

The HRC Story: A Collection of Reflections on the History of Our Community



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HRC Mission, Vision, and Motto

Written by Jai Chulani

Virginia Tech's Mission for Residential Colleges

First and foremost, residential colleges at Ambler Johnston are places where students belong, learn, and give. These multi-disciplinary, multi-generational living-learning communities thrive with meaningful and sustained relationships among faculty, staff, students, and the worlds they pursue together. In addition, they promote a rich intellectual, cultural, and social context where students "know and are known." The residential colleges seek self-motivated, lifelong learners, with diverse interests, who will build a community of scholars in the spirit of Virginia Tech's motto, Ut Prosim.

HRC Vision Statement

The Honors Residential College (HRC) at East Ambler Johnston strives to engage a diverse community of students pursuing development of themselves, relationships with others, and the projection of their passions into the greater community with unwavering curiosity and a commitment to lifelong service and learning. The HRC Motto also embodies these goals: In fellowship, all things grow.

Introduction

Written by Jai Chulani

Context

The purpose of the Honors Residential College Story is to document the founding and progress of the HRC. From its beginnings at East Ambler Johnston, to the numerous events put on by faculty and students, this document captures each era of the college. It is a reference for past, present, and future students to use to learn more about the Honors Residential College at East Ambler Johnston.

What is a Residential College?

The residential college is one of the oldest organizational models for universities in the western world. Residential colleges were first founded at Oxford University and the University of Paris in the 12th century. Over the years, residential colleges have spread to higher education institutions around the world and are now defining aspects of some universities (Bandas). Although each college has its own culture, generally speaking, colleges are designed to bring about a sense of community and family among the members of the college. These members of the college are referred to as Fellows. At the Honors Residential College, this term is divided into Junior Fellows (undergraduate students), Graduate Fellows (graduate students), and Senior Fellows (university faculty and other esteemed members of the community). These fellows are responsible for creating a diverse and welcoming community for the college.

What is the Honors Residential College?

The Honors Residential College is a community of faculty, staff, and students who share a deep intellectual curiosity. This program offers freshman through senior-level University Honors students and graduate students an interdisciplinary opportunity to capitalize on the rich history and tradition of Virginia Tech while living and learning with faculty and students in a unique and intentional environment. The HRC is led by a live-in faculty principal and supported by over thirty faculty, staff, and community members (Honors Residential College - About).

Bandas, Mark. "Residential Colleges - Defining Residential Colleges and Related Terms, The Classic Residential College, Benefits of Residential Colleges." State University. State University, n.d. Web. 14 May 2015. <<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2367/Residential-Colleges.html>>.

"Honors Residential College - About." Division of Student Affairs. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, n.d. Web. 14 May 2015. <<http://www.housing.vt.edu/lc/communities/hrc/about.html>>.

Leadership

Written by Melanie Trammell

Before we begin to recount the history of the HRC, it is important to identify and explain all the leadership components of our community. Many of these roles originated out of the standard residential college model to keep with its legacy, while others have been adapted to meet our specific needs. Though the responsibilities of these parties have developed as the community has aged, all such parts of the HRC were established when it was founded and no new bodies have been added to our model since. Any further inquiry to these components may be found in our Charter, which explains the roles of our leadership bodies and how those roles intersect to fulfill our community mission.

One important distinction of members in the HRC is that they are called 'Fellows', and there are two major categories: Senior Fellows and Junior Fellows. Junior Fellows are undergraduate students who currently or previously resided in East Ambler Johnston Hall, whereas Senior Fellows are different types of faculty, community members, and university staff who have affiliated with the Honors Residential College. Furthermore, Graduate Fellows are graduate students at Virginia Tech who are either former Junior Fellows or otherwise affiliated with the HRC. The Graduate Fellows often mentor Junior Fellows about a range of topics, from considering graduate school to current academic situations and general life advice. The HRC has four different leadership bodies: the Senior Fellows Council, the Honors Residential College Council (HRCC), the Apartment Fellows, and the Resident Advisors (RAs), whose membership is drawn from the fellows.

The administrator of the HRC is the Faculty Principal, who is responsible for the intellectual vision of the college, heads the Senior Fellows Council, and advises the HRCC. This position is appointed by the Honors Director and Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, and serves for a three-year term. During this time the principal lives in the faculty apartment amongst the other student residents of East Ambler Johnston Hall. In addition, the Principal organizes events like Principal's Tea, where Junior Fellows, Senior Fellows and a speaker come to discuss current events and more over tea. The Principal also hosts D2uesday fellowship dinners, a gathering of the fellowship to share a meal together at D2 Dining Hall. Lastly, the Faculty Principal is expected to set a directed vision for the HRC while serving out the term.

An administrative graduate fellow holds the responsibilities in aiding the Faculty Principal with many different tasks and also lives in the building. Firstly, the graduate assistant acts as the Teaching Assistant for the HRC seminar, where he or she is responsible for the logistics of the course. The assistant also serves as a leader and facilitator for the Apartment Fellows, coordinating monthly Apartment Fellow meetings and the annual Apartment Fellow application processes. Additionally, the assistant coordinates various events and social media initiatives for the HRC, including retreats of the college council, the weekly menus for Principal's Tea, and management of various HRC social media accounts.

The Student Life Coordinator (SLC), like the Faculty Principal, is also considered a Senior Fellow and advises residents in their social and extracurricular endeavors. The SLC is also a liaison between the HRC and Housing and Residence Life, balancing the needs of a residential college with the requirements the Housing and Residence Life department sets for the building. These include leading the RAs and general building administration. In addition he lives on the first floor of the HRC building in an apartment similar to the faculty apartment.

The other Senior Fellows of the HRC are nominated by the Faculty Principal followed by a vote of approval from the Senior Fellows Council to officially become affiliated with the HRC. Their responsibility is to interact with students at functions like Principal's Tea, D2uesday and other events that they are invited to attend. These interactions can take many forms, including supporting research with Junior Fellows, aiding in connections for internships or jobs, and engaging in discussion about their field and global events. They are also called upon to present different topics for discussion to the community in the form of a Rebel Seminar. Lastly, the Faculty Principal, Student Life Coordinator, and five other Senior Fellows make up the Senior Fellows Council that is responsible for the oversight of the HRC.

This brings us to our next leadership body, the College Council. The HRCC holds weekly meetings, which are open to the public and are attended by its 9 elected members, who go through the process of campaigning, nomination and election in the spring semester prior to the academic year for which they serve. The job of the HRCC is to program events for the building, listen to suggestions put forth by the community and manage relations with West AJ and Hillcrest. West Ambler Johnston, West AJ for short, is another much larger residential college of Virginia Tech located on the west side of the same building as the HRC, and Hillcrest is another honors residential community on campus. In addition, the HRCC also manages the funds of the HRC for social programming, service projects, meeting community needs, and more. Often the legislature of the HRCC comes into play for this aspect, as members of the HRCC vote on the appropriation of funds granted to the body and amendments to the Charter. The elected members of the HRCC are as follows: the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Director of Communications, Director of Programming, Director of Academic Enrichment, and the Director of Service Initiatives.

Each elected member of the HRCC has certain responsibilities. The President leads the College Council through setting the agendas of and heading Council meetings. The President also act as a liaison to the Faculty Principal and Housing and Residence Life. The Vice President assists the President, coordinates Welcome Week for both semesters, and leads the mentoring program. The Secretary takes notes of the meetings and distributes them to the community. In addition, the Secretary maintains a Fellow directory. The Treasurer keeps track of all funds and processing of them, as well as aids residents in making funding requests. They also act as a liaison to the Area Office Manager. The Historian maintains a community record, and keeps track of any documents or legislation passed by council. The Director of Communications informs

the community about HRCC efforts, maintains a community calendar, creates a summer newsletter, and acts as the administrator of the listserv. The Director of Programming coordinates all end-of-semester events and social programming. The Director of Academic Enrichment acts as a liaison to the Senior Fellows and coordinates the academic seminar and other academic programming like Renegade and Rebel Seminars. Lastly, the Director of Service Initiatives provides and encourages service opportunities with different organizations and promotes participation in major university service projects.

One of the more informal leadership bodies in the HRC is the Apartment Fellows. These residents may apply every year to live in an apartment within in the building by sharing their vision of how to use the apartment as a community space. The qualifications for such members are intentionally vague so that prospective Apartment Fellows can foster community in unique and fun ways depending on the personalities and the culture of the hall they are trying to reach. The funds for the activities that they organize are supplied by the College Council. Lastly, there are 6 apartments in the HRC, one on every hall on floors 4 through 6.

The last leadership body is the Resident Advisors. These members are headed by the Senior RA and function much like the RAs in other buildings. They are on duty every night, promote safety and well-being in their halls and the building at large, and foster community and support for their residents. However, unlike RAs in other buildings, these Resident Advisors are not expected to program social events for the entire building; that responsibility is ideally overseen by the College Council. Instead the hall programming arises from a combination of initiatives from the RA and residents of the hall.

The Story of Main Campbell

Written by Melanie Trammell

Before the HRC, there were two Honors residential communities called Main Campbell and Hillcrest. Though similar in many aspects, upon the opening of the Honors Residential College, Main Campbell was closed, while Hillcrest remained open. In order to preserve the history of Main Campbell, this section will focus on its story and contribution to the HRC.

Main Campbell was a small LEED certified gold-rated building that could hold a little under 100 residents, but had a strong sense of unity and a lively spirit. Since Main Campbell did not have nice amenities (no elevators or air conditioning and the showers were “glorified garden hoses” (Edward Coe)) everyone who lived there did so because they wanted to be a part of its community. In fact, in those days Interview Weekend was used in part to try to discover whether prospective freshmen would be happiest living in Hillcrest or Main Campbell. Russell Shrader, the Associate Director of University Honors, was even nicknamed the “Sorting Hat” for this endeavor.

Furthermore, much like Hillcrest, Main Campbell’s two greatest purposes were being a supportive family to those who lived there, and encouraging every individual to seek and accomplish their very best. The first was heavily influenced by the multi-generational aspect of Main Campbell. Upperclassmen intentionally reached out to freshmen with an aim to mentor them in every aspect of college life and include and encourage them to partake in their many traditions and everyday fun. Main Campbell brought together not only those from diverse academic years, but also individuals with a variety of interests and from diverse majors, nationalities and experiences. Main Campbell fully embodied the Honors initiative to build your own college experience through proactively seeking and acquiring opportunities to grow and live out your unique passions. They recognized that every student had potential and celebrated the different paths the residents of Main Campbell created for themselves. Even further, Main Campbellites supported each other not only to grow academically but also socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Much of this emphasis on the individual and the closeness of community also established what some call “anti-establishment” tendencies for Main Campbell. Since Main Campbell was so small, the community developed around individual initiative and passion about each other, which let Main Campbell firmly hold onto meaningful traditions. They were a fully functioning group that did not need a formal framework to operate. Lastly, through the entire experience of living in Main Campbell, residents grew close together into a wonderful mix of being friends, family, and mentors all at once. They lived life together, migrating in giant groups to dining halls, trolling and fighting over trivial arguments on the listserv, playing board games in the residence hall to relax, and much more.

However, when University Honors began considering the creation of the Honors Residential College, it also began considering closing one of the two honors

communities it already had, Hillcrest and Main Campbell. In the face of this possibility, many Main Campbell residents put up a resistance to being shut down. They arranged meetings with Honors staff, put up flyers and had many listserv debates. Despite these actions, Main Campbell was closed, much to the dismay, frustration and sadness of those who had lived there. Everyone who was not graduating was uprooted from their home, and had to make a choice about where they would go. Residents were invited to join Hillcrest or the recently opened HRC. They had the opportunity to tour the new building before it opened and were told that their input would be greatly valued in creating the residential college. Most of the Main Campbellites decided to join the HRC, as they wanted to be a part of forming a new community, and some even had hopes of recreating Main Campbell on a larger scale. Many others went along desiring to be close to the fellow Main Campbellites that had become their friends and family in their time at Main Campbell.

In the creation of the Honors Residential College, many different communities were brought together. Though this encouraged diverse efforts to establish a new community, it also prompted many collisions of cultures and expectations. Many of the residents of the HRC in its early years did not have prior experience with a residential community, and thus had no expectations for its outcome. However, the Main Campbellites had come from a strong background of residential life, and so they brought with them all of their traditions, spirit and fun-loving attitudes. Though all good-intentioned, much of the effort to recreate Main Campbell was shut down. The HRC was too large to support community without a structured framework, going against a lot of the culture of independence and informality of Main Campbell. In addition, many Main Campbellites tried to re-establish the close, multigenerational bonds through sharing the legacy of Main Campbell with the new freshmen of the HRC. Unfortunately, since the HRC had not yet fully defined itself like Main Campbell had, not many freshmen fully bought into this part of the residential model.

As time wore on, more conflicts arose between those who had come from Main Campbell and those who had not. Main Campbellites felt that the residential college was resistive to their ideas about activities and attitudes for the community, despite the fact that one reason they were invited to live in the HRC was for the very purpose of contributing their ideas. On the other hand, other residents felt that they did try to incorporate Main Campbellites' ideas as often as possible, but that many Main Campbellites were unhappy living in the HRC and thus volunteered unhelpful interactions and conversations. This disconnect in perception of what was really happening was never resolved; and with growing tension and controversy over the conflicts, many Main Campbellites found the HRC an unsuitable place to live. After the first year of the HRC, many of the Main Campbellites left.

Even though the story of Main Campbell seemingly ends on a sad note, its spirit and traditions live on in those who were a part of its story. The Honors Residential College is included in this, as it owes many of its own traditions to the upperclassmen of Main Campbell who choose to share them with the HRC in its first year. Due to the abundant involvement of both Hillcrest and Main Campbell in the HRC's early years,

many of these traditions could also be attributed to Hillcrestacians as well. They include many hallowed events such as Disney Movie Night, Soup Night, and the Nerdfest competition between Hillcrest and Main Campbell. In addition, Main Campbell brought with it some of cultural aspects such as love of board games (particularly Werewolf), watching of the football away games and prior experience in creating and maintaining a hall council and charter. Some more formal structures within the HRC that owe their legacy to Main Campbell are the listserv and the Main Campbell award. In Main Campbell, the life-line to being social was the List-serve; absolutely no one filtered it out and many residents used it to poke fun at each other and fight in long email chains. All references to "Goo Gone" or "Q-tips" on the HRC listserv can be traced back to these. Lastly, the Main Campbell award that is given to a rising senior every year in the HRC for their academic prowess, involvement in the community, and mischievous nature, is derived from Main Campbell's strong academic presence and love of pranks and shenanigans.

Without Main Campbell, the HRC would not be what it is today. Regardless of the controversy that existed when it first closed, it is imperative to remember Main Campbell's spirit and community apart from these conflicts. Through including its story in this document we hope to preserve the original personality of Main Campbell, so that it may not only live on in the memory of those who were a part of its story, but also can be recognized for its unique spirit for years to come.

Prequel and Founding of the HRC

Written by Melanie Trammell

Before East Ambler Johnston was identified as a residential college, it was a renovations project aimed to entice more students to live on campus. In March 2007, the Director of Housing and Residence Life held its first committee meeting to brainstorm an outline for the building. They came up with some luxury features such as a movie theater and day spa, complete with a hair and nail salon, tanning beds, and a revolving spray tan room. In addition, they planned to incorporate a variety of types of rooms in the building that reflected the variation of styles already implemented on campus, including traditional rooms, hotel-style rooms, and apartment suites (though these were much different from other suites on campus). Specifically in the case of the hotel-style rooms, the committee hoped that it would encourage more upperclassmen to live on campus.

To give some perspective on the renovations of Ambler Johnston, the original building was constructed in 1972 and was always grouped into two sub-houses: East and West. Before the renovations, in the Atrium there was a ceiling on the first floor and no large staircase that connected the first and second floors. On this first floor, the area next to the mailboxes used to be a small hall that had stalagmites and stalactites painted on the walls and was called "The Cave." Residents who lived in this small section were very close and elected to stay in their rooms year after year. During the renovation process, the East section of Ambler Johnston and the crossover was completed in two years, beginning in 2009, after which the renovations for West Ambler Johnston were completed in one year. Though West AJ is larger than East, its renovations were completed in less time because of learning from mistakes that occurred in the construction of East AJ. In between the restorations of East and West, a wall existed barring the entrance to West from the East side on floors 1 and 6.

Much of the design of Ambler Johnston can be traced back to the decisions of the architect hired during the renovations. They decided to use angles to create dissonance, a style based on varying offsets of walls and other construction components. Thus the slants of many of the walls in AJ are actually purposely angled so that the building is righting itself to face true North. Another interesting fact is that the theater area is actually underground, and the decision to make it a theater was predicated on the notion that it could not function as a room without windows. The pinball machine located in the crossover was voted on by the community to be Iron Man-themed.

Around the same time as construction began on the renovation, 2009, Frank Shushok came to work at Virginia Tech as the Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Having been involved with residential colleges before, Dr. Shushok was passionate about bringing this element to Tech. He envisioned a multi-disciplinary, multi-generational community that was academically engaged by a faculty principal. He hoped that this residential college could grow to have strong leadership bodies, including a student governance that would take ownership of their responsibilities and

impact on the community. To sum up his original purpose for the potential of the residential model in his own words, it was to support the university's goal to “expand and support the holistic and transformative educational experiences of students... develop diverse and inclusive living and learning communities... and promote the quality of student life, health, and well-being.”

Ambler Johnston renovations had begun already, and Dr. Shushok knew that the Director of University Honors, Terry Papillon, had been interested in making more Honors housing units. Honors was an ideal candidate for the residential model considering its experience with tight-knit communities that valued academia and fostering relationships that brought together faculty, staff and passionate students. Dr. Shushok realized that East Ambler Johnston was the perfect ambassador for his residential college vision for the Honors Residential College because of timing of these circumstances. Thus, Dr. Shushok approached Dr. Papillon about creating the Honors Residential College. Though there had been many conversations about creating a residential college at Virginia Tech in years before, making those ideas a reality was monumental. This challenge was entirely new and different to every department, and everyone was following the project closely to see how this precedence would turn out.

Soon after this conversation, construction on Ambler Johnston was temporarily stopped. Dr. Shushok and Dr. Papillon assembled a planning committee that met three hours every week for an entire year to deal with the operational challenges of the project, as well as recruiting Honors students, faculty and other staff, and departments of Virginia Tech to help build and be a part of the Honors Residential College. This committee was designed to be a flat hierarchy; all were equals in the planning process so that the wealth of knowledge, experience and perception of its members could be recognized and utilized to its maximum potential. To inspire a residential college, some committee members were even invited to tour other universities that had residential colleges already, namely UVA, Baylor University and Princeton. Lastly, even though the visions for East and West Ambler Johnston residential colleges were dreamed up together, the committee decided to implement East first, and then West in the following year.

Even with the approval to move forward, creating the Honors Residential College had many architectural and logistical challenges. The new vision for the renovations pulled a lot of construction completely off-track. Two of these major changes were implementing the faculty offices on the first floor and the faculty apartment on the fourth. After touring the facility, Frank Shushock decided that if this was going to follow the residential college model, there needed to be a stronger faculty presence. Thus the salon idea was scratched and replaced with faculty offices. In addition, a faculty apartment was introduced to the construction plan in order to allow a faculty principal to live amongst the students. To promote more academic endeavors, the second floor had more common space and classrooms installed. In addition, the committee had to find a way to bring the East and West residential communities together, despite the fact that they were segregated by Ambler Johnston's structure. Lastly, integrating these major

revisions into the construction plan while staying within budget presented its own challenges.

However, other than the faculty arrangements, much of the old plan for East Ambler renovations remained the same. Usage of certain spaces for purposes within the residential community were given meaning in the context of the facilities that already existed. Thus the idea of having Apartment Fellows that would apply to use their suite as a community space came about after the suites were already under construction. Another example of this is that the side-door policy was similarly decided upon after the building had been finished, to promote community through universal use of the same front entrance.

With the construction reaching its end, planning had to begin for the non-architectural foundations of the HRC. Students and faculty from all over Virginia Tech were invited to help contribute to the creation of the Honors Residential College and even live there when it opened the following year. Specifically, many Honors students who lived in tight-knit communities like Hillcrest and Main Campbell were recruited to help in this process. One such task that had to be completed was writing a governing document for the HRC. Grace Mulholland and Patrick Goley were asked to preside over the College Council in the following year as co-Presidents, and Patrick headed the writing of its Charter. Since the HRC was aimed to be a residential college, Patrick and others who helped write the Charter wanted to follow the model of residential colleges before them. However, they also wanted to strike a balance between following those traditions and creating room to define the HRC in a unique way, which they tried to incorporate into the Charter by leaving parts of it vague for future generations to fully define as the community grew. The Charter was ratified by about two-thirds of HRC residents during the spring semester of its first year.

Another challenge of implementing the HRC was the scale of the building size. Other honors communities, like Hillcrest and Main Campbell, only held around 100 people, one-third the resident-count of East Ambler Johnston. Members of the project were worried that in trying to unite such a large group of people, the sense of intimacy and community would suffer. These concerns coincided with research that suggested that humans are only capable of having meaningful relationships with 150 people at a time, referred to as the Lumbar number. For a time, there was even a search for another building because of the importance of these claims. When it became apparent that East Ambler Johnston was the only viable option, items were created for the community to help break it down into less sizeable chunks. These included the First-Year Honors Residential College Seminar (FHRCS), Colloquia Magna, and Apartment Fellows.

The Freshmen Honors Residential College Seminar was originally based off of FYES, the Honors First Year Experience Seminar, headed by Michael Blackwell. FYES was a voluntary seminar that was meant to connect people that wanted to invest in meaningful relationships in an intentional way at the beginning of the college experience. Influenced partly by Dr. Charles “Jack” Dudley, a prior Director of University

Honors, part of the approach of the seminar was bringing interesting people together with some guidance for leaders but mostly giving students the opportunity to take the initiative and define the experience themselves. This guidance also came from Michael Blackwell who met with FYES leaders once a week to help coach them in making meaningful relationships and interactions with the students they mentored. Later, Dr. Terry Papillon, a different Director of University Honors, brought faculty into the experience through the expectation that they would visit FHRCS seminars once a month. In addition, Colloquia Magnum was brought to the HRC from Main Campbell; it was a topical seminar that brought upperclassmen together over common interests and resulted in a project on that topic by the end of the semester. The hands-off nature of both of these seminars was also an intentional part of the learning process. Jack Dudley considered it vital to have parts of the college experience reflect the 'real-world' that students would enter one day, and that meant providing the opportunity to fail. Thus there was a sense of accountability to oneself in Colloquia Magnum and FHRCS that broke down regimented barriers and allowed students to grow not only from community with each other, but from their own shortcomings.

The Apartment Fellows were also created to break down the larger community into smaller subsets to foster close relationships. East Ambler Johnston's infrastructure lent itself well to this idea, as each floor is divided into two halls of about 30 people that each had an apartment (except on floors 1 through 3). Committee members saw the potential of creating community spaces on each hall, not only through the availability of physical spaces (like lounges), but by also appointing members of the community with a passion and vision who could intentionally connect the residents on their hall. Thus, today potential apartment members must apply to live in the space by sharing what they would do to create community within it. At this point, the HRC was now almost fully built in all aspects to take on the challenges, hopes and dreams of the coming year.

The Era of Drs. Stephens and Gumbert

(Fall 2011 – Spring 2014)

Written by Nicholas Montgomery

First Year: Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

When August 2011 rolled around, the HRC officially opened its doors to its inaugural class of students. Though the leadership had been in residence for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, the Exchange marked the first HRC event held for the whole community. For the upperclassmen, there was a palpable sentiment of having no idea what this community would become, but for the freshmen everything was new, and there was little difference between the novelty of college and the novelty of this residential college. Furthermore, there were a lot of freshmen. Though there was a strong contingent of upperclassmen leaders, the freshmen class of this first year was significantly more than half of the population.

The Exchange was the first in a long line of student initiatives that make the HRC as distinct and self-sufficient as it is. Several student leaders had articulated a desire for various student- and faculty-led seminars in the time before classes started, primarily as a means of formal and informal introductions to college, honors, and honors housing. The event was no small undertaking, and the responsibility fell to Betsy Brucker, the first Vice President of the College Council. The day consisted of a brunch for everyone and a full afternoon of hour-long sessions on topics from rhetoric and mythology to the Honors bucket list.

Beyond this landmark tradition, there was a field day, movie nights, and other such activities to get everyone together in the days leading up to the first day of class. From one perspective, it was an amalgamation of a group of college students getting together and having fun, but it didn't take long for the intentionality of it all to become clear. From the beginning, and throughout his time with the HRC, Dr. Stephens emphasized the importance of learning and having fun being inextricable activities. As soon as you have one without the other, the HRC will have lost its way entirely. To that end, the Exchange is a perfect example of both. The brunch and sessions are fun, sometimes comical, sometimes serious, but always educational. From its first designs, the HRC was to be a place to develop "the life of the mind" (something reiterated by Drs. Stephens and Gumbert and Caleb Keith, the first Student Life Coordinator), and that is exactly where it started.

In addition to developing the life of the mind, the HRC was also a place "to know and be known," a motto found on the Housing and Residence Life side of the leadership structure. Carl Krieger, who oversaw the HRC in addition to several other communities on campus, heavily emphasized this approach, and it became a common phrase heard from Caleb Keith and the ten members of the Resident Advisor staff he supervised. That staff consisted entirely of RAs brought from other communities. Some had been RAs before, while others hadn't, but all brought at least one year of experience living on campus elsewhere. If there is one refrain they all admit in unison, it's that no one knew

what they were doing. But at the same time, that has never been known to slow RAs down, least of all Nicholas Roberts, the Senior RA of that first year staff. Nicholas, as described by Dr. Gumbert, is both the most extroverted person and the best community-builder in the world. His role in the HRC was invaluable, particularly in that first year. He was able to bring people together in special ways, which helped fill the gaps and pick up the slack when uncertainty left others scrambling.

One of the greatest sources of uncertainty was the role of the College Council. This group came together during the planning phase before the HRC ever opened, but its exact function was never clear. Michael Blackwell, one of the fundamental contributors to the early life of the HRC, worked extensively with this group and the RAs while ironing out the specifics of their leadership. That being said, it was never easy. Tim Duffy, one of the original College Council members, pointed out that everyone had a different vision of what the Council and the HRC more broadly should look like. Nobody knew exactly how broadly the Council could or should impact the community and its surroundings. Furthermore, there was a bit of cultural conflict in bringing groups together. Main Campbell had dissolved upon the opening of the HRC, while Hillcrest had persisted, and many of the upperclassmen in the first year of the HRC came from these two previous Honors experiences. Particularly for those from Main Campbell, there was an expectation that the HRC would be a new edition of what they had had before in Main Campbell. However, though there were some legacies of the culture of Main Campbell incorporated into the HRC's culture, in large part the HRC was an entirely new thing, and that transition was hard for many. To the extent that there was internal conflict, the early Council did not assume an active role in the community. Though it met twice a week to continue planning and formalizing its role, very few early members of the HRC knew anything about the Council or its relevance to their daily life in the college.

Out of that void, the RA staff essentially did what it was trained to do. In a traditional residential community, RAs put on programs that bring people together, and they are usually quite good at it. Given that Housing and Residence Life pulled together a high quality and high achieving group of staff members, community building was their specialty, and they did it with joy and enthusiasm. The RA staff achieved quite a high prominence early on. To the extent that many fellows knew little about the College Council, most everyone could name most or all of the RAs, and that set the tone for how things were expected to go during the first few formative months of the HRC. However, this process was not always smooth for the RAs, particularly in the earliest parts of the first year. Dr. Stephens, as Faculty Principal, had a very different vision for the RA staff than the RA staff had for itself. At its most extreme, Dr. Stephens did not understand why the HRC needed RAs at all, whereas the RAs all came from experiences where they were the driving force of their community's leadership. However, after seeing the RA staff fill in and pick up the community in its most formative months, Dr. Stephens came to love and appreciate what this group of ten leaders could do collectively.

One strong, important, and truly invaluable community tradition began here at the outset, and it stands as an example of a community event that grew organically, just as

the original planners had hoped. Patrick Goley, one of the two co-presidents of the first Council, understood that the HRC would thrive best when people came together in informal situations. As Patrick had been a professional chef for several years before coming to Virginia Tech, his first thought was to bring people together over bowls of soup. He started "Soup Night," a Friday night tradition of a shared soup dinner in his apartment, and it was a huge success. Unlike many of the big events in the early HRC, Soup Night existed without any RAs taking the lead. More importantly, it did not require any formalized leadership to make it happen or keep it going. Students alone planned and executed it every week, and students alone fueled its continued success.

Through these first few crazy months of the HRC, one thing was clear: we were the shiny new thing on campus. The Washington Post wrote an article about this weird dorm that branded everything with "of learning" on the end of the title (which has persisted with the theatre in particular). Outside visitors were common, and Drs. Stephens and Gumbert were frequently showing people around and recruiting our early leaders to give tours to important guests. Even within the campus community, there were a number of high profile leaders with a vested interest in the success of the HRC. In a lot of ways we were an experiment, and our success (or failure) was vitally important to many and intriguing to just about everybody. In the words of Dr. Stephens, the first year of the HRC was all about moving chairs. Events happened almost incessantly, and very often it was necessary to move chairs to be ready and welcoming for the next group. Dr. Stephens remembers that he, Dr. Gumbert, and Caleb Keith did that often, simply because there wasn't anyone else to do it yet. This was truly an example of the dedication and sacrifice the early leaders had to this community.

Halfway through the year we encountered the hardship of not making grades for the first time. One of the difficult tensions of HRC from the outset was its design as a compromise between Housing and Residence Life and University Honors. To Housing and Residence Life, the HRC is another instance in a line of living-learning communities. To University Honors, the HRC is an Honors community. Each membership comes with its own set of requirements, and on the Honors side there is a 3.5 GPA requirement to maintain good standing with Honors and thereby maintain good standing as a member of the Honors community. Though there are exceptions to stay in Honors with a lower GPA in extenuating circumstances, a sizeable number, particularly freshmen, did not have above a 3.5 GPA at the end of that first semester, so people had to start making plans for living elsewhere the next year. As the spirit of a residential college is one in which you are a community member for life, this GPA requirement for residence poses quite a difficult and heartbreaking situation for many. However, even with those who were required to live somewhere else in the coming year, their status with the HRC was always regarded and maintained as full community members who were welcome back whenever they could visit. In the words of Dr. Gumbert, "Once a HRCulean, always a HRCulean."

One other result of that tension between housing and Honors was the norms and patterns of how things have always been done at Virginia Tech. We had never had a residential college at this university before, so there was inevitably some conflict

between the pattern of the past and the new ways the HRC sought to explore. In particular, Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert had to push back against housing in several instances, not letting the way things have always been done be an impediment to the HRC's potential. A good example of this is the lounges of the HRC. From a housing perspective, every lounge is designed and laid out in a specific, unchanging way. Any deviation from this is seen as vandalism and quickly rectified by the housekeeping staff. In the HRC students began writing on the lounge windows in dry erase markers to do their homework, bringing furniture into the lounge, adding artwork to the walls, and more. To Drs. Stephens and Gumbert, this was a beautiful thing and precisely what they had hoped would happen in the HRC's culture. Therefore, when the housekeeping staff complained about the treatment of the lounges, Drs. Stephens and Gumbert started asking questions about changing the rules, norms and expectations for how the HRC would handle its common spaces. They wanted to give ownership to students as much as possible, and after fighting a bit of bureaucracy, that's exactly what we got.

There was similar negotiating with the university to get space in D2 for our weekly community dinners, and plenty of other examples of fighting bureaucracy at the university level. That, in many ways, was one of the most underappreciated contributions of Drs. Stephens and Gumbert in this formative time of the HRC. They faced and battled red tape head on, and they were able to find success in ways that continue to benefit the HRC today. Needless to say, leadership in the early years of the HRC was a huge time commitment. All of this was fueled by an idea Drs. Stephens and Gumbert frequently championed: "a culture of yes." It became a bit of a mantra, as they wanted to foster a community that pushed the bounds of possibility, refusing to shut down new ideas with a simple "no." Sometimes requests would be hard to accommodate, but just because something is hard does not mean it cannot and should not be done. Within reason, then, that desire to say "yes" drove Drs. Stephens and Gumbert to push back against old norms of bureaucracy to help the HRC find its own way of operating as a microcosm within the University.

Beyond fighting bureaucracy, Drs. Stephens and Gumbert frequently roamed the halls of the HRC, often in the evenings, checking in with fellows wherever there were open doors. This was a great informal way for them to get to know people better and establish their presence, and it was another means by which they demonstrated that they were going to do anything and everything it took to make this residential college experiment a success.

From the student side, Patrick Goley and Grace Mulholland, the co-presidents of the inaugural year, handled their roles with patience and grace. Their contribution went far beyond what anyone would normally expect of students, and they absorbed a lot of abuse during these formative times. Students from Main Campbell were frustrated that the HRC was different, others were bothered that the side doors were not unlocked, and complaints in general were not hard to find. In the light of that fact, Patrick and Grace willingly hosted town hall meetings in order to hear and respond to the concerns of anyone and everyone in the building. Furthermore, Patrick spearheaded writing a charter for the Council, along with several other early leaders. This was a huge

undertaking, and at the time few people appreciated the value of this task. However, having it in place and having it ratified by the entire community lent a lot of legitimacy to the community's leadership and our self-governance, and that legacy has been affecting the community in positive ways ever since. Furthermore, under the Charter, Patrick led the community's first election in the spring to determine the College Council for year two.

Another significant contribution that came from this inaugural Council was a partnership with Head Start in Giles County. Dr. Stephens wanted the HRC to form a lasting partnership with an entity in our community, and Tim Duffy, the Council member in charge of service engagement, took the lead. Tim worked with Michael Blackwell and Jake Grohs to brainstorm organizations for this partnership. Jake, a staff member in VT Engage who has since become an Engineering Science and Mechanics instructor, was instrumental in identifying options. Tim, Michael Blackwell, Jake Grohs, and Dr. Stephens made several trips throughout the New River Valley visiting the YMCA, preschool organizations, and more. One of these visits was to Head Start, and things lined up well with their mission and needs. From there, Tim said it seemed like a very logical partnership. It took three to six months from that point of identification to put together the details of the framework, and that part fell on Dr. Stephens primarily. He overcame the bureaucratic obstacles to organize the system as it is now, which involves five groups of University Honors students traveling each day of the week to the Head Start locations in Pearisburg and Narrows. There is also a weekly seminar that these University Honors students attend, and Jake Grohs became the coordinator for that part of the course. Quickly, this Head Start partnership became a significant core to the HRC's commitment to service, and it even extends beyond a few groups of students traveling on site each week. There have also been initiatives to do painting and refurbishing projects for Head Start during Virginia Tech's annual Big Event Day of Service.

The College Council also helped run several events that incorporated the HRC into University Honors traditions. The first was Freshman Interview Weekend, which University Honors hosts annually to bring prospective students to campus and interview them for Honors scholarships. The HRC and Hillcrest worked together to provide student hosts for each prospective student for one night during the visit, and student volunteers also led panel discussions and sat in interview groups. Additionally, Hillcrest hosts a Coffee House during Freshman Interview Weekend, and it is the most widely attended event for both Hillcrest and the HRC every year. Hundreds of students pack the Hillcrest Dining Room for hours of weird, wacky, and entertaining talents showcased by their peers.

In the context of all of these formalized elements of the HRC, it is important to remember the one-time social events and informal interactions that happened (and continue to happen) all the time in the HRC. It might begin with an exciting conversation in the hallway, a request on the social listserv, an impromptu Nerf gun battle, or a popular Disney movie in a lounge. In the end the effect might have seemed insignificant

when looking at a single event on a single night; but together, these informal gatherings were invaluable to the growth and formation of the community culture.

Another note about the inaugural year of the HRC involves Colloquium Magnum. University Honors housing has always required participation in a house seminar, and for years before the HRC opened, that class was Colloquium Magnum. Hillcrest and Main Campbell each had their own flavors of this seminar, but its main characteristic was that it was entirely student-led. Each semester, students would volunteer to lead a Colloquium Magnum on a certain topic, and other students would select and join these seminars led by their peers. In the HRC, this happened with a formalized “Colloquium Magnum Fair” during the first week of classes. It was student-taught and student-regulated, and that tradition began from the onset in the HRC. One new element, however, was the blogging. In the past Colloquium Magnum (at the time a two credit, A-F course) had been graded by University Honors faculty members reviewing a paper or some other project put forth by each group at the end of the semester. However, given the larger size of the HRC, this was no longer feasible in terms of volume; so from the onset, the HRC’s version of Colloquium Magnum was to be assessed based on student blogs. Each HRCulean was required to have a blog and post weekly as part of the course. Dr. Gardner Campbell was particularly involved in this blogging initiative, and there was a large push to syndicate the contributions of community members for both internal and external viewers to get a snapshot of life in the college.

The first year came to a close with a large, community-wide end of semester celebration hosted and run by our very own community members. Dr. Stephens, Dr. Gumbert, and Caleb Keith collectively took a very deep breath and for the first time took a step back to appreciate that we were alive and well as a community. There had been hardship already, but it had been completely worth it. Additionally, there was so much to look forward to, and that opportunity was stimulating.

Second Year: Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

With a hectic, high profile, emotionally draining, and successful first year behind us, it was time to start a new year, learning from mistakes and deepening the ruts of our most successful paths. We were guinea pigs, in the most endearing way possible, but it remains true that we were the residential college experiment at Virginia Tech. Having completed the first year without rebellion was success in the eyes of just about everyone, but now year two was about growth. It was about figuring out just what we wanted to become and laying a serious foundation to that end.

Inevitably, there were changes and adjustments. The first and possibly most contentious was the opening of the Residential College at West Ambler Johnston. During the first year of the HRC, West AJ had been closed for renovations. This was good news for the inaugural year of HRCuleans because it meant that all common spaces were shared by only a little over 300 of us. However, that was short-lived, as the opening of West AJ signaled a transition to common spaces shared by nearly 1200 students. The retreat was rather dramatic; for most of the year few HRCuleans were

found in the common spaces shared with West AJ at all. Because having these common spaces was so new to West AJ, there was a time when virtually no one used them. However, after a while, West AJ students began to acclimate to the space, and the result was that HRCuleans remained almost entirely on the east side of Ambler Johnston.

In the midst of this adjustment to West AJ's opening, it proved helpful to have a class of freshmen who did not know what it was like to live in the HRC without West AJ. For this new group, there were no habits of using common spaces without having to share. Furthermore, there were concerns at the end of year one about safety and security with the possibility of West AJ students crossing over into the HRC's space, and a fresh group of students helped dilute these fears with a very neutral approach to our new neighbors. On the whole, though, there was a lot to learn in the way of bringing others into the community of the HRC. First, there was a new class of freshmen to bring in. However, beyond that, there were many lessons in being inviting, particularly about West AJ students who might trickle into a Soup Night or Principals' Tea.

From the perspective of Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert, year two was much easier than year one. Unlike before, now there were people to move chairs! There was an established leadership and norms of community events, many of the bureaucratic issues over facilities management were resolved, and much more. Furthermore, there had been undue antagonism between the RA staff and College Council in year one, but the two groups got along much better in year two. People were getting better at working together, and it also helped that we knew what we were doing, at least more so than ever before. Also, within the leadership structure, we had the first group of RAs who had been recruited from the community members of the HRC. This brought a really valuable perspective and a healthy youth to the leadership.

Unfortunately, despite improvements in relationships through much of the leadership, the College Council still struggled in this second year of the HRC. Dr. Stephens recounts that he had to step in and intervene in the details of the Council far more than he wanted to. The University Honors trip to Riva, San Vitale, caused some serious changes mid-year, as it pulled away three of the Council members at the start of the spring semester, including the president, Tim Duffy. All three vacated positions had to be filled by a brand new appointment procedure. In that way Dr. Stephens described year two as really having two different Councils. The second half of the year did see improved relationships and camaraderie within the group, but there were still certain struggles that would not be resolved for another year.

Despite some hardships when looking at the Council as a whole, there were some wonderful individual contributions, particularly coming from Pamela Moore, who served as the Director of Service Initiatives. Michael Muldoon, a freshman student during the first year of the HRC, had to leave school during the fall semester of year two due to brain cancer. In his honor, Pamela organized and executed a 5K fundraiser for the American Brain Tumor Association, Michael's charity of choice. This event included a casual 5K for runners, joggers, and walkers on the nearby Huckleberry Trail, and then

everyone transitioned back to the HRC for a lunch of subs and pies where we recorded many community members saying a few short words of encouragement and appreciation for Michael. This event was undoubtedly meaningful for many involved, as a cherished community member had been seriously affected by cancer, and the response and participation in this event spoke volumes about our commitment to each other as a community. This moment undoubtedly stands out as one of the highlights of the academic year.

Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert began implementing an idea of their own in the faculty apartment, called HRC: Presents. They wanted to incorporate the arts more actively in the life of the college, so HRC: Presents was about showcasing artistry. Though it never became a recurring tradition, the handful of events they did host were quite popular.

There were a few significant transitions and milestones during this second year. Christine Lavin moved in as the Graduate Fellow in Residence, and she really took up a prominent role in the way she assisted Dr. Stephens and made the HRC her home. Christine, who lived on 2nd low, quickly became known for often having her door open and always being willing to talk to people coming by. Her involvement drastically changed expectations for what the Graduate Fellow role could be.

Dr. Gumbert finished her book in the summer immediately following year two, which was a significant personal accomplishment and a wonderful opportunity for community celebration. Caleb Keith, the Student Life Coordinator, transitioned out of his role to move to Athens, Georgia, to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Georgia. That was a very hard transition for many who had grown close to Caleb. One of the most bittersweet moments was also one of the highlights of HRC: Presents, mentioned above. Caleb had studied vocal performance in his undergraduate education, and he was a talented singer-songwriter who enjoyed playing acoustic guitar. Toward the end of his last semester here in the HRC, Caleb held a concert in the faculty apartment as an HRC: Presents event and played many of his favorite original songs and covers.

Third Year: Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

Year three began with a freshman class that composed nearly half of the HRC's population. At this point it became clear that the community retained more and more upperclassmen each year, even over the short time span of only three years. Furthermore, year three began reaping the benefits of normalcy. Though the HRC community was and continues to be in constant flux, many things do follow from previous tradition, so the structure of Principals' Tea, D2 Dinner, End of Semester Events, and more helped keep the flow of the year on track.

Following Caleb Keith's transition out, one of the major changes with the advent of year three was the introduction of Jay Read, our new Student Life Coordinator. Jay was somebody who had some teaching experience, understood the residential college model, was excited about it, and was a physicist! University Honors has a history of

representing liberal arts and human sciences very well, but faculty members from the natural sciences and engineering are often harder to find. Jay's perspective carried a lot of value for a number of reasons, and his love of community coupled with his passion for teaching made him a great fit for the role.

In the realm of student leadership, this year in the HRC featured a significant shift in power. Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert came into the HRC not understanding why Housing and Residence Life required us to have Resident Advisors. However, the first semester had hardly begun when they realized the enormous value of this leadership group, and Dr. Stephens is often heard saying the RAs were the backbone of the community for the first two years. Despite the incredible value of the RAs in a prominent leadership role, having the RA Staff as a backbone to the community was not in line with the residential college model. Self-governance is essential, and the College Council best represented this model of leadership. Therefore, coming into year three, Dr. Stephens and Jay Read specifically targeted a shift in power from the RA staff to the College Council. Nick Montgomery served as both an RA and the College Council President that year, and that shift in power was one of his central goals for the College Council. The primary shift was one of programming. RAs had long been the primary group for planning and executing social events for the community, but this year the RAs intentionally stepped back and made space for the College Council to fill that role. This transition was not easy. Several RAs had grown fond of programming as a central component of the job, so learning to give that up for the good of the college challenged a lot of habits and preferences. However, with time, the transition occurred, and it yielded a College Council stronger than ever before that started to take the kind of significance and value it needed to well represent the community.

The previous College Council started the "Big Idea," which officially went into effect at the start of this third year. The Big Idea is a topic selected by community vote on proposals from community members, and it exists to provide a unifying theme for events and discussions throughout the academic year. Jill Miller, the incoming Director of Programming, had proposed "the tree" as a topic, and it won the vote. Therefore, much of this year's College Council programming focused on incorporating the tree as a theme or element.

Another important change was the introduction of the Honors Residential College Seminar (HRCS). Dr. Papillon, the Director of University Honors, was disappointed in the trajectory of Colloquium Magnum and chose to replace it with a new house seminar. Dr. Papillon structured the seminar such that everyone read the same books, which were chosen to relate to the Big Idea of "the tree." To the extent that Colloquium Magnum was freeform and self-regulated by students, HRCS was structured and regulated by faculty. Many students were not happy with this change, especially since there were more reading assignments than ever before and the class had become one credit, pass/fail. The biggest complaint centered on a lack of autonomy. Because Dr. Papillon felt the students had not handled it with maturity and responsibility, his new model for HRCS was very authoritarian and left little room for students to maintain their own system of accountability. As a result, it was never popular in the eyes of the

community; instead, it generated a lot of complaints. Because there was a lot of frustration with it in the fall semester, it was not required for upperclassmen in the spring semester, and a combination of the leadership of University Honors and the HRC made plans to quickly restructure it before the next academic year.

Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert reflect on this third year as being particularly hard personally. Dr. Stephens moved to a dean position in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; and because of the added demands of this position, he switched positions with Dr. Gumbert; she became the Faculty Principal and he became the Associate Faculty Principal. As the two of them had shared the leadership the whole way, this transition was smooth and almost imperceptible to the community as a whole. However, the semester took an emotionally difficult turn when Dr. Stephens' mother passed away. In addition, Dr. Stephens' father started having serious health problems, so it became clear to Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert that they needed some time to be attentive to family. This all happened at approximately the same time they were asked whether they wanted to renew their three-year term in the Faculty Principal position. The Faculty Principal position is available in three-year terms for up to two terms for a given person. Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert had planned to renew from the beginning, but because of these unexpected personal situations, they chose to step away from the role. Dr. Stephens said afterward that telling the community they were not returning was the hardest thing he ever had to do in the HRC.

Following that announcement, Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert worried about the community losing momentum. As it became necessary to choose a new Faculty Principal for the following year, everyone had to look to the future a lot more than usual, taking attention away from the current state of the community. Thankfully, this transition did not have a negative effect on the community's momentum, thanks in large part to Dr. Gumbert's efforts to leave the HRC in a good position for moving forward. Dr. Gumbert made it her goal to use the second half of their last year to solidify traditions as much as possible. Though she felt like a lame duck in some ways, she was able to get some really important projects done, including creating and hanging posters to showcase projects from Junior Fellows in the HRC. These posters hang in the center of each floor immediately outside the main elevators.

Reflecting on those times of transitions and switching roles, Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert explained that it is hard being the Associate Faculty Principal because you are held accountable for things you do not get to decide. It's also hard being the Principal because you have to be there for everyone. In that sense it was a very bittersweet time for them. Stepping away from the role would give them more time to address personal family situations, but they would sorely miss the community they had come to love deeply. However, leaving the Faculty Principal role did not mean leaving the community. Dr. Stephens and Dr. Gumbert were still Senior Fellows and continued to make an effort to stay involved in the community they had influenced so much in their three years of leadership.

The Era of Dr. Kaufman:

(Fall 2014 – Spring 2017)

Written by Alex Ochs

First Year: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015

With the beginning of the HRC's fourth year came a significant shift in the administrative leadership since its founding: the leave of Drs. Robert Stephens and Heather Gumbert as Faculty Principals, as well as the Director of University Honors, Dr. Terry Papillon. Although Papillon's role in Honors encompassed far more than the HRC, he was directly responsible for the creation of the Honors Residential College, in conjunction with Dr. Frank Shushok. In the wake of these changes, a collection of students and faculty began interviewing candidates for the Faculty Principal position in the spring of 2014. From this process, Dr. Kaufman emerged as the new faculty principal to serve out a full term beginning in the fall of 2014.

Dr. Eric K. Kaufman was an associate professor of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education at Virginia Tech; and he brought with him his family, whose presence in the HRC created a novel distinction in the culture of the faculty apartment from that of previous years. Drs. Stephens and Gumbert had no children, whereas Dr. Kaufman and his wife Shevon had two children who came to the HRC at the ages of 5 and 9: Sara and Ethan. These children nearly always accompanied their parents to events like D2uesday and Principal's Teas, and became quite close to many HRCuleans. Multiple residents around the building would unofficially help the Kaufmans with tasks regarding Sara and Ethan, such as picking them up from the bus stop or acting as nannies as they took the children around the halls on weekends.

Shevon Kaufman offered a different perspective from the faculty apartment, as she was not a member of the university faculty as both Drs. Stephens and Gumbert had been. Many years prior, a serious car accident had left Shevon with a traumatic brain injury and primarily wheelchair-bound, but these in no way limited her enthusiasm and passion for the HRC. She was one of the most active contributors to the community, and she frequently invited students into her apartment spontaneously; she loved company and never shied away from the chance to engage with the community around her.

Dr. Kaufman, in his notably administrative style, brought several new initiatives to the HRC leadership, including increased social media and branding in regards to the College. Residents were encouraged to meet with their professors or Senior Fellows outside of the office and post a selfie to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with the tag "#vthrc". Every month there would be a random drawing and the selected hall would get a free ice cream social in the Principal's Apartment, and were often featured on the television slideshow shown in the main entrance. Another HRC T-shirt contest was held like in previous years, in addition to new embroidered quarter-zips being sold to residents. Specifically the quarter-zips were a smashing success, as many HRCuleans purchased and wore them proudly around the building and campus.

In all, the Kaufmans brought with them a family environment to the position of faculty principal and new perspectives for the college. Specifically, Dr. Kaufman further emphasized the idea of actively using social media for the betterment of the residence hall, began by Dr. Gumbert in the years before him. Lastly, he marked a new era for the HRC. The transition of Faculty Principals demonstrated just how much the college had grown from its beginning, as its founders were able to take a step back and watch as what they built stood firm, and even continued to grow and mature.

The College Council also changed as a leadership body in the fourth year, continuing to build on its history to become increasingly effective, with unparalleled energy and enthusiasm. Some of this can be traced back to Lauren Cashman, the fourth Council President, who brought with her leadership an infectious excitement and inviting, fun atmosphere that both encouraged everyone to participate and challenged Council members and involved residents alike to go the extra mile. College Council meetings had unprecedentedly high levels of attendance and were filled with laughter, interest, input and support from many there. Secretary Mitch Wagner developed a habit of capturing some of the funniest quotes from each Council meeting in his weekly minutes, and he began awarding a winner for "quote of the week" for the most hilarious or outrageous comments.

In addition, the freshmen of 2014 all around the residence hall quickly became passionate about the community of the HRC and stepped up to help cultivate it in many different ways. They were the driving forces on many College Council committees, they led Renegade seminars about topics important to them, they programmed small events for their hall and sometimes even the entire community, and much more. This was a big change in the community from previous years, and the upperclassmen and faculty of the HRC were pleasantly surprised by this outcome. Though there are many reasons for the intense involvement of the freshman class, it was a true tribute to just how much the HRC had grown. Now with a legacy in place and a better understanding of what its community looked like, The Honors Residential College was readily attracting newcomers with its ever-growing sense of unity, both from its own freshman class and from the student body outside of the HRC.

Appendix

Written by Alex Ochs

Artifacts:

Given the large number of residents that cumulatively have lived in East AJ, it is natural that a number of significant items or in-house traditions would develop over time. Examples of these include trophy-like items from competitions with other residence halls, such as the Nerdfest trophy from Hillcrest, or objects created for the building that still exist, such as the 3rd Low Beanbag Chair. We will refer to these objects of importance as “artifacts” of the community, and explain their stories and significance below.

One of the first artifacts created by the community was the Mancave Crest. Ralph Hale, who was a first-year architecture student, designed the crest initially for a visit to Hillcrest at night. Ralph and some other residents from the Mancave decided to leave a “calling card” upon their visit. Basing the design partially off of the HRC Crest, Ralph created both a poster and fabric version of the Mancave Crest. Furthermore, the fabric crest even travelled with Nick Roberts, a senior RA of the HRC, during some of his travels, including a trip to the Grand Canyon. Ever since their creation, one of the Mancave crests has been hung up in the third high lounge.

Another HRC artifact is the Family Feud paddle, the reward for winning the Family Feud competition organized by Skylar Mueller in the fall of 2014, pitting low and high halls against each other. The premise of the game was based upon the widely popular Family Feud game show. Questions and answers for the competition came from a poll sent out to the community earlier in the week that played upon small cultural norms of the HRC community.

A HRC-Hillcrest rivalry item is the Nerdfest trophy, also created by Ralph Hale in his third year when the HRC won Nerdfest, a competition between the residence halls that takes place in the spring. The trophy is actually made out of a clean toilet plunger, though it was sculpted with the intention to hide the original object it was created out of.

In the library of the HRC, located on the 6th floor crossover, there is a deck of Werewolf cards, a psychological game involving story-telling and survival played amongst several people. The deck of cards was originally carried over from Main Campbell to the HRC by Rachel Montague.

Several awards came into existence over the first few years of the HRC. The most historic of these is the Main Campbell Award. Main Campbell was the honors community that preceded the Honors Residential College and was closed as an honors community upon the opening of the HRC. Many of the residents in the first initial years of the HRC were once Main Campbell community members, and that was influential in how the building developed initially. The Main Campbell award is given to a rising senior every year in the HRC for their academic prowess, involvement in the community, and

mischievous nature, which is derived from Main Campbell's strong academic presence and love of pranks and shenanigans.

Another award is the Most Involved Freshman Award, given to an outstanding freshman at the End of Semester Banquet whose involvement and passion for the community is both present and astounding. In year one of the HRC the award was presented to Michael Muldoon. However, when Michael Muldoon was diagnosed with brain cancer that following summer, the Most Involved Freshman Award was renamed in his honor, to the Michael Muldoon award. It was then presented to Bradley Vorjohan in 2013, Colby Weit in 2014, and William Xie in the spring of 2015.

Additionally, in the first floor atrium area between East and West AJ, Dr. Frank Shushok of Housing and Residence Life had provided banners of crests for each of the Colleges of Virginia Tech. This was done by request of faculty principal Dr. Stephens to illustrate how multigenerational and interdisciplinary the students of the HRC were, and proudly show that in the atrium of our building.

Last but not least, another one of the artifacts still remaining in the HRC is the 3rd Low Beanbag Chair. This Beanbag Chair was created in the spring of 2014, on an idea that the RA of 3rd Low, Meredith Leonard, had for the hallway. She requested funds from the College Council to buy the fabric and beans separately, and then Rochelle Silverman spent the next few weeks stitching the fabric together then filling the chair with the beans. This huge sack was covered in sharks and cyan-colored water, and quickly became a beloved item of the community. It illustrates how any resident with an idea had the resources to make something awesome happen as a result.

HRC Traditions:

Over the years, many different and unusual traditions became a routine part of life in the HRC. Most famous of all of these were D2uesday and Principal's Teas, events that were residential college traditions yet still had the largest regular turnout out of all events in the building. These events had the advantage of being easy to incorporate into weekly schedules and at comparatively odd hours with less conflicts than other days. Much of the community building and development present in the HRC happened and grew every week at these events.

D2uesday was a weekly community gathering at a reserved side room of the nearby D2 dining hall that would happen every Tuesday in the early evening (5:30 PM). As D2 was the only buffet style dining hall, many residents would attend and informally chat over many plates of food after many were finished with classes. Principal's Tea in comparison was more formal, catered and requiring students to dress in nice attire for the invited speaker. Speakers were anything from distinguished professors at Virginia Tech to international dance performance directors to a resident of the building, former RA Adam Joslin, who as a sophomore had published his own fiction book "The Convert Conspiracy." The Senior Fellows and other faculty or important people around campus would often stop by Tea and talk with the residents on this weekly occasion.

In the first year of the building, making traditions was both exciting and challenging for the community as there was no precedent before then. Some long-standing traditions that emerged in this year included Soup Night, Sunday Pancakes and Disney Movie Nights. Soup Night would happen on Friday evenings, where the 4th high apartment would make many gallons of soup for famished residents. This event was started by HRC co-president Patrick Goley, an electrical engineer who had been a professional chef for numerous years before arriving at Virginia Tech. It was enormously popular in the first two years of the HRC, although it floundered somewhat over the few years after Patrick graduated. Patrick thought that food and community went hand and hand in many cases, and by serving up first rate, relatively inexpensive and easy-to-make homemade soup much community would be built that way.

Sunday Pancakes was a weekly event where a few residents would wake up early and make pancakes and granola from 9 to 11 AM on Sunday mornings. Katy Shepard and Tyler Weiglein were in charge of making pancakes and granola respectively for the first few years, and fed both church-goers and late risers a great breakfast for a long time.

Disney Movie Nights happened on Saturday nights where residents would put on a Disney movie in the Junior Common Room and anyone who was interested could come watch. Turnout was high for the first few years, then tapered off until it was discontinued as there was no central person leading the event anymore. The room would be polled at the conclusion of the movie for the following week, and included childhood classics such as Mulan, The Lion King, Toy Story, The Emperor's New Groove, and more.

Waffle Wednesdays were on Wednesday nights at 11 PM, where an apartment would make waffles for anybody who was still awake and would stop by. First year co-president Grace Mulholland led this event, and it was discontinued after the first year since the apartment did not return the following year and no other apartment took up the role afterwards.

High Brow Low Brow was an event put on by Drs. Stephens and Gumbert for the first two years of the HRC. Those who were interested in watching a movie would go to the Theatre of Learning on a Tuesday evening, where a coin would be flipped to determine the movie. The two choices were always a very sophisticated and well created movie ("high-brow") and a poorly done, generally considered "bad" movie ("low-brow") and by entering those who attended had committed to staying the entire time to watch the movie. Attendance faltered during the second year of the HRC, so by the third year the event was discontinued, but brought back by the fourth low apartment in the fourth year.

College Council meetings, which have occurred since the buildings' foundation, were always held weekly. The College Council would formally meet during this period, and any resident interested in participating was able to attend even if they had no formal

voting power. The Council was in charge of maintaining the Charter, putting on both formal and informal events, and granting funding requests for those interested in making other events happen in the building. Much of the planning and self-governing decisions were made during College Council meetings, as well as creating results such as the HRC t-shirt contests and making HRC quarter-zips available for those interested in purchasing.

No pants Fridays was an informal tradition brought over by Main Campbell and kept alive by Adam Mills in regards to Principle's Tea. Instead of showing up to the event in business casual attire, Adam would show up with no pants in order to poke a little fun at the system.

In addition, Saturday Morning Basketball started as a tradition in Hillcrest before the HRC was founded and was carried over here by Brooks Akers.

During the Fall of 2013, Colby Weit began TED Talk Tuesdays. Like the title of the event suggests, residents who attended would watch TED talk speeches and then discuss them. A similar event, Taboo Topics Tuesday started by Catie Cheek, Lauren Bour and Caity Lingley, also took place on Tuesday but alternated with TED Talks. Again in a similar fashion, the latter event was aimed to break barriers by talking about concepts normally uncomfortable and ignored in society. Both of these events lost turnout and were not continued the following academic year.

Rebel and Renegade Seminars were semi-formal evening discussions spread throughout the semester and led by either another resident or a professor at Virginia Tech on a certain topic. This supported the intellectual vision of the building, and encouraged thinking about complex subjects outside of the classroom. They were often put on by the Director of Academic Enrichment in the College Council, but also could happen by the accord of an empowered resident.

The Alternative Spring Break Trip would happen during Virginia Tech's week-long spring break every year. A group of residents would travel to West Virginia and help construct houses as humanitarian work. It was well established throughout the years, but really exploded in the spring of 2015 when the number of participants increased from 6-8 on average to 18. Students would see a very different side of life as what they normally saw at Virginia Tech, and often bond quite closely through the amount of time they spent working together.

The 5K for Michael was an event put on by a resident in the second year of the HRC, and became an annual tradition in the fall. Michael Muldoon was a freshman living in the HRC for its first year, but was diagnosed with brain cancer over the following summer and had to temporarily leave the HRC. One of the residents who knew him put on a 5K run on the Huckleberry Trail in Christiansburg to raise money for brain cancer, and generated over \$2000 with over 100 people participating. This event later went on to win Housing and Residence Life's "Event of the Year" award.