

The University of Texas at Tyler

Student Housing Audit



May 2016

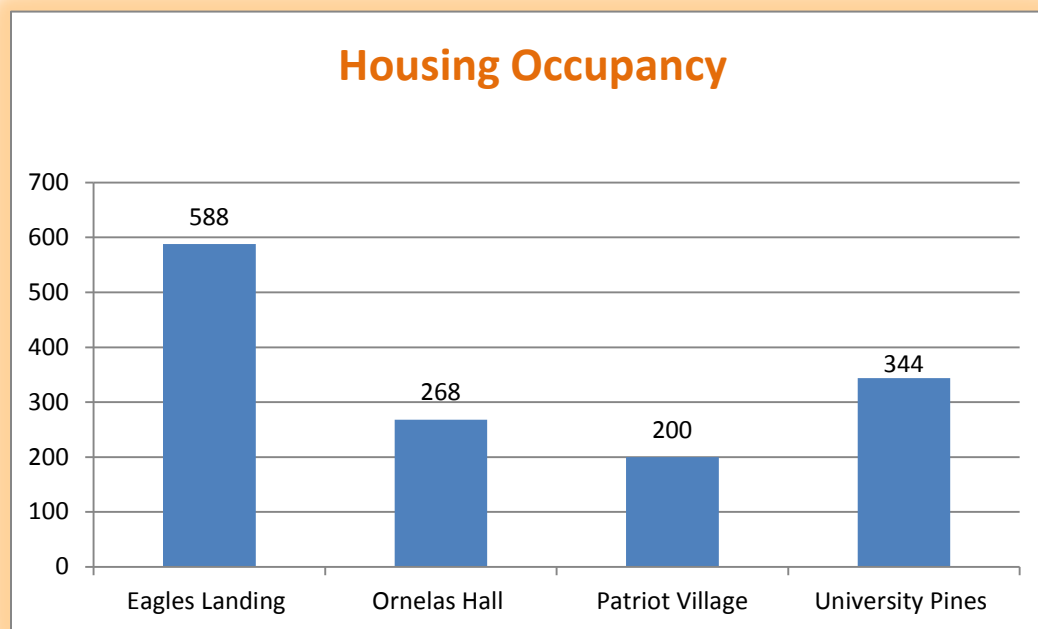
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Fiscal Year 2016**

BACKGROUND

The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler) offers four options for on-campus living that serve as the home away from home to over 1,400 students. Students with fewer than 60 college credit hours are required to live on campus with a few exceptions allowed for local residents, age, and marital status. The Office of Residence Life manages the student housing program and has over 40 employees, including students, working as Resident Assistants. They provide residence life activity programs as well as oversight of the safety and security of the student residents and facilities, with staff on call 24 hours a day. University Police also patrol the buildings multiple times day and night. The living options include a variety of floor plans and amenities.

- Eagle’s Landing was constructed in 2007 and purchased by UT Tyler in Spring 2014. It serves primarily upperclassmen and includes one, two, three and four bedroom options with full kitchens and a washer and dryer in each apartment. Amenities include a fitness center, swimming pool, computer lounge and clubhouse. Pets are allowed.
- Ornelas Residence Hall was constructed in 2006 and designed for incoming freshmen. It includes traditional dorm style rooms with double beds or triple occupancy suites, each sharing a single bathroom. Amenities include recreation courts, laundry care room, media room, and a study center.
- Patriot Village, constructed in 2005, available to all students, offers a four bedroom/two bathroom living arrangement with a full kitchen. The facility includes a clubhouse, recreation courts and laundry care rooms.
- University Pines was constructed on UT Tyler property in 1992 and is operated by Campus Living Villages. This apartment complex offers efficiency, one, two, and four bedroom units. It also includes a swimming pool, clubhouse, laundry room, and recreation lounge.



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AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the audit were to determine if UT Tyler student housing program operations are adequately monitored and are in compliance with university and departmental policies specifically related to the safety and security of the facilities and student residents.

STANDARDS

The audit was conducted in accordance with guidelines set forth in *The Institute of Internal Auditors' Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This audit was approved by the Institutional Audit Committee and included testing of Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 under the former Director of Residence Life (Director) as well as Fall 2015 under the current Director. To accomplish the objectives noted above, the following procedures were conducted:

- Reviewed Federal, State, UT System, and UT Tyler housing policies and procedures,
- Reviewed campus housing contracts and documents acknowledged by students,
- Reviewed the UT Tyler "Residence Life Risk Monitoring Plan" for adequacy and implementation by the Director of Residence Life, and tested that required reporting had occurred,
- Reviewed the UT Tyler "On Campus Housing Safety Risk Monitoring Plan" for adequacy and implementation by the Environmental Health and Safety Director, and tested that required reporting had occurred,
- Reviewed training policies and materials for Resident Coordinators and Assistants, which included information on Title IX, blood borne pathogens, and proper use of fire extinguishers, and tested a sample of completed training documents,
- Reviewed facility inspection documents and tested a sample of completed inspection reports by the Resident Assistants, Resident Coordinators, Environmental Health and Safety Department, and Physical Plant / Maintenance Department,
- Inquired of Campus Housing Management and University Police Department Management concerning access controls, security patrols, and adequacy of emergency preparedness plans, and
- Inspected two housing facilities for safety issues.

AUDIT RESULTS

A Priority Finding is defined as "an issue identified by an internal audit that, if not addressed timely, could directly impact achievement of a strategic or important operational objective of a UT institution or the UT System as a whole." Non-Priority Findings are ranked as High, Medium, or Low, with the level of significance based on an assessment of applicable Qualitative, Operational Control, and Quantitative risk factors and probability of a negative outcome occurring if the risk is not adequately mitigated. This audit resulted in one High finding.

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Training, Inspection and Monitoring (High)

The Office of Residence Life has policies and procedures for the training of student housing employees and inspection of housing facilities. There are also two Risk Monitoring Plans related to student housing. The initial review and testing of Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 operations identified multiple weaknesses related to employee training, facility inspections, and implementation of the Residence Life Risk Monitoring Plan. The findings were discussed with the current Director and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Audit Department consulted with the current Director to implement recommendations related to the weaknesses noted.

Management Response and Audit Follow-up: The Director strengthened the operating controls related to training and inspections as well as updated and implemented the Residence Life Risk Monitoring Plan. Follow-up review and testing of Fall 2015 was conducted by the Audit Department. The results revealed that prior weaknesses were addressed with adequate controls in place under the current Director. Improvements were made in the following areas:

- The Handbook of Operating Procedures was updated to state the current requirement that students with less than 60 hours are required to live on campus.
- The Residence Life Risk Monitoring Plan was updated and implemented with required reporting completed.
- Resident Assistants and Resident Coordinators are completing required training and testing, including re-testing when necessary. Training is conducted by the Residence Life Department and Environmental Health and Safety Department and includes the following topics:
 - Policies and procedures including required inspections,
 - Title IX and sexual assault,
 - Mental health and conflict resolution,
 - Blood borne pathogens, and
 - Fire extinguisher use.
- The Daily Inspection Logs and Monthly Health and Safety Checks are completed by the Resident Assistants and reviewed by the Director. Inspections are conducted on the following:
 - Exterior doors, hallways, stairwells, and community use areas,
 - Electrical outlets and use of extension cords,
 - Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Maintenance logs are being maintained and include documentation related to inspection of the following:
 - Gates,
 - Utility vehicles,
 - Swimming pool,
 - Fire extinguishers,
 - Dryer vents,
 - Exhaust fans,
 - Mechanical rooms and air conditioners, and
 - Property and emergency lights.
- Required reports are presented to the Compliance Working Group and Compliance Officer.

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CONCLUSION

Significant improvements for the UT Tyler's student housing program operations have been implemented by the current Director related to the safety and security of the student residents and facilities. The Director is implementing the Residence Life Risk Monitoring Plan and is generally in compliance with policies and procedures tested.

We appreciate the assistance of the departmental management and administrative assistants, especially the Office of Residence Life personnel, and the Environmental Health & Safety department personnel during this project.