The Perceived Impact of Faculty-in-Residence Programs on Faculty Development

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Abstract

Faculty-in-Residence (FIR) programs, where students interact with faculty outside of the classroom, have shown positive effects on student success. However, most research does not look at FIR programs from a holistic perspective that examines the impact on faculty. This study investigates the perceived impact on faculty participating in FIR programs. The results add to current literature that faculty-student interactions outside of the classroom are significant for students and faculty, specifically faculty perceptions of performance in teaching and service. The results also indicate positive perceptions by faculty in research performance due to participation in the FIR program. This finding is surprising given previous research, which shows faculty who participate in FIR programs feel disadvantaged in terms of their research agenda. Furthermore, the investigation uncovers how the organizational design of the institution implementing the FIR program impacts the perceptions of program purpose and efficacy.

Practitioner Notes

1. Participation in FIR programs help facilitate FIR faculty development, which in turn creates greater opportunities for student engagement, student sense of belonging and student success.
2. Faculty and student interactions outside of the classroom are significant for students and faculty, specifically faculty perceptions of their performance in teaching and service.
3. Involvement in the FIR program fosters positive perceptions by faculty to expand their research agendas with increased opportunities to collaborate with other disciplines.
4. Beyond the positive results of FIR faculty perceptions on their teaching, research, and service performance, transcending themes of diversity, empathy, networking, and organization were uncovered, which enhanced FIR faculty professional development.
5. To achieve overall positive impact of FIR programs, program goals, objectives, need to be aligned and agreed upon by the university, residential life administrators, and faculty.

Keywords

Authors

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Introduction

The various ancillary departments, and offices in institutions of higher education are together responsible for meeting the goal of educating their students. The goal of providing higher education that supports student success is best met through the coordination of various departments, ancillary university services and offices. Research on the alignment of universities' mission and the functions of their ancillary activities show a high correlation between goal development and institutional expectations for positive student outcomes (Ozdem, 2011). As such, university administrators support innovative initiatives that bridge academic affairs and student affairs. Faculty-in-Residence (FIR) programs are one such innovative program, demonstrating positive correlations between student success and student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom (Beckowski et al., 2018; Browne et al., 2010; Garrett & Zabriskie, 2003; Komarraju et al., 2010). FIRs (Faculties-in-Residence) are faculty members who, along with their teaching and research responsibilities, have committed to contributing to student education beyond the classroom (Healea et al, 2015). Other terms for similar programs used in higher education in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, include scholar-in-residence, professor-in-residence, faculty mentor-in-residence, or faculty fellow.

For this study, the unit of analysis is the FIR program at San Jose State University (SJSU) a public institution offering primarily undergraduate degrees. SJSU is a large institution designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The FIR program was first introduced to University Housing Services (UHS) at SJSU in the Fall of 2016 with a cohort of nine faculty. The goal of the program is to enhance student learning by integrating the value of academic life with the residential experience into a seamless living-learning environment. For example, FIRs (Faculties in Residence) organised and were responsible for programs that included activities aiming to promote and cultivate self-awareness, social relationships, cultural competency, social engagement while also fostering intellectual stimulation and academic involvement. Activities such as field trips out in the community, life skills, nutrition education, meal preparation, political and social events, diversity, post-traumatic stress disorder topics, alcohol and drug consumption, movie nights and individual offerings of academic mentoring sessions, just to name a few.

It is important to understand the impact of FIR programs on the mission of higher education and the ways it contributes to student learning outcomes, given (1) the lower level of importance placed on service learning, compared to research activities for faculty development (Sriram, 2015) and (2) the need to demonstrate better accountability to students and parents about the value of education (Birdsall, 2018). However, to understand the full impact of FIR programs on students, it is equally important to understand the impact on faculty of the FIR programs. This requires that faculty perspectives need to be investigated.

This paper reviews the existing literature on FIR programs and investigates the experiences of faculty members involved in the FIR program at SJSU to ascertain their perspectives of how their participation affects their professional development in teaching, research, and service. A discussion of the significance of this effect follows the results. The paper concludes by providing implications of how the results could inform better practice in other FIR programs and ideas for future research.

Literature

Theoretical Framework

The framework that structures this research is based on several theories of student learning and student-faculty engagement. The literature that presents these theories are reviewed below. The theories discussed below provided the structure to view the connection between student success and student involvement with faculty outside of the classroom. The pertinent literature is divided into the following categories: (a) the connection of faculty to student success outside of the classroom, (b) learning beyond the classroom, and (c) research on the work of FIRs.

Connecting Faculty to Student Success Outside of the Classroom

Theories on student learning stem from several education researchers. Two education researchers include Astin (1977, 1993) and Pace (1982), who both developed theoretical frameworks for explaining how greater student involvement and institutional structure lead to better educational outcomes. Student involvement and institutional structure include investing effort into the use of institutional facilities, but also time and effort invested into cultivating meaningful interactions in the personal and social settings, prevalent in college life (Pace, 1982). This includes interactions with faculty outside of the classroom.

First-generation pedagogies view academic learning as taking place inside the classroom and social learning outside the classroom. Second-generation pedagogies remove the academic and social labels and recognise student learning as a complex concept that can be attained inside and outside of the classroom (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014). Researchers have developed theories on student learning empirically (Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Cuseo, 2018; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000), that ignited several innovations such as the development of Living Learning Communities (LLCs) and faculty residing in residence halls. LLCs exist in various models. For example, students may live together in a residential community based on a theme, such as sustainability and social justice, or based on an academic major with common classes with a complete curriculum (Dunn & Dean, 2013). Co-curricular activities concerning the theme and purpose of the community complement the structure of the LLCs. These innovations fulfill the type of student learning envisioned by researchers, like Astin and Pace, as mentioned above.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

The majority of the literature on student success focuses primarily on the classroom. For example, Joyce et al. (1992) model of teaching is based on a theory of social interaction inside the classroom. Even research looking at the impact of teaching on students outside of the classroom returns the focus to how the outside classroom interaction affects the content delivery inside the

classroom (Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016). This focus has some merit since faculty are evaluated for retention, tenure, and promotion based on their teaching, research, and service (Centra, 1979). However, of those three categories, the most prominent for tenure and promotion is research, an activity that can prevent a faculty member from tenure attainment or promotion.

Retention, Tenure, & Promotion (RTP) committees typically view faculty educational efforts with students outside of the classroom as a component of service. In order of rank, compared to service to department, college, or university, such educational activity is the lowest of the three, if it is considered at all (Centra, 1979). As such, when examining the role of faculty in student success and achievement based on their interaction outside of the classroom, the literature is thin and rather dismissive. This raises the need to investigate the role and impact of faculty on student success in other academic initiatives besides the classroom. Further, it indicates that while the focus on student success is important, the impact of faculty-student interaction on the faculty is limited and presents a gap in the extant literature.

The Work of Faculty-in-Residence

Healea et al. (2015) point out that the innovation of FIR programs represents a potential shift in the professoriate. Administrators who make decisions on RTP recognise the value of including FIR programs in the residence halls. However, it is less clear how senior faculty members view this change, and it is even more uncertain as to the impact on the career trajectories for faculty who participate in FIR programs.

The literature suggests two main themes in the role of the FIR related to the professor performance model of teaching. Blimling (2015) claimed that, besides students, faculty members can also benefit from out-of-class student-faculty interactions. Sriram et al. (2011) interviewed faculty members who lived in residence halls as part of an FIR program and found that faculty had several positive experiences and reported three outcomes: (1) developed as educators, (2) advanced their understanding of teaching and learning, and (3) created a deeper commitment to connecting the in-class and out-of-class learning experience, because of living on campus and interacting with students. Golde and Pribbenow (2000) found similar results through faculty reports with the addition that participating faculty reported being able to create a sense of belonging and community among students, while creating a deeper sense of meaning for their professional work.

According to Healea et al. (2015), FIR programs exist in three variations. The first variation is where the faculty live on campus in the residence halls alongside students. In this model, the faculty has no administrative requirements other than to engage students intellectually and educationally where they reside. The second variant is the Oxford-Cambridge house style of faculty masters where the faculty have more administrative role in the day-to-day lives of the resident students. The last variation is the Faculty Fellow model, in which faculty engage students outside of the classroom in advising or programmatic activities as part of a campus program, but not in a residential setting.

The literature on faculty-student engagement is "broad and voluminous" (Healea et al., 2015, p. 475). However, research on the work of FIRs, specifically faculty residing in residence halls, is limited. Existing studies focus primarily on the impact on students and validate the results of the

positive impact on student success from faculty-student engagement outside of the classroom (Browne et al., 2010; Dolby, 2014; Fitzpatrick, 2011).

Research focusing on the faculty participating in FIR programs (Browne et al., 2010; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Rhoads, 2009; Sriram, 2015; Sriram et al., 2011; Wawrzynski et al., 2011), describes the insights faculty developed about faculty-student involvement and the rising expectations of faculty involvement in FIR programs from students who desire that their undergraduate programs be treated on par with the research programs that universities market to gain prestige (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Additionally, research describes how faculty perceptions of students change because of their participation in FIR programs (Rhoads, 2009; Sriram et al., 2011). Other research points to the obstacles faculty face in participating with FIR programs. Those obstacles stem from outright discouragement of their mentors and colleagues (Browne et al., 2010) to potential negative consequences such as lack of recognition of their FIR service on RTP committees (Fitzpatrick, 2011) and the partnerships of faculty with student life professionals and their value to the success of the program (Armstrong, 1999).

While the extant literature on FIR work focuses on the experiences of faculty who participate in FIR programs, empirical observations of the impact on faculty quality and their professional development remain open to investigation. Further research on the impact on faculty is necessary. Does participation in FIR work change faculty in terms of their teaching, research, and service? Do faculty modify their teaching style, given their perceptions of students and their learning requirements change? Does the quality and quantity of faculty research improve or become hindered? Does the level of faculty service participation increase, and if so, does it have a greater impact on the institution and community where the faculty work and reside? The stated gap leads to this research project's primary research question:

> What is the faculty's perception of the impact on their professional development in the areas of teaching, research, and service for those who participate as FIRs in such programs?

In response to this question, this study aims to contribute to higher education literature by illustrating qualitative findings from this understudied area of faculty development.

Method

Data Collection and Description

The data for this investigation was derived from interviews of former FIRs. Besides the pertinent interview questions, faculty were only asked general descriptive data such as gender, race, and faculty rank (i.e., tenure, tenure-track, or lecturer) to preserve their anonymity. The project team interviewed nine FIRs for this project. Of those, five were male (four White, one Asian) and four were female (two White, one Black, and one Asian). Their academic ranks ranged from Assistant Professor (seven) to Associate Professor (two). The participants were also FIRs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic with each faculty member completing the 2-year participation limit established by the SJSU FIR program. Majority of the participants became involved with the FIR program during their first year at SJSU. The participants at the Associate professor rank had been at SJSU for more than six years and had achieved tenure. The interview protocol describing the plan for collection and security of the data was approved by SJSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee.

Method of Analysis

To answer the primary research question, the research team implemented a phenomenological approach to analyse interview transcripts from the FIR interviews. Creswell described the phenomenological method as "a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 13). While the main research question is founded on a structured framework, we employed semi-structured interview questions to inquire not only about perceptions of the impact of the FIR program on faculty development, but also to allow respondents to expand on any other themes they deemed as relevant to their experience.

The authors established the reliability of the interview questions by conducting two test pilot interviews with FIRs not included in the study. After each pilot interview, questions were revised to solicit additional information from respondents. The final interview questions were developed collaboratively by the entire research team. Interviews were conducted by two members of the research team, data analysed jointly by four team members, and results were reviewed and confirmed by the remaining members of the research team. The research team coded the responses of the interviews based on the categories of teaching, research, and service, and additionally, found responses that transcended those three initial categories.

To ensure inter-coder reliability, the four qualitative researchers of the team each coded one interview transcript at the same time, during each iteration of analysis, and then conducted a code comparison query using NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis tool. All codes with a Kappa coefficient less than 0.40 were manually compared by the qualitative team and adjusted to ensure codes were agreed upon and uniform among coders. After three iterations of coding, the analysis produced two main categories of coded themes: impact themes (those references coded under the sub-categories of teaching, research, or service) and transcending themes (those references coded that were present in each of the impact categories). A total of 1,065 references from the interview responses were coded with 699 references coded by the impact theme and 366 references coded by the transcending themes. The impact themes of teaching, research, and service are described in the next section. The transcending themes are described following the impact themes.

Responses from the interviews were transcribed and coded to identify outstanding phenomenological themes of perceived impact on faculty development. This process adheres to the phenomenological method because it applies to an "experience [that] can be described" (Giorgi, 2006, p. 174). However, the focus includes the FIRs' experience and meaning rather than just the description; particularly concerning how FIR interprets their perceived experience of that impact to their teaching, research, and service domains of performance. Thus, the precise phenomenological method of analysis used for this study is the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method (Eatough & Smith, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This method relies on the semi-structured interview to elicit the experience of the participants and their interpretations of that experience concerning their self-assessed performance in traditional domains of faculty performance.

All authors were involved in developing the research design of the overall project and the review and approval of its results. However, four main investigators led the qualitative data collection and

analysis. To minimise any influential factors on how the research was conducted, the qualitative team developed positionality statements. Positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt, within a given study" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 71).

The primary qualitative investigator is an occupational therapist of Asian-American background and is an assistant professor at the Department of Occupational Therapy. After years of serving in the healthcare industry as a clinician, his decision to transition into the higher education sector was propelled by his desire and interest in teaching the future generation of occupational therapists. At the time of the study, he was completing his 2-year term as an FIR at the university where the research was conducted. As someone new to academia, he was interested in identifying the potential impact of the FIR program on faculty development in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

The secondary qualitative investigator is a professor of public administration and of Hispanic background. He has previously served as a director of a Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, which focused on faculty development. During the investigation, he was a faculty-in-residence in the FIR program under investigation. Given his background in faculty development and organisational development, he was interested in learning how faculty perceived the value of the FIR program to their academic careers.

The third qualitative investigator was a first-year FIR at the time of the study. She was in her 3rd year as an assistant professor in the biology department. As a first-generation college graduate and as a woman in STEM, she came to SJSU with the desire to connect with students. She credits much of her academic and career success to the guidance of a mentor she had during her undergraduate experience at a primarily undergraduate institution like SJSU. She hopes to return the investment placed in herself by inspiring and guiding SJSU students in the education process. Thus, she joined the research team to explore how an FIR program could contribute to faculty development for this purpose.

The fourth qualitative investigator is a student affairs professional, doctoral student, and first-generation college graduate of White Greek American descent with a background in teaching, counselling, and lifelong learning. At the time of the investigation, she oversaw the Faculty-in-Residence program that is managed by the Academic Initiatives team within residential life of UHS. Additionally, she was a member of a federal research grant from the Department of Education and allocated, with the agreement of the grant's Principal Investigator, a portion of the funding to stipends for the two faculty interviewers and two research assistants. In her 16-year practice in higher education, she collaborated with faculty in academic advising, first-year experience, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and created synergies between student affairs and academic affairs.

The specific steps of this qualitative methodological approach, modified from Smith and Osborn (2015), involved several readings of the text, at least four: holistic, richly descriptive, abstract, conceptual. It involved refined coding of the initial points of interest toward specific coding of concepts based on teaching, research, and service so the results from each participant could be compared, arbitrated, or reconciled, and an analytical interpretation of the faculty's perceived experiences in these domains.

Results

Impact Themes

This section presents a thematic analysis of phenomenological experiences described by interviewees within the professor performance model: teaching, research, and service.

Teaching

Interviews with FIRs uncovered two main themes related to teaching: increased teaching capacity and changes to pedagogy. FIR responses revealed that most perceived increased capacity to teach and changes in their pedagogy, which they felt, made them more effective educators. Examples of increased capacity include increased interpersonal connection with students. This allowed FIR#1 to explore facilitating and teaching in spaces they never would have considered before. Additionally, due to more contact, FIRs found students to be more relatable as FIR#2 reported having better organised lessons and utilising examples in class that better resonated with students. FIR#4 reported having better designed courses because of better connection with students. As such, experiences as an FIR living amongst students exposed faculty to the students' lives in ways that they perceived increased their capacity to be better teachers. FIR#5 described the relevance of shared spaces with students, which allowed them to witness how some minority students felt vulnerable and isolated. Understanding student circumstances allowed FIRs to appreciate better how their own teaching could affect and enhance their students' lives.

FIRs also reported perceived changes to their pedagogy and their teaching methods and practice. For example, FIR#1 reported they gained a broader perspective of their teaching practices by being an FIR. They added to their lesson scaffolding techniques applicable to students' level that helped them improve their performance. FIRs #5 and #8 indicated the FIR program increased their awareness of what engages students and explored culturally responsive ways to enrich student learning experiences beyond the classroom. Given the designation of the SJSU as a HSI and AANAPISI, this highlights the importance of designing instructional methods to serve a variety of students from diverse backgrounds.

Other FIRs reported specific modifications in their teaching styles, such as being more lenient with assignment deadlines, given that data for this study was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. FIR#2, for example, reported learning from their FIR experience their value as a professor was more to facilitate increased opportunities for group work sessions that allow students to interact and be exposed and to learn from other students' ideas. FIRs reported that influenced by their FIR interactions with students they incorporated more interactive teaching styles that increased student learning and engagement. For example, FIR#4 reported using "real-life examples, the use of various media, including role-playing and interviewing, and other group and paired activities" to make lessons more interactive. FIR#6 reported finding the need to "adjust the learning environment" to include online platforms and anonymous discussion boards because their experience as an FIR showed them that "it was painful for students to ask for help."

Research

All FIRs mentioned research in their interviews. Initially, participants did not report any impact of the FIR program on research activities. However, as their interviews progressed, they shared perceived impacts to their research. Two research-related sub-themes emerged from their responses: (1) limitations on research and (2) research applications.

On the research limitations sub-theme, faculty reported four main aspects regarding research: (1) a disconnect between the FIRs and the administration about the length of their FIR term, being two years rather than three, and thus not having time to make any connections to their research agenda; (2) their research field interests were not related to students they engaged; (3) the student-centric direction of the university placed higher value in teaching than research; and (4) a shift from guided research as postdoctoral associates to an independent researcher as faculty. FIR#4 and FIR#8 reported a lack of time to dedicate to their research as an impeding factor. Some faculty referred to the inability to develop research agendas in conjunction with the undergraduate students. FIR#1 stated undergraduate students have not reached that developmental stage yet to hold research conversations outside of the classroom. FIR#8 stated they felt the university placed a higher value on teaching and on service for students as opposed to research. With a lack of resources and time, faculty naturally dedicate less time on their research, let alone while serving as an FIR. FIR#3 identified the shift from the guided research, as post-doctoral researchers, to the independent research as new faculty, and found that the competition for their time as an FIR prohibited the advancement of their research agenda.

Despite the initial sentiments of negative impacts to research, all faculty reported positive aspects as well. Eight faculty shared how they found applications of their experience to their research. Their responses highlight two prevailing sub-themes: (1) increased opportunities for interdisciplinary research opportunities with colleagues and (2) expansions of the scope in their research agendas by incorporating their experiences with students. For example, FIR#7 discussed collaborating with a faculty member from another department, also in the FIR program, that resulted in a research grant and subsequent publication. FIR#3 reported being more open and involved in multidisciplinary research than previously.

Regarding perceived opportunities to expand the scope of their research, FIR#2 and FIR#5 stated they incorporated investigations on factors of student success into their research agendas. FIR#9 described how hosting residential events, followed by conversations with students, allowed them to deepen their research focus, and shaped their way of thinking for their future research projects. In addition, FIR#1 described practical research applications stemming from their experiences with the residential communities. For example, FIR#1 introduced virtual reality technology at a residential event and invited students to participate and contribute responses to their research from this experience.

Service

FIRs reported more experiences from the service domain (44% of all coded references). Three main service sub-themes emerged: (1) the perceptions of how the FIR program was viewed and evaluated by their departments, colleagues, and RTP committees, (2) their personal service experiences from participation in the FIR program, and (3) their experiences with students.

Many of the FIRs perceived that service in the FIR program was undervalued. While the FIRs believed the program constituted university-level service, six out of nine FIRs reported they felt their home departments and colleges undervalued their FIR work in their RTP evaluations. The FIRs also reported they felt their work was undervalued by the UHS Administration. FIR#6 stated, "[Student] Housing [Services] appear to be resentful of tenure track faculty as we are viewed as 'privileged' people who are taking up valuable resources." Nonetheless, FIRs reported they felt their service was valued by both the Resident Assistants (RAs) and residents. For example, FIR#2

stated, "when I talked to some of the RAs, who were there from the first year to the second year…they felt we had been able to achieve a great deal more for the community, both on individual floors and in the building as a whole." Further, many FIRs reported that despite their departmental colleagues not recognising FIR work as a valuable service, the FIR program was nonetheless recognised as a valuable faculty recruiting tool by the university and their college deans.

Despite the perceptions of negative judgments about FIR work, the faculty reported they sensed the greater value they provided in service to the university community. They felt they had a larger impact by learning what campus and community services they could connect their students. For example, typical services included connecting students with university and local food banks, medical services, and financial aid services.

Most of the FIRs discussed their ability to engage with and learn about the students outside of the classroom. Faculty felt they could "just have deeper conversations with them" (FIR#1). This allowed students to see faculty "as individuals who could be helpful as opposed to [the] mystique of faculty university professors. . .and for them to. . .give [students] skills. . .to communicate better and interface more effectively with professors" (FIR#2). Lastly, all FIRs reported developing professional relationships with the residential students they interacted with. The FIRs felt that engagement contributed to the overall academic success of the students.

Transcending Themes

In addition to the identifying themes of teaching, research, and service, several other themes were observed from the responses of the faculty. While there were many themes raised, the most common themes expressed among all faculty interviewed were the transcending themes of diversity, networking, empathy, and organisation unravelled from the interviews. Therefore, the researchers chose to focus additional analysis on these themes.

Diversity

The combined faculty responses described diversity as descriptions of enhanced awareness of the needs of diversity and inclusion on campus related to teaching, research, and service. Along with teaching, FIR#2 reported becoming cognisant of "the sense of isolation that individuals of color or different ethnicities felt" in education settings. FIR#3 reported becoming more aware they "didn't feel the same problem[s] as people of color." From a research perspective, FIR#9 described how, by participating in the FIR program and activities, they started thinking to include "teachers of color and…black scholars" in their future research projects. Further, the theme of diversity emerged in the FIRs' perceptions of service. For example, FIR#6 reported being able to serve as a moderator for RA-held sessions "in which conversations could be started that stemmed on racial issues." FIR#7 described helping students identify with "someone with a common identity [but] usually [with] a marginalised identity", while FIR#8 reported helping students of diverse backgrounds "feel acclimated."

Networking

The FIRs' combined responses described networking as experiences related to opportunities to expand professional relationships that helped them improve as faculty. For example, FIR#3 described networking with faculty from other disciplines and changes in their teaching style due to their exposure to other pedagogy styles. Related to research, FIR#3 stated, "because I got to

know other faculty in different fields, I got to apply for a grant on an injustice study that I don't think I've ever been part of before." FIR#4 stated, "I think that the networking and collective planning…the activities we did through the FIR help[ed] give me the means to create partnerships on campus and to reach out to others off campus." FIR#7 summed up the networking benefits by saying "it's more the connection" that FIRs make because of the FIR program. FIR#4 and #7 explained how learning about the different campus support and services and making connections with the people in those areas helped them to better serve their assigned students.

Empathy

FIR statements described empathy as a new perspective of students they found useful in teaching, service, and research. Most FIRs reported increased or enhanced understanding of the student population at SJSU. This was especially salient for FIRs who came from elite R1 institutions. Other FIRs described understanding "the vulnerabilities of students and their everyday life ups and downs, [such as] the sense of isolation that individuals of color or different ethnicities felt" (FIR#2). This newfound sense of empathy made FIR#2 "open to appreciating how life circumstances like a car that was broken into or, the fires [referring to the State Forest fires of 2019] had such a significant impact on students and therefore [made me] able to offer additional time for assignments and be more available outside of the classroom for office hours." FIR#8 described newfound empathy from participating in the FIR program as such:

"If you've had that experience where you're working with [the students] in the residential community, you do get that sense of, "Oh, I didn't know that students who go to SJSU typically have two or three or four jobs." And now they're dealing with food insecurity, or there's like all these challenges, right? You know, that's going to kind of help you with how you teach."

Responding about research, FIR#1 stated, "maybe [it is] that you gain that empathy, and you know that there's more exposure that needs to happen." Another FIR indicated that discussions with students shifted their thoughts about the direction of future research and helped shape the structure of their next research project (FIR#9). Several FIRs indicated empathy played a new and important part in their service. Specifically, FIRs reported understanding what it may be like for some of the students who are both first-year and first-generation, "especially if you are trying to help them feel acclimated and feel that they belong at [the] university" (FIR#8). FIR#5 responded knowing the students lived in a residential hall with no air conditioning or go hungry over the weekend is "something as a faculty, you never think about it, if you're not in this [FIR] program."

Organisation

At least five FIRs mentioned topics about the organisation of the program concerning shifting, competing, ambiguous, or discontinuity of goals and confusing expectations about the roles and purpose of the faculty in the program. FIR#2 provided an example of shifting goals, by stating the position was reduced from three to two years because the goals changed from "promoting student success" to "providing inexpensive housing for faculty." According to FIR#5, this may have caused animosity between residential life professionals and the faculty to the point where faculty were viewed as "external entities" and not treated "as colleagues." Some FIRs reported perceiving role ambiguity because of the newness of the program. For example, FIR#7 stated the purpose "was unclear and there were a lot of administrative things still being worked out" and that the "position descriptions were written in a way that was not realistic to the [role and ability] of first-year faculty."

FIR#3 reported in the beginning, the program requirements were "very confusing" to the point they" did not know what to do" and so they just started "putting on so many programs" that "I felt disoriented." Lastly, with the quick successive turnover FIR, FIR#4 reported creating goals and objectives for their learning community and trying to hand them over to the next FIR but not feeling the new FIR "adapted or [took them] up in any significant way."

Summary of Results

The qualitative results of this study demonstrate faculty perceived dramatic effects from participating in the FIR program. Faculty perceived an increase in their knowledge and skills of teaching and student engagement techniques. They increased their perceived empathy of student situations and as a result, modified their teaching philosophies. Furthermore, despite initial constraints, faculty perceived more opportunities to expand their research agendas and collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines. Additionally, many faculty felt their service contribution to the university and community expanded, despite the perceptions their department colleagues expressed little value in their FIR service. As a result, many faculty felt they had a better understanding of how to help students learn and feel like they belong at university, which contributed to enhancing the faculty's perceptions of their overall performance and contributions.

Discussion

Results of this research point to a perceived expansion of capacity in teaching attributed to increased empathy and understanding of student circumstances from faculty participation in the SJSU FIR program. Many faculty reported pedagogical changes within their classrooms because of this perception. While there were mixed response results describing the impact on faculty research performance, responses suggest the FIR program increased opportunities for faculty who included students in their research and were exposed to cross-disciplinary research opportunities. The largest qualitative impact was the faculty contribution to the university and the larger community under service with their expanded knowledge of student resources and opportunities. Lastly, beyond finding impacts along the traditional pillars of teacher performance, the qualitative results exposed transcending themes of an increased appreciation of diversity, empathy, networking, and organisation by all FIRs.

A collective view of the results demonstrates that, overall, the faculty participating in the FIR program at SJSU did perceive a positive impact on professional development. This confirms research that demonstrates positive personal development for faculty who experiment with outside of the classroom engagement with students (Torres-Gordillo, 2020). However, there were caveats observed in the results that both confirmed and contrasted the research on FIRs by Healea et al. (2015).

For example, the impact perceived by faculty related to how the members of the university (i.e., student housing services, home department of FIR, university administration) viewed the importance of the program and agreed on the goals of the FIR program. The faculty perception of differences in stated goals, objectives, and tasks stated by residential life administrators and university level administrators led to confusion and potentially wasted efforts from the participating faculty and demonstrated an inefficient use of valuable faculty resources. Furthermore, expressed support and recognition from FIRs' home departments about the mission and service value of the FIR program, moderated the FIR's perceived impact of the program on their future career

development and their perceived impact on students in general. These findings point to the need for an institutional approach that aligns goals and objectives from at least three categories of university personnel: administrators, residential life professionals, and faculty. Despite the incongruent goals, the positive perceptions described by participating faculty demonstrate the implementation of FIR programs in residential colleges has positive effects on faculty as well as students. Given these findings, faculty contributions to FIR work should be better recognised by RTP committees in decisions regarding faculty retention, tenure, and promotion.

Conclusion

This research investigated the perceptions of faculty who participated in the SJSU FIR program, and their perceptions of its impact on teaching, research, and service activities. This research provides evidence that FIR programs not only contribute to student success, but also facilitate faculty development, which in turn creates greater opportunities for student engagement, student sense of belonging, and student success. As student success in higher education should be the goal of all administrators, staff, and faculty, and given that faculty are so critical to the conveyance of student education and student success, university administrators and residential life administrators should align goals and objectives that fully support and facilitate FIR programs.

This study has contributed theoretically, empirically, and normatively to the understanding of the utility and overall impact of developing and employing an FIR program in higher education. It confirms the theoretical assumptions that faculty-student engagement outside of the classroom leads significantly toward student learning successes. Empirically, the study demonstrates that positive effects are not only felt by students, but also by faculty in terms of becoming better teachers, researchers, and service members to their institutions and community. Normatively, this study's results suggest that to achieve overall positive impacts from FIR programs, program goals and objectives need to be aligned and agreed upon by university, residential life administrators, and faculty.

Further empirical research into the correlational effects of faculty perceptions and their impact on student success as well as their career development is necessary for future studies. In addition, more research and data development are needed to identify the effect of not only the frequency of interaction between faculty and students, but also the quality of that interaction on overall student learning success and faculty development.

The results of this study serve as a starting point to raise future additional interview questions to understand further the impact of the FIR program on perceived faculty career development. Such research should also investigate comparative experiences of faculty from diverse racial backgrounds serving institutions with historically underserved demographic populations. In addition, future studies should also investigate the potential of FIR programs, not as a cost or diversion from the mission of either faculty affairs, residential life, or student affairs, but rather as a unique resource that combines the resources of all three to help accomplish the overall university mission.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) disclose that they have no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The authors disclose that they have received funding for this manuscript.

Funding

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