## Authors


**FRED VOLK**
Professor and Director of Research, School of Behavioral Sciences
Liberty University
*fvolk@liberty.edu*

**DANIEL J. GIBSON**
Graduate Assistant, School of Behavioral Sciences
Liberty University
*dgibson31@liberty.edu*

**JOSHUA TRAVIS BROWN**
Fellow in Residence at the Rothermere American Institute of the University of Oxford, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Culture, and Instructor of Leadership Foundations in the Policy at the University of Virginia
*jtb8n@virginia.edu*

**JOSEPH M. KUSH**
Postdoctoral Fellow
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
*jmk7cj@virginia.edu*

# *The Anatomy of Room Change: Architecture, Academic Performance, and Differences in Race and Socioeconomic Status*

THE NUMBER OF ROOM CHANGE REQUESTS by first-year college students can be influenced by several factors, including race and socioeconomic status. This study adds to the body of research by also examining the role of residence hall architecture, roommate similarity, and academic performance in room change requests. Findings indicate that residence hall architecture was the first differentiator of these requests. Other differentiators were first-semester GPA, age, and differences between roommates in socioeconomic status and race. The results indicate that residence hall architecture has important effects on students' college experience, which can influence the development of social networks and form the context through which personal characteristics and roommate differences affect interpersonal interactions. Employing policies and programming that support student autonomy, create social connections, and reduce interpersonal barriers can foster a rich and positive environment for developing culturally diverse student experiences.

*Note: This study was funded through the ACUHO-I funded research grant program with the generous support of the ACUHO-I Foundation. It was approved by the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences.*

Some of the most meaningful friendships for college students are with their roommates, with whom they spend much time in a shared living space. For first-year students, establishing meaningful relationships is critical to wellness and developing a sense of belonging in a new environment, as well as facilitating learning, growing, and adapting to college, which makes roommate relationships pivotal to the college experience (Kerby, 2015). Roommate relationships are often facilitated by common background, and differences in socioeconomic status (SES) can create a barrier between students (Chavous et al., 2002). These differences, experienced far more by minoritized students, can be a source of roommate conflict and

sometimes result in room change requests. In addition, minoritized students are less likely to seek assistance for roommate conflicts, so room change requests are often the first instance when college administrators become aware of roommate difficulty (Bresnahan et al., 2009).

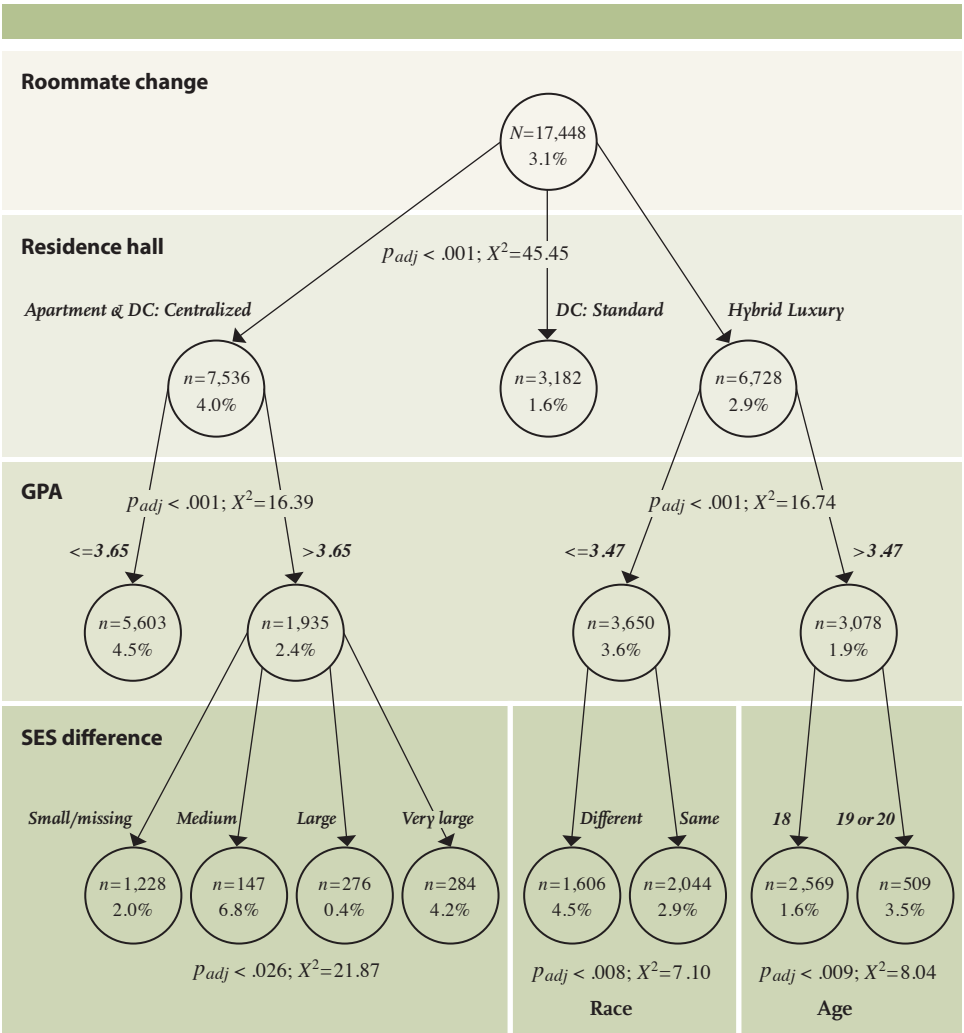
Using archival data from a large university in the eastern U.S., this study explores the relationship between room change requests for first-year students and several factors: personal characteristics and roommate similarity (i.e., socioeconomic status and race), residence hall design, and academic performance. One step was to determine if there were differences in the relationship between the number of room change requests and the particular design of a residence hall. Traditional double-corridor halls, which varied based on location, also varied in the number of residents' requests for room changes. One double-corridor residence hall, which was centrally located to campus amenities, had the highest room change request rate, one similar to that of students in the suite-style residence halls. The other traditional double-corridor halls had the lowest number of room change requests. For hybrid luxury residence halls, which contain elements of both double-corridor and suite designs, the number of room change requests were near the average for that of the campus.

As shown in Figure 1 (*see page 51*), the number of room change requests also varied by students' grade point averages (GPAs). First-year students with higher GPAs in the suite-style (>3.65), centralized double-corridor (>3.65), and hybrid luxury residence halls (>3.47) were less likely to request room changes than were first-year students with lower GPAs in the same residence halls. In the hybrid luxury designs, students with lower GPAs had a higher room change request rate when living with a roommate of a different race (4.5% vs. 2.9%). Age also played a role. Students with high GPAs living in hybrid luxury designs who were 18 years old were less likely to request a room change than were 19- and 20-year-old first-year students (1.6% vs. 3.5%). And, finally, socioeconomic status (SES) made a difference; in centralized double-corridor and suite-style residence halls, similarities in socioeconomic status appear to result in fewer room change requests.

These results are consistent with those in the research on the frequency of room changes as it relates to race and socioeconomic status (Chavous et al., 2002; Shook & Fazio, 2008a, 2008b). They are also consistent with the findings of studies showing that residence hall design, combined with race and household income, influences a student's initial choice of a residence hall and their academic performance (Brown et al., 2021; Foste, 2021). However, the results were inconsistent in that there was considerable variability in the number of room change requests in residence halls with corridor design elements (double-corridor and hybrid luxury). Differences in residence hall design and students' household income and race were related to the number of room change requests but were conditional on one another. We found that high academic performers requested room changes less frequently across all living situations. This study helps develop a more nuanced understanding of how race and household income interact with other academic and environmental factors involved in first-year students' decisions to change rooms.

**FIGURE 1**

## Room Change Classification Tree Analysis




*Note:* For our analysis, we used chi-squared automatic interaction detection (CHAID), maximum of three levels, parent node minimum of 40, child node minimum of 20, Pearson $X^2$, and Bonferroni adjusted *p*-values (Kass, 1980; Rokach & Maimon, 2015).

> *The opportunity for first-year students to connect with their immediate neighbors or other students in their residential environment creates an increased emphasis on hall design in establishing a sense of belonging.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ROOMMATES FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

For first-year students, the initial weeks on campus are spent attempting to find a place to belong, striving to fulfill a basic human need missing in their new surroundings. Their success or failure plays a key role in subsequent decisions about whether or not to drop out (Bowman et al., 2019), in their academic achievement (Davis et al., 2019; Layous et al., 2017), and in their mental and emotional health (Gopalan & Brady, 2019). Nevertheless, in one study 54% of students reported feeling lonely in the previous year, which was the most common issue for which students sought counseling (American College Health Association, 2021), and of course loneliness is even greater for students without a roommate (Henninger et al., 2016).

Creating close friendships is particularly important for minoritized students, who often experience greater difficulties in transitioning to college than do White students (Bentley-Edwards & Chapman-Hilliard, 2015). Comparative studies between predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and minority-serving institutions found that the isolation and pressure some students feel due to their minoritized status were greatest at PWIs, an experience that hinders a student's adjustment to college and increases the risk of their dropping out (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2021; Winkle-Wagner & McCoy, 2016). Minoritized students report lower levels of belonging (Stevens et al., 2018) and greater feelings of isolation or social difficulty caused by their status (Walton & Cohen, 2011) or cultural differences (Chavous et al., 2002). Roommates can bridge this gap, providing an opportunity for developing close friends who can springboard minoritized students into finding and engaging in further connections (Schofield et al., 2010).

## ROOMMATE DIVERSITY

Recognizing the role that roommates play in creating a sense of belonging has led higher education institutions like New York University, Colgate, Tufts, Duke, and Harvard to create housing policies for assigning roommates in a way that improves college adjustment and social connection for minoritized students (Wong, 2019). Such policy decisions are based on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which argues that interactions under the proper conditions reduce prejudice and facilitate connection. These policies have yielded benefits that include increasing the number of non-White friends that White students have (Gaither & Sommers, 2013; Mark & Harris, 2012) and strengthening social belonging, college adjustment, and GPA for minoritized students (Schofield et al., 2010; Shook & Clay, 2012).

Despite empirical support for the fact that there are many benefits of different-race roommate pairings, these relationships dissolve at higher rates than they do for peers in same-race pairings (Shook & Fazio, 2008b; Towles-Schwen & Fazio, 2006), and those in different-race pairings report lower satisfaction and involvement than do those in same-race pairings (Shook & Fazio, 2008a). In addition, Black students are typically much less integrated into their White roommate's social network, especially when

*. . . the individual factors that contribute to roommate relationships—residence hall design, personal characteristics, roommate differences, and academic performance—are predominantly understood in isolation from one another rather than holistically.*

higher intergroup anxiety is present, which negatively impacts the quality of roommate relationships and further hinders the integration of Black students (Shook & Fazio, 2011). This means that room assignment policies, while often successfully improving the college experience for minoritized students, also increase the risk of creating problematic and challenging living situations for the students they are intended to help.

Beyond race, socioeconomic status forms a significant part of an individual's identity, which can create difficulties for first-year college students entering a new environment characterized by different social norms, values, and expectations (Destin et al., 2017). Further, differences in SES may create interpersonal barriers that influence levels of social engagement, belonging, and academic performance (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Johnson et al., 2011; Rubin & Wright, 2015) for students from a lower socioeconomic status, who often spend more time working, which limits the opportunity to meet others and to foster relationships (Zembrodt, 2019). Also, students with fewer financial resources may be excluded from social activities simply due to the cost of such activities—a $20 movie ticket may be too costly for some students.

Few studies have explored how socioeconomic status might shape roommate relationships. Minoritized students from low SES backgrounds can have more difficulty transitioning to college. Though the precollege intergroup experience enables new students to cross racial divides with greater ease (Schofield et al., 2010), many Black students from lower SES backgrounds who have grown up in neighborhoods and high schools with majority Black or minoritized peers (Chavous et al., 2002) can still feel out of place and isolated for *both* their race- and SES-based identities. There is some evidence, however, suggesting that residence hall design can facilitate their transition to college.

## RESIDENCE HALL DESIGN

The opportunity for first-year students to connect with their immediate neighbors or other students in their residential environment creates an increased emphasis on hall design in establishing a sense of belonging. Corridor-style residence halls offer the greatest opportunity for connection, with socializing designs that foster close contact and connection beyond roommates, creating a stronger sense of community (Devlin et al., 2008). This results in higher satisfaction rates and greater participation in campus events (Davis, 2010), which can reduce psychological distress (Suitor, 2013) and increases GPAs, especially for minoritized students (Brown et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the individual factors that contribute to roommate relationships—residence hall design, personal characteristics, roommate differences, and academic performance—are predominantly understood in isolation from one another rather than holistically. High-

er education researchers have yet to consider these myriad factors in a more coherent model that accurately reflects the social and environmental complexity confronting residence life professionals who manage diverse residence hall environments. For example, SES and race influence the development of roommate friendships, but how these two factors interact has not been explored in the context of other social and environmental conditions. We build upon the existing literature by bringing personal factors, roommates, residence hall design, and academic performance into a single analytical and conceptual model to more fully represent the anatomy of room change requests in residence halls.

## METHOD

### Data Source and Filtering

We set out to examine the impact of residence hall design, personal attributes (gender, race, age, and household income), roommate differences (race, age, and household income), and academic performance on roommate changes. We obtained data for incoming first-year students during six fall semesters at a university in the eastern United States. While roommate changes are not the norm, a number of requests inevitably occur, and sometimes these requests are motivated by success and flourishing rather than difficulty and conflict. One category of success—obtaining a residence hall leadership position—was eliminated from the data. Other student attributes that may encourage or discourage room change requests or were not consistent with the typical profile of first-year students were also eliminated: students over 20, transfer students, and NCAA athletes. Following these exclusions, we derived a final sample size of 17,448 students, 542 of whom experienced a room change from fall to spring (3.1%).

### Participants

In the final sample of 17,448 first-year students, the reported race/ethnicity figures over six years were 71.5% White, 13.3% who did not report their race, 5.6% Hispanic/Latino, 3.9% Black, 2.1% Asian, 3.1% two or more races, and 0.1% Native Americans or Pacific Islanders (*see Table 1, page 55*). Consistent with current cultural trends in college attendance, women ($n$ = 9,486; 54.4%) were a higher proportion of those included in the analysis than men ($n$ = 7,962; 45.6%). The reported ages in the sample were 18 years ($n$ = 13,392; 76.8%), 19 years ($n$ = 2,964; 16.9%), and 20 years ($n$ = 1,092; 6.3%).

### Design

Two basic designs characterize residence halls on this campus: suite-style ($n$ = 4,984) and double-corridor ($n$ = 12,464). There were two suite-style housing choices, standard and premium, which differed primarily in the number of floors and the age of the building. There were three different double-corridor housing choices: (1) one six-story women's residence hall; (2) a set of three-story residence halls centralized on the main campus among the academic buildings and athletic fields; and (3) two eight-story

**TABLE 1**

## Demographics

| | *N* | PERCENT |
|---|---|---|
| **Race** | | |
| White | 12,469 | 71.5 |
| Asian | 366 | 2.1 |
| Black | 686 | 3.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 976 | 5.6 |
| Native American | 73 | 0.4 |
| Hawaii/Pacific Islander | 14 | 0.1 |
| Two or more | 534 | 3.1 |
| Not reported | 2,330 | 13.3 |
| **Age** | | |
| 18 | 13,392 | 76.8 |
| 19 | 2,964 | 16.9 |
| 20 | 1,092 | 6.3 |
| **Gender** | | |
| Female | 9,486 | 54.4 |
| Male | 7,962 | 45.6 |
| **Design** | | |
| ***Suite*** | 4,984 | 28.6 |
| Premium | 4,130 | 23.7 |
| Standard | 854 | 4.9 |
| ***Double-Corridor*** | 12,464 | 71.4 |
| Luxury | 6,728 | 38.6 |
| Centralized | 2,554 | 14.6 |
| Standard | 3,182 | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **17,448** | |

luxury double-corridor residence halls. Although these halls were a double-corridor design, there were slight differences in the design. The primary differences between luxury and other double-corridor options were the common social area on each floor, the age of the residence halls, and bathrooms (luxury housing shared bathroom space between two rooms rather than having a communal bathroom space).

### Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status was measured in two ways: Pell grant eligibility and adjusted gross income (AGI). Pell grants are awarded to undergraduate students with unmet financial needs and are based on their families' ability to provide financial support. Adjusted gross income—the income reported on a tax return before federal and state taxes have been deducted—is widely accepted as a measure of current tax year income (e.g., Frank, 2009). For this study, the AGI was computed based on the average AGI of the student's family's home address zip code collected from IRS data (Internal Revenue Service, 2019).

### Roommate Differences

For each set of roommates, we created a household income difference variable equal to the range of AGI values among the group. For example, if two roommates were from different zip codes representing an average AGI of $50,000 and $80,000, the AGI difference would equal $30,000. A set of binary indicator variables were also created for each roommate grouping, including same race and same age.

### Analytical Approach

We employed a classification tree analysis (CTA) that uses a decision tree to determine the degree that a set of attributes may be predictive of a nominal outcome, referred to as the root node (room change request in this analysis). In the tree, each decision is represented as a node that divides the sample into branches based on nominal attributes (e.g., race or residence hall design) or cutoff points based on quantitative attributes (e.g., GPA) that maximally differentiate the two groups based on the percentage of the group that requested a room change. Each unique group potentially becomes further analyzed for additional subgroups differentiated by the percentage of room change requests. The CTA procedure is iterative until the attributes no longer differentiate the subsample on the percentage of room change requests. CTA is a descriptive technique; therefore, any causal claims should be avoided.

## RESULTS

Of those first-year students included in the analysis, 3.1% resided in a different room in the spring than in the fall term (see Figure 1). The strongest predictor that differentiated students who changed rooms was the residence hall, which fell into three groups. The suite-style residence halls and the *DC: Centralized* double-corridor residence halls had the highest room change rate, 4%. The remaining older traditional double-corridor

residence halls had the lowest room change rate at 1.6%. This second group of students ($n$ = 3,182) is represented as a terminal node, not further differentiated by room change request percentage in Figure 1. The final group is those first-year students that lived in the double-corridor luxury residence halls ($n$ = 6,728) who changed rooms at a rate (2.9%) mostly consistent with the overall room change rate (2.9% vs. 3.1%). These results are generally consistent with previous design and student interaction research, except for the *DC: Centralized* residence halls (Brown et al., 2019). These results suggest that another factor beyond socializing design may impact room change behavior for first-year students in these residence halls.

The second room change differentiator in the decision tree was first-semester GPA for both the *Suite/DC: Centralized* and *Hybrid Luxury* branches. High academic performers in both branches were less likely to change rooms. For the *Suite/DC: Centralized* branch, those students with a GPA of above 3.65 changed rooms less frequently than did other students (2.4% vs. 4.5%). The study variables did not further differentiate the non-high performing students ($n$ = 5, 603) in their room change rate. For the *Hybrid Luxury* branch, those students with a GPA of above 3.47 changed rooms less frequently than did others (1.9% vs. 3.6%). Both subsamples were further differentiated based on the study variables: race difference for the non-high performing sample and age for the high-performing sample.

Of the four GPA subsamples defined in the second level of the decision tree, three were further differentiated on room change requests. First, the room change requests for high performers in the *Suite/DC: Centralized* branch were differentiated based on roommate differences in AGI. The number of room change requests for those having medium (6.8%) and very large (4.2%) differences in AGI was greater than expected based on the parent node change rate (2.4%). Those with missing values and small differences in AGI were less likely to change rooms (2.0%) than what would be expected for high performers. Of the 276 high performers with large AGI differences, only one first-year student changed rooms. Although these cut-points were statistically significant, the smaller cell sizes may indicate model overfitting. Second, for the high performers ($n$ = 509) in the *Hybrid Luxury* branch, 18-year-old students were much less likely to change rooms than were 19- and 20-year-olds (1.6% vs. 3.5%). Given the smaller proportion (16.5%) of the older students, this may be driven by differences in other factors related to age, such as maturity, rather than age itself. Finally, the non-high performing subsample in the *Hybrid Luxury* residence halls was further divided by differences in race. Residents with roommates of a different race were much more likely to change rooms mid-academic year (4.5%) than were students rooming with someone of their same race (2.9%).

*Residence hall design was the strongest predictor of room change requests.*

## DISCUSSION

When the multiple factors that influence room change requests are combined into a single analytical model, three new insights are gained: residence hall design is related to mid-academic year room change, high academic performers are less likely to request a room change, and roommate differences are related to room change requests but only in certain residence halls and at differing levels of academic performance (GPA). Residence hall design was the strongest predictor of room change requests. Given the work of Brown and colleagues (2019) and Devlin and colleagues (2008), we expected roommate change to be driven by design (i.e., suite-style) considerations. While these results are consistent with those of previous work, we also found that for one type of the double-corridor (*DC: Centralized*) residence hall, the number of roommate change requests were consistent with the number for the suite-style residence halls. This exception suggests that other factors play a role in student room change requests in the centralized residence halls. It is possible that the unique location of these buildings, away from the two major areas of student residences on campus, may limit students from accessing a broader range of friends and peers. However, it does appear that the room change requests are higher among those students with GPAs that fell below the respective cutoffs.

That high academic performers are less likely to request room changes is evidence that these students have found a way to adjust to college life that allows them to succeed without a change in their living situation mid-academic year. At a minimum, these students have a good working relationship with their roommates and have developed a broader social experience that facilitates their academic success, which reveals links between social belonging and academic performance (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Davis et al., 2019; Rubin & Wright, 2015).

Students with roommates of a different race and AGI were more likely to request room changes, which is in line with studies done by Shook and Fazio (2008b) and Towles-Schwen and Fazio (2006), which found that different-race roommate relationships dissolve at higher rates than do same-race pairings. However, these differences were found in only certain students (race differences in non-high performers in the *Hybrid Luxury* halls and AGI for high performers in *Suite/DC: Centralized* halls). At first glance, the results seem consistent with the current research on roommate differences, but the particular subgroups drive these broader trends. For example, while decreased academic performance has been associated with isolating residence hall

*That high academic performers are less likely to request room changes is evidence that these students have found a way to adjust to college life that allows them to succeed without a change in their living situation mid-academic year.*

*Focusing on student autonomy should begin before students choose their residence hall and potentially connect with both their roommate and their resident assistant.*

design (Brown et al., 2019), in this study, room change requests from residents of at least one of the socializing residence halls (i.e., double-corridor design) were elevated. These results indicate what campus housing administrators already know: It is often a combination of factors that drive room change, academic performance, and retention of first-year students.

## IMPLICATIONS

The architectural features of residence halls are bound by the timeframe in which they were built. As a result, students' campus experience necessarily changes according to current societal and market forces. The acceleration of those changes and the complexity of ensuring that student experiences align with their desired social and learning outcomes are formidable challenges. Our results suggest that student affairs and residence life professionals should consider two important areas to emphasize in addressing this challenge: developing flexible strategies that provide students the autonomy to manage their residence hall experience and develop their social network and implementing orientation and funding policies that encourage cultural intelligence and humility.

Focusing on student autonomy should begin before students choose their residence hall and potentially connect with both their roommate and their resident assistant. Students could be better served by first understanding how their residence hall is designed, knowing the unique challenges that the building can present (e.g., effects on student interaction and distances from other residence halls) and recognizing how that may impact their experience and ability to develop their social support system on campus. Informing students upfront will provide them with a sense of ownership in their choice; suite-style halls allow students to choose more privacy or engage in social activities that provide opportunities for socialization and relationships. Also, before room assignments are made, students should be encouraged to interact with one another via organic social media platforms, which may allow them to identify potential roommates before assignments are made (Gray et al., 2013). Finally, in many cases, room change requests may result from students wanting to live with another person they have connected with. An emphasis on room change requests that promote the development of a better campus experience could be a focus for college and university housing in improving university-wide retention efforts (Rine & Brown, 2023). Ensuring that changing rooms in these positive scenarios is easy, low cost, and not laden with overbearing administrative processes or physical challenges for students who need physical help moving is critical.

Improving approaches that encourage student interaction and help them develop a broader understanding of diversity should increase multicultural acceptance and decrease the number of room change requests driven by roommate dissatisfaction (Hudson, 2018). University-sponsored social media focused on particular residence halls may be another way for students to connect with peers and to increase their exposure to others different from them in terms of race, SES, or geography. It would also provide a forum for resident assistants to introduce themselves to students before they arrive and thus set the stage for incoming first-year students' success in developing a network of friends. Developing orientation activities that emphasize roommate and non-roommate interaction allows students to get to know a wider range of residents (Brown et al., 2022; Erb et al., 2014). Providing funding in a non-stigmatizing way—by, for example, offering the same benefit for all students—at the residence hall level for small spontaneous activities such as going to a movie can help remove barriers related to SES. Finally, resident assistant training should focus on developing a multicultural mindset and understanding how different cultural norms may influence student interaction (e.g., some students are less likely to ask for assistance to work through conflicts). Though opportunities for influencing residence hall construction may be rare, housing administrators' influence over the design of newly constructed or remodeled residence halls should target increasing student interaction over the efficiency or financial factors that often take precedence (McClure et al., 2020). We advocate that student affairs professionals understand how design decisions are likely to impact students' experiences, as they differ from campus to campus across institutional types (Brown, 2021). For example, increased student interaction between rooms and floors should result in students developing friendships more easily.

Future research into room change requests should seek to understand the underlying motivation for the requests and assess how factors such as gender, sexuality, and religion impact roommate relationships. Such variables were beyond the scope of institutional data provided in this study, which prevented the development of a closer understanding of the rationale for students' room change requests. Exploration into such areas would better differentiate when students are making a move *towards* friends in other rooms or halls versus moving *away* from an adverse living situation. In addition, such research could clarify specific factors that might underlie different-race and different-SES roommate conflicts that create an unwelcoming atmosphere for minoritized students. Further, future research should focus on the experience that other students minoritized by their gender or sexual orientation have and seek to understand the relationship between variables in room change requests.

*Though opportunities for influencing residence hall construction may be rare, housing administrators' influence over the design of newly constructed or remodeled residence halls should target increasing student interaction over the efficiency or financial factors that often take precedence.*

## CONCLUSION

The request to change rooms is motivated by many factors, which have previously been examined in isolation, rather than holistically. Using a novel analytical approach, this study combined several factors—student characteristics, roommate differences, academic performance, and residence hall design—into a single model to gain new insights into the complex contexts that first-year students encounter and residence hall professionals manage. In creating a model that more accurately reflects the dynamics of room change requests, we brought to light three new insights: (1) residence hall environment and student behavior are complex rather than simple, (2) roommate differences matter but only under certain conditions, and (3) there are still opportunities for further understanding the dynamics of residence hall life. Finally, the best residential life experiences will be driven by creative and bold residence life administrators and practitioners who design and develop opportunities for student autonomy, increase students' multicultural experiences, and collaborate with higher education scholars in optimizing residential life for all students. ■

## REFERENCES


Ahn, M. Y., & Davis, H. H. (2020). Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: A quantitative approach. *Teaching in Higher Education, 28*(1), 136–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1778664

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice.* Addison-Wesley.

American College Health Association. (2021). *American College Health Association-National college health assessment III: Undergraduate student reference group data report spring 2021.* American College Health Association. https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA-III_SPRING-2021_UNDERGRADUATE_REFERENCE_GROUP_DATA_REPORT.pdf

Bentley-Edwards, K. L., & Chapman-Hilliard, C. (2015). Doing race in different places: Black racial cohesion on Black and White college campuses. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 8*(1), 43–60. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038293

Bowman, N. A., Jarratt, L., Jang, N., & Bono, T. J. (2019). The unfolding of student adjustment during the first semester of college. *Research in Higher Education, 60*(3), 273–292. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-018-9535-x

Bresnahan, M. J., Guan, X., Shearman, S. M., & Donohue, W. A. (2009). Roommate conflict: Does race matter? *The Howard Journal of Communications, 20*(4), 394–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170903303840

Brown, J. T. (2021). The evolving missions and functions of accessible colleges and universities. In G. Crisp, K. McClure, & C. M. Orphan (Eds.), *Unlocking opportunity through broadly accessible institutions* (pp. 65–81). Routledge.

Brown, J. T., Kush, J. M., & Volk, F. A. (2022). Centering the marginalized: The impact of the pandemic on online student retention. *Journal of Student Financial Aid, 51*(1), 3–24. https://doi.org/10.55504/0884-9153.1777

Brown, J., Volk, F., & Spratto, E. M. (2019). The hidden structure: The influence of residence hall design on academic outcomes. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 56*(3), 267–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2019.1611590

Campbell-Whatley, G., O'Brien, C., Reddig, K., Sun, T., & Freeman-Green, S. (2021). Nonmajority student perceptions of diversity and inclusion at a PWI and an HBCU. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 15*(3), 253–269. https://doi.org/10.1108/jme-03-2021-0028

Chavous, T., Rivas, D., Green, L., & Helaire, L. (2002). Role of student background, perceptions of ethnic fit, and racial identification in the academic adjustment of African American students at a predominantly White university. *Journal of Black Psychology, 28*(3), 234–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798402028003004

Davis, G. M., Hanzsek-Brill, M. B., Petzold, M. C., & Robinson, D. H. (2019). Students' sense of belonging: The development of a predictive retention model. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 19*(1), 117–127. https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v19i1.26787

Davis, L. J. (2010). *Building engagement: The influence of physical structure on social interaction* [Master's project, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]. https://doi.org/10.17615/ccbd-re73

Destin, M., Rheinschmidt-Same, M., & Richeson, J. A. (2017). Status-based identity. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*(2), 270–289. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616664424

Devlin, A. S., Donovan, S., Nicolov, A., Nold, O., & Zandan, G. (2008). Residence hall architecture and sense of community. *Environment and Behavior, 40*(4), 487–521. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916507301128

Erb, S. E., Renshaw, K. D., Short, J. L., & Pollard, J. W. (2014). The importance of college roommate relationships: A review and systemic conceptualization. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 51*(1), 43–55. https://doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2014-0004

Foste, Z. (2021). "Oh, that's the White dorm": The racialization of university housing and the policing of racial boundaries. *Journal of College Student Development, 62*(2), 169–185.

Frank, M. W. (2009). Inequality and growth in the United States: Evidence from a new state-level panel of income inequality measures. *Economic Inquiry, 47*(1), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-7295.2008.00122.x

Gaither, S. E., & Sommers, S. R. (2013). Living with an other-race roommate shapes Whites' behavior in subsequent diverse settings. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 49*(2), 272–276. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.10.020

Gopalan, M., & Brady, S. T. (2019). College students' sense of belonging: A national perspective. *Educational Researcher, 49*(2), 134–137. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x19897622

Gray, R., Vitak, J., Easton, E. W., & Ellison, N. B. (2013). Examining social adjustment to college in the age of social media: Factors influencing successful transitions and persistence. *Computers & Education, 67*, 193–207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.02.021

Henninger, W. R., Eshbaugh, E. M., Osbeck, A., & Madigan, C. (2016). Perceived social support and roommate status as predictors of college student loneliness. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing, 42*(2), 46–59.

Hudson, T. D. (2018). Random roommates: Supporting our students in developing friendships across difference. *About Campus: Enriching the Student Learning Experience, 23*(3), 13–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086482218804252

Internal Revenue Service. (2019). *SOI tax stats - Individual income tax statistics - ZIP code data (SOI) (2019)* [Dataset]. IRS. https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-individual-income-tax-statistics-2019-zip-code-data-soi

Johnson, S. E., Richeson, J. A., & Finkel, E. J. (2011). Middle class and marginal? Socioeconomic status, stigma, and self-regulation at an elite university. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*(5), 838–852. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021956

Kass, G. V. (1980). An exploratory technique for investigating large quantities of categorical data. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series C (Applied Statistics), 29*(2), 119–127.

Kerby, M. B. (2015). Toward a new predictive model of student retention in higher education. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 17*(2), 138–161. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115578229

Layous, K., Davis, E. M., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Cook, J. E., & Cohen, G. L. (2017). Feeling left out, but affirmed: Protecting against the negative effects of low belonging in college. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 69*, 227–231. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.09.008

Mark, N. P., & Harris, D. R. (2012). Roommate's race and the racial composition of White college students' ego networks. *Social Science Research, 41*(2), 331–342. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.11.012

McClure, K. R., Barringer, S. N., & Brown, J. T. (2020). Privatization as the new normal in higher education: Synthesizing literature and reinvigorating research through a multilevel framework. In L. W. Perna (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 35, pp. 589–666). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11743-6_13-1

Rine, P. J., & Brown, J. T. (2023). Shifting environments, emerging norms: How changes in policy, technology, data, and market competition affect college enrollment management processes. In R. Reason & J. Braxton (Eds.), *Improving college student retention: New developments in theory, research, and practice*. Stylus.

Rokach, L., & Maimon, O. (2015). *Data mining with decision trees: Theory and applications* (2nd ed.). World Scientific.

Rubin, M., & Wright, C. L. (2015). Time and money explain social class differences in students' social integration at university. *Studies in Higher Education, 42*(2), 315–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1045481

Schofield, J. W., Hausmann, L. R., Ye, F., & Woods, R. L. (2010). Intergroup friendships on campus: Predicting close and casual friendships between White and African American first-year college students. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 13*(5), 585–602. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210362437

Shook, N. J., & Clay, R. (2012). Interracial roommate relationships: A mechanism for promoting sense of belonging at university and academic performance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(5), 1168–1172. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.05.005

Shook, N. J., & Fazio, R. H. (2008a). Interracial roommate relationships: An experimental field test of the contact hypothesis. *Psychological Science, 19*(7), 717–723. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02147.x

Shook, N. J., & Fazio, R. H. (2008b). Roommate relationships: A comparison of interracial and same-race living situations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 11*(4), 425–437. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430208095398

Shook, N. J., & Fazio, R. H. (2011). Social network integration: A comparison of same-race and interracial roommate relationships. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 14*(3), 399–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210382127

Stevens, C., Liu, C. H., & Chen, J. A. (2018). Racial/ethnic disparities in US college students' experience: Discrimination as an impediment to academic performance. *Journal of American College Health, 66*(7), 665–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1452745

Suitor, D. T. (2013). *Social support, sense of community, and psychological distress among college students: Examining the impact of university housing units* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Kansas. https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/15108/Suitor_ku_0099D_12639_DATA_1.pdf;sequence=1

Towles-Schwen, T., & Fazio, R. H. (2006). Automatically activated racial attitudes as predictors of the success of interracial roommate relationships. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 42*(5), 698–705. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2005.11.003

Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science, 331*(6023), 1447–1451. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1198364

Winkle-Wagner, R., & McCoy, D. L. (2016). Feeling like an "alien" or "family"? Comparing students and faculty experiences of diversity in STEM disciplines at a PWI and an HBCU. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 21*(5), 593–606. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1248835

Wong, A. (2019, August 26). Colleges would rather freshmen not change their roommates. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/08/colleges-dont-want-freshmenchoosing-their-roommates/596803/

Zembrodt, I. (2019). Commitment: Predicting persistence for low-SES students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 23*(3), 580–606. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025119858340

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The authors touch on room change requests being motivated by moving toward friends as opposed to moving away from an undesirable living situation. What are some examples when requests and their room changes were the result of something positive?
2. In their implications, the authors suggested providing funding for events and activities to reduce stigma related to one's socioeconomic status and allow all residents to participate. Has your institution created such environments? If so, reflect on what was implemented and the results of such activities. If not, what are some suggestions for activities that might work in your housing program?
3. Trends in desired room types change more rapidly than the lifespan of residence halls. How might hall or room types at your institution be the catalyst for change requests? What are some strategies or actions you might take to ensure that residents choose the right room from the start?
4. In what ways could living-learning communities, resident assistant training, and programming help mitigate issues related to roommate conflict or dissatisfaction? Describe any specific examples you may have encountered in the past as well as any recommendations you have going forward.
5. From a purely operational perspective, why might reducing the overall number of room changes be a departmental goal? How could this goal be balanced with a welcoming approach to positive-based room changes?
6. The authors mentioned that gender, sexuality, and religion were beyond the scope of the study and suggested that more research should include these variables. Have you encountered room change requests or roommate conflicts due to these or other variables outside of age, race, socioeconomic status, and architecture? What are some examples, and how did you facilitate the change or request? What are your opinions on change requests outside the extent of this study?
7. Throughout the article, the authors propose that room change request factors should be viewed holistically rather than in isolation. Taking this into account, if you were asked to develop an overall approach or mission to room changes at your institution, what would that entail?

*Discussion questions developed by Karl Tyler, University of Texas at Dallas*