

History of the Residence Scholars Program at Indiana University

(with comments from participants of the AHAYWEH era)

The following comes from the minutes of the IU Board of Trustees meeting for April 20, 1951, page 3:

Establishment of Residence Scholarships for Needy Undergraduates of High Scholastic Rating

3.(h) Mr. Franklin presented the recommendation of a plan to establish undergraduate scholarships to be known as Residence Scholarships, whereby top-quality students who otherwise cannot afford to attend the University may, by sufficient work, eliminate the cost of room and board, or reduce it materially. Dormitories, such as Rogers K and L for men, and Hickory and Linden for women, would be set up in which the students furnish their own bedding and do their own cleaning. A special dining room in Smithwood Dining Hall will be established in which an adequate but simple diet will be served, and each student will assist for about five hours per week in washing dishes and serving. Under this arrangement they will pay 48 cents per day for housing and \$1.00 per day for board. In addition, employment opportunities will be available to these students for work on and off campus, so that many will have the income to pay all room and board.

These Residence Scholarships are for graduates of Indiana high schools, to be awarded and renewed on the basis of scholarship first, and the second consideration is unquestioned need of such aid. It is believed that no stigma will attach to the program, and it is hoped that the designation "Residence Scholar" will soon, through proper publicity and administration, be considered as a distinct honor.

The Board concurred in authorizing the Residence Scholarships to be established beginning in the first semester 1951-52, along the lines indicated above. The program will be administered by the Junior Division until the scholarship administration has been revised, after which it will be handled by the Scholarship Office.

Residence Scholarship Program Today

The program still exists, as part of the IU Honors College. Students receive a \$1500 reduction in room/board costs in return for minimal dorm jobs (compared with ours). Students are housed in Ashton Center (the old GRC). A 3.0 average is required to maintain status, compared to 2.8 for us. There is no mention of holding a job or a means test. If someone has access to IU bulletins from the 1950s, you might find out when the program began (likely in the early 1950s).

Here is what the IU website has to say about the current program:

If you want to pursue academic excellence, have fun with like-minded individuals, and get all that plus a reduced room rate, Residence Scholars is for you. It's a cooperative environment where motivated students share academic interests and participate in a wide variety of educational cultural, social, and service programs. In exchange for performing limited tasks such as custodial duties and staffing the center desk, residents receive a significant reduction in room rates. Residence Scholars students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to live in the community. Incoming students must have an SAT score of 1080 and

be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class in order to apply to the Residence Scholars Community.

Recent Comments from AHAYWEHS

On Aug 7, 2020, Larry Clunie wrote:

I've sometimes wondered what IU had in mind with the Residence Scholarship Program. The original intent is very clear in the minutes of the IU Board of Trustees minutes: help needy Indiana students. (See at: <http://hoosierpewter.com/ahayweh/history.htm>)

Putting students paying the lowest rates in the least desirable housing (Trees Center) seems obvious. In the 50's males lived in half of Linden (East or West?).

When I started in 1964, males were in Upper Linden, but after one semester we were moved by seniority to Shea Hall in Foster or to McNutt- those with most class seniority and their chosen roommates went to Shea, mostly freshmen went to McNutt. (What happened to the guys who were in those rooms first semester?) Trees Center was no longer used as dorms, but it was still being used for something in 1987. It eventually was replaced by the School of Education.

In the fall of 1965, the Ahaywehs went to the 6th and 7th floors of Briscoe, a new dorm. The Program in one year went from the least desirable to the newest dorm, although that also meant from one of the closest dorms to campus to the farthest.

In 1966, the program was still on 6th and 7th floors but one section of the 7th floor had non-residence scholars in at least three rooms. Of the ones I remember, two were Arabs, one was from Illinois, and two were from Indiana.

In 1967, there were only four freshmen and the program was on only one floor. I've wondered if this meant the university was considering eliminating the program, or maybe they were concerned about the attrition rate. Lots of guys were not making their grades or staying on the program, but the GPA average for the unit was still among the highest on campus. Reducing the number of newcomers may have eventually led to the elimination of what might loosely be called "Ahayweh culture". The core wasn't there to absorb it and pass it on.

In 1968, the new high-rise Eigenmann Hall was opened for grad students, and the program was moved to the old GRC, an old but solid set of buildings. (I'm relying now on what I learned from Tom Pytynia.) The rooms were singles and there was a large lounge. Some of the residents were from outside Indiana. I don't know if IU changed the requirement of Indiana residence or if these guys just were able to have an Indiana address. (George Van Hasselt earlier was notably from New York but apparently had Indiana relatives with whom he could use an Indiana address.)

Much later we know that Indiana residence was not required, nor was financial need. Recently the requirement for doing cleaning was eliminated because of government requirement. (I remember Steve Burress saying two guys in McNutt would pile all of the trash, including leftover pizza, for a day on their beds and then just lift the sheets at night and dump the trash on the floor and leave it. He said it was almost unbearable to go by the room and it was even worse with the door open.) Demanding professional cleaning was probably inevitable and overdue. What is left of the program is a grade

requirement and reduced housing fee. There are programs to help the needy that did not exist in the 50's and 60's and, although I'm not clear on how they work, some students are grouped into interest communities that probably make the old program unworkable.

We were unique people in a unique program at a unique time in history.

On Aug 7, 2020 Scott Lyons wrote:

I found the minutes from the 4/20/51 Trustees meeting establishing the Residence Scholars program "interesting." As a former philosophy major, I might be inclined to parse the language too critically, but here goes. They say, "It is believed that no stigma will be attached to the program." Why did they feel it necessary to say that economically disadvantaged students would not be stigmatized? Apparently the Residence Scholars were not cut from the same cloth as mainstream IU students. Having said that, I must recognize that hundreds of GI Bill students were descending upon the campus at about the same time. How were they received? It's also notable that the Residence Scholars were assigned to "a special dining room in Smithwood Dining Hall in which an adequate but simple diet will be served." Really? I guess it's easy to be critical 70 years after the fact, but I have to wonder what world the Trustees were living in. Perhaps AHAYWEHs from an earlier era can shed some light on the subject.

On Aug 7, 2020, John McFarland, AB, History, 1959, wrote:

It is interesting that the IU trustees wondered if we would be stigmatized because it was pointed out, just by being on The Plan, that we were poor. I think in the early 1950s, when I was in HS, college really was not considered a logical choice for poor kids, like me, growing up on welfare. Several of my teachers went out of their way to point out to me that they did think I was "college material." [And one went out of her way to point out that she wasn't sure about it!] So, yes, a stigma might have been attached by the general student population. But when I matriculated in Sept of 1955, RSP had already been eliminated from the academic cup competition among housing units because we won every time. So even if we had the rep as poor kids, we were also known to be smart.

And, as Larry pointed out, we did consider ourselves to be Independent, and were all members of that political party on campus, but we had a natural camaraderie that was not the forced brotherhood of frats.

I have never heard of the Smithwood dining deal. Read Center, which was first named Smithwood, the big X building for girls, was constructed my freshman year. Linden and Pine Swine RSP kids [It's a good thing for us that nothing rhymes with Linden] all ate in Arbutus, as did the rest of the people who lived in Trees. We were the only undergrad dining hall on campus that had both girls and boys. [College students did not become men and women until the likes of Tom Cone had graduated.] Occasionally someone from Men's Quad or MRC would be a guest and was amazed. "Wow, it must be nice to eat with girls. You get lettuce leaves under your jello salads." We thought it was nice, but for better reasons than lettuce with our jello. [I wonder if Arbutus had the name of Smithwood first?]

Speaking of Tom Cone, I mention him and Linden and the poverty of Ahaywehs in my Christ In Winter blog for 8-6-20. <https://christinwinter.blogspot.com/>

I think returning GIs when I was at IU were considered a breed apart. They were almost all married, living in the little trailers north of campus. They were in a separate world, even if we shared some

classes. They wanted nothing to do with "college life." Just wanted to get a degree and a job as quickly as possible.

Oh, and Larry asked about Animal's porn collection. I didn't learn much, because he was very possessive of it. He allowed guys to come to his door and see the stacks of magazines and books, and occasionally you got a glimpse of a photo of some girl you hoped lived somewhere in Trees, but certainly no one was allowed to come in, or to borrow.

I think, with perhaps 2 exceptions, all of us who came to Linden East in the fall of 1955 were the first ones in our families to go to college. But Pete Thorsen's older brother was also on The Plan, so I'm not sure he counts.

[The Residence Scholars Program was in existence during] 1955-59, and I assume before that, Ahaywehs were in Linden East--both floors on the east end, and the upper floor in the middle. Linden West was a polyglot bunch, but since I lived in the middle hall, close to the west end, we got acquainted, at least with the guys on 2nd floor: The Animal, who was known for his extensive porn collection; Laurel, a returned army veteran; a 3rd string fullback on the football team; Ziad, The Arab; et al.

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Compiled by Gary Wiggins