

GRINNELL NEW DOWNTOWN STUDENT RESIDENCE

OCTOBER 2020 SURVEY SUMMARY



NOVEMBER 2020

ADJAYE ASSOCIATES + OPN ARCHITECTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014, Grinnell College began to outline needed renovations and expansions of its student residence halls. Since then, student, faculty, and staff groups have worked through multiple sessions and scenarios to update and improve the student residential experience. Out of that work, a partnership has developed between the College and Adjaye Associates and OPN Architects to design a downtown student residence hall. The design approach for this new building prioritizes community engagement throughout its process in ever-expanding circles of input and feedback, providing a significant time for conceptual development.

In the fall of 2019 and early spring of 2020, Adjaye Associates came to Grinnell and collaborated with campus partners to hold three extensive listening sessions addressing Identity of Place, Iowa Nice, and Divisions and Consensus. Insights from those sessions can be found on the College website created to provide information to the college and community members about this project.

This survey was conducted as part of the Grinnell Downtown Residence Pre-design phase: a stage in the architectural process designed to empower Grinnell neighbors and generate new ideas and advance programs that would move the project and town forward. It reveals ideas and issues that are top-of-mind for Grinnellians, and some strategies to address them.

Grinnell community members, students, alumni, faculty, and staff participated in the survey. Among the findings:

The project and design process are mostly well-received across Grinnell, both town and College, and there is significant interest in playing an active role in the design process.

Currently, there is only limited interaction between students and the town. Community members visit the campus only infrequently and students seldom spend time in the town.

A new Downtown Student Residence is seen by many as an opportunity to strengthen constructive relationships between neighbors through hosting both new and existing programming as well as fostering spontaneous interactions.

On the whole, the community is willing to welcome more students into the town and sees a new student residence as a positive addition to downtown.

There is wide interest among the student body for new off-campus residential options.

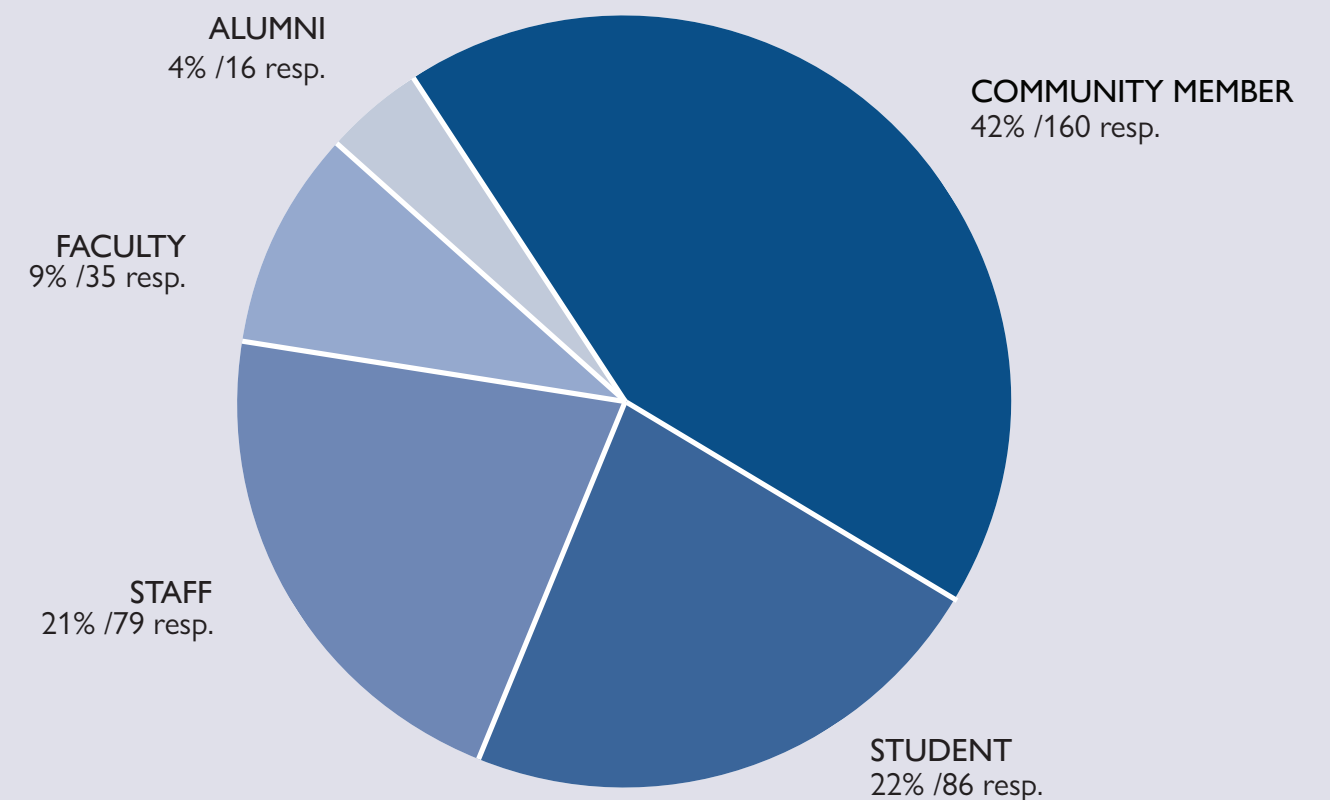
METHODOLOGY

The DSR Survey surveyed Grinnell residents on their views and expectations for a new Downtown Student Residence building in Grinnell.

The research team sent invitations via e-mail and newsletters. The survey was also announced through social media, flyers, and on the Grinnell College website.

The anonymous survey included a mix of open-ended and multiple-choice questions and was administered online from October 21, 2020, to October 31, 2020. A total of 376 Grinnell residents participated, including town community members, college students, staff, and faculty.

35% of the responders wish to continue to be part of the process by attending future work focus groups. This distribution was almost identical within each sub-group.



376 Total Respondents

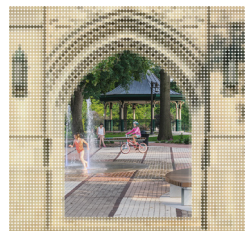
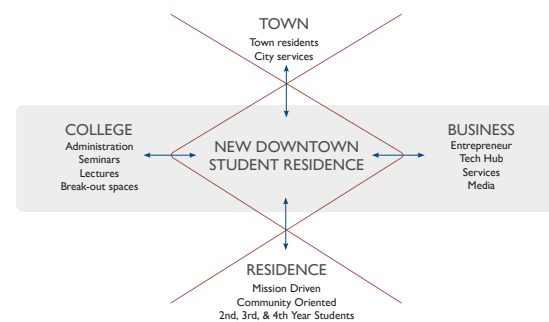
GRINNELL DOWNTOWN STUDENT RESIDENCE (DSR)

THE DESIGN PROCESS

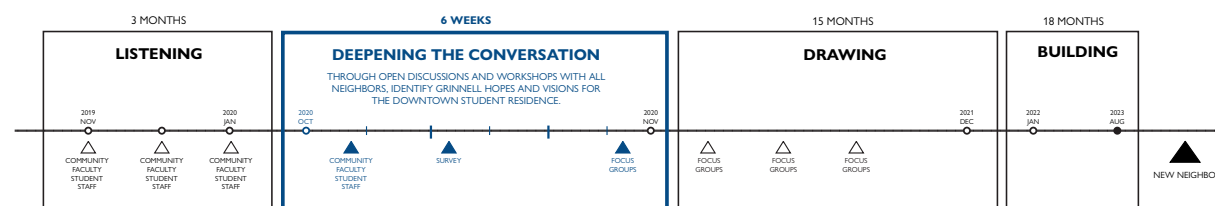
Adjaye Associates and OPN Architects are working with Grinnell College and the Town of Grinnell on the design of a new Downtown Student Residence (DSR) located in the heart of Downtown Grinnell to be a space for **COMMUNITY AND STUDENT INTERACTION AND ENGAGEMENT**.

During the coming six weeks we are looking to build on previous findings and dialogues and open the discussion to begin to understand what **ACTIVITIES, USES, AND CONNECTIONS** these new spaces should bring.

We hope to test concepts and ideas against surveys and **WORKING GROUPS** that will remain engaged throughout the entire project development timeline.



The design process will **BRING TOGETHER IN CONVERSATION ALL NEIGHBORS**: town and campus residents, businesses and College, to shape a **NEW COMMON GROUND** in Downtown Grinnell.



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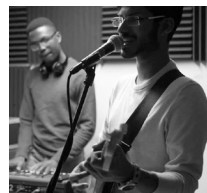
MAKING A NEW COMMON GROUND TOGETHER



How do these types of social divisions and conflicts manifest themselves?

"It just feels like we have gotten to a point where people can no longer live in a shade of grey—everything has to be black or white, either you're good or you're bad. No longer are we able to come to consensus and work things out and that's kind of what goes along with this narrative. Being able to have a space that allows people to interact and find out that sure maybe someone's relative who comes from a different generation and has beliefs that don't align necessarily with yours is still a great guy, he'll still do business with you, he's still a human being."

Austin Jones
President / Financial Advisor of Grinnell Investor Center



How do you find a common ground despite the differences that exist?

"And, that's the other thing. You cannot disagree with someone's humanity; you can't disagree with someone's story. You can't say that that didn't happen, or you didn't feel that way when someone expresses something different from your beliefs."

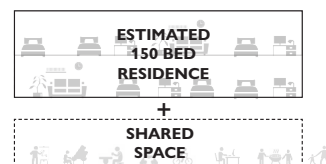
Saketan Anand '20
Former Student Government VP SA



What are your initial thoughts about the idea of introducing a forum type place, or a 'marketplace of ideas' into the new Downtown Student Residence?

"I think what's exciting to me about this space downtown is, how do we make this acceptable to our general public? How do we get out of our head and have a place where expertise isn't just in the classroom? But where it's ok for people to have these kind of problem-solving conversations."

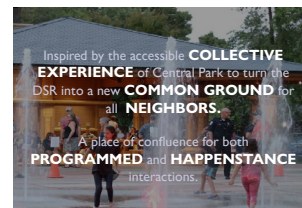
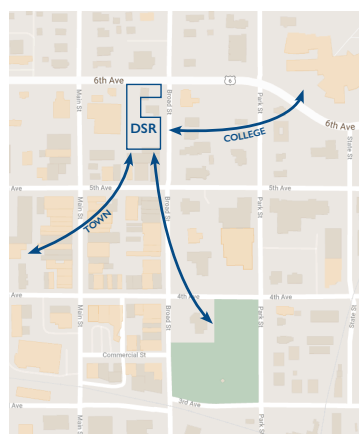
Susan Sanning
Associate Dean and Director of Service & Social Innovation



What does this new home look like to YOU?

Who will be YOUR neighbor?

How do YOU imagine the community and college will engage with each other in the shared space?



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Respond to this short survey to have your voice heard. This survey is open to all! Look out for survey results at:

www.tinyurl.com/yyruzjho

Link to survey:
www.tinyurl.com/y4okm8h9



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ADJAYE ASSOCIATES + OPN ARCHITECTS

ADJAYE ASSOCIATES

Adjaye Associates strives for an architecture that enriches daily life and meets the diverse needs of the communities we serve from the intimate to the expansive. We believe architecture presents opportunities for transformation—materially, conceptually, sociologically—and can act as a catalytic mechanism for bridging and creating relationships between the human body, society, and the world.

As a multidisciplinary studio, research is indispensable to our process and we undertake the responsibility of articulating narratives through understanding the past to create a vibrant, socially, and environmentally responsible future. Notions of place-making, identity, memory, and meaning, are central to our design process as we aim to create structures conducive to positive forms of human transformation.

Through rigorous dialogue we pay earnest attention to the historical relationships between land and people, stimulating dialogue that would otherwise go unheard. This provides invaluable insight that informs our formal design process, as well as helps us anticipate and problem solve design challenges that might arise throughout a project's conception.

OPN ARCHITECTS

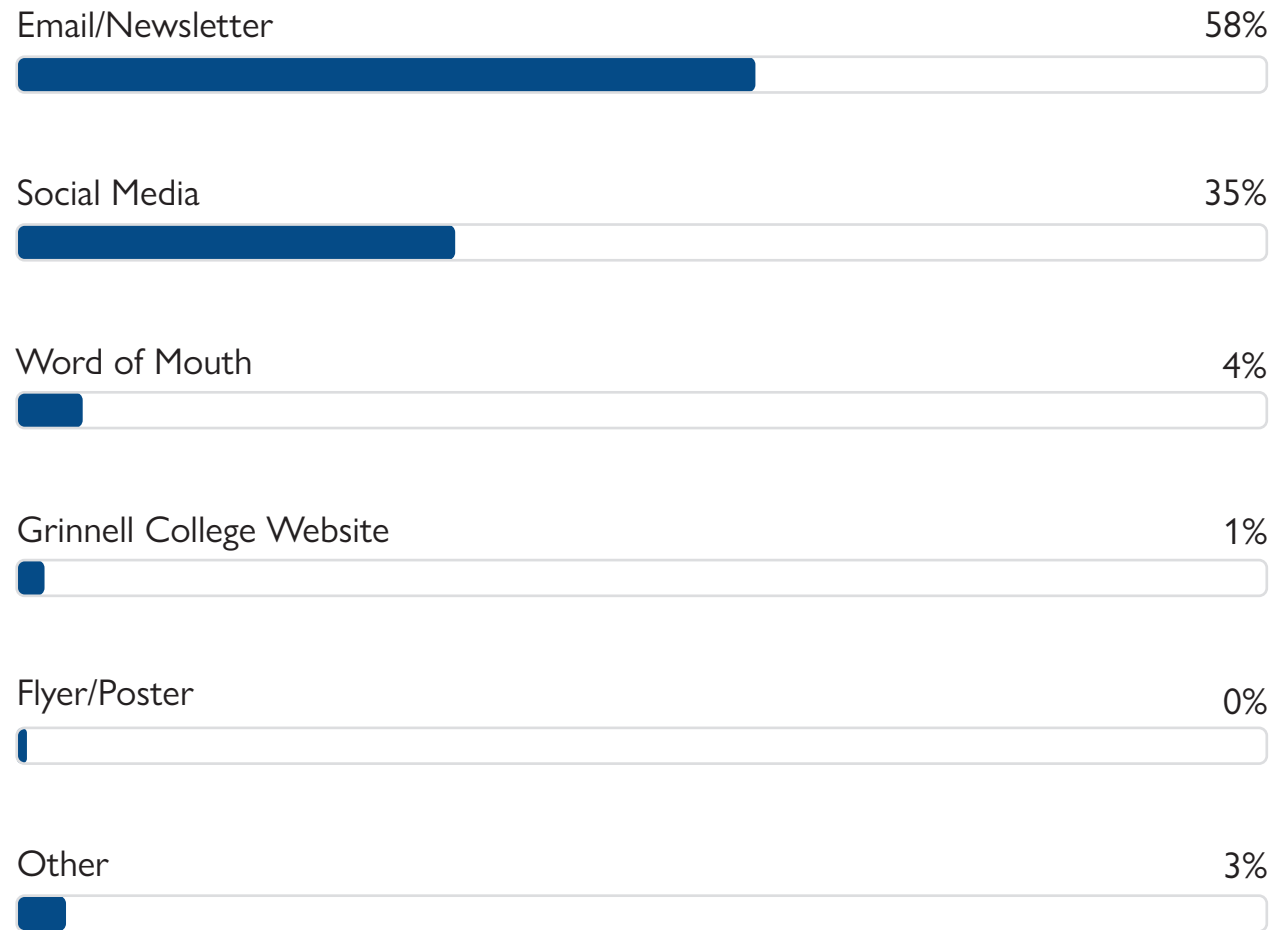
OPN Architects is a regional, knowledge-based design firm with more than 100 designers working on projects across the Midwest. OPN has studios in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City, Iowa, and Madison, Wisconsin. The firm's award-winning work spans a wide variety of client types including corporate, civic, higher education, health care, and libraries.

For nearly 30 years, OPN has partnered with colleges and universities to create unique, high-performance academic and student-centered environments. We have focused on almost every aspect of higher education — from high-level campus and academic planning to the complex detailing of science and research facilities to collaborative spaces that spark innovation and creation.

OPN has worked on the Grinnell campus over the last eight years, formulating the Grinnell College Academic Space Planning Committee report, completed design and construction of Younker Residence Hall renovation, and served more recently as a construction administration partner with EYP Architects (Boston) designer of the new Humanities and Social Sciences Complex (HSSC).

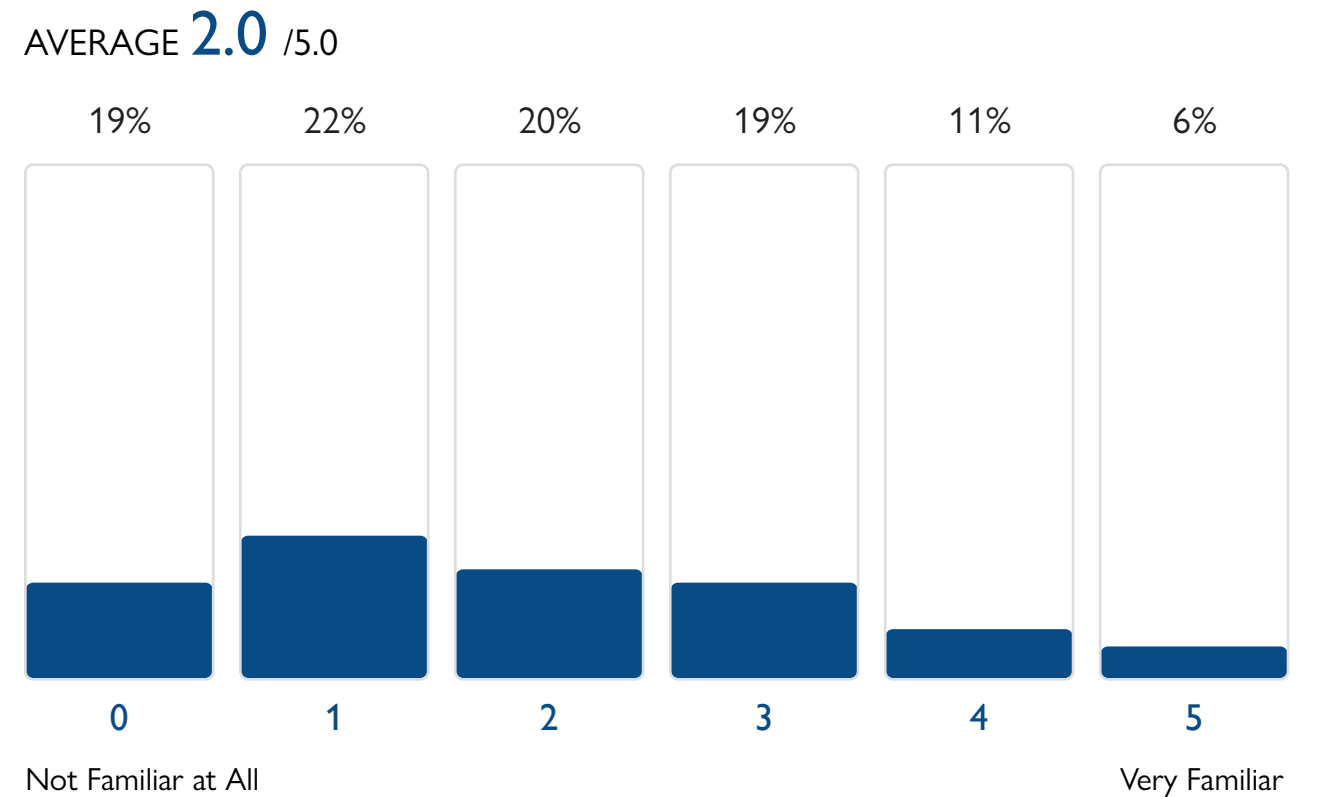
How did you learn about the survey?

Overall, email and newsletter was the most efficient way to reach people, followed by social media. Grinnell College members were best reached by email, while community members were best reached by social media and word of mouth. This survey summary does not reflect physical survey responses which were not available at the time.



How familiar are you with the project?

Most people were not familiar with the project with students and the community being the least and staff and faculty being the most familiar. The level of familiarity with the project is expected to increase with the launching of a dedicated project website that will contain the history and progress of the project.




Community Member
MOSTLY SOCIAL MEDIA


Faculty Staff
MOSTLY EMAIL/NEWSLETTER


Students
MOSTLY EMAIL/NEWSLETTER


Community Member
1.8 / 5.0

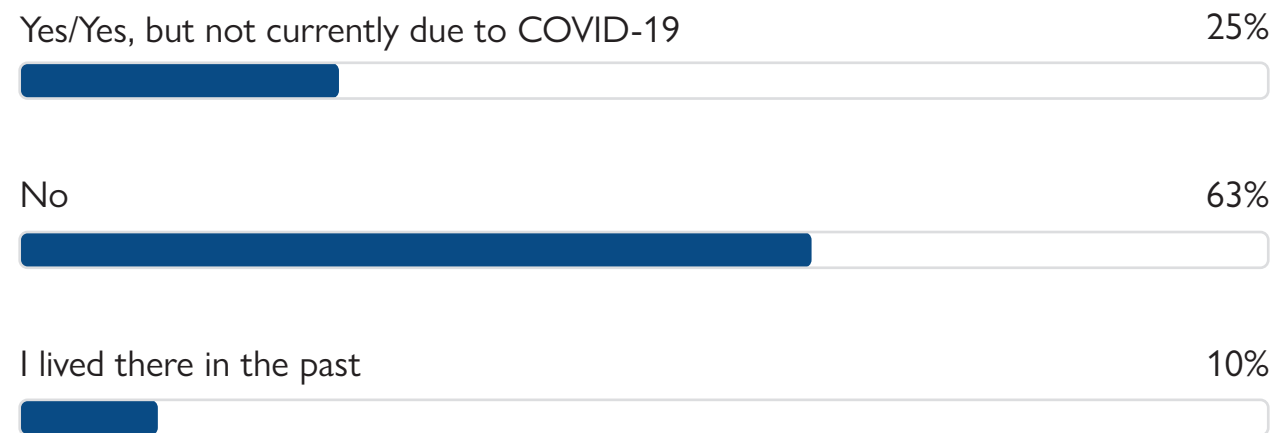

Faculty Staff
2.5 / 5.0


Students
1.8 / 5.0

Do you or have you lived within Grinnell College Campus?

Other than College students and some faculty and staff, most respondents live within the town in their own accommodations. Some students chose to live off campus at some point, but have experienced living on campus.

The students that indicated they have not lived on campus were current first-year students, who have not been able to live on campus due to COVID-19.



Why do/did you live off campus?



Community Members own their own house/ live in the community.



Most faculty and staff own their own house/ live in the community.

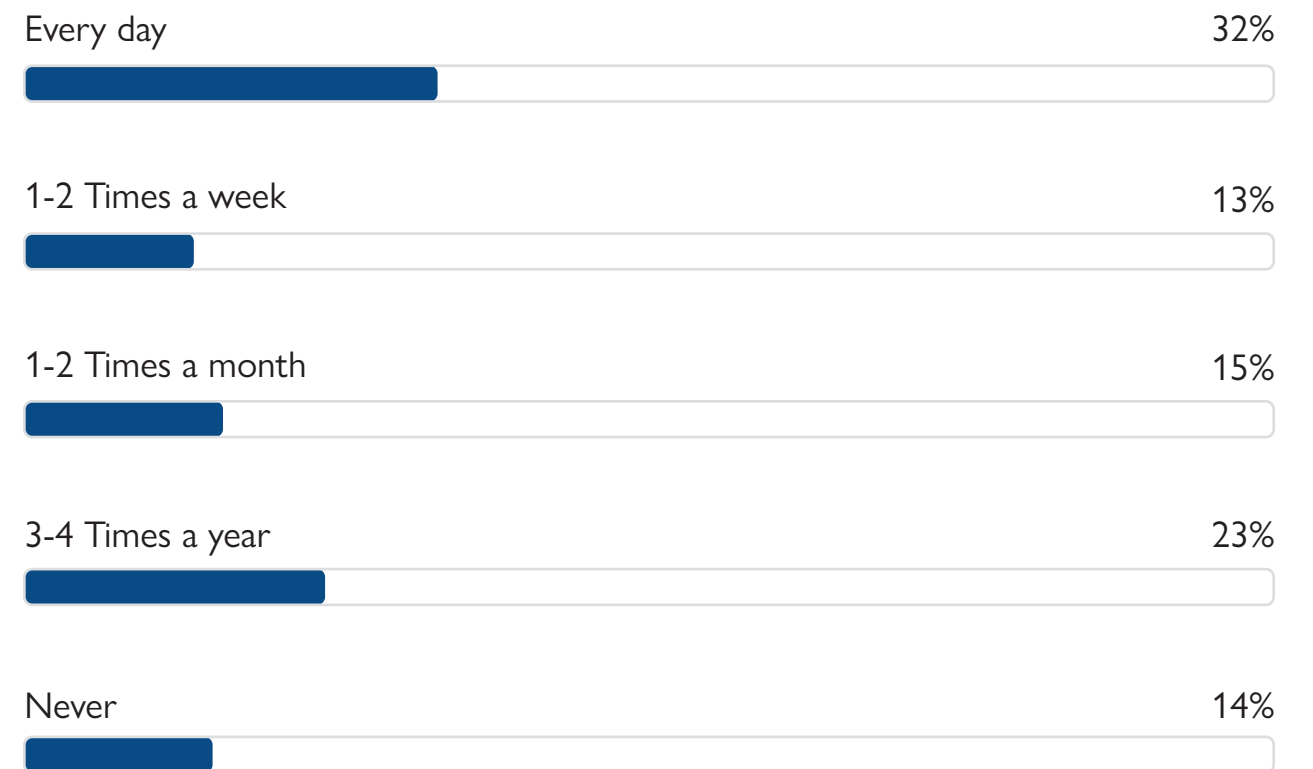


Most students live(d) on campus (excluding first year students).

Before COVID-19, how often did you spend time on Grinnell Campus?

Prior to the pandemic, most students, faculty, and staff were regularly on campus while community members rarely visited. Reasons from the community for not spending time on campus included insufficient parking space and limited access to the College buildings.

AVERAGE **2-3 TIMES A WEEK**



Community Member

3-4 TIMES/YEAR

Faculty Staff

EVERY DAY

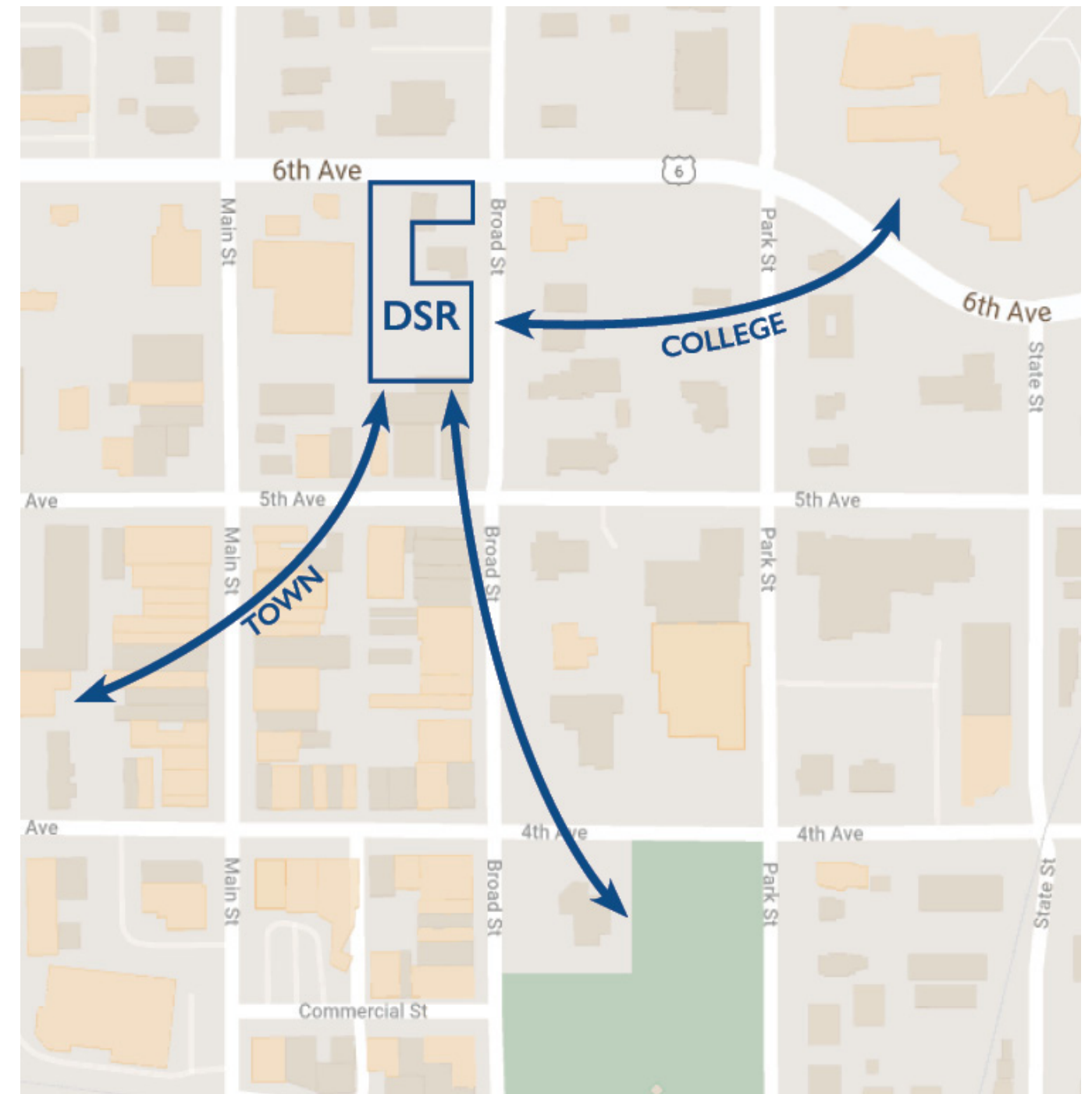
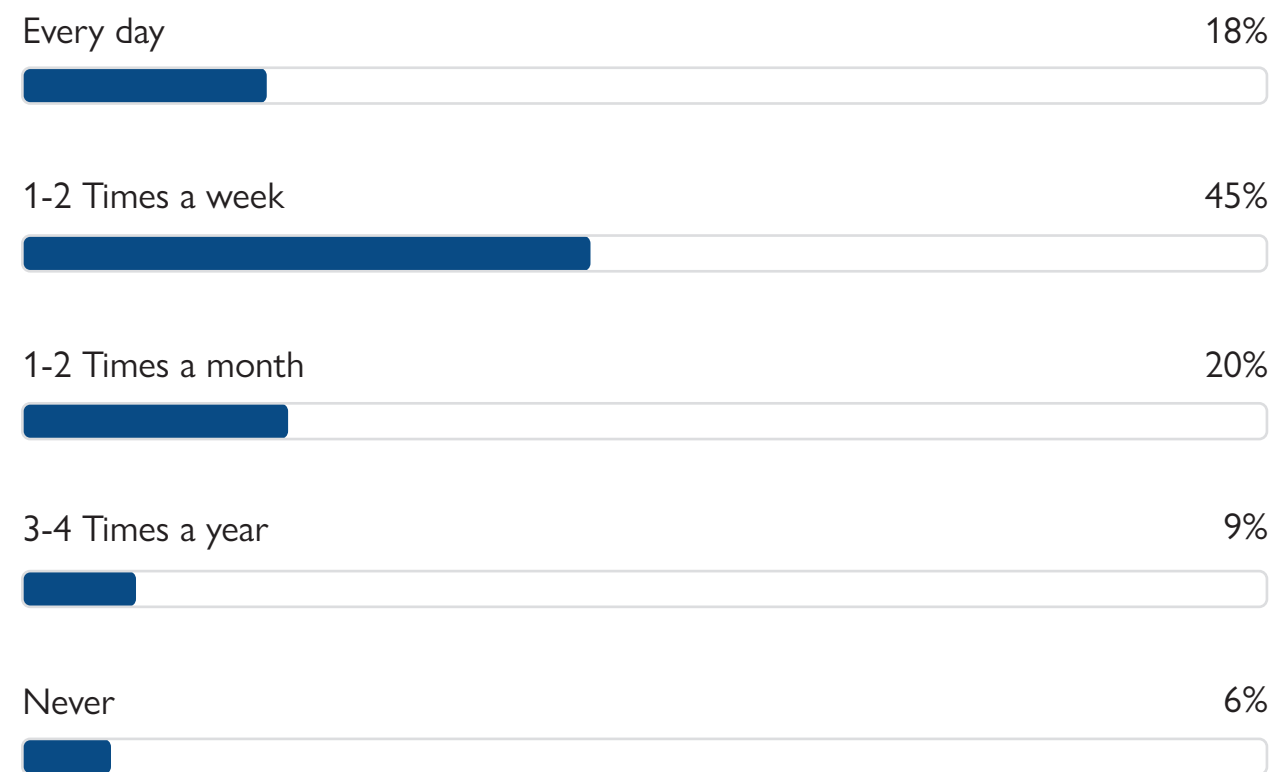
Students

EVERY DAY

The new DSR will be in Downtown Grinnell at the intersection south of HW 6 and west of Broad St. How often do you visit this area?

Students do not tend to go Downtown more than one or two times a month, with some of them indicating they never or almost never go into the town. On the other hand, community members, faculty, and staff visit this area on a more regular basis, around one to two times a week.

AVERAGE **2-3 TIMES A WEEK**

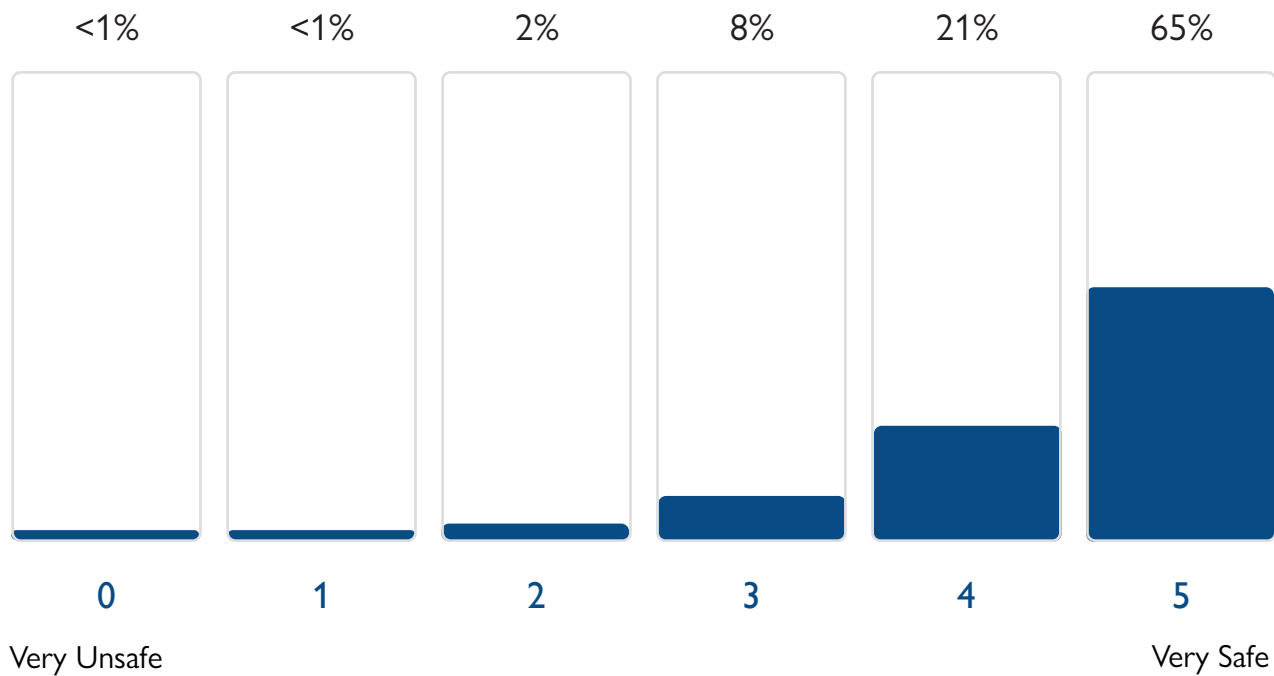


Grinnell Downtown Student Residence Location

How safe do you feel when you are Downtown?

Grinnell neighbors tend to feel safe while downtown. Those that feel safe in this area cited the small-town nature of Grinnell and the friendly community. Those that indicated feeling unsafe in the area mentioned the inadequate street lighting as the main factor. Racial and gender tensions were also cited as reasons. Overall, there was a range of views on policing and college security personnel presence, with some participants considering it a positive factor towards a feeling of security and others in contrasting disagreement.

AVERAGE **4.5** /5.0



Community Member

4.6 / 5.0



Faculty Staff

4.7 / 5.0

Students

3.9 / 5.0

What makes you feel unsafe?

LOW LIGHTING



“My sense of safety is time dependent meaning that sundown and/or late night options for this area are not safe.”

Faculty

VEHICLE TRAFFIC



“The cars downtown definitely don’t make me feel safe when crossing the street”

Student

IDENTITY ISSUES



“I feel safe because I am a white male, however, that is not how minorities feel. There needs to be a plan in place to help make our community feel safe for everyone, this means facing the fact that there are racist people in Grinnell. Address that head on and you’ll make people feel safe.”

Staff

What would help increase the security and sense of welcoming in the area for you?

SMALL TOWN FEEL



“Very low crime rates & small, close-knit community has always made me feel secure and safe.”

Community member

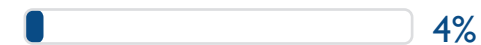
EXISTING BUSINESSES



“Lots of very friendly local business owners who’ve spent their whole lives here.”

Community member

PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC

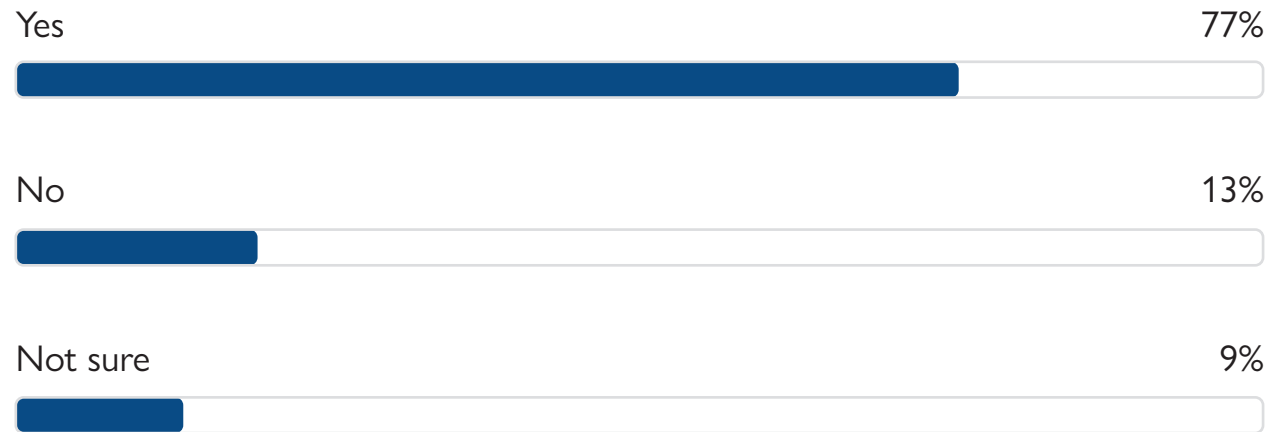


“At night, artificial lighting and foot traffic make me feel safe. When I lived in big cities, I learned to appreciate the safety of crowds.”

Faculty

Do you think that more intentional connections between the College and the Town could be beneficial?

Most people from across the Town and College consider more intentional connections between the Town and College could be beneficial in bridging any existing divides between them while fostering new, exciting opportunities.



"I like the idea of this building providing services to the community, but there needs to be a discussion about what types of services those would be. There could be some collaboration with public events such as the music series in Central Park or the Farmers Market. Or, this could be an opportunity to bring something to town which we haven't done yet (art festivals, food truck festivals/carnivals, etc.)."

Faculty

"The tensions that exist are deep and long-standing, and will require years of sustained efforts. Rather than viewing the solution as a building or an event, I think a series of sustained exchanges that result in meaningful relationships between college students and residents of Grinnell are required. To this end, I believe engagements such as volunteering and community engagement through classes are needed. This can set the stage for thinking about a dorm in the future."

Faculty

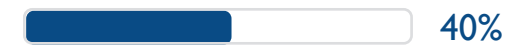
"... Probably the large majority of Grinnell residents recognize the benefit of the College and the energy that the College adds to the town. But, recognizing that support for the College in town is not universal, the footprint of the College in this space needs to strike the right balance. It probably should not be monolithic and imposing "overshadowing" the space. It should be a college/town space, not "college" in capital letters."

Faculty

What kind of activities, events, and spaces do you think could be shared by the Town and the College in the DSR?

People indicated that activities around eating and drinking would be valuable in bringing people together. There was also strong support for creating performance and event spaces, formal and informal workspaces, outdoor and green spaces, and offering opportunities for existing or new businesses to use the space.

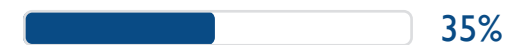
EATING AND DRINKING



"Perhaps a restaurant or cafe, which could provide a much-needed third option for students to eat at while also being an option for people from the Town."

Student

ART AND EVENTS



"Performances of all sorts, including music, art shows, theater, open mic, talks; just have a patio area where anybody is allowed to gather (no gate or faces the sidewalk and is not interior)."

Community member

MEETING SPACES



"Meeting rooms, hang-out area, cafe, large flexible space (tables but also chairs arranged as audience, kind of like the community room at the library)."

Staff

OUTDOOR AREAS



"Prairie-style perennial garden with paths and benches placed so they get used. Make it a "destination garden" using well-recognized 'New Perennialist gardeners'..."

Faculty

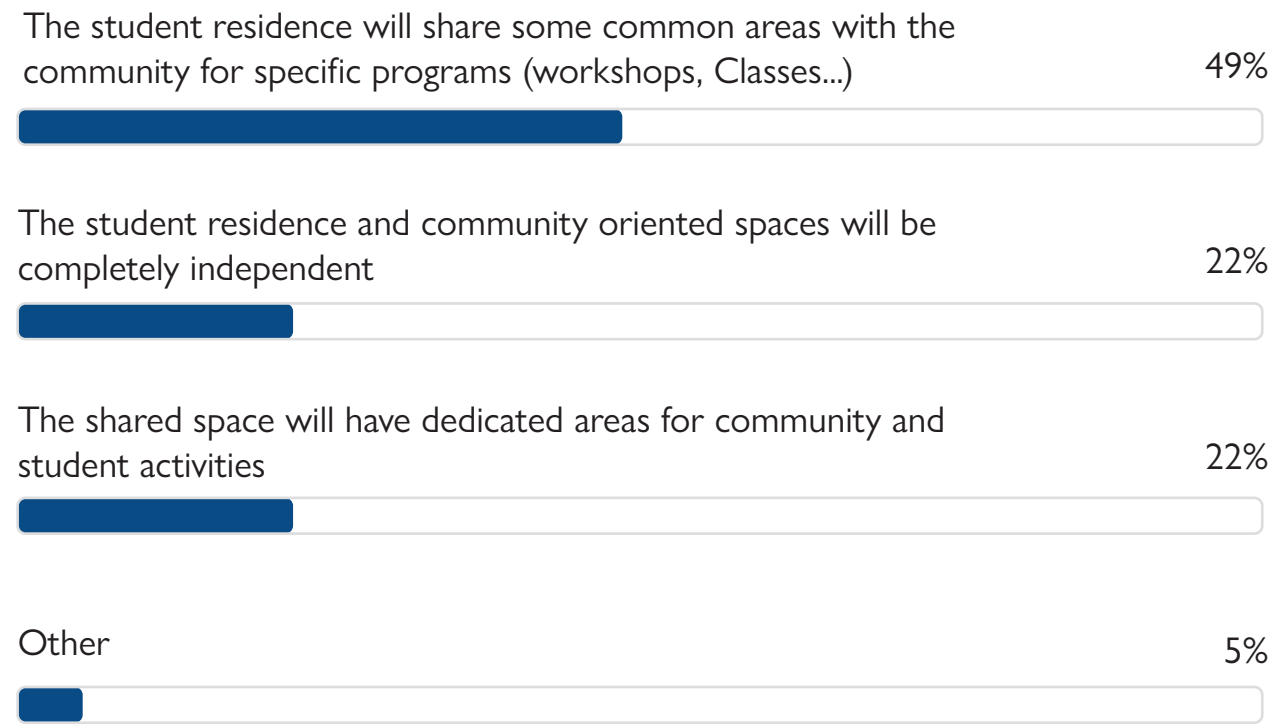
RETAIL SPACES





"A local-business shop, where businesses from around town could display their objects for sale, and students and town folks could buy--which sort of happens on the winter farmers market at the jingle bells day."


Student

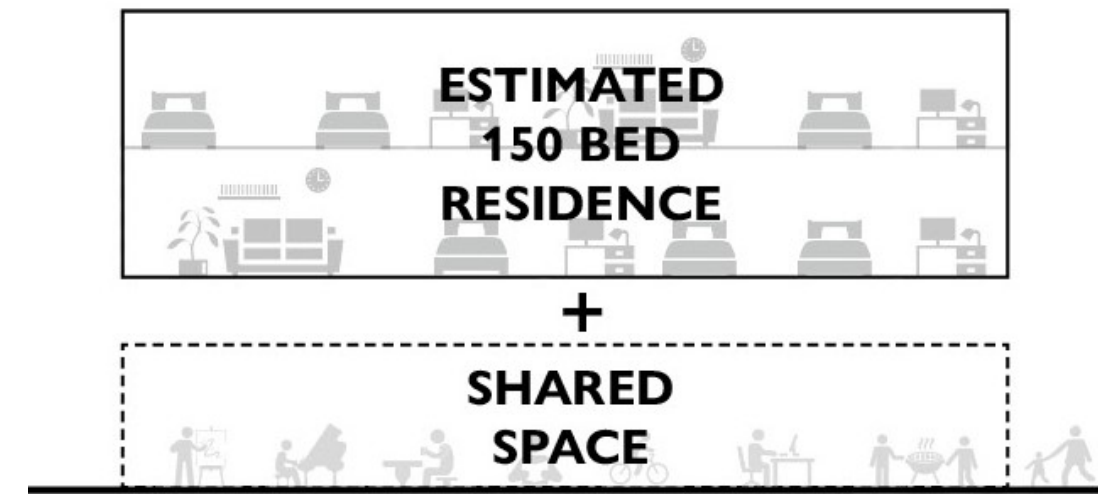
The new building is envisioned to be an estimated 150-bed student residence combined with a shared space for community and student interaction and engagement. How do you imagine the interaction between these two spaces?



 **45%** of Community members imagine the student area sharing some common areas with the community for specific programs.

 **45%** of Faculty and Staff imagine the student area sharing some common areas with the community for specific programs.

 **54%** of Students imagine the student area sharing some common areas with the community for specific programs.



“I’m struggling to think of shared spaces in a college owned dorm that would be welcomed by the community. Any shared spaces for business activity (e.g. coffee shop) would **take away from the private market in downtown**. There are a number of existing spaces for communal (non-profit) gatherings, including the Drake Library, the Arts Center, numerous churches and social organizations, and private rental spaces (e.g. Hotel Grinnell).”

Faculty

“I would imagine a model where the spaces are physically separate but **integrated through programming** and/or the flow of foot traffic.”

Faculty

“Students want **privacy in their living spaces AND they want to connect with the town community**. The two are not oppositional, but many students may feel unsafe with strangers in the building.”

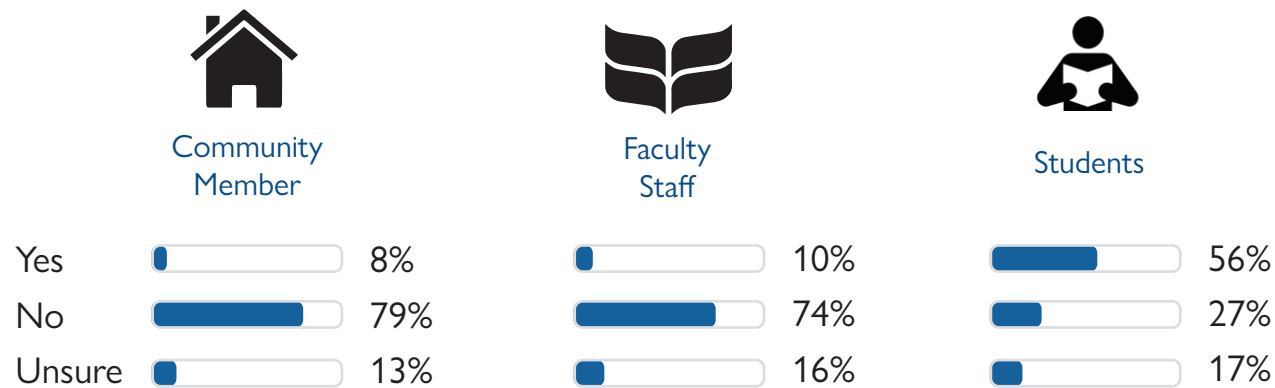
Student

“I think options should be left wide open - **the space simply needs to vibrant and offer a meaningful experience for as many as possible.**”

Community Member

Could you see yourself living in this building?

While most faculty, staff, and community members own their own homes and are not looking to move into a new residence, a majority of student responders said they would be interested. Those that said no cited cost, convenience, and safety concerns as primary reasons.



What excites you about the new DSR?

| | | |
|-------------|-----|--|
| COMMUNITY | 26% | “The idea of living in town. I regularly ventured into town for a variety of activities and involvement, but it took continuous effort. Living downtown would have encouraged those actions while allowing me to stay in student housing.” |
| CONNECTIONS | 14% | |
| RESIDENCE | 10% | |

Student

Why don't you see yourself living in this building?

| | | |
|-------------|-----|---|
| OWN A HOUSE | 56% | “I enjoy being close to campus. I prefer to live on campus in a dorm, but if I live off campus I want to be as close as possible to my classes. That means being no more than a block away. If I wanted independent living I'd just move off campus, not live in a dorm in town.” |
| CONVENIENCE | 13% | |
| SAFETY | 8% | |

Student

What could make this building feel like home for you?

For most people, a sense of home comes from feelings of inclusivity and accessibility where everyone is welcome. Many students indicated that having levels of privacy ranging from their rooms, to smaller student gathering areas, to fully public areas would make them feel at home. A wide spectrum of participants mentioned an intentionally designed welcoming atmosphere for the new building as a crucial factor for community and residential engagement

SENSE OF WELCOMING

“A sense of welcome regardless of a person's particular relationship to the College and to the town.”

Alumni

“Not privileging one group over another; having different rules; bumping community members from events and keeping students; staffing in such a way that certain groups are welcome and others are not.”

Faculty

RANGE OF PRIVACY

“I think students need a space they can call their own (their room) and also a space where they can gather with other students and not have community interaction.”

Student

“Suite style living with some common space and private space.”

Student

ATMOSPHERE

“Feeling like I could use the space to read the paper, sit by a cozy fire, bake cookies for students, do email. I think you need a place where folks feel free to just rub shoulders, not always formally interact, although more formal activities like concerts would be great as well. I can see going down and sharing work on a jigsaw puzzle or teaching/ playing Mah Jong.”

Community Member

“Make it feel like “college”, not some high-fabricated modern mismatch that resembles every office in silicon valley without a soul. Allow this space to be a creative area and allow the students to shape it as they will. Create an environment that cultivates individuality.”

Student

