing this particular decision would be difficult to apply equally to all individuals. However, a study conducted at Washington State University has shown that co-ed housing leads to a better understanding of members of the opposite sex for the residents of the coeducational halls polled in the study. Additionally, the study concluded that males who lived in co-ed housing environments were more appreciative of females as individuals and reported a greater degree of tolerance and understanding in their dealings with members of the opposite sex.

Another question that comes to mind is who to include in a coeducational residence hall; i.e. freshmen, sophomores etc. According to Doctor James Duncan of the University of Texas, freshman are ideal. For most freshmen, college offers their first experience at being away from home, and to try their hand at governing themselves. They are more responsive to responsibility and tend to have a fresher outlook on college life.

In a society in which women are playing an increasingly more significant role, the male who finds it difficult to view a female in any role besides that of wife and mother may well find it difficult to work with women as equals or as superiors.

CASE STUDY NUMBER ONE (1)
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
PUBLICATION DATE 1976

ABSTRACT:

This study, conducted at North Carolina State University was designed to evaluate coeducational residence halls. It is to date the most extensive study on the subject. The objectives of the study were to compare changes in the following variables for co-ed residents with those of residents of single sex halls:

1. Self Confidence
2. Participation in campus and residential hall activities.
3. Perceived personal development in relationships with member of the opposite sex.
4. Male attitudes toward the role of women.
5. expectations and satisfaction with residence hall environment.

SUMMARY OF STUDY RESULTS

With the exception of the freshmen co-ed hall, in which residence hall expectations were very high, co-ed environments do not appear to provide greater satisfaction of residence hall expectations for females than do single sex halls. Males recorded that co-ed environments are more likely to result in satisfaction than are single sex halls.

A supplement study conducted by two psychologist at Stanford University (Corbett and Sommer 1972) studied satisfaction with living environments and found that a majority of students in co-ed environments preferred this arrangements and felt it provided a more friendly atmosphere than a single sex hall.

THE STUDY'S RELEVANCE TO WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

One of the most significant aspects of the NCSU study are the effects of coeducational housing on male/female relationships, and more importantly how these relationships will effect the individual students in the future.

As an institution of higher learning, it is our responsibility to offer students the chance to learn, to deal with one another, not merely as male or female, but as individuals. Individuals capable of a wide range of emotions, talents, and capabilities which are not based on sex or gender but on individual abilities.

The North Carolina State University study raises one of the most significant arguments in favor of coeducational housing:

From the research that has been published on co-ed living, several studies (Brown, Winkworth, and Braskamp, 1972; Lynch, 1972; White and White, 1974; Reid, 1974; and Foster, 1974) have indicated that self-confidence in relationships with members of the opposite sex increased for students in co-ed environments.

Additionally, the studies also indicated that students who chose co-ed halls were initially more mature, exhibited greater flexibility in their appreciation of values, and possessed a greater ability to develop meaningful interpersonal relationships than those who selected a single sex hall.

Jay Stanley Marshall, president of Florida State University in 1972, summed up the feelings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention for the Association of College and University Housing Officers in August 1972:

It has been noted by some observers that individual student development is further enhanced by co-educational halls--there is some casualness and ease of interaction within the co-ed setting. Research at Haverford University reports that for both undergraduates and alumni, relations with roommates and friends were the principle experiences that transformed ethnocentrism into greater acceptance and affection for others. This daily encounter with different others has the effect of reducing stereotyping and prejudice and increasing tolerance and freedom in interpersonal relationships.

PROCEDURES

SAMPLE

To provide data for the objectives listed above, students from three different coed residence hall arrangements were selected for comparison with male and female residents of five single sex halls. The following is a brief description of each of these halls.

COED

- METCALE ----- Resides promarily freshmen with a living-learning program format, high rise tower with suite arrangement, men on first eight (8) floors and women on top four (4) floors.
- LEE ----- Resides mixture of freshmen through seniors, high rise, suite arrangement with long hall, men on first four floors and women on top four floors.
- LEE
9th floor --- Resides upperclassmen only, top floor of Lee with men and women in alternating suites.

SINGLE SEX

- Male ----- Tucker-lowrise, long hall arrangement
Sullivan-highrise, suite arrangement
Gold-small hall with three floors
- Female ----- Carroll-highrise, suite arrangement
Welch-small hall with three floors.

The student sample was selected by a systemic sampling from the room order roster for each of these halls except in Welch, Gold, and Lee-9th floor.

FORMATION OF CLOSE FRIENDS - COMPARITIVE STUDY
 NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY-RALEIGH DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
 AUTHORS - DIANNE DAILEY AND THOMAS H. STAFFORD, JR.

FEMALES

METCALF		LEE		LEE-9th		SINGLE SEX	
Exp ^a	Sat ^b	Exp	Sat	Exp	Sat	Exp	Sat

Formation of Close Friends

<u>Very Much</u>	63%	66%	40%	50%	51%	68%	49%	55%
<u>Some</u>	36%	31%	56%	48%	49%	32%	46%	37%
<u>None</u>	2	3	4	2	-	-	8	9

MALES

METCALF		LEE		LEE-9th		SINGLE SEX	
Exp ^a	Sat ^b	Exp	Sat	Exp	Sat	Exp	Sat

Formation of Close Friends

<u>Very Much</u>	63%	69%	20%	49%	50%	57%	46%	50%
<u>Some</u>	37%	30%	77%	43%	46%	29%	51%	45%
<u>None</u>	-	2	2	8	4	14	3	3

a Expectation of Residence Hall on Initial Survey

b Satisfaction - Degree to which expectation was met

CASE STUDY NUMBER 2

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY PUB. 1976

ABSTRACT:

This study was conducted in an attempt to begin assessing the needs of Washington State University students living in the Institutions residence hall. The Department of Residence Living sought the responses to a 106-question survey. The study produced a net response of one thousand nine hundred sixty nine (1,969) completed usable questionnaires for a response rate of 49.2%.

SUMMARY OF STUDY RESULTS:

The study sought information on several areas of residence hall living. The general residential living areas assessed were: Personal Development: Residence Hall and General Residence Hall Policies: Housing: Facilities, Maintenance, Vending Services and Financial Aid and Employment Opportunities.

When examined by hall types (i.e. large single sex, small single sex and coeducational) respondents from coed halls did not respond as highly as predicted in a number of areas: noise, finding help with personal problems, and satisfaction with hall government, are a few of the areas where the coed residence hall response rate was lower than the residents of single sex halls. However, it should be noted that in most cases the difference in the overall response rate was a 2 to 6 point difference for the coed residence halls depending on the size of the single sex residence hall used as a comparison.

Although the study is "college specific", the responses of the co-ed residence halls when compared with those of single sex halls is significant as a model for other universities interested in ascertaining students future needs with regards to coeducational housing possibilities.

THE STUDIES RELEVANCE TO WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY:

The study conducted at Washington State University has several significant implications for the future of coeducational housing here at Western. The residents of both single sex residence halls and coeducational residence halls will undoubtedly experience difficulties in coping with residence hall life. However, it is our belief that residents of coeducational residence halls will fare better in coping with these difficulties than the residents of single sex halls. The primary reason for the increased ability to copy with possible problems will be because the establishment of a greater amount of interpersonal relationships with a more diversified range of people. Additionally, the residents of coeducational residence halls will have the opportunity to redefine their sense of self as a young man or young woman by gaining a new perception of the roles that they as individuals can assume, i.e. friend, counselor, or protector with members of the opposite sex.

On a visit to Murray State University in September of this year, members of Western Kentucky University's Associated Student Government Student Affairs Committee toured the university's (Murray) coeducational housing hall and discussed several key aspects of the program with the hall's director Stephanie Tebow, and several of the hall's resident assistants.

Of the ten on-campus residence halls located on Murray's campus all are single sex halls except Woods Hall. Although termed "temporary overflow housing" by the university's administrators, Woods Hall has been coeducational for six years, beginning in 1976. Since its inception, Woods Hall, which houses 430 students, 180 males and 250 females, has improved in several areas. Previously, the dorm was plagued by problems of excessive vandalism. But according to Ms. Tebow the problems have virtually disappeared. Another major problem facing the hall was that of security. However, Ms. Tebow points out that since the hall was converted into a co-ed hall this problem has declined significantly.

According to Ms. Tebow, "The atmosphere is one of a community; residents in Woods seem to develop more outgoing and likeable attitudes and personalities compared to the residents of the other halls." Ms. Tebow also pointed out that program participation i.e. floor activities, is "triple that of any of the other dorms."

When asked about the classification of the residents, Ms. Tebow responded that ... "at least 50% of the hall's residents are freshmen or transfer students."

Ms. Tebow also commented that there were virtually no problems concerning the residents obeying open house visitation policies.

The resident assistants emphasized that in comparison to other residence halls on campus, the relationship between residents and RA's in Woods seemed to be more satisfying for both the resident assistants and the students.

Overall, Ms. Tebow and the resident assistants felt that Woods Hall had the best atmosphere in regards to the students "getting along" of any residence halls on campus.

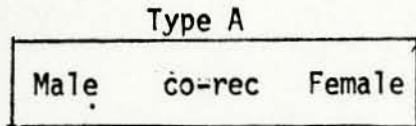
Ms. Tebow concluded that, "The most important factor in establishing a co-ed hall like Woods is having organization. If you have organization, then you have a great place for students to live, grow, and mature."

ASG and IHC ALTERNATIVE HOUSING POLL

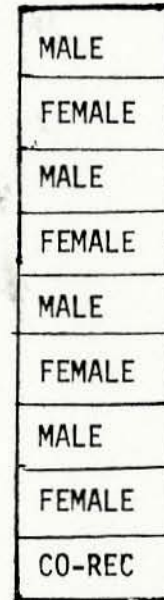
SEPTEMBER 28 and 29, 1982

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS



Type B



This poll was conducted to determine the interest shown in coeducational housing by Western Kentucky University's dormitory residents.

The poll consisted of three questions; the third question allowed students to comment on coeducational housing.

Students were shown two different floor plans for coeducational housing - Type A and B as shown above.

Residents were informed of the time needed to implement this plan, and that coeducational housing would be for upperclassmen and graduate students only.

Students were required to show a validated student identification card and dormitory representatives verified the student's vote by initialing

the ballot and voter's name on a computer printout. The ballots were numbered to make certain that there was no duplication or falsification of ballots.

RESPONSE TO COEDUCATIONAL HOUSING POLL

I. Would you be in favor of either type of housing shown?	FEMALE		MALE	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	476	123	640	49
	79.5%	20.5%	92.9%	7.1%
II. Would you be willing to live in Coeducational Housing?	457	132	629	60
	76.3%	23.7%	91.3%	8.7%
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS RESPONDING	YES		NO	
1288 on-campus students	1116		172	
	86.7%		13.3%	

THE FUTURE OF ON-CAMPUS HOUSING AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Many students have expressed a desire for coeducational housing. They have made known their desire through various polls and suggestions to their student representatives. As representatives of the students, we the members of the Associated Student Government and the Inter-Hall Council propose to you the following: the conversion of either Poland or Florence Schneider hall into a coeducational residence hall.

POLAND HALL

Poland Hall could easily be converted into a coeducational residence hall on the basis that it was originally a male residence hall until 1979 when it became a female residence hall. The restroom facilities are already equipped for both sexes, therefore conversion would be kept to a minimum. Poland Hall would offer two methods for housing residents.

There are eight floors with living quarters. The bottom four floors could be sectioned off for female residents, leaving the upper four floors for male residents. Another method would be to have one floor reserved for female residents, the next male, and so on. The ground floor contains the lobby and recreational areas.

FLORENCE-SCHNEIDER

Florence-Schneider would be better suited to a coeducational residence hall. It would offer the residents one of the nicer halls on campus; it's carpeted, spacious, and has a ballroom where a variety of functions could be held.

Florence-Schneider would have little if any conversion costs. There are two separate wings joined together by the ballroom. Each wing is equipped with suites - two separate living quarters joined together by a common bathroom. One wing would be designated for females, the other for males. Doors already exist to close off both wings from the ballroom; thus making one large hall in reality two small and separate halls.

There are other reasons for choosing Florence-Schneider. The ballroom could be used for dances, dinners, lectures, and other hall activities that the hall council could provide. As stated in the study from Murray, coeducational halls are often found to have increased participation in hall activities. An increase in resident hall participation in hall activities would possibly result in a higher retention rate for students. Students who might leave due to a lack of involvement or belonging might find in the hall activities those ingredients necessary to make their college experiences positive ones. Using Florence-Schneider as a location for coeducational housing would also eliminate the complaint from some male students that there are no resident halls with suite type living arrangements.

IMPLEMENTATION

If approved by the Western Kentucky University Board of Regents, we would make the following recommendations for implementation:

1. As proposed, the policy would go into effect in the fall of 1985. This would give the housing department sufficient time to make the necessary changes in the hall as well as in its housing applications. Additionally, it would allow students who do not wish to live in a coeducational hall time to accommodate themselves into another hall.
2. The coeducational hall chosen would follow the same open house hours as set forth by the Inter-Hall Council.
3. That the University start the coeducational program out by allowing only juniors, seniors, and graduates to stay in the coeducational hall. This would allow time for the university and the community to adjust to these changes. We also suggest that each year after implementation the classification requirements be lowered by one year until we meet the ideal stage of allowing any potential resident to reside in the coeducational hall.