

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

RESIDENTIAL LIFE / 2024

Department's Relationship to the College Mission and Strategic Plan *(completed Spring semester or on accreditation cycle)*

In a paragraph or two, discuss how the department's work carries out the Mission and Strategic Plan.

Mission Statement

The Office of Residential Life supports the mission, vision, and values of Jefferson College by providing an accessible and quality living-learning environment to meet the diverse needs of students. We strive to create a community that supports and values intellectual, social, and personal growth.

Goals

- Provide a community that is safe and secure.
 - Commitment to facilities management, emergency preparedness, and collaborative relationship with the Jefferson College Police Department.
- Provide a community that is conducive to learning.
 - Commitment to administrative policies and procedures that promote critical thinking, interpersonal communication skills, values development, and appreciation for diverse perspectives.
- Provide a community that is comfortable and enjoyable.
 - Commitment to providing residential facilities and programs with current trends and amenities to foster student retention.
 - Commitment to a student-development based approach to community building.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The Office of Residential Life supports the Strategic Plan through our commitment and support of the College's following Strategic Priorities: Student Success, Operational Excellence, and Community Engagement. Staff members provide leadership and service that directly relate to Goals in each of these Strategic Priorities.

Summary of Departmental Activities, Assessment and Use of Results

(completed Spring semester or on accreditation cycle)

(may include process flowchart)

Provide a brief overview of major accomplishments since the last review and how assessment results have been used to improve services/learning outcomes.

Viking Woods, which opened in 2001, houses four residential buildings and our office/clubhouse. The residential buildings include Hickory Hall (808), Maple Hall (804), and Sycamore Hall (802) as well as the new 800 building (built in 2024). The Jefferson College Police Department is also housed within Viking Woods in the 800 building. This creates a safe space for our residents knowing that police officers are close by in case of any emergencies.

The Residential Life department has experienced significant growth and change in recent years. The department now boasts a dedicated team of three full-time employees: Residential Life Manager (RLM), Residential Life Coordinator (RLC), and an Administrative Specialist. The current RLM, Keri Schmidt, stepped into the role of Interim RLM in June 2020 and transitioned to the RLM position in 2021. Julie Creath began serving as the RLC in November 2022. Angi Bassin has served as the Administrative Specialist since 2021. This position initially was split between Residential Life and Athletics. With the upcoming addition of the new building as well as the addition of new sport teams, Angi transitioned to a full-time role in Residential Life in July 2023, and a full-time Administrative Specialist was hired for Athletics. Additionally, one full-time Maintenance Technician is assigned to Viking Woods who reports to the Director of Facilities Management.

In September of 2024, we welcomed a new residential building. What led to this expansion was the need for more student spaces and a dedicated space for our Police Department. The cost of the new building was \$4.9 million and was funded by the College's Bond funds. The building was fully completed in November of 2024. The addition created 10 additional student spaces, two staff apartments, and a new Police Department. The new building also includes three ADA-compliant student spaces, ensuring that Viking Woods remains fully accessible. As part of our expansion, we are renovating the old staff apartments and Police Department into additional student housing.

Our partnerships with local churches have been invaluable in enhancing student life. We have built a strong relationship with Gracelife Chapel, which supported us during the 2023-2024 academic year by providing food from the St. Louis Area Foodbank. On food drop days, they also treated our students and employees to lunch and special treats. Additionally, Hillsboro Christian Church has been a wonderful partner, bringing monthly snacks and treats to share with our students. These community collaborations have made a meaningful impact on our residents, creating a supportive and engaging environment at Viking Woods.

The following table provides an overview of assessed needs in Viking Woods since 2020 and the steps taken to address them.

Assessed Need	Outcome
Enhanced Apartment inspection process	Implemented bi-weekly Health and Safety Inspections for each unit to improve overall upkeep of facilities: cleanliness, fire safety equipment, etc.
Compliance need for more ADA units	Built a new building with 3 ADA student units.
Additional storage in Viking Woods	Basement and storage added to the new building because of the lack of space for equipment, furniture, and other work order related needs.
Maintenance work order tracking system needed an update	Added work order system to THD for easy access for students and staff to put in what is needed and for staff to see what needs to be done for tracking purposes.
Emergency Evacuation maps in student apartments outdated	Updated maps and evacuation routes were put into each apartment.
Lack of students remembering RA phone number and JCPD phone number	Installed informational sheets with contact information on the back of all apartment entry doors.
Painting needs in offices	Coordinated with Buildings and Grounds to paint in spring of 2024.
Improved process for student billing accounts	Revised payment policies to ensure that students pay in full, have sufficient financial aid, or are enrolled in a payment plan before move-in.
Enhanced Residential Assistant (RA) training	Established a comprehensive RA training schedule that can be adapted as needs arise.
Organization of athletic spots and who will receive them	Created a Google document to share with the coaches for monitoring the application progress of their student-athletes.
Increased response rates for end-of-year resident surveys	Revised request dates from after move-out to May 1 to increase completion rates and offered incentives for early completion.
HVAC systems continuously going out	Replace all old units by the completion of the spring 2025 semester.
Moisture issues in bottom of the 804 building	SMCI put in dehumidifiers in the 4 lower units to help with moisture.
Additional student housing	Added new building in 2024; renovated the old Mercy Clinic space back to a usable 2 bedroom ADA compliant apartment and plans to renovate the old staff and PD apartments for additional housing.
Additional outside seating needed	5 picnic tables were placed between the 804 and 802 buildings.
Additional RA support	Scheduled bi-weekly meetings between RAs and RLC to touch base on workloads, needs, and overall well-being.

Internal and External Data Collection and Analysis

(completed by Fall semester or on accreditation cycle)

Gather and analyze relevant internal and external data (link to data).

Number of Residents

The number of residents and bed spaces at Viking Woods has varied between 2019 and 2024 due to several factors. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we offered rooms with bunk beds, which provided a more affordable option for some residents but also led to some roommate challenges due to the smaller shared space. In response to the pandemic, we converted these double rooms into single-occupancy spaces to ensure greater safety and comfort.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, our resident numbers were lower as we needed to reserve certain units as quarantine spaces in case of illness or relocation. We conducted extensive cleaning during the pandemic and worked diligently to ensure that no COVID-19 outbreaks occurred in Viking Woods.

Since 2021, our waitlist has consistently ranged up to 45 students, though this number fluctuates as some students either drop their spaces or are assigned housing due to other factors. Ultimately, the waitlist tends to settle at its highest point around 12 students once we begin moving residents in for the fall semester. This ongoing demand shows the popularity and desire for housing at Viking Woods.

Fiscal Year	# of Bed Spaces	# of Residents	Waitlist Students
2020	212	205	Data not available
2021	186	167	N/A (COVID)
2022	202	190	10
2023	202	202	8
2024	202	195	12

Meal Plan Implementation

The meal plan through Great Western Dining was implemented in the fall 2023 semester and is mandatory for all residents of Viking Woods. It consists of 14 meals a week. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served Monday through Thursday, and breakfast and lunch are served on Friday. There is also a \$50 amount to spend on the grill side which consists of different hot foods that can be ordered a la carte. The cost of the meal plan for fall 2023 was \$1,283 and for fall 2024, we reduced the cost down since we had a better understanding of cost per student to \$1,250. Since implementing the meal plan, there has been mixed reviews from students. Here are some comments from our end-of-year survey.

After the first year, students have provided the following feedback:

- “Dining hall was very hit or miss.”
- “We have kitchens, but unfortunately we pay a lot for the meal plan and don't use it often.”
- “It would be nice to choose if you want to eat at the dining hall and not forced into a meal plan.”
- “It's nice having food; I don't have to cook every day.”

- “The food definitely was better second semester vs the first.”
- 13 of 52 students said that food is a challenge of living at Viking Woods.

Based on these responses, we worked closely with Great Western Dining to share feedback and to increase the variety and quality of food offerings. The Dining Manager also works collaboratively with any students who have dietary restrictions to meet their individual needs.

Student Activities

To keep students engaged and foster a sense of community, we love hosting monthly events at Viking Woods. We kick off the year with a fun-filled Welcome Week featuring food, soft drinks, and exciting treats like snow cones. Throughout the year, we offer a variety of enjoyable activities such as paint nights, Halloween movie nights, tie-dye sessions, Easter egg hunts, cookie decorating, karaoke, bonfires with s'mores, and more. We've even had Kona Ice events for an extra refreshing treat.

Our smaller events typically attract 15 to 20 students, while our larger gatherings, like the Fall Bash and Kona Ice events, draw around 100 students. In fact, 41 out of 76 residents who responded to our end-of-year survey shared that they participated in at least one of these events during their time at Viking Woods.

Move Out Inspections/Charges

The refundable deposit amount has stayed the same at \$250. Residents are offered the opportunity to do a walk-through appointment that allows residents to be a part of the inspection process. We believe this component has contributed to a decline in move out-related charges.

Fiscal Year	# of Residents Charged	Total Charges	Avg per resident charge	Refundable deposit amount	# of Residents charged beyond deposit amount
2020	188	\$8,109.25	\$30.83	\$250	1
2021	139	\$8,918.73	\$45.27	\$250	1
2022	122	\$4,834.57	\$34.53	\$250	0
2023	144	\$6,026.03	\$38.63	\$250	1
2024	121	\$4,007.17	\$28.22	\$250	0

Work Orders – Viking Woods

The number of work orders received at Viking Woods is a great indicator of the high demand and activity on our campus, keeping our maintenance technician consistently engaged and productive. Work orders vary from simple tasks like plunging toilets, fixing clogged shower drains, changing light bulbs, and door handles, to more complex projects like drywall repair, mold remediation, toilet replacements, plumbing, electrical work, appliance repairs, and more. Buildings and Grounds typically handle about 100 work orders per term, spread among eight technicians. Viking Woods, however, averages 158 work orders per term, not counting the additional volume during May move-outs and the busy summer apartment flipping season.

Adding a second maintenance technician would greatly enhance our ability to respond to work orders more efficiently, improve the scheduling of preventative maintenance, and give us the capacity to focus on much-needed renovations, upgrades, and improvements for our 23-year-old facilities. We are actively collaborating with the Buildings and Grounds/Facilities department to develop a solid plan for ongoing building upgrades and maintenance. We are also working on creating a deferred maintenance plan to

ensure that all repairs and needs are systematically addressed. The following table identifies the number of work orders submitted by residents each of the past five years.

Calendar Year	Total # of Work Orders Submitted
2020	327
2021	313
2022	325
2023	319
2024	299

Student Resident Survey Feedback

With our annual end-of-year survey, the biggest challenge students say they face at Viking Woods is the cost. An average of 25% of respondents noted that it is the most challenging aspect of living in Viking Woods.

A total of 73 of 76 residents who answered our surveys indicated they would recommend staying in Viking Woods if attending Jefferson College. According to residents, they would recommend living in Viking Woods to new students. Here are some reasons from students:

- “I would recommend living on campus because they have a four-bedroom two bath that means you can get your own room to stay in. You have a kitchen and living room, the living room you can use to hang out with your roommates.”
- “I would recommend living on campus because you can experience living on your own and make many new friends.”
- “I would recommend staying at the dorms because it's a good way to meet friends and a good way to start living on your own.”
- “It is a good transition for moving out of your parents’ house and it is very convenient being so close to the school.”
- “I would, because it gives you a chance to meet new people, from other parts of the world.”

According to our end-of-year survey results, several factors contributed to students not returning to Viking Woods. Some students withdrew from classes, sought to be closer to home, or transferred to different institutions. However, the most significant reason for students not returning was graduation, as many reached this exciting milestone and moved on to the next chapter of their lives.

Annual Cost per FTE and Trend Analyses
(completed by Fall semester)

Provide cost per FTE and analyze for the period being evaluated.

Residential Life
(a.k.a. Viking Woods, Student Housing)

The overall Viking Woods budget has remained relatively consistent throughout this timeframe. There have been some increases, but there have been no major changes. The total number of Viking Woods residents has decreased over the years due to two significant changes. One was COVID-19*, which required us to keep some rooms offline for quarantine purposes and eliminate the double bunk-bed rooms. The cost per resident has increased through rent as well as the new mandatory meal plan which was implemented in fall of 2023. The cost for the meal plan in fall of 2023 was \$1,283, and the cost was reduced to \$1,250 for fall of 2024. The table below reflects the operational costs associated with Viking Woods along with the cost per Viking Woods resident. For most fiscal years, the cost per resident exceeded the cost of rent.

Fiscal Year	Adjusted Budget	YTD Budget Activity	Fall VW Residents	Cost of Rent for 4-Bedroom Apartment	Cost Per VW Resident
2020	\$503,330	\$451,262	223	\$1,935	\$2,024
2021	\$424,994	\$454,668	171	\$2,030	\$2,659
2022	\$432,777	\$430,153	191	\$2,130	\$2,252
2023	\$450,975	\$433,163	199	\$2,200	\$2,177
2024	\$469,179	\$465,772	196	\$2,303	\$2,376

Viking Woods staff regularly review the cost of room and board at other colleges and universities to ensure that we remain competitive. The following table identifies the costs associated with residing in Viking Woods in a 4-bedroom apartment and 2-bedroom apartment over the past five years. Due to the implementation of the mandatory meal plan in fall of 2023, the cost of housing increased by 58% for a 4-bedroom apartment.

Fiscal Year	Rent for 4-bedroom Apartment	Rent for 2-bedroom Apartment	Mandatory Meal Plan
2020	\$1,935	\$2,430	N/A
2021	\$2,030	\$2,550	N/A
2022	\$2,130	\$2,675	N/A
2023	\$2,200	\$2,763	N/A
2024	\$2,200	\$2,763	\$1,283

SWOT Analysis
(completed by Fall semester)

Using the data collected and analyzed, complete a SWOT analysis. Reference and link data for each.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Internal Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Low student staff turnover -Efficient processes and procedures -Team atmosphere -Consistent Presence within the office for students to see -Good administrative support -Interdepartmental cooperation -Campus Police Department is located in Viking Woods -THD housing software streamlines our application, leasing, and billing processes -Streamlined our RA training program 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Internal Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Space for events -Space for student recreation area -Facilities (paint, water, repairs) -Limited bed space availability -Lack of maintenance per student population -Lack of on-call supervisors (2 full-time all year, other times we have 1-4 coaches) -Washer/Dryer upgrades -Upgrade office area (desks, flooring) -Signage for individual buildings
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>External Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand Viking Woods spaces for a general student hangout area -Expand outside space for residents and events -Expand VW Clubhouse for events -Continue collaborating with our local non-profits (Churches) -Additional budget training regarding reinvesting profit of Viking Woods back into the buildings and overall budget -Updated security cameras -Review of emergency systems 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>External Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Weather shelter relocation due to Fine Arts construction -Lack of open spaces for emergency student removal -Mandatory meal plan

External Accreditation (if applicable)

Link to accreditation report.

N/A

INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLANS for *Residential Life* / 2024

Instl or Dept	Org Code	Strategic Priority	Goal	Instl Strategy	Action Plan Description	Indicators	Addl Res ?	Amount	Type	Onetime Expense	Annual Expense	Funding Source	FY Compl	Status	Responsible Party	Submitted by
Instl	714	Operational Excellence	2		Develop a Deferred Maintenance Plan and research the feasibility of adding a second maintenance technician	Improved Facilities and Response Time		TBD	Deferred Maintenance	TBD	TBD	Explore Opportunities of Revenue	TBA	TBA	Keri Schmidt and Buildings and Grounds	Keri Schmidt
Instl	714	Operational Excellence, Student Success, Community Engagement	2 (OE), 1 (SS), 1 (CE)		Expand Outside Space to Encourage Student Engagement in Events and Activities	Improved Facilities & Student Participation		TBD	Construction	TBD	TBD	Explore Opportunities of Revenue	TBA	TBA	Keri Schmidt and Buildings and Grounds	Keri Schmidt
Instl	714	Operational Excellence, Student Success, Community Engagement	2 (OE), 1 (SS), 1 (CE)		Expand Viking Woods Clubhouse to Encourage Student Engagement in Events and Activities	Improved Facilities & Student Participation		TBD	Construction	TBD	TBD	Explore Opportunities of Revenue	TBA	TBA	Keri Schmidt and Buildings and Grounds	Keri Schmidt
Instl	714	Operational Excellence	2		Collaborate with the Chief of Police/Director of Emergency Management to Assess Security in Viking Woods	Improved Safety & Security		TBD	Security	TBD	TBD	Explore Opportunities of Revenue	TBA	TBA	Keri Schmidt and Chief Parchim	Keri Schmidt

DEPARTMENTAL ACTION PLANS for *Residential Life* / 2024

Instl or Dept	Org Code	Strategic Priority	Goal	Instl Strategy	Action Plan Description	Indicators	Addl Res ?	Amount	Type	Onetime Expense	Annual Expense	Funding Source	FY Compl	Status	Responsible Party	Submitted by
Dept	714	Operational Excellence	1		Additional Budget Training for Completion of Financial Analysis and Annual Budget Review	Improved budget and office system	Business Office	N/A	Operational and Staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	FY25	Active	Keri Schmidt and Business Office	Keri Schmidt
Dept	714	Student Success	5		Provide Mental Health Training for all VW Staff	Improved staff knowledge	TBD	TBD	Operational and Staff	TBD	TBD	Operational budget	FY25-26	Active	Keri Schmidt	Keri Schmidt
Dept	714	Student Success & Community Engagement	1 (SS) 1 (CE)		Enhance Calendar of Viking Woods Events by Communicating Activities by Semester	Participation	N/A	N/A	Operational and Staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	FY 25	Active	Keri Schmidt	Keri Schmidt

Evaluation



Meets Expectations

Comments:



Requires Attention and Submission of a Follow-Up Report

Comments:



Does Not Meet Expectations and Requires Submission of a Follow-Up Report

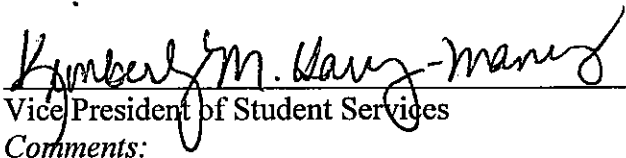
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Follow-up report required by: _____

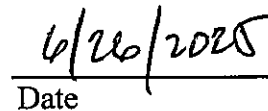
Comments:

(Date)

Approvals



Vice President of Student Services
Comments:



Date