

8-29-2016

27 Floors of Support: Effectively Advertising Campus Resources to College Students

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27 FLOORS OF SUPPORT:
EFFECTIVELY ADVERTISING CAMPUS RESOURCES TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Bachelor of Arts with
Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By:

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2016

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2016

ABSTRACT

College campuses provide a large variety of resources to college students to help ensure their well-being and success; however, students cannot utilize these resources if they do not know they exist. While there has been extensive research on the importance and efficacy of resources on college campuses, not as much research has been done on how to advertise these services to college students.

The goal of this project is to create and assess the efficacy of a campaign educating and encouraging students to seek out campus resources in times of need. This project focuses primarily on promoting resources to first-year female students that live within Pearce-Ford Tower at Western Kentucky University. Students were given an anonymous survey that asked about their knowledge and comfort levels utilizing various campus resources. From this data, a campaign entitled “27 Floors of Support” was created. Surveys were then redistributed, collected, and analyzed at the end of this campaign to assess its efficacy.

This research yields practical insights into how Student Affairs professionals might successfully promote an array of campus resources to students. Providing students with information about such resources is important both for retention and college students’ well being.

Keywords: advertising, design, student affairs, residence life, campus resources

Dedicated to my family, friends, coworkers,
and the ladies of Pearce-Ford Tower.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of many others. I am especially thankful for my CE/T committee – Dr. Alexander Olson, Daniel Rosner, and Dr. Victoria LaPoe – for their time, support, and guidance throughout this process.

I cannot thank Dr. Olson, my CE/T Advisor, enough for inspiring me, challenging me, and believing in me even when I doubted myself. This project would not have been possible without his guidance, and I would not have been nearly as academically successful at Western Kentucky University without his support.

I am also very appreciative of Daniel Rosner and Sarah Haught not only for their help with this project, but also for their continuous mentorship and support outside of the classroom as well. I am forever thankful for their assistance on my path to becoming a student affairs professional.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Western Kentucky University's Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Research for the financial support of my CE/T project through a Faculty Undergraduate Student Engagement (FUSE) Grant.

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Advertising

Minor Field: Sales

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

College campuses provide a large variety of resources to help ensure students' well-being and success. On Western Kentucky University's campus, for example, students who live on-campus have direct access to Resident Assistants, Desk Clerks, and Residence Hall Directors who are available to help with a wide variety of concerns. Western Kentucky University also offers a Counseling and Testing Center that is staffed with professional counselors who provide a range of psychological services. The Financial Aid Office and the Academic Advising and Retention Center are other resources available to help with financial and academic matters. Past research has shown that students who get connected to campus and utilize the available resources are more likely to retain and be successful in college.

While there has been extensive research on the importance and efficacy of these various resources on college campuses, not as much academic research has been done on how to advertise these types of services to college students. Without effective advertising, students may not be fully aware of or utilize the campus resources that are available.

The goal of this Capstone Experience/Thesis project is to create and assess the efficacy of a campaign encouraging students to become more informed and seek out campus resources in times of stress and need.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Residents of Pearce-Ford Tower (PFT), an all-female residence hall housing mostly first-year women at Western Kentucky University, were randomly asked to complete a survey in late October/early November of 2015. These surveys asked residents to rate their knowledge of various campus resources, how comfortable they felt utilizing those resources, and how desirable they felt living in Pearce-Ford Tower was. (Survey displayed in Figure 2.1 on page 4).

Surveys and informed consent letters were randomly placed into residents' mailboxes in Pearce-Ford Tower. Once completed, residents could turn them into a sealed box sitting on the edge of the Pearce-Ford Tower front desk. The surveys were voluntary, collected no demographical or identifying data, and were approved by Western Kentucky University's Institutional Review Board.

Residents who chose to participate in the study were asked to rate their knowledge of different campus resources and their comfort levels utilizing those resources on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being labeled as "little to no knowledge / uncomfortable" and 7 being labeled as "very knowledgeable / very comfortable". The campus resources included on the survey included the resources within Pearce-Ford Tower, the Financial Aid Office, the Counseling and Testing Center, and the Academic Advising and Retention Center on Western Kentucky University's campus. These

particular campus resources and offices were chosen to examine residents' knowledge about a wide range of resources that are geared towards allowing students to be successful academically, mentally, and financially while at Western Kentucky University.

Residents were also asked to rate how desirable they felt living in Pearce-Ford Tower was as a residence hall. A score of 1 was labeled as "undesirable" and a score of 7 was labeled as "very desirable".

The aim of these questions was to learn which resources residents lacked information about so that a campaign could be better targeted towards residents' needs, see if there were correlations between how knowledgeable students were about different campus resources, and discover whether or not there was a link between how knowledgeable a student is about the resources offered within their hall and how desirable they viewed living within that hall was.

From the data that was gathered in this survey, an advertising campaign was created to help promote campus resources to residential students at Western Kentucky University living within Pearce-Ford Tower. This advertising campaign ran from November of 2015 until March of 2016.

In March of 2016, a second anonymous survey was randomly distributed to Pearce-Ford Tower residents. This survey asked the same questions and was identical to the survey that was distributed in late October/early November of 2015. Residents who participated in this survey were asked to reevaluate their knowledge and comfort levels with various campus resources, as well as how desirable they now viewed living in Pearce-Ford Tower as. These responses were analyzed to gauge the effectiveness of the advertising campaign that ran from November of 2015 until March of 2016.

CHAPTER 3

WHO ARE THE LADIES OF PEARCE-FORD TOWER?

Pearce-Ford Tower is a 27-story all-female residence hall at Western Kentucky University that was built in 1970. It is known as the tallest residence hall in Kentucky. Features of Pearce-Ford Tower include 23 residential floors, two TV lounges, eight floor lounges, two study rooms, a game room, and a front desk that is staffed 24/7 (WKU Housing & Residence Life, n.d.). This residence hall is staffed by 23 undergraduate Resident Assistants, four undergraduate Community Advisors, four undergraduate Night Clerks, two full-time Residence Hall Directors, and one full-time Residence Hall Coordinator.

At the beginning of this project, 855 primarily first-year women lived within Pearce-Ford Tower. These women came from a multitude of cultural, socio-economic, and academic backgrounds. For example:

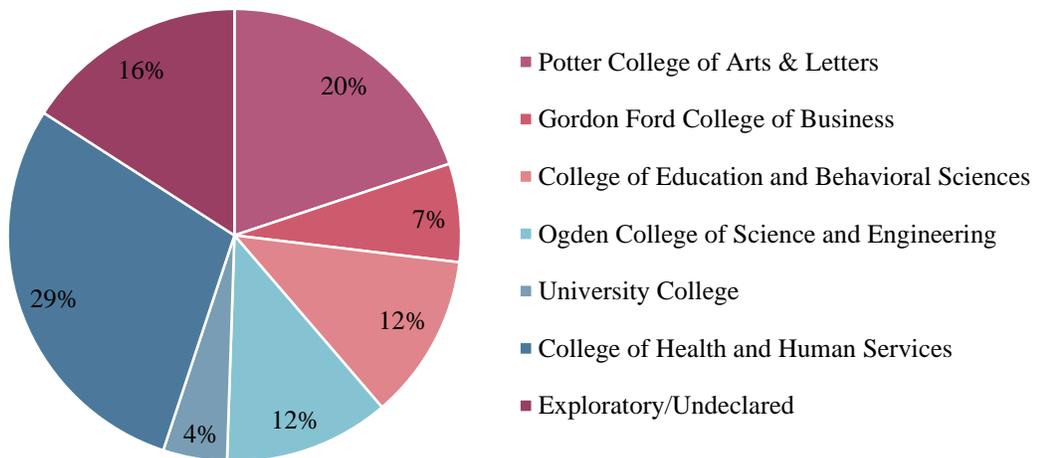
- 35%, or 301, of the students living within Pearce-Ford Tower are first-generation college students. Overall, first-generation students make up 37.3% of Western Kentucky University's student body (Western Kentucky University, 2015).
- The average ACT score for Pearce-Ford Tower residents was 21 points, which fell below the campus's average ACT score of 22.7 (Western Kentucky University, 2015).

- The average course load for a student living in Pearce-Ford Tower in the fall semester of 2015 was 14 credit hours.

These women also came to Western Kentucky University to study a wide range of subjects and majors. Western Kentucky University is divided into 6 academic colleges: the College of Health and Human Services, the Gordon Ford College of Business, the Ogden College of Science and Engineering, the Potter College of Arts and Letters, and University College.

Of the 855 residents living within Pearce-Ford Tower, 170 students had majors that fell within the Potter College of Arts and Letters, 60 students had majors within the Gordon Ford College of Business, 101 students belonged to the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, 248 students were members of the College of Health and Human Services, 101 students were part of the Ogden College of Science and Engineering, and 39 students were members of University College. Another 136 residents were classified as ‘Exploratory’ or ‘Undeclared’ (S. Haught, personal communication, August 24, 2015).

Figure 3.1 Breakdown of Academic Colleges Among Pearce-Ford Tower Residents



Pearce-Ford Tower is also the home of several Living-Learning Communities, or LLCs, that students can partake in. LLCs provide students with similar interests or majors to live, learn, and take classes together.

The largest LLC within Pearce-Ford Tower is A.C.E.S or the ‘Academic Community Engaging Students’. A.C.E.S. is a LLC that is partnered with the Academic Support Department and is designed to support incoming students who attend developmental courses at WKU’s South Campus. Its mission is to “enhance students’ successful matriculation into a global society by engaging in academic, residential, and social experiences” (WKU School of University Studies, n.d.)

Pearce-Ford Tower is also home to the PCAL (Potters College of Arts & Letters) and CHHS (College of Health and Human Services Students) Living-Learning Communities.

CHAPTER 4

HYPOTHESES

Before beginning the initial survey, three hypotheses were made. The first hypothesis was that residents would have high average knowledge and comfort levels with the resources offered in Pearce-Ford Tower by Housing and Residence Life staff members. Additionally, it was also believed that average knowledge of other resources would be lower and more moderate.

Secondly, it was hypothesized that students who were more knowledgeable about the resources offered in Pearce-Ford Tower would on average also be more knowledgeable about other campus resources such as the Counseling and Testing Center, the Financial Aid Office, and the Academic Advising and Retention Center.

The final hypothesis was that a residents' comfort level with various campus resources would be positively correlated to how knowledgeable they were about those campus resources.

CHAPTER 5

INITIAL SURVEY RESULTS

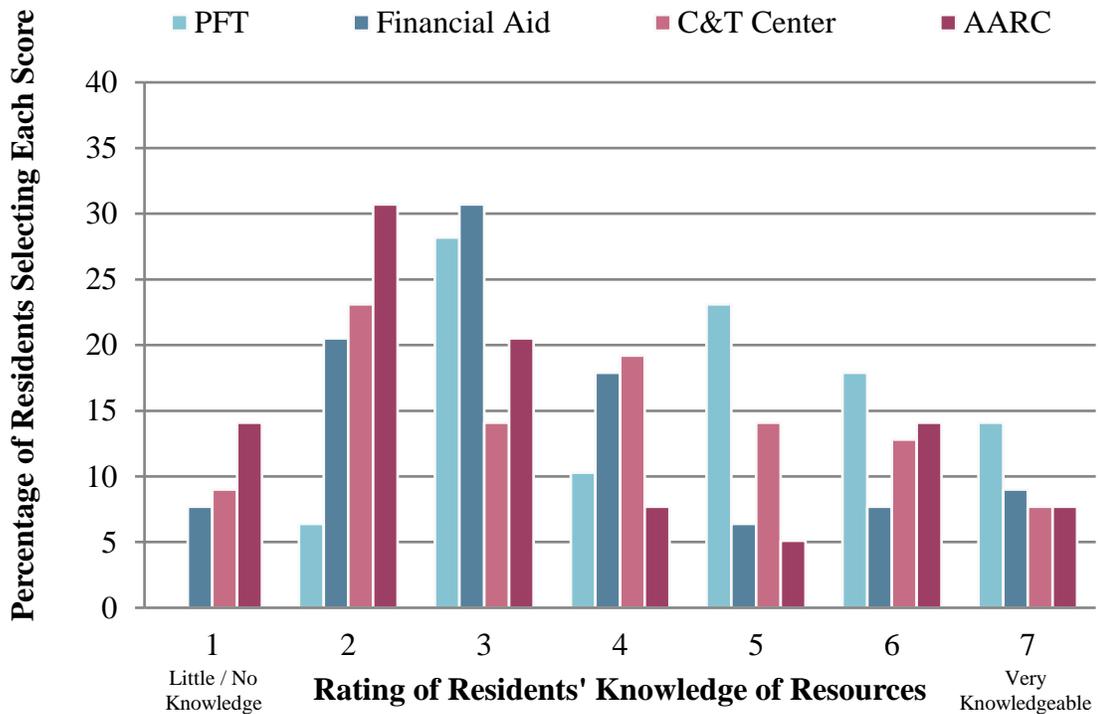
In late October / early November of 2015, residents of Pearce-Ford Tower were randomly given anonymous surveys. These surveys asked residents to rate their knowledge of various campus resources, how comfortable they felt utilizing those resources, and how desirable they viewed living in Pearce-Ford Tower was. Campus resources that were surveyed included Housing and Residence Life, Financial Aid, the Counseling & Testing Center (C&T), and the Academic Advising and Retention Center (AARC). Of the residents who were randomly asked to participate in the survey, 78 responded.

Residents' reported knowledge of campus resources greatly varied within Pearce-Ford Tower and the average scores were lower than expected. For example, 34.6% of residents rated their knowledge of resources within Pearce-Ford Tower to be between a score of 1 and 3, indicating that they had below moderate to 'little/no knowledge' of these resources. 10.3% of respondents rated their knowledge level at a 4 out of 7, indicating that they possessed moderate knowledge of these resources. Another 55.1% of respondents rated their knowledge level between a score of 5 and 7, indicating that they had an above moderate to a "very knowledgeable" understanding of the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower.

Figure 5.1 Distribution of Residents' Reported Knowledge by Resource (Late October/Early November of 2015)

Rating	Resources			
	PFT	Financial Aid	C&T Center	AARC
1	0 (0.0%)	6 (7.7%)	7 (9.0%)	11 (14.1%)
2	5 (6.4%)	16 (20.5%)	18 (23.1%)	24 (30.7%)
3	22 (28.2%)	24 (30.7%)	11 (14.1%)	16 (20.5%)
4	8 (10.3%)	14 (17.9%)	15 (19.2%)	6 (7.7%)
5	18 (23.1%)	5 (6.4%)	11 (14.1%)	4 (5.1%)
6	14 (17.9%)	6 (7.7%)	10 (12.8%)	11 (14.1%)
7	11 (14.1%)	7 (9.0%)	6 (7.7%)	6 (7.7%)

Figure 5.2 Distribution of Scores in 2015 (Percentages)

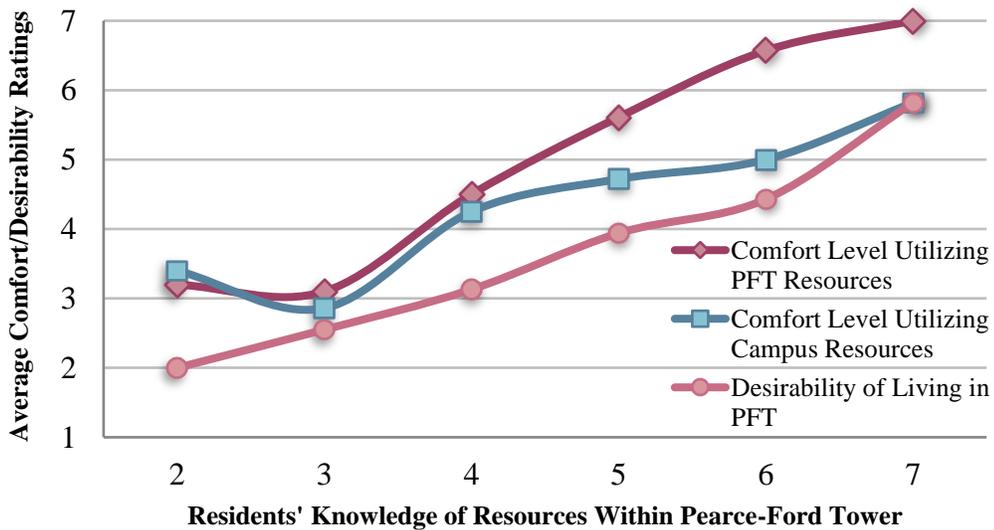


Overall, the average rating of knowledge about resources within Pearce-Ford Tower was a score of 4.60 on a scale of 7 points. The average knowledge level of Financial Aid resources was a 3.54, the average knowledge level of Counseling and Testing Center resources was a 3.76, and the average knowledge of resources provided by the Academic Advising and Retention Center was a 3.32.

One of the most notable trends within the data was the relationship between a resident’s knowledge of resources within Pearce-Ford Tower, their comfort level utilizing various campus resources, and how desirable they felt living in Pearce-Ford Tower was.

How residents rated their knowledge of the resources within Pearce-Ford Tower correlated strongly with how comfortable they felt using those resources ($r=0.809$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$) and moderately with how comfortable they felt utilizing other campus resources outside of Pearce-Ford Tower ($r=0.612$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$). Knowledge of resources within Pearce-Ford Tower also had a moderate correlation with how desirable the resident rated living in Pearce-Ford was ($r=0.615$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$).

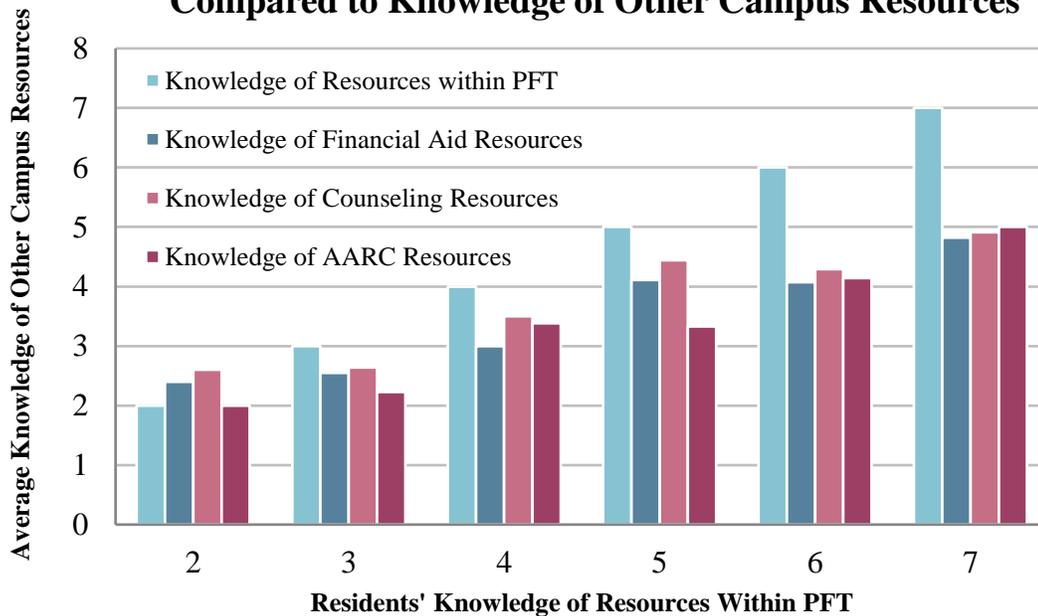
Figure 5.3 Comfort Level Utilizing Resources & Desirability of Hall Compared to Knowledge of Resources Within PFT



The average comfort level rating in regards to utilizing resources within Pearce-Ford Tower was a score of 5.0 on a scale of 7 points. The average comfort level rating in regards to utilizing other campus resources was a 4.27, and the average desirability rating of living in Pearce-Ford Tower was a 3.69.

Residents' knowledge of resources within Pearce-Ford Tower also had moderate correlations with how knowledgeable students were about other campus resources. For example, knowledge about the Financial Aid Office correlated positively with residents' knowledge about resources within Pearce-Ford Tower ($r=0.515$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$). Knowledge regarding the Academic Advising and Retention Center ($r=0.525$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$) and the Counseling and Testing Center ($r=0.457$, $N=78$, $p<0.05$) also correlated with the students' knowledge of Pearce-Ford Tower resources.

Figure 5.4 Average Knowledge of PFT Resources Compared to Knowledge of Other Campus Resources



CHAPTER 6

UTILIZING DATA AND THEORY TO GUIDE THE DESIGN PROCESS

Data gathered from the initial survey was used to guide the design process for this advertising campaign. These results were analyzed and taken into consideration when setting the campaign's goals, deciding on what forms of media to use, and creating the designs and copywriting for the advertising campaign.

Hypotheses:

Due to the initial survey results, it was hypothesized that successfully promoting the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower would indirectly increase residents' knowledge and comfort levels with other campus resources.

It was also hypothesized that an advertising campaign of this nature would have a small but noticeable effect on how knowledgeable and comfortable students felt about campus resources, and that scores in the second survey would see small increases.

Goals of the Campaign:

The three main goals that were set for this campaign were to increase residents' knowledge about the resources offered in Pearce-Ford Tower by residence life staff members, to encourage an environment where students felt more comfortable seeking out

help and support in times of need, and to make Pearce-Ford Tower a more desirable residence hall for students to live in.

Residents' reported knowledge about campus resources varied greatly in Pearce-Ford Tower, and all areas of reported average knowledge showed room for growth. Specifically, results from the first survey showed that only 65% of Pearce-Ford Tower residents had at least a moderate understanding of the resources offered by Pearce-Ford Tower staff members.

Data also indicated that a resident's knowledge of those resources highly correlated to how comfortable the student felt in seeking out those resources and how desirable they viewed Pearce-Ford Tower as a residence hall. A student's knowledge of those resources also positively correlated to how knowledgeable a student was about other campus resources offered at Western Kentucky University.

For those reasons, it was decided that the advertising campaign would be primarily targeted towards increasing students' comfort and knowledge levels about the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower. It was hypothesized that successfully promoting the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower would indirectly increase residents' knowledge and comfort levels with other campus resources.

Deciding on Forms of Media:

Several different forms of media were considered when creating this campaign such as social media, listserv emails, and direct mailings. Ultimately, posters were chosen as the main method of promotion for a variety of reasons including their ability to reach a large audience, their cost, and longevity that they provide.

Through the use of posters, this campaign was able to reach a broad audience in Pearce-Ford Tower. In total, 32 posters were placed on every residential floor in high traffic areas near the elevators as well as in every floor study lounge. This allowed the campaign to easily reach most of Pearce-Ford Tower's 855 residents and their guests.

A poster campaign was also inexpensive to run. The 35 posters that were printed for the campaign cost a total of \$36.20. For this price, the campaign was able to reach the majority of Pearce-Ford Tower's 855 residents for an approximate time span of 5 months.

Writing the Copy:

The copy written for the poster was targeted specifically towards Pearce-Ford Tower residents and was designed to educate students about the resources offered by Pearce-Ford Tower staff members while also fostering an environment where residents feel comfortable seeking out support in times of need.

“27 Floors of Support” was chosen as the campaign's slogan. This slogan was meant to be a play on one of the building's most prominent features, as Pearce-Ford Tower is known for being the tallest residence hall in Kentucky with 27 floors. This slogan was also created to foster an environment where the residents of Pearce-Ford Tower can feel comfortable seeking out the help and support they need on campus.

The remaining copy on the poster is geared towards educating residents' about the resources and staff members available to help them within Pearce-Ford Tower. The initial survey completed in late October/early November of 2015 indicated that only 65% of Pearce-Ford Tower residents had at least moderate knowledge of those resources. Furthermore, only 14% of residents claimed to be “very knowledgeable” about what staff

members provided within Pearce-Ford Tower. The following brief, general descriptions about each Pearce-Ford Tower staff member's (Resident Assistants, Community Advisors, Desk Clerks, and Hall Directors) role were created.

- Resident Assistants: Resident Assistants (RAs) are located on each floor. They are trained to be community builders, conflict managers, crisis responders, resource referrers, and more. You can go to them for almost anything! They can help you solve disputes with your roommate, provide emotional support during stressful times, and connect you with important resources like financial aid and counseling. If an RA isn't able to help you with something, they almost always know someone who can.
- Community Advisors: Community Advisors (CAs) are experienced student staff members that oversee their respective 'houses' within PFT. Their primary role includes mentoring, supervising, training, and serving as a resource for the RAs; however, your CA can also serve as a valuable resource to you as well! CAs are available to assist and support you in all of the same ways that your RA can. They can help you through roommate conflicts, stressful situations, and emotional crises. They are also there to provide referrals and a listening ear whenever needed.
- Desk Clerks: Desk Clerks and Night Clerks are available 24/7 at the PFT front desk, making them a constant resource that you can access at any time. They can help answer any questions that you may have, make referrals and help you get in contact with other resources and departments, address maintenance concerns, and more! They can also provide advice and support, call an on-call RA or CA to assist you, or forward any messages to a Hall Director.

- Hall Directors: Hall Directors are residence life professionals who live in PFT and are passionate about your success. While they tend to focus on the more administrative aspects of the hall, they are still an excellent resource for you to reach out to! They are very knowledgeable about the resources available at WKU and can answer any of your questions. They are also available to help you through difficult or serious situations that you may not feel as comfortable approaching an RA with. You can email the Hall Directors or visit them on the 2nd floor during their office hours.

Creating the Designs:

The design of the poster was also created to be unique and recognizable for Pearce-Ford Tower. No faces or pictures of people could be used, so a photograph of the building itself was taken and utilized in the design instead.

Figure 6.1 Photograph of PFT Taken for Campaign Posters



Pink, blue, and black were chosen as the main color scheme for the campaign. The color pink is associated with sincerity, nurturing, support, and warmth. Blue is soothing and typically creates feelings of calmness and relaxation. The color black is viewed as sophisticated and professional (Clarke & Costall, 2007). Being able to invoke these emotions was an important aspect of fostering an environment that encouraged residents to reach out and seek help from campus resources.

Figure 6.2 Photograph of PFT with Color Palette Applied



Finished Design:

Figure 6.3 “27 Floors of Support” Poster (Full)



27 Floors Of Support

College can be tough. Pearce Ford Tower is here to help.

Resident Assistants

Resident Assistants (RAs) are located on each floor. They are trained to be community builders, conflict managers, crisis responders, resource referrers, and more. You can go to them for almost anything! They can help you solve disputes with your roommate, provide emotional support during stressful times, and connect you with important resources like financial aid and counseling. If an RA isn't able to help you with something, they almost always know someone who can.

Desk Clerks

Desk Clerks and Night Clerks are available 24/7 at the PFT front desk, making them a constant resource that you can access at any time. They can help answer any questions that you may have, make referrals and help you get in contact with other resources and departments, address maintenance concerns, and more! They can also provide advice and support, call an on-call RA or CA to assist you, or forward any messages to a Hall Director.

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Hall Directors

Hall Directors are residence life professionals who live in PFT and are passionate about your success. While they tend to focus on the more administrative aspects of the hall, they are still an excellent resource for you to reach out to! They are very knowledgeable about the resources available at WKU and can answer any of your questions. They are also available to help you through difficult or serious situations that you may not feel as comfortable approaching an RA with. You can email the Hall Directors or visit them on the 2nd floor during their office hours.

Figure 6.4 “27 Floors of Support” Printed Poster (Close Up)



Figure 6.5 Displayed “27 Floors of Support” Printed Poster



CHAPTER 7

ASSESSING THE EFFICACY OF THE CAMPAIGN

In March of 2016, a second anonymous survey was randomly distributed to Pearce-Ford Tower residents. This survey was identical and asked the same questions as the survey that was distributed in late October/early November of 2015. Residents who chose to participate in this survey rated their knowledge of campus resources, how comfortable they felt utilizing those resources, and how desirable they felt living in Pearce-Ford Tower was on a scale of 1 to 7. Campus resources that were assessed included the staff of Pearce-Ford Tower, the Financial Aid Office, the Counseling and Testing Center, and the Academic Advising and Retention Center. Of the residents who were randomly asked to participate in this survey, 61 responded.

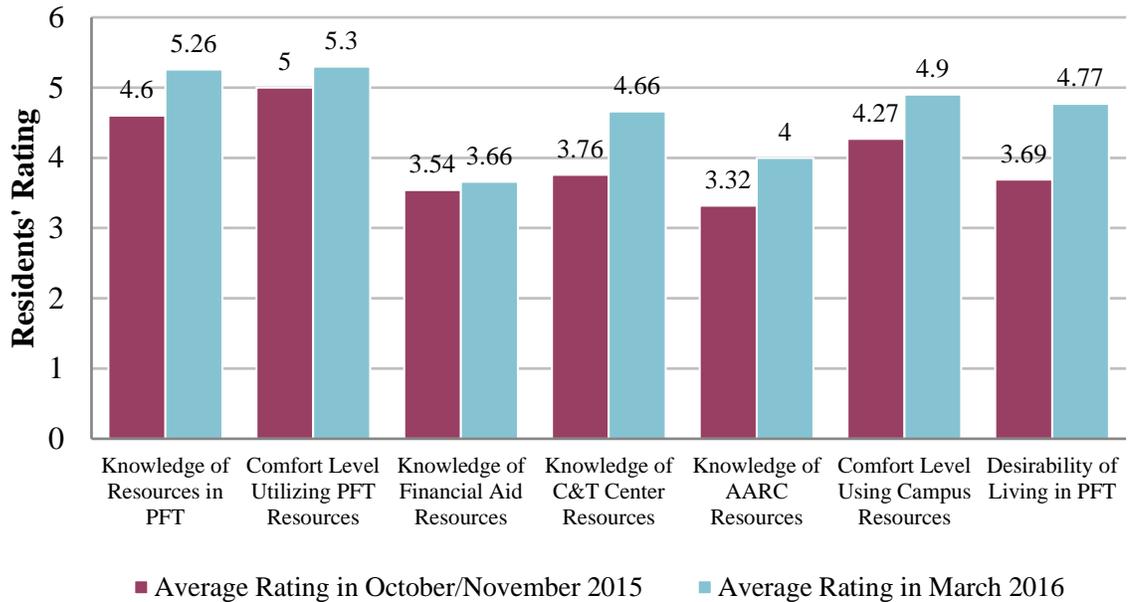
Overall, the residents' average ratings increased across the board. The largest increase occurred in Pearce-Ford Tower's desirability rating, which saw a 1.08-point increase from an average rating of 3.69 to an average rating of 4.77.

The knowledge residents' possessed about the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower and their comfort leveling using those campus resources also saw increases, albeit smaller. For example, knowledge about the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower increased by 0.66 points from an average rating of 4.60 to an average rating of 5.26. Comfort levels utilizing the resources within Pearce-Ford Tower also saw a 0.30-

point increase from an average rating of 5.0 to an average rating of 5.30, and comfort levels using campus resources gained a 0.63-point increase from an average rating of 4.27 to an average rating of 4.90 points.

Knowledge of campus resources also rose. Residents' knowledge of the Counseling and Testing Center experienced the largest increase of 0.90 points from an average rating of 3.76 to an average rating of 4.66. Knowledge of the Academic Advising and Retention Center increased by 0.68 points from a 3.32-point average to a 4.00-point average. Residents' knowledge of the Financial Aid Office, however, barely saw a noticeable increase of 0.12 points from an average rating of 3.54 points to an average rating of 3.66 points.

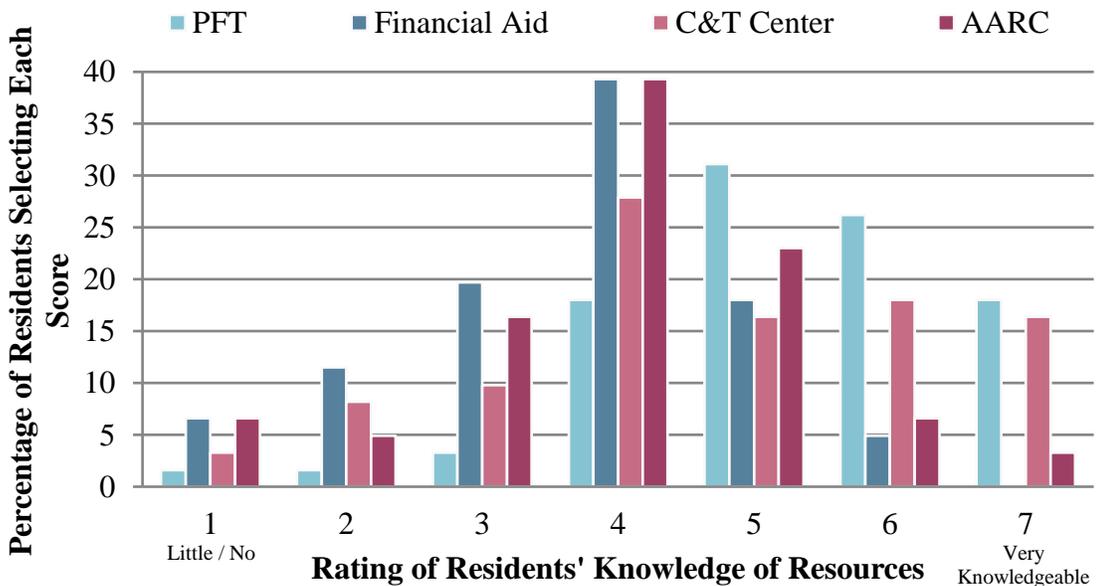
Figure 7.1 Average Ratings in October/November of 2015 Compared to March of 2016



The change in the distribution of scores was even more apparent than the increase in average ratings. For example, during the first survey taken in late October/early November of 2015, approximately 65.4% of residents said they had moderate to high knowledge (a rating between 4 and 7) of the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower. By March of 2016, 93.3% of residents rated that they had moderate to high knowledge of these resources, an increase of 27.9 percentage points.

The number of students that reported a moderate to high understanding of Financial Aid also increased by 21.2 percentage points from 41.0% in late October/early November to 62.2% in March of 2016. The amount of residents with moderate to high knowledge of the Counseling and Testing Center increased by 24.9 percentage points from 53.8% to 78.7% of Pearce-Ford Tower residents, and the number of residents who reported a moderate to high knowledge of the Academic Advising and Retention Center increased by 37.6 percentage points from 34.6% to 72.2% of residents.

Figure 7.2 Distribution of Scores in 2016 (Percentages)



**Figure 7.3 Distribution of Residents’
Reported Knowledge by Resource (March of 2016)**

	Resources			
Rating	PFT	Financial Aid	C&T Center	AARC
1	1 (1.6%)	4 (6.6%)	2 (3.3%)	4 (6.6%)
2	1 (1.6%)	7 (11.5%)	5 (8.2%)	3 (4.9%)
3	2 (3.3%)	12 (19.7%)	6 (9.8%)	10 (16.4%)
4	11 (18.0%)	24 (39.3%)	17 (27.9%)	24 (39.3%)
5	19 (31.1%)	11 (18.0%)	10 (16.4%)	14 (23.0%)
6	16 (26.2%)	3 (4.9%)	11 (18.0%)	4 (6.6%)
7	11 (18.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (16.4%)	2 (3.3%)

The distribution of ratings in regards to residents’ comfort levels utilizing various campus resources also experienced a positive shift. In late October/early November of 2015, approximately 70.5% of residents reported that they felt moderately to very comfortable (a rating of 4 to 7) using the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower. In March of 2016, 90.2% of residents reported that they felt moderately to very comfortable using those same resources, a 19.7 percentage point increase. The amount of residents that felt moderately to very comfortable utilizing other campus resources increased by 22.8 percentage points from 64.1% to 86.9% of Pearce-Ford Tower residents.

Similarly, approximately 55.1% of residents rated Pearce-Ford Tower as a moderately to highly desirable residence hall in late October/early November of 2015. There was a 31.8 percentage point increase by March of 2016, when 86.9% of residents rated Pearce-Ford Tower as a moderately to highly desirable residence hall to live in.

Figure 7.4 Distribution of Scores by Year (Percentages)

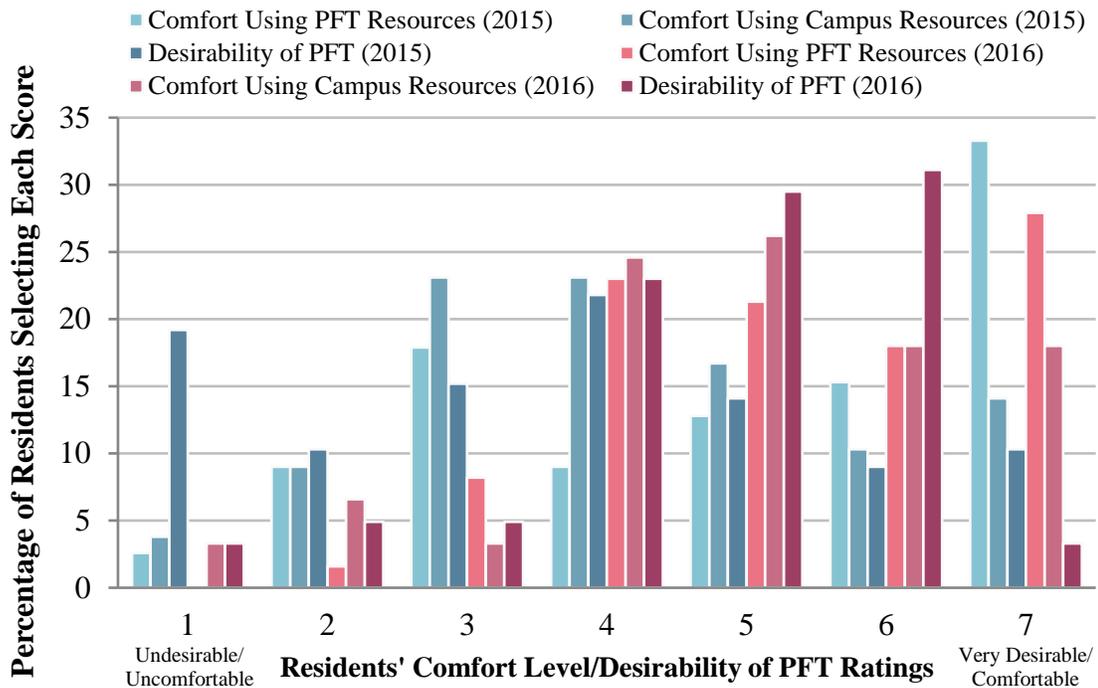


Figure 7.5 Distribution of Residents' Comfort Levels & Desirability Ratings by Year

Rating	Comfort PFT		Comfort Campus		Desirability PFT	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
1	2 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (3.3%)	15	2 (3.3%)
2	7 (9.0 %)	1 (1.6%)	7 (9.0%)	4 (6.6%)	8 (10.3%)	3 (4.9%)
3	14	5 (8.2%)	18	2 (3.3%)	12 (15.2)	3 (4.9%)
4	7 (9.0%)	14	18	15	17	14
5	10	13	13	16	11	18
6	12	11	8 (10.3%)	11	7 (9.0%)	19
7	26	17	11	11	8 (10.3%)	2 (3.3%)

CHAPTER 8

LIMITATIONS / CONCLUSIONS

The goals of the “27 Floors of Support” advertising campaign were to create an environment where Pearce-Ford Tower residents felt comfortable seeking out support and to increase the knowledge that residents possessed about various campus resources at Western Kentucky University. The numerical data that was assessed in Chapters 4 and 7 indicate that these goals were ultimately accomplished. Surveys showed that Pearce-Ford Tower residents’ average knowledge and comfort levels in regards to utilizing campus resources increased across the board.

While the data points to the campaign’s success, this was a preliminary study with several limitations. One such limitation was the lack of an available control group. Pearce-Ford Tower has the largest and one of the most general populations of first-year women on Western Kentucky University’s campus while other residence halls tend to target different demographics. For example, Bemis Lawrence hall has a much higher population of international students and student athletes than Pearce-Ford Tower does. Rodes Harlin hall has a higher percentage of upperclassmen students, and Gilbert hall is home to many first-year students within the Honors College. Other halls, such as Hugh Poland hall, are home to male students. As every hall’s demographic is different on campus, no control group was held.

Additionally, many factors come into play when promoting and encouraging the use of campus resources. Thus, it is impossible to measure how much of an impact this passive campaign had in comparison and conjunction with other efforts across campus.

For example, residents' knowledge about the Counseling and Testing Center experienced a large amount of growth between late October/early November of 2015 and March of 2016. Part of this may be attributed to the campaign's promotion of an environment where residents could feel comfortable seeking out support. The campaign may have also encouraged students to reach out to the resources offered within Pearce-Ford Tower, where staff members then referred those students to the Counseling and Testing Center on campus. Other outside factors may have played a role as well, though. For instance, other departments could have referred or taught the student more about the resources that the Counseling and Testing Center offers. Furthermore, Pearce-Ford Tower experienced the death of a student on November 15, 2015. In response Counseling and Testing Center staff members came to Pearce-Ford Tower to assist grieving residents, and their services were promoted throughout campus during this time.

Similarly, while knowledge of the Academic Advising and Retention Center may have increased in part because of the "27 Floors of Support" campaign, other factors may have had an influence as well. For example, the Academic Advising and Retention Center offers several resources and programs that academically at risk students are required to participate in such as the Best Expectation Programs (BEP). BEP targets students on academic probation to provide support, set academic goals, and teach study habits and time management skills. BEP's mission is to "help retain at risk students so they may be academically successful and graduate from WKU" (WKU Best Expectation

Programs, n.d.). The Academic Advising and Retention Center also oversees the 5th Week Assessment program each semester for students enrolled in 100-level and 200-level courses. AARC staff members, course instructors, residence hall staff members, and/or academic advisors follow up with students who have negative marks for attendance or grades in one or more of their classes (WKU Academic Advising & Retention Center, n.d.). Residents of Pearce-Ford Tower may have become more educated about the Academic Advising and Retention Center's resources through some of these programs.

Furthermore, Resident Assistants are required to plan and host a number of programs each semester for their respective residence hall communities. These events are usually social or educational in nature and have learning outcomes of community living, academic success, identity development, and multicultural competence. The programming efforts of the Resident Assistants may have contributed to their residents' learning about campus resources and their perceived desirability of Pearce-Ford Tower as a residence hall.

In summary, there are many factors that come together to impact students' knowledge about campus resources and how comfortable they feel utilizing those resources. This study was unable to measure and analyze the effects of those different influences individually. The data does show, however, that the campaign's goals were successfully accomplished and that residents' knowledge and comfort levels in regards to campus resources increased.

CHAPTER 9

FUTURE RESEARCH / ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Due to the limitations of this project, several opportunities for future research and additional questions remain. Examples include using more qualitative surveys in future assessments, using eye-tracking technology to gauge the effectiveness of different advertisements, creating a larger campaign, and targeting different demographics.

Using More Qualitative Surveys:

To encourage a higher participation rate, the survey that was used in this project contained mostly quantitative questions. Future research and assessment could involve asking students more qualitative and open-ended questions to gain direct insight on things such as where students learned about campus resources, how helpful they viewed the campaign, what types of support they need on campus, and more.

Utilizing Eye-Tracking Technology:

How effective are the campaign designs? What information and images do students focus on?

Future campaigns could be analyzed and tested with eye-tracking technology. Eye tracking involves measuring where the eyes focus and how they move on an

advertisement or piece of artwork. This information can provide valuable insight on how to create effective campaign pieces.

Creating and Assessing a Larger Campaign:

How would a larger advertising campaign for campus resources impact students' knowledge and comfort levels with those resources? Which forms of media would be the most effective?

Future research in this area could involve creating a larger, more expansive campaign. This particular project was dedicated to analyzing and assessing the effect of one poster design hung throughout a single residence hall. A future campaign could involve social media, events, banners, direct mailers, different poster designs, and more. Additional assessment could be done to gauge the impact of a larger campaign, as well as analyze which forms of media were most successful.

Choosing a Different Target Demographic:

How do we promote campus resources to other student demographics?

This campaign and Capstone Experience / Thesis project was limited to the primarily first-year female students at Western Kentucky University who live on-campus in Pearce-Ford Tower. Future research could involve analyzing how to promote campus resources to other student demographics such as commuter students, upperclassmen students, minority students, international students, male students, and/or student athletes. A broader, more campus-wide campaign and study could also be conducted at either

Western Kentucky University or on another college's campus to provide further and more expansive insight.

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