

## **California State University Maritime Academy: A Residential Campus**

Educational research shows that students have higher retention rates, higher levels of satisfaction, and increased engagement when they live on campus during their collegiate experience. Understanding and believing in student success, student retention, and the positive attributes a residential community brings, California State University Maritime Academy has always been a residential campus. Being a residential campus is a foundational element of being a student at California State University Maritime Academy. It is the policy of California State University Maritime Academy that students enrolled in its baccalaureate degree programs maintain residence on campus and participate in a meal plan.

As a residential campus, on-campus housing fosters and facilitates the development of a strong sense of community; building student connections with peers, faculty/staff, and the University. Residence halls assist in sustaining a supportive living-learning community that is designed to attract and retain students. Living on campus at California State University Maritime Academy encourages students to stay connected to campus by being close to classes, corps responsibilities, making it far more convenient and easy to engage in activities that bring students closer to other students, faculty, and staff. In this way, students are surrounded by all of the cultural, social, and sporting events that make California State University Maritime Academy vibrant, a place where you build a network of lifelong friends.

### **Review of the literature**

According to Schudde (2011) because living on campus implies greater interaction with peers, who experience similar stressors, campus residency may facilitate increased social support. Social support is directly beneficial and acts as a buffer protecting students from the impact of external stressors (Cohen & Willis, 1985). Psychological stresses, including loneliness, isolation, and anxiety, are correlated with dropping out (Ting, 2000). Residential life activities may combat the sense of isolation that new students experience by dividing the campus into smaller, more knowable communities (Tinto, 1993).

In Tinto's (1993) Student Departure Model, the decision to stay at or leave college is a function of the student's personal and academic background and how well he or she integrates into the academic and social life of the campus. By becoming more involved in the campus community, students learn to

effectively live in the college environment. Additional research supports his theory by suggesting that integration and involvement in the college experience are positively associated with degree completion (Allen & Haniff, 1991; Astin, 1993; Pascarella, 1985). More recent studies continue to develop the concept of student engagement by including measures of interactions between student behaviors and perceptions (Milem & Berger, 1997), “psychosocial engagement,” defined as the energy students invest in their social interactions (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004), and the practices and conditions of institutions in addition to the behaviors of students (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008).

According to Association of College and University Housing Officers living on campus has effects on educational outcomes. When the outcome is persistence, on the other hand, the clear majority of studies find that on-campus students do “better” (higher persistence) than off-campus students (Pascarella et al., 1994). Astin (1973) found that students living in campus residential settings are less likely to drop out of college and are more likely to complete their degree in four years, and subsequent studies have also found higher persistence among on campus students (Bozick, 2007; Herndon, 1984; Thompson & And Others, 1993). Previous studies also suggest that academic involvement and social integration mediate this relationship (Liu, 2010; Skahill, 2002). Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) also indicate that on-campus students, compared to commuter students, have significantly higher academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and enriching educational experiences (Kuh et al., 2001).

The Association of College and University Housing Officers further found that living on campus has effects on social and educational connectedness. Many studies find that students in campus residential settings are more involved in campus activities and have an easier time forming meaningful relationships on campus than those living off campus (Astin, 1973; Buote et al., 2007; Chickering, 1974; Pascarella et al., 1994). Although on-campus and off-campus students may have similarly sized social networks, on-campus students are more likely to form new social acquaintances, and interactions with their social network are more likely to take place on campus (Hays & Oxley, 1986). A recent mixed-methods study found that on-campus students made far more friendships during their first semester than

commuters, and these friendships played a larger role in their college social adjustment (Buote et al., 2007). These differences in the development of social networks could make it difficult for commuters to become integrated into campus. In addition, recent evidence from the NSSE indicates that on-campus students have significantly higher levels of engagement in academic activities, particularly compared to off-campus students who live farther away from campus (Kuh et al., 2001).

### **A Residential Community**

As the research above concludes California State University Maritime Academy's decision to be a residential campus is well founded. The decision to simply be a residential campus is much more than just constructing buildings and students living in them; it's about building a residential community. California State University Maritime Academy will have an inclusive residential experience where students live, sleep, study, make life-long friends and thrive. This living learning community will embrace the connection to the academic rigor. A primary guiding principle of California State University Maritime Academy's residential community is that a residence hall is built to serve students and help them succeed, not just provide a space to live, sleep, and study. California State University Maritime Academy will have a thriving community where students don't just live, but become fully engaged in their academic pursuits.

Cal Maritime recognizes that learning takes place both in and out of the classroom. The campus is committed to creating inclusive communities and providing a residential living/learning environment that directly supports the educational, social, and personal development of each student. Our goal is to provide opportunities in tune with Cal Maritime's mission to provide each student with a college education combining intellectual learning, applied technology, leadership development, and global awareness. We strive to create and sustain communities that support the academic goals of Cal Maritime, maintain student safety, promote campus engagement, and encourage student growth.