Report of the Working Group on
Campus Social and Residential Life

Princeton President Shirley M. Tilghman appointed a Working Group on Campus Social
and Residential Life in the fall of 2010 following a period of significant change in
campus life. A new four-year residential college system had been implemented, creating
new living and dining options for juniors, seniors and graduate students. The Frist
Campus Center was celebrating its 10th anniversary; the Carl A. Fields Center for
Equality and Cultural Understanding had moved into spacious new quarters; and Campus
Club — a former eating club — had reopened as a gathering place for all undergraduate
and graduate students.

A separate student-faculty-staff-alumni task force had spent the previous year examining
relationships between the University and the eating clubs, organizations founded and
operated by students and alumni that for more than a hundred years have played an
integral role in undergraduate life at Princeton. In May 2010 that task force issued a
report that made 25 recommendations to improve those relationships and the experiences
students have in the clubs. In addition, the task force identified several issues related to
undergraduate on-campus social and residential life that fell outside of its charge, but that
it thought merited careful review by a similarly constituted group of students, faculty and
staff.

Working Group

Charge and Composition

In appointing our 13-member working group, President Tilghman asked us to address the
issues identified by the Eating Club Task Force, and specifically to do the following two
things (full charge included as Appendix A):

1. Review the University’s goals regarding undergraduate on-campus social and
   residential life; and

2. Answer the following four questions:
   a. How can undergraduate social and residential life be enhanced and
      improved on campus?
   b. How can the University enrich the social and residential experience in the
      residential colleges?
   c. What is and should be the role of fraternities and sororities at Princeton?
   d. Is it desirable, and if so, feasible to reintroduce a campus pub?

The members of the working group included five undergraduates, two faculty members
(one of them a residential college master) and six members of the staff, including two
directors of student life in the residential colleges and, as co-chairs, Vice President for
Campus Life Cynthia Cherrey and Vice President and Secretary Robert Durkee. (A full listing of the members of the working group is included as Appendix B.)

*The Work*

The working group met 11 times between October 2010 and April 2011, with most of the meetings lasting more than two hours. It created a website to solicit the views of members of the University community and received comments from almost 300 students and alumni. It held 17 focus groups with students, student organizations, alumni leaders and others. (A list of focus groups is included as Appendix C.) It examined data about the social and residential experience of Princeton undergraduates, and it met with an outside expert on fraternities and sororities. It also established an affiliated committee under the leadership of Amy Campbell, director of campus life initiatives in the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life, to examine in detail the issues related to reinstatement of a campus pub, with the understanding that the working group’s recommendation regarding the desirability and feasibility of reinstating a pub would be heavily shaped by the work of this affiliated committee.

We begin our report with a brief history of social and residential life at Princeton, followed by a review of some of the data we examined regarding the nature of on-campus social and residential life and the level of student satisfaction. We then attempt to articulate what we believe to be the University’s goals for undergraduate social and residential life. In the final sections of our report we make a number of observations and recommendations under the three broad headings of our charge:

- on-campus social and residential life, including social and residential life in the residential colleges;
- the role of fraternities and sororities;
- reinstatement of a campus pub.

**A Brief History of Social and Residential Life at Princeton**

When the 10-year-old College of New Jersey moved from Newark to Princeton in 1756, all residential, dining and social facilities for undergraduates were located in Nassau Hall. All undergraduates lived there or had lodgings in town until 1833 when the first dormitory, East College, was built. Over the next century and a half Princeton built 40 dormitories, three of which were subsequently razed (East College in 1896, Upper Pyne in 1963 and Reunion Hall in 1965) and three of which were converted to other uses (Lower Pyne in 1950, 1979 Hall and West College in the 1960s). Over the last 30 years Princeton has built additional dormitories, while also razing five that were constructed in the 1960s as what was known as the New New Quad. While most undergraduate housing was originally built to serve as dormitories, Forbes College is a former hotel; the 2 Dickinson co-op is a former private home; and Spelman Halls were built in the 1970s to provide apartment-style living.

In 1804 the college’s dining room and kitchen were moved from Nassau Hall to Philosophical Hall (the current site of Chancellor Green), and in 1834 a second refectory
was built on William Street to offer board at a cheaper rate ($1.50 rather than $2 a week). The college spent as little as possible on food, and there was significant student dissatisfaction. Beginning in 1843, students were permitted to take their meals with local families, and in 1855 the college discontinued food service entirely, forcing all students to make dining arrangements in town.

With extracurricular activities prohibited except for the Whig and Clio literary societies, students expressed considerable interest in Greek-letter fraternities, which arrived at Princeton in 1843 with the founding of a chapter of Beta Theta Pi. Though these groups remained unofficial, within a few years 12 fraternities had Princeton chapters. Wary of their small size, cliquishness and (especially in this pre-Civil War era) their division of the student body along sectional lines, the trustees and faculty voted in 1853 to ban fraternities. Beginning in 1855, all undergraduates were required to pledge that they would not join one while at the college. Despite the ban, a few fraternities operated in secret until 1875, when the identification and suspension of 50 fraternity members effectively eliminated all remnants of the system. The required pledge remained in place until the late 1930s when the writers of Princeton’s rule book decided that it had become moot and no longer needed to be stated.

With the elimination of campus dining options and the prohibition of fraternities, students from all four classes began taking their meals in boardinghouses in town. These arrangements came to be known as eating clubs, and by 1876 there were 25 of them, although few lasted more than a few years. Over time more formal arrangements for juniors and seniors took root, beginning in 1879 with Ivy Club, and eventually a system of independently owned and operated clubs grew up along and near Prospect Avenue, reaching a high point of 18 clubs shortly after World War I with more than 90 percent of juniors and seniors as members.

As upperclass clubs flourished in the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, the phenomenon of freshman and sophomore clubs faded. The college acquired the short-lived University Hotel (on the corner of Nassau Street and University Place) in the mid-1880s, renamed and converted the building to “University Hall,” and began to serve regular meals in “Commons.” All freshmen ate their meals on this site by 1906, joined two years later by all sophomores.

In 1907 University President Woodrow Wilson proposed to eliminate the eating clubs and replace them with undergraduate colleges. He envisioned a system in which a group of dormitories with a central dining hall and other social facilities would be self-governed and presided over by a faculty master with other resident faculty. The plan was rejected by the trustees and through the first half of the 20th century most freshman and sophomore dining and social life took place on campus while most juniors and seniors ate and socialized at the clubs. (During this period there were significant restraints on the occasions when freshmen and first-semester sophomores could be at the clubs.)

In the late 1960s a special trustee committee recommended the creation of a variety of dining and social alternatives, partly in response to the growing diversity of the undergraduate student body that began in the aftermath of World War II. From the end of the war until 1959, Prospect Club (on the current site of the Center for Jewish Life)
operated as a student-led co-op. In 1957 a group of upperclassmen established the Woodrow Wilson Lodge in one of the halls of Commons (Madison Hall) as a nonselective alternative to membership in an eating club; in 1961 it moved to the new Wilcox Hall as the Woodrow Wilson Society; and in 1968 it evolved into Princeton’s first four-year residential college. In 1969 the University reopened the former Court and Key and Seal clubs as Stevenson Hall, a nonselective University-operated dining and social facility for juniors and seniors with a faculty master; in 1972 membership was extended to sophomores and a kosher kitchen was added. In the fall of 1969 the University created the Madison Society, which allowed juniors and seniors to eat breakfast in Wilcox, lunch at Commons and dinner on the top floor of New South. In 1970 the University converted and expanded the former Princeton Inn to create Princeton’s second four-year residential college, later renamed Forbes College.

In the early 1980s the University created a system of five two-year residential colleges (Butler, Forbes, Mathey, Rockefeller, Wilson) to house, feed and provide social facilities for all freshmen and sophomores. The colleges largely utilized existing dormitories and dining halls, with the major exception being the construction of Wu Hall as the social and dining facility for Butler. In 2007 the residential college system was increased to six colleges with the opening of the entirely new Whitman College, and revamped so that three of the colleges (Butler, Mathey and Whitman) would enroll students from all four classes. (Each of the four-year colleges is paired with one of the two-year colleges.) At the same time a new director of student life position was added to each of the six colleges to help students build a greater sense of community and enhance the residential and social experience of the college. A shared meal plan program was developed under which all of the eating clubs offer some of their members the option of living in one of the four-year colleges and taking meals in both the college and the club. Even juniors and seniors who do not live in the colleges or have shared meal plans are permitted two meals per week in the colleges at no additional cost, and all juniors and seniors receive nondepartmental academic advising in their college.

The 2000s saw several other developments that reshaped on-campus social and residential life. One was the opening of the Frist Campus Center in 2000, after nearly a century of calls for the creation of such a facility that would provide recreational and dining facilities open to all four undergraduate classes as well as graduate students, faculty, staff and visitors to the campus. Another was the conversion of Campus Club from an independent eating club to a University-managed but student-programmed non-dining recreational, social and meeting space open to all undergraduates and graduate students. A third was the relocation of the Carl Fields Center and Community House into the expanded and thoroughly renovated former Elm Club at 58 Prospect Ave. There also was a growth in student interest in dining co-ops, two of which are located on campus and one of which is immediately off-campus on Dickinson Street.

Certainly the most profound change in on-campus residential and social life in the modern era occurred in the fall of 1969 when Princeton began admitting women undergraduates. After one year of housing all women undergraduates in one dormitory (Pyne Hall), women were permitted to select rooms throughout the campus. Coeducation dramatically changed social life on campus (gone were the days of busing in women en
masse from other colleges for major dances) and at the clubs. By the end of 1970 nine of the then-existing 13 clubs were coeducational, and by the early 1990s all were. Coeducation shifted the dynamic of Prospect Avenue from one in which women were present only on designated party weekends to one in which women and men ate and socialized together throughout the week. Coeducation quickly led to the demise of the longstanding practice of prohibiting freshmen and first-term sophomores from being on “the Street” (Prospect Avenue) and at the clubs, which in turn led to freshman and sophomore social life, in addition to junior and senior social life, largely revolving around the clubs.

The creation of a residential college system for all freshmen and sophomores in the 1980s had the effect of housing underclass students in dormitories that excluded juniors and seniors, except for a handful of resident advisers. The change in the New Jersey drinking age from 18 to 19 in 1980 and then to 21 in 1983 led to the closing of a popular 10-year-old on-campus pub, which meant that essentially all drinking in larger settings took place at the clubs or in dormitory spaces of adequate size. Both the creation of residential colleges and the increase in the drinking age seem to have contributed to the reintroduction to Princeton of fraternities, and then sororities, in the 1980s. In 1982 William Robinson ’51 wrote a column in the Princeton Alumni Weekly advocating the return of fraternities, and he worked with others to encourage national fraternities and sororities to establish Princeton chapters. In 1983 the trustees denied official recognition to the organizations, but by 1993 there were 18 unofficial Greek organizations enrolling about 15 percent of the student body, a percentage that has remained fairly constant.

While it was initially suggested that fraternities and sororities would be of particular interest to students who were unfamiliar with Princeton’s social structure and traditions, in time it became clear that they were attracting many students who entered Princeton with a desire to join a particular eating club with which a particular fraternity or sorority was associated, thus creating a pipeline relationship between some of the fraternities and sororities and some of the clubs.

**Data on Options and Satisfaction**

All freshmen and sophomores are required to live on campus and have University dining contracts. Incoming students are assigned randomly to rooms in one of the six residential colleges. For sophomore year they select their own room, but they must remain in the same college.

For junior and senior years, students may live and eat in the four-year colleges; this includes students who serve as residential college advisers (RCAs) and students with “shared meal plans” who as eating club members take meals both in the college and at their club. Most juniors and seniors live in upperclass dormitories that are not associated with a residential college; these students may take their meals at an eating club, purchase a University meal plan, join one of three co-ops where students cook for each other or be “independent” with no meal plan. Students who wish to cook for themselves have the option of living in the apartment-style suites in Spelman Halls. Juniors and seniors who do not live in the colleges are permitted two meals per week in the colleges at no cost, and many students take advantage of this option.
Table 1 shows the number of juniors and seniors who have elected the various options during spring room selection over the past four years. (The parenthetical numbers for juniors and seniors in the colleges show RCAs.) Students with shared meal plans are listed both as students in clubs and students in colleges. Some students in Spelman are also listed as students in clubs since some four-person groups in Spelman include a mix of independents and club members. Independents in Spelman and students in co-ops are also included as independents. Preliminary data for this year suggests that the distribution of students seems to be stabilizing, with some reduced interest in independent status and some increased interest in co-ops and University meal plans.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living and Dining Options for Juniors and Seniors</th>
<th>9/07</th>
<th>9/08</th>
<th>9/09</th>
<th>9/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors in Clubs</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>1,649</td>
<td>1,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors in Colleges</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Juniors/Seniors in Colleges Who Are Also RCAs)</td>
<td>(103)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(97)</td>
<td>(86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meal Plans</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors in Spelman</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors in Dorms with Meal Plan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors in Co-ops</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors/Seniors Independent</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In its review of on-campus undergraduate social life, the working group was aware that significant change has occurred in recent years. Just since the current senior class of 2011 arrived in the fall of 2007, the size of the undergraduate student body has increased by 6 percent (from 4,845 to 5,149); the four-year residential college system has been implemented with the opening of Whitman College (2007) and the new Butler College (2009); new dining options have been introduced (the shared meal plans and a new co-op); Campus Club opened as a University-managed facility and the Carl Fields Center

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1 When four-year colleges were first proposed, it was anticipated that the number of juniors and seniors in the colleges — not counting RCAs — would roughly equal the additional number of juniors and seniors (roughly 150 per class, or a total of 300) in the larger classes that are now being admitted. This meant that the introduction of four-year colleges was not expected to result in a significant reduction in the number of students in the clubs. The number of juniors and seniors in the colleges is higher than initially expected because of the introduction of shared meal plans, which adds students to the colleges who are also in clubs. After subtracting RCAs and students on shared meal plans, the number of juniors and seniors in the colleges this year is 252.
moved into a new location at 58 Prospect Ave. (both in 2009); and there has been an increased emphasis on internationalization, including expanded study abroad options and introduction of the Bridge Year Program. Even the Frist Campus Center, now a mainstay of undergraduate social and extracurricular life, has just this year celebrated its 10th anniversary.

We note this to make the point that both residential and social life on campus are continuing to evolve as students figure out how best to relate to the options now available to them. To get an idea of just how many social events for undergraduates take place each year (apart from social events organized or sponsored by the eating clubs or other outside organizations), under whose sponsorship, and where, we asked the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students and the Frist Center staff to analyze the events that took place in calendar year 2010. They found that 2,337 events took place; the overwhelming majority were sponsored by student organizations or the residential colleges; and by far the single most utilized location was Frist. In one of her President’s Pages last fall in the Princeton Alumni Weekly, President Tilghman commended the “10 staff and 80 to 100 students [who] provide the energy and creativity that enable Frist to operate up to 20 hours a day and around the clock during reading and exam times.” She cited Fristfest, “which celebrates the end of the academic year with entertainment, games, and abundant food and drink,” and Winterval, which marks the holiday season, and she noted that the 17-member Center Stage Student Program Board that directs much of Frist’s programming was conducting a comprehensive user survey to ensure that Frist continues to be responsive to the needs and interests of its users. We join in commending the staff and student leadership at Frist for the central role they play in on-campus social life for undergraduates, as well as for graduate students, faculty, staff and campus visitors.

In a meeting last fall with Vice Provost for Institutional Research Jed Marsh and in several follow-up discussions, the working group examined at some length the available data on undergraduate satisfaction with selected aspects of campus life (drawn mostly from senior surveys that are conducted every year just prior to graduation and get very high response rates). The basic message is clear: Overall levels of satisfaction are high (and generally higher than at other institutions) and where there is dissatisfaction, in large measure it does not correlate with any specific demographic factor or living arrangement. In other words, while we found areas for improvement, we did not discover any definable group that is not having a meaningful and rewarding social life at Princeton.

As Figure 1 indicates, roughly 80 percent of all seniors said they were generally satisfied or highly satisfied with social life on campus. (Almost 90 percent said they were generally or highly satisfied with their educational experience.)
Similarly high percentages of seniors were generally or highly satisfied with their residential college experience during freshman and sophomore year (see Figure 2), irrespective of what living and dining choices they made for junior and senior years.

**Figure 1**

Overall Satisfaction with Campus Life

Overall Satisfaction with Undergraduate Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satisfaction with Social Life on Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data drawn from surveys of Princeton University seniors administered by the Office of the Provost/Institutional Research.

**Figure 2**

The Residential College Experience During Freshman and Sophomore Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living and Dining Choice</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective Club (n=365)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in Club (n=215)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential College (n=90)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meal (n=73)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm &amp; Dining Plan (n=38)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op (n=38)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (n=200)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data drawn from surveys of Princeton University seniors administered by the Office of the Provost/Institutional Research.
When asked about their satisfaction with residential college life during their junior and senior years (see Figure 3), seniors who lived in the colleges were reasonably satisfied, while seniors who did not live in the colleges either expressed low levels of satisfaction or, mostly, termed the question not applicable.

When asked about their upperclass dorm living experience (see Figure 4), seniors gave it high marks whether they ate at the clubs, had University dining plans, ate at co-ops or were independent.
When asked about social life on campus (see Figure 5), seniors who were not in eating clubs clearly expressed less satisfaction than students in clubs, and the satisfaction level of seniors in residential colleges without shared meal plans falls below 60 percent. We believe these lower levels of satisfaction deserve further exploration and we hope to address them with some of the recommendations we make later in our report. On the other hand, when asked about social activities in the colleges themselves (see Figure 6), more than 70 percent of seniors in the colleges express high degrees of satisfaction.

**Figure 5**

**Social Life on Campus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective Club (n=360)</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in Club (n=215)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential College (n=30)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meal (n=73)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm &amp; Dining Plan (n=38)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op (n=38)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (n=302)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data drawn from surveys of Princeton University seniors administered by the Office of the Provost/Institutional Research

**Figure 6**

**Social Activities in the Residential Colleges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Generally Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective Club (n=360)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in Club (n=215)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential College (n=30)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meal (n=73)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm &amp; Dining Plan (n=38)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op (n=38)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (n=200)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data drawn from surveys of Princeton University seniors administered by the Office of the Provost/Institutional Research
We want to close this section with one final graph, which indicates the percentage of seniors in different categories who felt out of place socially often or most of the time (see Figure 7). While the percentages among students in eating clubs were relatively low, for students in co-ops they were 27 percent; for students who were independent 32 percent; for students living in residential colleges 35 percent; and for students living in upperclass dorms and purchasing University meal plans 41 percent.

**Figure 7**

*During the Current School Year How Often Have You Felt Out of Place Socially*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective Club (n=360)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-in Club (n=215)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential College (n=90)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meal (n=73)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm &amp; Dining Plan (n=38)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op (n=38)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (n=200)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data drawn from surveys of Princeton University seniors administered by the Office of the Provost/Institutional Research

**Goals Regarding Undergraduate On-Campus Social and Residential Life**

In its undergraduate admission process, Princeton University looks carefully at two sets of characteristics. One set focuses on academic qualifications and capacities, while the other encompasses extracurricular activities, leadership potential and a broad range of personal qualities. Both sets of characteristics are important because while Princeton is first and foremost an academic institution, it also cares deeply about developing each student’s non-academic interests and talents and preparing students to live healthy, productive and meaningful lives that include opportunities for leadership and service to others.
Residential Life

Because of the importance it attaches to the residential experience, Princeton requires all freshmen and sophomores to live on campus in one of the six residential colleges, and it provides housing for all juniors and seniors who wish to live on campus, as almost all do. One of the core goals of the University’s recent campus planning project was the preservation of “walkability” as a defining feature of the Princeton campus, in part to sustain its strongly residential character, which in turn sustains a strong sense of family among Princeton students, and later in life among Princeton alumni. One student said on our website: “I think Princeton should keep itself a compact, walkable campus; proximity creates a lot of social opportunities.”

The introduction of the residential college system, and its recent expansion to include four-year colleges, was intended to provide all freshmen and sophomores, along with interested juniors and seniors, not only with housing and dining, but with guidance and resources to help them take the fullest advantage of all that Princeton has to offer. Juniors and seniors outside of the colleges are provided with an array of choices that let them shape their upperclass residential experiences.

Through all four years Princeton provides a diverse array of extracurricular activities and organizations, athletic teams, opportunities to engage in cultural and artistic expression and the spiritual dimensions of life, opportunities to get to know and socialize with students from a broad range of backgrounds and interests, and opportunities to practice the skills of citizenship and service to others.

• The residential experience is intended both to create a strong sense of community, collaboration and mutual respect, and to support individual initiative and personal growth. As one student said: “The University should be focused on helping students reach their full potential and really figure out what they love.”

• It aims to help students develop such core values as honesty, integrity and fairness, and to encourage creativity, curiosity, collegiality, resourcefulness, a capacity for leadership and a sense of responsibility for their own well-being and the well-being of others.

Social Life

Social interactions allow students to learn from and about each other; develop important life skills; and enhance their health and well-being. In providing students with opportunities for social life, the University’s goals include the following:

• Help students develop as intellectual and social beings who have the skills necessary to build a sense of community and shared experience and to live a balanced life; this requires an ability to play as well as an ability to work.

• Help students develop a sense of connectedness with each other and with the larger community in which they live; connectedness can lead to positive health outcomes and help create a constructive and optimistic outlook on life. As one
student said: “I think the University’s overall goal should be to create a caring, loving campus community.”

- Encourage students to get to know other students from backgrounds unlike their own and experience new perspectives in a safe space and in a context of shared values and aspirations. As one student said: “It is possible to celebrate diversity while also fostering unity.”

- Help students see the world through the eyes of others and develop the empathy that is necessary to be able to understand their needs and motivations. If students are going to make significant contributions as citizens and community leaders, they will need to be able to demonstrate this empathy, work collaboratively with others, and communicate effectively outside of work settings.

- Provide an outlet from the pressure of academic life; part of life is making time to be refreshed and have fun. As one student said: “Princeton is such a stressful environment — many students focus so heavily on academics that it’s hard to make time for fun.”

- Foster friendships and support systems. As one student said: “There is inherent value in sharing the presence of another person.” Another said: “Sometimes it feels like we are just here to take advantage of Princeton instead of to enjoy living and interacting with each other.”

**From the Website**

Several students and alumni captured these goals well in the suggestions they made through our website. We would like to conclude this section of our report with their thoughts:

- “The University should provide a safe, comfortable and beautiful environment which encourages healthy lifestyles (such as walking and biking), conversation (such as easy meal exchange between on-campus choices and the Street), informal gatherings and student-driven activities (lots of performance spaces, practice rooms, etc.). Outside areas to play, relax and study are important too.”

- “I think the goals for social and residential life should be about creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, to prepare students for life beyond the University, and also to provide a social network that ensures that they have support and guidance and the strength of community. I also think that there must be an expectation of responsible, thoughtful, engaged participation for all campus community members in the social life of the campus.”

- “I think the University’s overall goals should be continuing to emphasize diversity and promoting a heterogeneous experience for students, as opposed to one dominant experience that students can feel left out of.”
• “Please, please, please find some way to soften this notion of ‘work hard, party hard’ where students seem to engage in risky behaviors in order to counterbalance their intense studies. Swinging between extremes is simply not healthy, mentally or physically.”

Observations and Recommendations: Social and Residential Life

In our focus groups and through our website we heard again and again what the survey data cited earlier told us: Princeton students by and large give high marks to the residential experience of living on the Princeton campus; take full advantage of the extracurricular opportunities available to them (and, in some cases, create new organizations to pursue interests that are not being met); and like many aspects of on-campus social life. The residential colleges elicit a broad spectrum of views, and many students have suggestions to improve the experience in the freshman year, as well as to more fully engage sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Throughout the submissions and conversations of this past year there were a number of recurring themes. We would like to begin this section by citing three of them.

Connections Across Classes

One major theme was an intense desire by entering students to have opportunities to get to know sophomores as well as juniors and seniors who can share with them the insights of their Princeton experiences and provide access to a broad range of opportunities, organizations and activities. Some students make these connections with upperclass students through athletic teams or other extracurricular organizations, but even these students frequently are eager to broaden their associations. Students who don’t make these connections through established mechanisms worry that they will miss out on important elements of the Princeton experience — or will learn about them too late to take advantage of them. Some students make these connections through fraternities and sororities, and we will return to that topic later in our report.

In seeking connections with older classes, students seem to be looking for a range of perspectives, but in some cases they also have a more pragmatic desire to gain access to passes that allow them to attend parties at the eating clubs. We believe it would be healthy to moderate the demand for club passes by increasing the range of social options on campus (as we propose in this report), but we also believe it would be desirable for the clubs to broaden the range of students who can obtain passes.

Unstructured Socializing

Many of the suggestions we received, and many of the recommendations we make below, involve structured activities. As important as these are, many students also emphasized the importance of relieving stress and building friendships through unstructured and unplanned socializing, ranging from “shooting the breeze” or watching TV to building impromptu snow sculptures and sliding on a tray down the Whitman hill after a snow storm. They encouraged the University to provide spaces in the dorms and colleges where
students can gather comfortably and informally, and to send a clear message that taking time off to relax, reflect and refresh; hang out with friends; and have fun is not only acceptable, but healthy and desirable. Some students suggested that the University declare an annual “snow day” whether it snows or not to provide students with a forced and unanticipated day off.

We think there is merit in the University sanctioning an annual “snow day” as part of an effort to create a culture in which social improvisation is valued and not everything is planned in advance. While the annual dodgeball tournament is certainly structured, many students cited it as an occasion that, at least for a day, gives students “permission” to “just have fun.” The tournament has become the signature Alcohol Initiative (alcohol-free) event, organized by students for students from every constituency. We encourage all with responsibility for undergraduate social and residential life to consider strategies and incentives to encourage, facilitate and reinforce the positive benefits of making time for recreation and having fun, in unstructured as well as structured ways.

A Broader Sense of Community

The third recurring theme was a lament from many students that they don’t experience a campus-wide, or sometimes even class-wide, sense of community at Princeton, or the level of “school spirit” they believe exists at other schools. As one student said: “Princeton does not have a sense of campus community.”

In some ways this is a surprising observation on a campus whose alumni are justly noted for maintaining a strong sense of identification with Princeton throughout their lives, returning to Reunions each year in extraordinary numbers, and marching in a P-rade that reinforces the powerful sense of community with which students leave the campus. Many students say that while they appreciate connections to their friends, teams, organizations, clubs, etc., they feel an absence of bonding experiences that extend across entire classes or the entire undergraduate population. As one student said: “I like that there are so many different groups, eating clubs, events ... literally something for everyone, from the hermit to the crazy extrovert.” But another student said: “We need more common experiences, other than senior theses and writing seminars, experiences that we voluntarily take part in and that we are all passionate about.”

When asked for examples of what is missing, students cite higher levels of attendance at major athletic events at other schools, and a few cited the magical experience of the Princeton bonfire in the recently rare years when the football team defeats both Harvard and Yale. (Perhaps other rare occasions also could serve as sufficient reason to have a campus-wide bonfire, such as both men’s and women’s basketball teams playing in the NCAA tournament in the same year!) Some cited the Pre-rade (the procession from the University Chapel through FitzRandolph Gate to Alexander Beach following Opening Exercises) as an example of what they had in mind, and others pointed to the way the dodgeball tournament captures the imagination (and participation) of the entire campus.

We think there is something to be said for providing more campus-wide or class-wide social experiences, and we turn to this topic as we now make recommendations in the following areas:
• larger-scale events;
• smaller-scale events;
• relationships across the classes;
• life in the colleges;
• residential college advisers and Outdoor Action/Community Action groups;
• orientation and Princeton Preview.

Larger-Scale Events

We begin this section of our report by acknowledging that many social events occur on campus every year and some of them are very popular. If there is a single most popular event, it appears to be the annual dodgeball tournament in which thousands of undergraduates (as well as some graduate students and members of the faculty and staff) compete under the banners of numerous organizations, including some created specifically to participate in this all-day (and into the early morning hours) event. Concerts on Prospect Avenue during lawnparties (fall) and houseparties (spring) get high marks, and in terms of on-campus events, the Pre-rade seems to have become increasingly popular each year as more non-freshmen participate, and a number of students commented favorably on Fristfest.

Many students almost waxed poetic in their testimonials to the Undergraduate Student Government’s University Film Organization (UFO) program that provides free late-night movies (with free popcorn and soda) at the Garden Theater on Nassau Street and at venues on campus. Students particularly liked the regularity and predictability of this program, and the fact that one can feel comfortable attending alone or with friends, and deciding at the last minute. They thought that one of the attractions is that it is the kind of socializing they would do “in real life” — it is a way they have fun at home — and thus it is important that at least some of the films are shown at the Garden. Some students suggested similar regular trips to local bowling alleys. Other on-campus activities that students commended included intramural athletics; free skating at Baker Rink; the recently introduced program of Late Thursdays at the Art Museum when the museum stays open until 10 p.m. and offers amenities like live music and food; the home-baked cookies and relaxed atmosphere of the Murray-Dodge Café (“dedicated to the fine art of being open”); and Outdoor Action’s rock climbing wall at Princeton Stadium.

While many students suggested additional social activities targeted at specific audiences, such as members of a particular college, class or interest group, one recurring theme was the desire for more University-wide experiences, and especially for one or two more “big signature events” that cross all four classes. They suggested and we agree that a robust on-campus social structure would include many college-based events (some for all four classes and some attracting students from other colleges) and many “niche” events, but also would include some large events. Toward this end we offer the following observations and recommendations:
• There seems to be widespread interest in having at least one additional major concert each year with headliner talent. This was affirmed this past year when McCarter Theatre booked Trey Anastasio, formerly of the rock band Phish, into Richardson Auditorium, and student interest far exceeded the ticket supply. The working group would like to see greater use of Princeton Stadium and Weaver Track, and wondered if these sites could serve as attractive outdoor venues for such concerts.

• There was also interest in one or more on-campus, all-student dances each year, sponsored by the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) or other student organizations. One student wrote: “I wish they had more USG-sponsored parties. At my old school, we called the student council-hosted parties ‘mixers’ (because people mix and mingle I guess). We would have a few mixers during the year with different themes (’80s, jungle, futuristic, etc.), food, decorations and music. The parties were never super elaborate and didn’t require an enormous budget ... but they were still fun chances to socialize. And they were open to everyone.” Historically Princeton had such dances, sponsored by the Daily Princetonian, the junior class and other organizations. These events could provide opportunities for dancing and socializing that now are almost entirely provided only by the eating clubs.

• The working group was pleased to learn about a plan this spring for a “battle of the bands” along with a campus-wide picnic during one of the weekends for Princeton Preview, the annual hosting program for admitted students and their families. This seemed an excellent opportunity to bring students from all over campus together in the early days of spring for festivity and fellowship, while also addressing one of the concerns about the Preview that we discuss below. Unfortunately the plan did not materialize, but we encourage similar initiatives in the coming years.

• If a battle of the bands, showcasing Princeton talent, occurred during Preview it could become a “signature event” — something that becomes uniquely identified with Princeton. We encourage the development of one or two other signature events each year, along with such current events as the Pre-rade and the dodgeball tournament, and in the case of the Pre-rade we wonder whether adding a concert/dance to the end of the dinner would encourage even greater interaction among freshmen and between freshmen and students in the other classes. Another thought we had for a signature event would be an annual “birthday party” complete with music, dancing and a special cake. Princeton was founded on Oct. 22, and that could be an excellent time of year for such a party.

• Other suggestions regarding campus-wide events included encouraging more attendance at athletic events (several commentators noted the “Jadwin Jungle” era when students in specially designed T-shirts regularly attended men’s basketball games in Jadwin Gym); holding at least one additional campus-wide social event in the fall when freshmen are still learning how to navigate
Princeton socially; and, as one student put it: “There need to be more random fun campus-wide games like assassin or capture the flag or paintball.”

- In planning for large-scale events on campus, some students asked whether special efforts should be made to encourage multiple sponsors to take into account a broad range of interests and perspectives.

**Smaller-Scale Events**

Most social life does not occur in large or University-wide settings, and one of the strengths of Princeton is the ability of students to find a niche and then create an event or organization to cater to their interest. Some years ago a Princeton admission video cited an entering student who wanted to create a Go Club; he did, and it continues to attract students and others who enjoy playing this ancient Chinese board game. Similarly, several years ago students took the initiative in organizing a Quidditch match and, within a year, the residential colleges were competing in an on-campus tournament and Princeton students were traveling to Middlebury College to compete on a “national” basis. For many students, social life revolves around their extracurricular activities, and we encourage the University to continue to work with students to support a broad range of interests. There are also a number of social activities in the colleges, such as Wilson’s Black Box, that have attracted campus-wide followings, and we encourage the colleges to provide more of these kinds of opportunities. Princeton clearly offers students a wide range of social options, and as one student said: “I like having more options than time to explore them all.”

At the same time, a number of concerns were expressed and suggestions put forward, including the following:

- There was an interest in more events designed to increase bonding within each class.
  - Some students suggested more social events for freshmen, especially in the fall, as they are getting to know each other. Suggestions included freshman class dances (“the freshman formal at Colonial is awesome”) or a freshman class concert during or shortly after orientation week. Students pointed out that after orientation week, freshmen don’t see each other as a group; even within the colleges they don’t, since they can eat at any dining hall.

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2 One student wrote the following: “My typical social month involves going to the Street once or twice a week, going to see a movie at the Garden Theater on a Friday night, and hanging out with my friends on some Thursday nights. I’ll throw in some random events too, like a dance show or late night skate night (which I think is a really good idea and I love the posters). ... To enhance it, it’d be great to have a place where a good deal of people routinely hang out, where something was routinely happening. ... Recently it seems like the residential colleges have been holding bigger and bolder events, like Casino Night, Roaring ’20s night, etc.”
Some students suggested more class-wide programming for sophomores. One student said: “The sophomores are not a part of an eating club yet and are quite frankly ignored by the residential colleges. Why don’t we have class unity assemblies like at the beginning of freshman year?”

Junior year introduces the challenge of meeting the social needs of students who don’t live in the colleges or join an eating club. As one student said: “Once junior year hits, there are two main types of entertainment at Princeton: the Street or video games. If you enjoy neither, tough luck.” While we don’t think this is a fair characterization, we do want to say more in a moment about upperclass students who are not in colleges or clubs.

Seniors also expressed interest in more activities that bring them together as a class prior to the end-of-year events associated with Reunions and Commencement. One student said: “Pub Night at Winberie’s and karaoke at Ivy Inn have been great variations to the social scene as a senior when the Street starts to get a little old.” Another also commented on the Pub Night: “The best social experience that I have had in recent memory is our Senior Pub Night. It was great to feel like we were bonding as a class and to see people who I might have lost touch with. The best part of the night was that a large portion of the class was in a room that was rented out solely for our benefit, and the space itself encouraged conversation as opposed to passing chitchat.”

As already suggested, there was considerable interest in providing better support for juniors and seniors who are not in the colleges or clubs. Some suggested greater outreach to these students from the colleges. Some suggested group shopping trips, independent study breaks and better community/social spaces in the upperclass dorms to facilitate social gatherings of students who live in those dorms. One of the defining characteristics of Princeton is that many juniors and seniors live in two social circles: their “club friends” and their “dorm friends.” While there are ample opportunities for club friends to socialize, it is much more difficult for dorm friends to do so. Finally, some suggested continuing efforts to improve Campus Club’s attractiveness to these students.

One student focused on the importance of “hang out space” for students who are not in an eating club: “I’m talking about an enormous room somewhere, preferably centrally located, with crazy amounts of comfortable seating and free food and drinks. Mathey’s new Writers Studio is close to what I mean but it’s tiny and only open a few hours a day. Murray-Dodge is fairly close to what I’m thinking of, but it’s not comfy enough and also has limited hours. The Lewis Library is actually pretty close, but you can’t eat in there. Some of us need a homey place to be ... and preferably unstaffed with round-the-clock hours. Eating clubs have those. ... Ever consider that lonely people who aren’t in clubs might also like to see a friendly face at 4 a.m.? ” (The University has been adding
lounges to dormitories as a way to encourage more unstructured conversation and down time.)

- Some students suggested that the University and student organizations could do more to encourage engagement in community service as a way for students to interact with each other socially and break away from the rigors of academic life while also contributing to the well-being of others. One specific suggestion was to hold a mass volunteering event to benefit a neighboring community. Interestingly, in cooperation with the Pace Center, the eating clubs sponsored just such a mass volunteering event this spring to benefit the Food Justice Foundation in Trenton, and a group of students on campus organized a Relay for Life event during which 46 registered teams of students raised more than $23,000 for the American Cancer Society.

- Recognizing the competitive nature of many Princeton students but also the importance of making time to play, there were a number of suggestions to organize more activities around games and other competitions, such as scavenger hunts. There were a number of suggestions to increase on-campus social programming after 10 p.m. and to offer more opportunities for social engagement outside of Thursday and Saturday nights. Some students asked whether Murray-Dodge, the International Festival and Communiversity could engage more students.

- Finally, some students expressed great appreciation for the large and growing array of arts-related performances on campus and the many opportunities to experience performances drawn from cultures other than their own. They also expressed the hope that as the University’s commitment to the arts expands, there will be even more programming that takes full advantage of the remarkable artistic talent and cultural and demographic diversity of our campus. One event that illustrates that diversity is the annual “This Is Princeton” evening of performances, and several students encouraged much greater publicity for that event so more students will know about it.

**Relationships Across the Classes**

While many alumni acknowledge the multiple benefits of residential colleges, they lament the lost opportunity for all freshmen to share the same dining experience at Commons and to live in dorms that include students from all four classes. Freshmen frequently talk about two competing desires: to get to know more of their classmates, but also to get to know the sophomores in their colleges and to get to know upperclass students early in their Princeton careers. As indicated earlier, students express a keen desire to learn the ropes from upperclass students, and to engage with them in ways that open doors to campus organizations and the eating clubs. This desire on the part of freshmen for mentoring by upperclass students that goes well beyond their relationships with their residential college advisers (RCAs) was cited recently by the committee that looked at issues related to women and leadership. We accept that mentoring and acculturation by upperclass students may be especially important for women, but we
found the desire for these kinds of cross-class connections to be pervasive and strongly felt among men as well as women.

As stated earlier, we believe there is merit in finding additional opportunities beyond orientation week to bring freshmen together as a class. In this section we want to make several recommendations designed to address students’ strong interest in getting to know students in the classes ahead of them, and to benefit from those interactions in making choices about academic, extracurricular and social options.

- We support efforts already under way to strengthen the four-year affiliation with their residential colleges of juniors and seniors who don’t live in the colleges past sophomore year. This is especially important in the two-year colleges, which don’t have juniors and seniors in residence. The policies that allow all juniors and seniors to eat two meals a week at the colleges at no additional cost and that keep juniors and seniors connected to nondepartmental advisers in the colleges are helpful starting points.

  - We suggest thinking about a plan under which all juniors and seniors would “go home” once a month to their colleges, with programming that either serves their needs or allows them while “home” to engage with current members of the college as mentors and guides. As one student said: “Providing events for upperclassmen, even if they no longer live there, would foster a sense of continued community that is now completely shut off after sophomore year.” Events that serve their needs could include wine and cheese gatherings with faculty and college staff, or workshops focused on such postgraduate life skills as searching for apartments, balancing budgets, paying taxes and achieving work-life balance.

  - We are told that many juniors and seniors use their former colleges as study spaces, with popular spaces including the libraries in Wilson, Rockefeller-Mathey and Whitman colleges. In addition, each college sponsors a “senior thesis boot camp” during which it provides space and food to seniors who sign up to work on their theses, particularly during spring break. It may make sense to think of more junior/senior study breaks in the colleges, with a special effort to attract independents who don’t have access to study spaces in the eating clubs.

- In a later section of this report we will discuss the role of the RCAs, but we wonder if there is a way to provide freshman RCA groups with one or two sophomore or upperclass students in addition to the RCA who serve as “sponsors” or guides in helping introduce the freshmen to other upperclass students and to campus social and extracurricular life. Princeton once had a “keyceptor” program that was intended to serve similar purposes. Each advisee group might have two such sponsors (one male, one female) whose principal responsibility is to host one or two dinners in the fall and talk about how to navigate the Princeton experience.
Finally, we would like to sketch out an idea that arose out of discussion about a program at Oxford University in which freshmen who live in a particular room on campus get together several times a year with all other students on campus who previously lived in that room. These “family dinners” would bring together students from multiple classes who would be likely to have quite different backgrounds and interests since the only common ground in bringing them together is that they have lived in a particular room (or corridor or entry way). We think a program along these lines is worth exploring—it would bring diverse groups of students together and it could be fun—and while it would require some administrative support to collect names and issue invitations, the cost of the program itself would be minimal since it could draw on the free meals provided to all juniors and seniors to cover the costs of the dinners.

Life in the Colleges

Overall, Princeton gets high marks for the quality of the residential experience, and students appreciate the many benefits provided by the residential colleges. We heard from many students who praised their college experience, but we also heard from many who suggested that whether because of size or architecture, and despite the best efforts of masters and staff, they perceive the colleges as aggregations of sleeping rooms, eating spaces and advisers that provide solid grounding for entering students to launch their Princeton careers, but don’t fully achieve their potential as holistic communities that create strong feelings of attachment, engagement and identification. While some social life takes place in the colleges—over meals, in dorm room parties, at study breaks, in common space conversations and at occasional special initiatives like the Wilson Black Box—the colleges are not thought of as places that put a high priority on social life or “fun.”

Two of the students who submitted comments to our website captured well one of the principal dilemmas that were cited by many who shared their thoughts with us. One student said: “Residential colleges seem like they’re making a sort of halfway effort to build a community. The way I see it, they should either stop trying to be a community and come together to foster events for the whole campus more effectively, or they should make a bigger effort to foster bonding within residential colleges and ‘zee’ (advisee) groups.” Another said: “I would like to see a bit more mixture between the colleges and at the same time a bit more exclusivity. Something like the College Olympics at the start of the year might be a good way to achieve something like this.”

We line up with the second student. On the one hand, we believe the colleges do need to schedule occasional (perhaps once weekly) meals and other events that are open only to college members as a way of creating a stronger sense of identification with the college. There is also much to be said for encouraging healthy competition among the colleges in intramurals, in events like scavenger hunts and in other ways. One student said: “There need to be more bonding things we do as a residential college. After freshman week we never really see each other since we’re eating all over the place.” Another said: “There is
no real reason for members of one residential college to feel as if they have more in common with each other than with members of a different residential college.”

At the same time, the colleges also need to have occasions when they reach out beyond their membership — to juniors and seniors and to students in other colleges — in sponsoring social activities and events that add to the overall robustness and richness of on-campus social life. We were surprised to learn that cross-college planning is uncommon, and we encourage both college staff and student leadership in the colleges to develop better mechanisms to share ideas and engage in joint planning with the other colleges — and perhaps with the eating clubs as well.

One student suggested that the colleges “become student-owned communities, in which sophomores feel connected to freshmen and upperclassmen.” In our view this student makes two important points. One is that programming in the colleges is more likely to appeal to students if students are heavily involved in the programming. The other is that college councils can provide excellent opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership, resourcefulness and creativity at an early stage in their Princeton careers, including especially in the sophomore year when they are making a number of decisions about their priorities in their remaining two years on campus.

Not surprisingly, many students commented on the importance of addressing the needs of juniors and seniors who elect to live in the colleges. One said: “The University should focus on improving residential college life for juniors and seniors choosing to stay in residential colleges. RCAs are considered cool upperclassmen, but being a non-RCA in a residential college doesn’t seem to be as ‘cool’ to people. Being an upperclassman in a residential college also seems to be an isolating experience. ... I think the University should address this by having community events targeted at juniors and seniors in the residential colleges.” One popular offering for upperclass students in the colleges are wine and cheese parties with the masters, some of which may be restricted to juniors and seniors currently in the colleges, but some of which may be open to previous college residents who now live in the upperclass dorms.

Some students suggested the University and the colleges do more to encourage students to take “time off.” One student said: “Perhaps there are ways the University could support and facilitate opportunities that closely approximate the tremendously important experience of just sitting around a room with friends, talking about nothing. For example, I know Rocky [Rockefeller College] just started offering small subsidies for ‘community events’ (like buying a cake for a hall-mate’s birthday). ... Spending quality time with other people can’t be ranked or prioritized as inferior to spending quality time with a textbook.”

We want to close this section by mentioning a number of other questions and concerns that we heard about the colleges:

- While freshman and sophomore membership in the colleges reflects the full diversity of the student body, in the junior and senior classes there are groups that are both significantly underrepresented and significantly overrepresented compared to their presence in the class. Among those overrepresented in the
colleges are women (58 percent in the colleges as compared to 50 percent in the class); Hispanic students (15 percent compared to 7 percent), international students (18 percent compared to 9 percent), and students who are first in their families to go to college (21 percent compared to 9 percent). Most significantly underrepresented in the colleges are white students, who constitute only 23 percent. (International students are also overrepresented as independents, also 18 percent compared to 9 percent.)

• Are they too large to develop a strong sense of community, and if so, should efforts be made to create subcommunities (or as one person put it, nests of communities) within the colleges, organized either around geography (particular dorms or entries) or shared interests?

• Is there a way to create greater comparability in experiences across colleges while retaining their individual identities and creativity?

• Is there a way for colleges to develop more “cool spaces,” including spaces that are open but feel intimate, and more of a sense that they are “living” communities where students are expected to develop friendships, enjoy themselves and have fun? One example cited was a college-wide “sleepover” in Whitman College where students were invited to stay overnight in the dining hall playing board games and engaging in other similar activities.

• Do colleges reach out effectively enough to freshmen prior to their arrival on campus, to begin creating identification with the colleges before students even arrive?

• Should there be more programming during holiday breaks for students who don’t or can’t leave campus?

RCAs and OA/CA Groups

Residential college advisers (RCAs) play critical roles in welcoming freshmen to Princeton and in conveying important (some say voluminous) information about Princeton’s structure, procedures and expectations. In general, students seem to appreciate their RCAs and like being assigned to zee groups with other freshmen, but many are looking for more from the program than the program delivers. The Outdoor Action (OA) and Community Action (CA) programs also get very high marks, but students ask whether more can be done to sustain the bonds formed in these intensive pre-orientation programs throughout their Princeton careers.

One specific question was whether there is a better way to integrate OA/CA groups and zee groups. Some suggested that all members of a zee group go together on an OA or CA program, while others thought one of the merits of the current arrangement is that through OA/CA groups freshmen get to know classmates in a range of colleges. Another question was whether OA/CA groups should get back together on occasion during the fall of freshman year to share experiences and seek guidance from the upperclass students who led their programs.
With respect to RCAs, two recurring questions were whether they should be asked to do more to build a sense of community in the colleges, and whether they should be asked to do more to introduce their zees to other upperclass students and Princeton’s social, recreational and extracurricular life. While many students reported positive interactions with their RCAs, they did not see their RCAs as meeting the desires they were expressing to get to know juniors and seniors and to benefit from the insights and experiences of students in those classes. In an earlier section of this report we suggest mechanisms to provide connections across classes separate from the RCA relationship, but in this section we want to at least raise the question of whether the RCA role should be somewhat recast to impose greater responsibility to integrate their zees into Princeton’s broader residential and social milieu.

Students also suggested that RCAs make more of an effort to interact with sophomores and to connect sophomores with the freshmen in their zee groups. (Butler College is conducting just such a pilot program next year.) They asked whether there might be merit in creating groupings of zee groups within each college that get together periodically as a way of giving freshmen exposure to another RCA or two beyond their own, and of creating bonds among freshmen at a level that is larger than a single zee group but smaller than the size of the overall college. Students also wondered whether zee groups should be brought back together on occasion in junior and senior years, again as part of a larger strategy to sustain ties between juniors and seniors and their colleges. Such a practice would also provide juniors and seniors with opportunities to renew connections with classmates who may have made different living and dining choices, and in so doing would reduce the compartmentalization that can develop in junior and senior years.

Finally, questions were asked about whether the dormitory assistants in the upperclass dorms, who currently have a building superintendent role, should be asked to play a role in building community in those dorms.

**Orientation and Princeton Preview**

Many students described their experiences as admitted students during Princeton Preview and their experiences as newly arrived students during freshman orientation in similar terms: They found both events heavily programmed with the transmittal of information, but strikingly short on experiences that create a sense of community or suggest that Princeton students enjoy an active social life or have fun. With respect to Princeton Preview, some students compared their Princeton experience with experiences at peer institutions, which they described as much less structured and much more enjoyable. One byproduct of the nature of Princeton’s programs is reaffirmation of the perspective that campus life at Princeton is serious, and for fun one needs to look to the clubs.

We agree with students who strongly encourage a revamping of both orientation and Princeton Preview to provide more time for bonding and for fun. (The Pre-rade and picnic that follows it are an exception to the general sense of seriousness that characterizes orientation.) In addition to shifting the equilibrium toward a bit more social interaction and fun during freshman orientation, we also believe it is important to find better opportunities during orientation and shortly thereafter to bring freshmen together
with upperclass students in ways that allow the upperclass students to share their insights and experiences very early in the Princeton careers of the entering students.

**Final Thoughts**

We would like to close this section with just a few final thoughts:

- Many students commented on the importance of late meals at Frist (meals offered in the campus center after regular dining hall hours), and noted that they are one of few occasions on campus that bring all four classes together. Some suggested that more upperclass students be permitted to take late meals at Frist.

- Several of the University’s goals regarding social and residential life focus on the importance of getting to know students from backgrounds unlike one’s own, experiencing new perspectives and seeing the world through the eyes of others. We encourage all responsible for social programming on campus and in the colleges to help the University achieve these goals.

- We want to note that many aspects of on-campus social life fall under the purview of the USG, class governments, college councils and other student organizations. We hope there will be student-initiated responses to the observations and recommendations we have made in this report, and we encourage the relevant administrative offices to make sure student organizations have the guidance and resources they need to contribute effectively to the improvement of on-campus social life.

- We don’t know exactly what to make of it, but we were struck in several of our conversations about the impact on social life of cell phones and texting. As others have observed, these technologies are a double-edged sword: they facilitate social life by making it easy for friends to stay in touch and make plans, but they also create technological isolation where students are so focused on electronic conversation that they fail to engage in direct conversation with those around them. One of the working group members, coach Susan Teeter, recounted her decision to prohibit cell phones and other electronic devices when the women’s swim team travels. In response to a question from the team about what they were supposed to do without access to these devices on their trips, her answer was: “Talk with each other.”

- One of the residential college activities that many students cited fondly was arrangements for trips to New York. While the focus of our work was on-campus social life, we would like to encourage more students to make greater use of the enormous social, cultural and intellectual resource that is New York. Transit back and forth is relatively easy by train, but there also may be occasions when chartered buses make sense. We also would encourage campus groups, including the colleges, to look into potentially attractive group rates at the Princeton Club of New York or other hotels for stays of two or three nights in New York during break periods, with programming that could revolve around theater, music, museums or many other activities.
• Finally, many students expressed strong approval of the many residential and social options that are available to students, but also expressed a desire for more guidance in how to make decisions among the many choices. We believe some of the answer is in doing a better job of connecting freshmen with upperclass students. But there also may be merit in doing more to assist sophomores as they make major academic, residential and social choices and in making sure that written materials and websites are as accurate, up-to-date and helpful as possible.

**Observations and Recommendations: Fraternities and Sororities**

We were asked to consider what the role of fraternities and sororities at Princeton is and should be. We brought to this question a broad range of personal experiences: Some members of the working group are or have been members of fraternities and sororities at Princeton and elsewhere (one even played a major leadership role), while others were learning about these organizations for the first time. We also brought to the question an awareness of Princeton’s history, which we summarized earlier in this report. Princeton was home to some of the earliest fraternity chapters in the country in the mid-1800s, and then for almost a century fraternities were banned at Princeton and the penalty for violation of the ban was expulsion.

Because of this history, a paradigm developed at Princeton where dining and social life in the junior and senior years revolved around the eating clubs, while freshmen and sophomore dining life revolved around the shared experience of Commons. In the 1980s a residential college system was established to provide freshmen and sophomores with more attractive dining options as well as opportunities to engage in community life within their colleges. Since the colleges focused on a student’s first two years and club membership did not begin until the spring semester of sophomore year, there was a natural progression from college life in the first two years to club life in the last two years. From the beginning of the residential college system there were some students who chose not to join the clubs, and the absence of enough attractive options for them led to the development of four-year colleges with spaces for juniors and seniors.

At most campuses with fully developed Greek systems, fraternities and sororities play roles that are generally comparable to Princeton’s eating clubs, but typically with a residential component. These campuses usually develop elaborate systems of oversight and governance (including self governance) for the Greek organizations, frequently in partnership with national offices that establish rules and procedures for chapters on individual campuses. Princeton, by contrast, has a “faux Greek” system that began to emerge in the mid-1980s with fraternities and sororities that are not officially recognized by the University, are not permitted to convene openly in campus space, and are not residential, but which nonetheless exist and by most measures, including senior surveys, seem to enroll about 15 percent of the undergraduate student body.

As best we can determine, there are three sororities at Princeton that enroll roughly 120 to 160 women each, for a total of about 450 women, and there is a small (fewer than 10 members) historically black sorority. One point made to us when we met with the leaders of the three large sororities is that among them they admit any freshman woman who is interested in joining a sorority and meets the requirements of rush. There are just under a
dozen fraternities, with memberships ranging from about 25 to 40, for a total of around 330. The fraternities vary enormously in the nature of their programming, with some making commitments to the traditional fraternity standards of leadership and service, but with others seemingly revolving largely around the use, and frequently the excessive or abusive use, of alcohol. Gatherings of the Greek organizations take place in the dormitory rooms of members; in other campus spaces under the cover of another organization’s sponsorship; in some of the eating clubs; and occasionally at off-campus locations.

Demographically, as shown in Figure 8 from the USG’s 2007 Committee on Background and Opportunity (COMBO) survey, white and higher income students are much more likely than other students to be in fraternities and sororities. From the senior surveys of the classes of 2009 and 2010, we know that 77 percent of sorority members and 73 percent of fraternity members were white; 30 percent of sorority members and 19 percent of fraternity members were children of alumni (legacies); and 69 percent of sorority members and 65 percent of fraternity members came from private high schools. Some 82 percent of sorority members and 68 percent of fraternity members were in the selective clubs.

![Figure 8: Greek Membership by Income, Ethnicity](image)

One of the lessons we have learned from polling data and comments on our website is that fraternities and sororities continue to be polarizing entities at Princeton. Some see fraternities and sororities as incongruous with Princeton’s distinctive social paradigm that revolves around colleges and clubs, while others argue that Greek organizations fill gaps and meet student needs that are not otherwise being met. Some focus on what they see as
the positive contributions these organizations make — or can make — to student life, while others focus on what one student described as their contributions to “social stratification, cliquishness, and high-risk drinking and hazing.” Many students fall squarely in a middle ground where they either have little awareness of the fraternities and sororities on campus or express an agnostic view about whether and how they should exist at Princeton. We did an analysis of the comments submitted to our website about fraternities and sororities and of those who commented, we found that 29 percent were generally or strongly supportive; 35 percent were generally or strongly unsupportive; and 35 percent were neutral.

Why do these organizations exist at Princeton and why do students join them? The principal reasons that are offered by students who join these organizations are the following:

- To get to know students across all four classes. In our focus group discussions and on our website students frequently cited the importance as freshmen of having access to more experienced students who can help them with course selections, choosing and gaining access to extracurricular organizations, understanding the social dynamics of Princeton, and gaining access to club parties. Students point out that while athletes have these relationships within their teams and while some freshmen join singing groups or other organizations that connect them with upperclass students, most freshmen do not readily connect with older students, especially early in freshman fall.

- To increase the likelihood that they will get into a particular selective eating club. While we acknowledge that this is not a motivating factor for all students in fraternities and sororities, there is ample statistical evidence and extensive testimony (cited in last year’s report of the Eating Club Task Force) to support the fact that for significant numbers of students in fraternities and sororities, membership is a means to an end, with the end being admission to the club to which their particular Greek organization serves as a pipeline.

- To be with other students with similar interests who enjoy a similar social life, and to have access to alcohol and parties, especially in freshman and early sophomore year before becoming affiliated with an eating club.

- Particularly in the sororities, but also in some of the fraternities, to take advantage of opportunities to assume positions of leadership and engage in community service.

- For some students, and perhaps especially students whose parents or family members were in Greek organizations at other colleges or universities, there is an attraction to being affiliated with organizations that exist at other campuses and have traditions of continuing involvement following graduation. One student said: “These organizations allow students to connect to national communities, rather than relying solely on the ‘orange bubble.’ Connecting with other campuses is a huge benefit for Greek life.” The opportunity to
connect with students outside of Princeton is frequently cited as an important consideration by women who participate in historically black sororities.

- There are a relatively small number of students who join sororities and fraternities in lieu of joining an eating club, saying they prefer the colleagueship of these organizations to the milieu of the clubs.

Many of the students and alumni who express serious concerns about these organizations cite the fact that Princeton long has defined itself as a campus that developed a distinctive social model and for most of its history did not have a Greek system. (Several students said one of the reasons they chose to attend Princeton was because it did not have such a system.) Beyond this fundamental incongruity, the major concerns expressed by students and alumni are the following:

- Affiliation with fraternities and sororities at Princeton begins very early in the freshman year, and in some cases even sooner. (Efforts to obtain commitments from admitted students begin at Princeton Preview and members are solicited through Facebook and by other means over the summer). This means that students who join fraternities and sororities narrow their social circles long before they have an opportunity to meet a wide range of students and gain full exposure to all that Princeton has to offer. It also means that students who join these organizations are forced to make choices before they have adequate opportunity to get to know these organizations and assess alternatives that might serve the same purpose.

- Members of fraternities and sororities disproportionately come from certain socio-economic demographics, which perpetuates an unhealthy divisiveness within the student body based on ethnicity and income and a perpetuation of patterns of exclusivity and privilege. Because of the pipeline relationship with some of the selective eating clubs, this in turn sustains the social and economic stratification of the clubs.

- Students point out that the cost to students to be in fraternities and sororities can amount to several hundred dollars a semester and that a substantial portion of dues are sent to national offices. This can serve as a financial deterrent for students from lower- to middle-income families, partly because of the cost itself (some students similarly feel they can’t afford the eating clubs) and partly because not all of the funds they pay in dues are used to support programming that benefits them. It was also pointed out that some of the fraternities and sororities handle significant amounts of money with little oversight.

- Because of the demographic composition of the Greek organizations, students express some skepticism about the need for these students to join a fraternity or sorority to have access to upperclass students when many of them come from private schools or are children of alumni and thus arrive at Princeton already connected to upperclass students and already knowledgeable about Princeton’s social structure.
o Many of those who express concerns about fraternities and sororities simultaneously express support for the eating clubs, and point to the multifaceted activities at the clubs, their coeducational membership, the deferral of admission until spring of sophomore year, the absence of a “pledging” process, the presence of professional management, and the open sign-in process of half the clubs as significant differences between the clubs and Greek organizations. They object to the role fraternities and sororities have come to play in de facto determining which students will become members of some of the clubs.

• The greatest concern about fraternities and sororities relates to the degree to which they are associated with irresponsible, excessive, dangerous, and in some cases coerced, consumption of alcohol, and, particularly for some of the fraternities, the extent to which they are associated with pledging, hazing and social activity that can be demeaning, humiliating and dangerous. On this last point, one student said: “I think the University needs to intervene in the rush process to make it somewhat more humane for the pledges and less dangerous. Some of the stories that come out of it are pretty horrific.”

Our Recommendations

In focus groups and on our website, students and alumni put forward three possible answers to the question of what role fraternities and sororities should play at Princeton. Some argued forcefully that Princeton should reinstate the ban that was in place from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century and suspend students who violate the ban. Others argued just as forcefully that the Greek organizations should be recognized and regulated by the University. Surprisingly, perhaps, the viewpoint most often presented argued — sometimes forcefully, sometimes reluctantly — for the status quo, a policy of not recognizing these organizations but also not prohibiting students from joining them. One student said: “They play a role for people who care about them, and they don’t really play a role for people who don’t care about them.” Another said: “By not having houses and needing to keep a low profile, they do not have too strong a presence, and social pressure to join is not very large, which is good. A policy of ‘we know you are here and won’t bother you as long as things stay within acceptable limits’ is the way to go in my eyes.” An alumna said: “I think their current role, where they are unofficial and kept off campus, is the proper one. It encourages them to remain social clubs while preventing the sort of oppressive social hegemony they have achieved on other campuses.”

In our deliberations we acknowledged the incompatibility of a fully developed Greek system with the social structure that has evolved at Princeton over more than 150 years and the awkwardness of the partial system that has grown up over the past 25 years. On aspects ranging from alcohol abuse and hazing to rush and community service, we acknowledged that there are significant differences between sororities and fraternities, as well as differences among fraternities, in their approaches to these issues. We appreciate the reasons students give for joining fraternities and sororities, and we share the concerns that students and alumni express. We especially share the concern that because of the nature of the selection process and the cost, fraternities and sororities exacerbate the
divide on campus between students of means and students with limited resources, and the concern that behavior that occurs within at least some of the Greek organizations is demeaning, dangerous and incompatible with Princeton’s values.

In the end, our deliberations focused on two major concerns — the negative impact of membership in these organizations in freshman year and the dangerous use of alcohol and hazing — which lead us to make the following recommendations:

**Students should be prohibited from affiliating with a fraternity or sorority or engaging in any form of rush at any time during the freshman year, or from conducting or having responsibility for any form of rush in which freshmen participate. The penalty for violating these prohibitions should be severe enough to encourage widespread compliance, which probably means a minimum penalty of suspension.**

We believe that Princeton’s goals for undergraduate residential and social life are best achieved when students do not narrow their social circle before they gain a full sense of the opportunities Princeton has to offer them or experience the full diversity of backgrounds and interests among their fellow students. We understand the human desire to fit in and to surround oneself with others like oneself, but we believe that a certain amount of unsettlement and exploration in a student’s first year is a good thing — it requires students to go beyond the familiar and comfortable; to challenge assumptions; to be open to new ideas and experiences; and to think hard about issues of identity and purpose. We want students in freshman year to explore a range of options and meet different people, and we believe that early engagement with fraternities and sororities makes it much less likely that this will occur.

We also believe that because of the relationships between many of the Greek organizations and some of the eating clubs, membership or affiliation with Greek organizations in freshman year tracks students too early in their Princeton careers. If fraternity and sorority membership is deferred until sophomore year, students can make a more considered and informed judgment about whether this is something they want to do. Several students wrote about how flattering it had been to have members of Greek organizations seek them out upon their admission or arrival on campus and invite them to pledge, but that in hindsight they realized they had prematurely closed other doors that they wish they had kept open. As one student said, deferring rush allows freshmen to “see what all aspects of Princeton social life are like before they get too obsessed with one group of friends.”

When students in fraternities and sororities cite the positive experiences they have in those organizations, they frequently intimate that they would not have been able to have those kinds of experiences in other settings. We agree with the student who noted that “there are numerous other campus organizations where students can exercise leadership, build friendships, and organize meaningful and productive activities.” We also agree with the student who described the recruiting practices of fraternities as “inappropriately aggressive and uncomfortable for freshmen.”
We know that some students point to other student organizations, such as sports teams and a cappella groups, and suggest that they, too, narrow a student’s range of friends and can serve as pipelines to the clubs. Why don’t we have the same concerns about them that we have about fraternities and sororities? Part of the answer is that as a University we value the talents and skills that students bring to those activities and develop through them, which is why they have been an integral part of campus life for many generations of Princeton students. With respect to pipelines to the clubs, we believe that students join teams or singing groups because they want to engage in those activities, not because a particular team or group may have a relationship with a particular club. The pipeline relationship is incidental to being on the team or in the group, not the reason the student joined in the first place. With fraternities and sororities, frequently a major consideration in joining is to position oneself for eventual membership in a particular club. This observation is reinforced by the pattern at Princeton of student engagement in at least some fraternities and sororities diminishing significantly after sophomore year as student interest shifts to the clubs.

In recommending a prohibition on fraternity and sorority membership in freshman year, we also want to underscore our earlier recommendation that the University do a better job, through the residential colleges and in other ways, to make sure freshmen have meaningful opportunities to engage more with sophomores, juniors and seniors early in their Princeton careers. These connections are important as students begin to navigate their way through the University and its academic, residential, extracurricular and social choices.

We are not proposing a prohibition on membership in fraternities or sororities beyond freshman year. We recognize that to completely address concerns about pipeline relationships with the clubs we should extend the proposed prohibition until spring of sophomore year. We have chosen not to make that recommendation. Once students have a year’s experience behind them, if they wish to join a Greek organization, along with or instead of joining an eating club in junior and senior years, we believe that is a judgment they should be permitted to make.

At the same time, we agree with the preponderance of visitors to our website who thought that the University should sustain its policy of not officially recognizing these organizations. If students affiliate with them, they do so as outside organizations with no formal or official connection to the University. Organizations would continue to be unable to use any University resources or facilities to engage in any type of Greek activity.

We recognize that this proposal raises challenging issues of enforcement, and that some students may wish to test whether they can affiliate in freshman year, or sponsor rush activities for students in freshman year, and escape detection. We would caution students to think long and hard about the risk they accept if evidence of their affiliation is discovered and the penalty is separation from the University.

The University should significantly increase its commitment to enforce policies that prohibit serious forms of hazing. This would affect not only students associated with
fraternities and sororities, but with eating clubs, athletic teams and other student organizations.

We are very concerned about the dangerous drinking and other dangerous, demeaning and dehumanizing behaviors that can often be associated with fraternities and sororities. These can occur as part of “hazing,” but also in other “requirements” that can be part of the pledge process or “bonding” activities. We heard from several students about the horrific nature of these behaviors, especially at some fraternities, and some have been discussed publicly in recent years at Princeton and on other campuses. These concerns are exacerbated if rush takes place in freshman year because newly arrived students may be more insecure and less capable of resisting peer pressure than will be the case once they gain their footing. They also are exacerbated by the pipeline connection between Greek organizations and some of the eating clubs because of the fact that students may agree to participate in certain behaviors if they believe this will get them into the club of their choice that they would not be willing to engage in if the only issue was whether they got into the fraternity or sorority. Finally, our concerns are exacerbated by the other idiosyncrasy of Greek life at Princeton: the lack of a significant junior and senior presence in fraternities and sororities, which means that most of the hazing is conducted by sophomores who have not yet gained the perspective that at other campuses is brought to the fraternal rituals by the juniors and seniors who typically occupy leadership positions on those campuses.

Hazing is illegal under New Jersey law and University policies already prescribe serious penalties for students who engage in hazing, no matter where or under whose auspices that hazing occurs. We believe the risks associated with this kind of behavior are significant, and that the University should become even more vigilant in imposing highly consequential disciplinary penalties on students found to have engaged in hazing that seriously threatened the health and well-being of any student. In making this recommendation we intend to encompass serious hazing wherever it occurs, not just in connection with fraternities and sororities, and we do not mean to suggest that the University has been inattentive to these issues. We are calling for a greater awareness among students that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated and that students who put other students at risk face serious penalties through the University’s disciplinary process as well as potential criminal penalties under New Jersey law.

We want to conclude this section with one other recommendation that relates to the inappropriateness of national offices of fraternities and sororities claiming to have chapters at Princeton. There are no chartered Greek letter organizations recognized by the University, and yet a number of those organizations cite Princeton chapters on their websites. We recommend that the University be more vigilant in challenging national organizations of fraternities and sororities to remove Princeton’s name from their websites and not to suggest they have recognized chapters sanctioned by the University when they do not.

In making these recommendations, we recognize that they may represent only a first step in determining how best to define the role of fraternities and sororities at Princeton. If the University accepts these recommendations, it will then need to see what impact they
have, whether the behaviors of concern to us change, and whether further steps need to be taken in the future.

**Observations and Recommendations: Campus Pub**

The last question we were asked to consider was whether it is desirable, and if so, feasible to reintroduce a campus pub. This turns out to be a very easy question followed by a more difficult one.

The easy question has to do with desirability. The widespread and strong support across a broad range of constituencies for reinstatement of a campus pub was so evident early in our deliberations that we decided we did not need to include the question on our website. Even so, one student wrote as follows: “HAVING A CAMPUS PUB IS A GREAT IDEA: It will provide an alternative for students and help us learn how to drink responsibly (at least those over 21 — though I think everyone should be allowed in). A pub could help students realize that one can have a few drinks, listen to music, have some fun, etc., without the goal of getting ‘trashed.’”

This student’s comment is echoed in the report presented to the working group by the 20-member Campus Pub Committee that spent several months examining in great detail the most desirable characteristics of a campus pub and a broad set of questions related to feasibility. This committee included five undergraduates (two of them from the working group); three graduate students; and staff from a broad range of offices, including Campus Life, Facilities, Community Affairs, Public Safety, Dining Services and General Counsel. The committee endorsed a campus pub and supported a venue that would be welcoming to all campus constituents, a place where food and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages would be sold, a place that would encourage and support interaction and conversation among faculty, graduate and undergraduate students and staff, and a place that would support an environment conducive to modeling responsible use of alcohol.

We hold this same view, and expect that at a minimum the pub would be in a convenient on-campus location and open from late afternoon until late at night. We hope that the late afternoon clientele would include a mix of undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff, while we expect that the later evening clientele would consist largely of students. In addition to food, beverages, and spaces conducive to conversation, we hope the venue can be outfitted to look and feel like a pub and that on occasion it might feature music or other entertainment. We believe the pub should provide a range of beers on tap and wines of good quality but at reasonable price, and since one important goal of the pub would be the modeling of responsible use of alcohol, we believe the pub should be open to underage students with adequate safeguards in place to ensure that alcohol is available only to students who can legally drink.

The difficult part of the question is related to feasibility. After lengthy deliberation, the committee expressed a preference for a venue that was renovated or constructed with the primary purpose of serving as a campus pub (a “purpose-built” space), as opposed to an existing space that would be converted at certain times of day to serve as a pub. Recognizing the challenges that would have to be overcome to identify a location,
develop a design and obtain funds for such a purpose-built space, the committee instead focused its attention on locations that, in its view, could be successfully converted to serve as a pub during late afternoon and evening hours at a potentially manageable cost. The committee examined a range of possibilities, and in the end put forward two locations that seem most promising to us:

- The downstairs “Tap Room” at Prospect House.
- The downstairs café area at Chancellor Green, site of the former pub.

Both locations have a current program that includes food and beverage sales and service. Both are self-contained areas with restrooms adjacent or nearby. Both are on-campus and have external as well as internal access points so patrons can enter directly into the pub.

The outside entrance to the Prospect Tap Room is convenient for students, and members of the faculty and staff are already familiar with the venue as an attractive luncheon location. The room is attractive and well appointed, and its proximity to Frist allows easy transit back and forth between the entertainment spaces in Frist and the more intimate conversational space at Prospect. The major disadvantages are the relatively small size of the space, the relatively high costs of the renovations that would be required (estimated in excess of a half million dollars), and the potential incompatibility on occasion between operation of the pub and other activities in the upstairs parts of the building, ranging from academic receptions and trustee meetings to weddings.

Chancellor Green is less centrally located for many students and faculty, although it is very convenient to Firestone Library and offices and teaching spaces in the humanities. While the building in which it is located is very attractive, the café space itself would need work to make it more conducive to conversation, and while the overall cost of renovation probably is less than at Prospect it would still be significant (estimated in the quarter-to-half-million-dollar range). The space is larger than Prospect, and pub programming would not displace or conflict with other programming in this venue.

The pub committee heard reports on the licensing process that would be required if the University went forward with the reinstatement of a pub and the conversations that would be required with local and state officials. In seeking both the requisite license and the requisite support from outside agencies, much would depend on the specific venue that was being proposed, and so the committee recommended deferring these elements of the process until decisions can be made about venue and about whether funds can be secured to cover both the capital costs of renovation and the operating costs of the pub. As a working group, we believe the benefits that would accrue from reinstating a pub, especially in helping to create a more responsible culture on campus regarding alcohol, justify the investment of time and resources to develop a plan for one of these two locations and seek both the approvals and the funding necessary to go forward.
Next Steps

The working group was asked to engage in conversation and deliberation, and then to bring forward its observations and recommendations regarding (1) the University’s goals for undergraduate on-campus social and residential life, and (2) the four specific questions that were posed to us in our charge. We engaged in wide-ranging conversations through the focus groups we conducted and the many thoughtful comments we received on our website. We deliberated at length in our meetings, and in this report we put forth the judgments we reached and the suggestions we are prepared to make. More than anything else, we hope that our report stimulates a lively and informed conversation throughout the Princeton University community — on campus and among alumni — about the important topics we were asked to address.

As a working group, we have no authority to implement the recommendations we have made, so the next steps in enhancing and improving on-campus undergraduate social and residential life at Princeton depend on those students, faculty and staff who have responsibilities in these areas. We hope the work we have done is helpful to them in clarifying issues, providing context, giving voice to those who communicated with us, and generating ideas and suggestions. We now leave it to them to determine which of these ideas and suggestions ought to be pursued, by whom, and at what pace. If we can be helpful in this ongoing conversation, we would be delighted to participate in any ways we can. We are grateful for the opportunity we have had to spend a year thinking about these issues, and we hope that what we have done will, in fact, enable the University to more fully achieve its highest aspirations for on-campus undergraduate social and residential life.
Appendix A

Charge to the Working Group on Campus Social and Residential Life

In its May 2010 report, the Task Force on Relationships between the University and the Eating Clubs made a number of observations and recommendations regarding undergraduate on-campus social and residential life at Princeton. In so doing, the task force also raised more fundamental questions about the goals of the University with respect to social and residential life.

I believe it is both timely and important to ask a working group of students, faculty and staff to review the University’s goals regarding undergraduate on-campus social and residential life and to examine, among other topics, the following issues that were raised by the task force: How can undergraduate social and residential life be enhanced and improved on campus? How can the University enrich the social and residential experience in the residential colleges? What is and should be the role of fraternities and sororities at Princeton? Is it desirable, and if so, feasible to reintroduce a campus pub?

These questions are timely in part because they arose out of the campus-wide conversation that was facilitated last year by the Eating Club Task Force, and in part because the four-year residential college system is now fully in place, as are other recent additions to campus life like the Carl Fields Center and Campus Club. As was done by the Eating Club Task Force, I hope the working group will provide ample opportunity for members of the campus community to offer comments, perspectives and suggestions, and I hope it will be able to complete its work and issue its report during the spring semester.

The co-chairs of the working group will be Cynthia Cherrey, our new Vice President for Campus Life, and Vice President and Secretary Robert Durkee, who chaired the Eating Club Task Force and co-chaired an earlier Task Force on Health and Well-Being. I will be consulting closely with the President of the Undergraduate Student Government in naming undergraduate members of the working group. My hope is that the working group will be fully constituted by early September and will be able to begin its work shortly thereafter.

President Shirley M. Tilghman
September 2010
Appendix B

Members of the Working Group

Students

Cesar Devers ’11
Samuel Dorison ’11
Angela Groves ’12
Cameron Hough ’13
John Monagle ’12

Faculty

Jeff Nunokawa — Professor of English and Master of Rockefeller College
Robert Sandberg ’70 — Lecturer in English, Theater and the Lewis Center for the Arts

Staff

Christina Davis — Director of Student Life-Whitman College
Thomas Dunne — Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students
Michael Olin — Director of Student Life-Wilson College
Susan Teeter h’85 — Head Coach of Women’s Swimming

Co-chairs

Cynthia Cherrey — Vice President for Campus Life
Robert Durkee ’69 — Vice President and Secretary
## Appendix C

### Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Life staff plus staff from Fields Center, Campus Club, Frist Campus Center, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center, and Women’s Center</th>
<th>Class of 2014 sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential college masters</td>
<td>Inter-Club Council (ICC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors of student life</td>
<td>Alcohol Coalition Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Student Government and class officers</td>
<td>International students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2011 sample</td>
<td>Leaders of Greek organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2012 sample</td>
<td>Residential college advisers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class of 2013 sample</td>
<td>Residential College Council chairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Residential graduate students</td>
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<td>Undergraduate Life Committee</td>
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<td>Alumni Council Executive Committee</td>
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</tbody>
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Summary of Major Recommendations

The report of the Working Group on Campus Social and Residential Life begins with a review of the charge, composition and work of the group; a brief history of social and residential life at Princeton; and data on options available to undergraduates and their satisfaction with on-campus social and residential life. The report then outlines the University’s goals regarding undergraduate on-campus social and residential life and presents observations and recommendations in the areas of social and residential life, fraternities and sororities, and a campus pub. The report’s major recommendations are summarized below.

Goals

- The residential experience is intended to create a strong sense of community, collaboration and mutual respect, and to support individual initiative and personal growth. It aims to help students develop such core values as honesty, integrity and fairness, and to encourage creativity, curiosity, collegiality, resourcefulness, a capacity for leadership and a sense of responsibility for their own well-being and the well-being of others.

- On-campus social life is intended to help students develop the skills necessary to build a sense of community and shared experience and live a balanced life; develop a sense of connectedness with each other and the larger community; get to know students from backgrounds unlike their own and experience new perspectives; see the world through the eyes of others; demonstrate empathy and work collaboratively with others; provide an outlet from academic pressure; provide opportunities to be refreshed and have fun; and foster friendships and support systems.

Social and Residential Life

The report cites three recurring themes in the comments it received on its website and in focus groups: the importance of connections across classes; the importance of encouraging and facilitating “unstructured socializing” (perhaps through an annual unplanned “snow day”); and the importance of building a broader sense of community. It then makes recommendations under the following sub-categories:

Larger-Scale Events

- The report notes the popularity of such off-campus eating club-sponsored events as lawnparties and houseparties and such on-campus events as the annual dodgeball tournament, the Pre-rade, the Undergraduate Student Government’s University Film Organization (UFO) program, intramural athletics, free skating at Baker Rink, Fristfest and other activities.

- It recommends the addition of one or two more “big signature events” each year that attract all four undergraduate classes. These might include an additional major concert with headliner talent, perhaps in Princeton Stadium or Weaver Track; an all-student dance sponsored by the USG or other student organizations;
a “battle of the bands” with a campus-wide picnic, perhaps during Princeton Preview; or a “birthday party” with music, dancing and a special cake commemorating Princeton’s founding on Oct. 22.

Smaller-Scale Events

• The report encourages a broad range of extracurricular activities and a variety of social activities in the residential colleges.

• It suggest more events designed to increase bonding within each of the four undergraduate classes; greater outreach from the residential colleges to juniors and seniors who are not in the colleges or the clubs; and more encouragement of community service, of activities that revolve around games and other competitions, and of the arts.

Relationships Across the Classes

• The report encourages a plan under which all juniors and seniors would “go home” once a month to the college they were in during freshman and sophomore years, with programming that serves their needs or allows them to serve as mentors or guides to current freshmen and sophomores.

• It suggests adding one or two sophomores, juniors or seniors to advisee groups in the colleges — in addition to the residential college adviser — to help introduce freshmen to upperclass students and to social and extracurricular life.

• It suggests a program in which freshmen would get together several times a year with students in the other three classes who previously lived in the room they now occupy. These “family dinners” would bring together students from multiple classes with different backgrounds and interests.

Life in the Colleges

• The report encourages the residential colleges to schedule occasional meals and other events that are open only to college members and encourages healthy competition among the colleges. The purpose is to create a stronger sense of identification with each college.

• The report also encourages the colleges to reach beyond their membership on occasion — to juniors and seniors outside the colleges and to students in other colleges — in sponsoring social activities and events.

• The report encourages more student-initiated programming in the colleges; more outreach to juniors and seniors who live in the colleges; greater effort in the colleges to encourage students to take “time off,” develop friendships, enjoy themselves and have fun; better outreach by the colleges to freshmen prior to their arrival on campus; and more programming during holiday breaks.
**RCAs and OA/CA Groups**

- The report suggests that Outdoor Action (OA) and Community Action (CA) groups get together on occasion throughout freshman year to share experiences and seek guidance from the upperclass students who lead these programs.

- The report asks whether residential college advisers should be asked to do more to introduce their advisees to other upperclass students and Princeton’s social, recreational and extracurricular life.

- The report suggests bringing advisee groups back together in junior and senior years to help sustain ties between upperclass students and the colleges and to reduce the compartmentalization that can occur in junior and senior years.

- The report asks whether dormitory assistants in the upperclass dorms should play more of a role in building a sense of community in those dorms.

**Orientation and Princeton Preview**

- The report recommends a greater emphasis on time for bonding and fun at both orientation and Princeton Preview, and a greater effort during orientation to bring freshmen together with upperclass students who can share their insights and experiences.

**Final Thoughts**

- The report comments on the importance of late meal at Frist Campus Center and encourages more programming on campus and in the colleges that helps students see the world through the eyes of others; more student-initiated programming; more opportunities for students to travel to New York; and more guidance for students as they make choices among the many academic, social and residential options available to them.

**Fraternities and Sororities**

The report presents background information on the history, current status and membership of fraternities and sororities. It outlines the reasons students give for joining them and the concerns that are expressed about them. The working group expresses its concern that because of the nature of the selection process and the cost, fraternities and sororities exacerbate the divide on campus between students of means and students with limited resources. It also expresses its concern that behavior within some of the Greek organizations is demeaning, dangerous and incompatible with Princeton’s values.

A major concern of the working group is that membership in fraternities and sororities in freshman year narrows students’ social circles before they gain a full sense of the opportunities Princeton has to offer or experience the full diversity of backgrounds and interests among their fellow students. This concern is heightened by the pipeline relationship that exists between some of the Greek organizations and some of the eating clubs, which has the effect of tracking students very early in their Princeton careers.
The working group’s other major concern relates to the dangerous use of alcohol and hazing, wherever it may occur. The particular circumstances of Greek life at Princeton accentuate this concern because (a) rush takes place in freshman year when students may be more insecure and less capable of resisting peer pressure than they will be in later years; (b) students may be more susceptible to peer pressure if they believe admission to a fraternity or sorority will also get them into the eating club of their choice; and (c) the lack of a significant junior and senior presence in fraternities and sororities at Princeton means that most pledging and hazing is conducted by sophomores, in contrast to the junior and senior leadership that more typically exists on campuses with fully developed Greek systems.

Because of these concerns, the working group makes the following recommendations:

• Students should be prohibited from affiliating with a fraternity or sorority or engaging in any form of rush at any time during the freshman year, or from conducting or having responsibility for any form of rush in which freshmen participate. The penalty for violating these prohibitions should be severe enough to encourage widespread compliance, which probably means a minimum penalty of suspension.

• The University should do a better job, through the residential colleges and in other ways, to make sure freshmen have meaningful opportunities to engage more with sophomores, juniors and seniors early in their Princeton careers.

• The working group does not propose a prohibition on membership in fraternities or sororities beyond freshman year.

• The University should sustain its policy of not officially recognizing fraternities or sororities, which means that they would continue to be unable to use University resources or facilities.

• The University should significantly increase its commitment to enforce policies that prohibit serious forms of hazing wherever it occurs, and the University should become even more vigilant in imposing highly consequential disciplinary penalties on students found to have engaged in hazing that seriously threatened the health and well-being of any student.

• The University should be more vigilant in challenging national organizations of fraternities and sororities to remove Princeton’s name from their websites and not to suggest they have recognized chapters sanctioned by the University when they do not.

**Campus Pub**

• The working group concurs with the widespread and strongly held view across a broad range of campus constituencies that it would be desirable to reinstate a campus pub that would be open to all undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff and help to model the responsible use of alcohol.
• While recognizing the advantages of creating a “purpose-built” space, the working group focused its attention on two spaces that it believes could be successfully converted to serve as a pub during late afternoon and evening hours at a potentially manageable cost: the downstairs “Tap Room” at Prospect House; and the downstairs café area at Chancellor Green.

• The working group believes the benefits that would accrue from reinstating a pub, especially in helping to create a more responsible culture on campus regarding alcohol, justify the investment of time and resources to develop a plan for one of these two locations, and seek the approvals and funding necessary to go forward.

Next Steps

• The working group was asked to put forward its judgments and suggestions and to stimulate lively and informed conversation about on-campus social and residential life. The next steps depend on those students, faculty and staff who have responsibilities in these areas. It is now for them to decide which of the ideas and recommendations in this report ought to be pursued, by whom and at what pace. The members of the working group would be delighted to participate in this ongoing conversation in any ways they can be helpful.