

9-1-2019

Next: Reflection on Furman going forward

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Ron (2019) "Next: Reflection on Furman going forward," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 62 : Iss. 2 , Article 15.

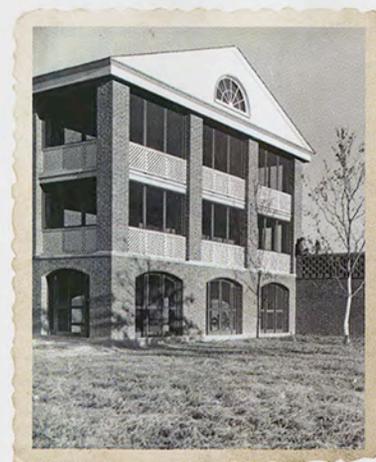
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LAKESIDE HOUSING COMPLEX

The front entrance to the Lakeside Housing Complex, 1960s.



GAMBRELL HALL

Rear façade and entrance to the newly completed addition to the Lakeside Housing Complex in 1968.



GAMBRELL IN THE SNOW

Gambrell Hall, shrouded in snow, soon after its completion. In 1971, it was named after Mary Latimer Gambrell, who graduated from the Greenville Woman's College in 1917.

Captions provided by Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist Jeffrey Makala.

NEXT



RON THOMPSON

Over the past two years, our team has implemented The Housing Director, a software program that has enhanced our communication with students and reinvented the housing lottery process into one that is community-focused.

Students now see everyone who has already chosen a room, which means they choose more than just a room to live in — they choose to be part of a community. With that project complete, we are now setting our sights on the residential experience.

Students' residential experience facilitates their growth through developmental stages along a four-year pathway. Anchored by belongingness efforts for all students, we provide developmentally appropriate challenges tightly coupled with an integrative support network during their transition to campus, academic and social integration, and community engagement.

A key piece of that is the job satisfaction of resident assistants, who guide and live alongside their fellow students. In recent years, serving as an RA has become more rewarding. We know this because they're coming back after their first year more often than they used to. RA programming, too, is enhanced through frequent collaboration with other offices and departments, including faculty, through Cultural Life Program offerings.

As students progress through their residential experience, they live in larger communities, in larger living spaces with more roommates and amenities and with less staff, while they learn to manage more autonomy. During their junior and senior years, while living in apartment-style housing in North Village, we partner with groups such as the Malone Center for Career Engagement and the Internship Office to ensure students are capitalizing on the available career readiness opportunities.

I am most proud of how these initiatives have enriched the student experience. For years, we spent much of our time reacting to student complaints and service delivery issues. For the past couple of years, however, we have flipped the script and now spend most of our time planning enhancements to the student experience and developing communication plans to better inform and prepare students.

More progress is coming. In early April, we began the master planning process to envision the future of the housing facilities and students' residential experience, facilitated jointly by teams from the architectural firms Hanbury, and Brailsford & Dunlavey.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ron Thompson is the director of Housing & Residence Life. ♦