

OFF-CAMPUS LIFE “KNOCKS AND TALKS” 2014-2015 ASSESSMENT PROJECT

What did Northwestern undergraduate, off-campus students learn through the “Knocks and Talks” program conducted in Fall 2014?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who engage in the “Knocks and Talks” program will [or will be able to]...

1. Manage their own affairs off-campus, making use of appropriate Northwestern and Evanston/Chicago resources/services. (Cognitive and Practical Skills)
2. Articulate their rights and responsibilities of being a member of both the Northwestern and Evanston/Chicago communities. (Social Responsibility)

CONTEXT

- Historic district adjacent to the university.
- Evanston residents with families and NU undergraduate students live in close proximity.
- Tension between students and non-student residents.
- Dean of Students office, NUPD, EPD receive complaints regarding noise, alcohol, trash, and other community concerns.

WHAT IS “KNOCKS AND TALKS”

- “Knocks and Talks” was created in 2013.
- This initiative has been connected to a decrease in off-campus issues.
- Dean of Students staff, NUPD, EPD visit the residences of NU students living off-campus in Evanston.
- Teach students about rights, responsibilities, resources, neighbor relations, and the Illinois Social Host Law.

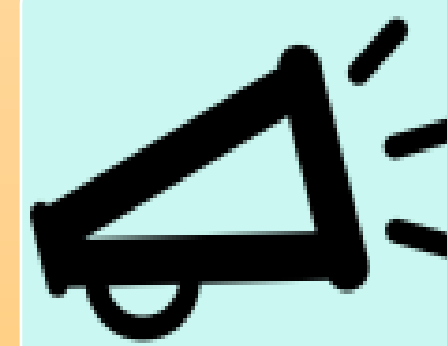
ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

- Online survey with open-ended questions distributed to off-campus students.
- Participants were divided into three groups:
 - Students with whom we spoke (n=5)
 - Students with whom we did not speak, but we spoke with their roommate(s) (n=7)
 - Students with whom we did not speak, and we did not speak to their roommates. Informational materials were left at the property. (n=51)

MAJOR FINDINGS



100% of “Knocks and Talks” participants correctly identified **noise** and **trash** as the top issues which attract negative attention/frustrate neighbors.



All 3 groups of students demonstrated **knowledge of positive neighbor relations** (Saying hello, respecting noise levels, being polite, etc.)



Students did not know their rights of being a tenant (i.e. Repair and Deduct)



Students identified **not damaging the property** as their main responsibility as a tenant.



Students generally were **not aware of tenant resources** provided by Northwestern /City of Evanston.



Survey participants listed **jail time** or a **fine** as the most severe consequence for violating the IL Social Host Law.

NEXT STEPS

In planning for future “Knocks and Talks” programs, the Northwestern Off-Campus Life office will:

- Incorporate more information and develop materials that focus on students rights as off-campus tenants.
- Educate students about the numerous resources provided by the City of Evanston/Northwestern for living off-campus.
- Create and implement a more standardized training for “Knocks and Talks” volunteers.

FUTURE ASSESSMENT PROJECTS

- Include multiple choice and matching questions in addition to/instead of open-ended questions. The responses to open-ended questions decreased throughout this survey.
- Distribute the survey earlier in fall quarter.

LIMITATIONS

- Many students were not at their residences during the time of the “Knocks and Talks” program in September 2014.
- Low survey response rate (8%).
- All student names were self-reported.
- All addresses were self-reported and “Knocks and Talks” volunteers were not able to gain entry to large apartment buildings.
- There may have been variations in how the information was conveyed by different volunteers.