The University of Texas RioGrande Valley™

Student Housing & Residence Life Audit

Report No. 23-AEN-08

September 20, 2023

Office of Audits & Consulting Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall Assessment:

The University's Department of Housing & Residence Life has effective controls in place for housing charges and operating controls. Expenditures tested were appropriate and supported by adequate documentation, and there is adequate physical security of the housing facilities. However, opportunities exist to improve system operations of the student housing management system, StarRez.

Risk Levels
Appendix I

Priority
High
Medium
Low

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation from the Department of Student Housing & Residence Life.

Background: UTRGV's Department of Housing & Residence Life's mission is to provide a safe and affordable residential community experience for students that supports and enhances mutual respect, student learning, personal growth, and academic achievement. UTRGV has three residence halls and two apartment complexes. The Department utilizes StarRez Portal (StarRez) as its student housing management system. In August of 2021, the Department transitioned to a cloud hosted version.

Objective: To assess the effectiveness of selected financial and operating controls related to Student Housing & Residential Life.

Scope/Period: Fiscal Year 2022 (September 1, 2021, to August 31, 2022).

Risk		Observation Summary
Medium	1.	In 56 instances, individual housing amounts listed in StarRez (student housing management system) did not match student Banner billing amounts, which totaled $10,046. Housing did not update StarRez to agree with the amounts charged to students in Banner. These changes were due to installments, cancelations, and other housing adjustments.
Medium	2.	All StarRez users have read and write access to the software. Access is not restricted based on job duties.

Observation Detail	Recommendation	Management Action Plan
StarRez All students apply for housing online using their university credentials through the student housing management system called StarRez Portal X. Housing & Residence Life provides Auxiliary Business Services with a list of charges from StarRez for the room and meal plans. These charges are posted to student accounts in Banner via a data load process. A weekly reconciliation process occurs to verify that students are accurately billed. Students pay the housing charges through the student self-service system. *(Condition)* In 56 instances, housing amounts listed in StarRez did not match student Banner billing amounts, which totaled $10,046. These changes were due to installments, cancelations, and any other housing adjustments. Housing & Residence Life did not update StarRez to agree with the amounts charged to students in Banner. *(Criteria)* Students are charged for the housing plan that they selected, and this plan is reflected in StarRez. *(Cause)* Changes to student housing after initial selections are manually captured in Banner and not updated in StarRez. *(Effect)* Semester student housing amounts in StarRez will not be accurate and will impact future automation of StarRez data feeds directly into Banner.	1. The Director of Residence Life should ensure: • the accuracy of the amounts listed in StarRez, • the automation of the StarRez billing function is implemented and, • the system accommodates installments, cancelations, and other housing adjustments.	**1. Management Response and Action Plan Owners:** • Interim directors are continuing to meet with Auxiliary Services. In these sessions, we are evaluating the process and making updates. • Part of these updates will include more widely distributed and enforcement of deadlines for changes in Star Rez. • Staff also need to reevaluate application types to streamline the billing. **Implementation Date:** • Already partially implemented with weekly

Observation Detail	Recommendation	Management Action Plan
		meetings with Auxiliary Services. • Roll out process to HCs in October 2023.
StarRez Access *(Condition)* StarRez data includes personally identifiable information such as demographic and student contact information such as name, SID, mailing address, date of birth, email, and contact number. All StarRez users have read and write access to the data in the software. Access is not restricted based on job duties. *(Criteria)* Restricting system access to authorized users based on roles and privileges is an industry leading solution to security management and a requirement in UTRGV HOP 09-101: Information Resources Use and Security as well as UTS 165: Information Resources Use and Security Policy. *(Cause)* Employee access granted without consideration given to the individual's job duties. *(Effect)* All users have the ability to make inadvertent, erroneous changes in StarRez affecting student billing.	2. The Director of Residence Life should limit the functionality of its StarRez users based on their roles and responsibilities.	**2. Management Response:** • With the department as short staffed as it is, the HCs still have limited access, but are doing more with their level of access. This is necessary at the moment for completion of tasks. • Interim directors reevaluated access. Interim directors are the only one with all access. • HCs can't currently open the Housing Access. They can't create reports. HCs can only do room assignments, meal plans, and run reports all access users have created. • All employees are required to complete FERPA training. Consideration will be made to make this annual requirements.

Observation Detail	Recommendation	Management Action Plan
		Action Plan Owners: 3 tiers – all access (Director); Billing Tier (Aux); Room Assignments & Meal Plans (HCs). - Housing will reevaluate the tiers and access when the department is fully staffed. - Upon hiring of staff, transition of responsibilities will include a review of the HRL Audit Action Plan. **Implementation Date:** - September 2023 – create a formal tier access.
Physical Security We reviewed the physical security of the student housing and residential facilities and determined there was adequate physical security.		
Expenses We reviewed a sample of expenditures and determined that all the expenses were appropriate and supported by adequate documentation.		

APPENDIX I

Risk Classifications and Definitions

Priority	High probability of occurrence that would significantly impact UT System and/or UT Rio Grande Valley. Reported to UT System Audit, Compliance, and Risk Management Committee (ACRMC). Priority findings reported to the ACRMC are defined as "*an issue identified by an internal audit that, if not addressed timely, could directly impact achievement of a strategic or important operational objective of a UT institution or the UT System as a whole.*"
High	Risks are considered substantially undesirable and pose a significant level of exposure to UT Rio Grande Valley operations. Without appropriate controls, the risk will happen on a consistent basis. Immediate action is required by management in order to address the noted concern and reduce exposure to the organization.
Medium	Risks are considered undesirable and could moderately expose UT Rio Grande Valley. Without appropriate controls, the risk will occur some of the time. Action is needed by management in order to address the noted concern and reduce the risk exposure to a more desirable level.
Low	Low probability of various risk factors occurring. Even with no controls, the exposure to UT Rio Grande Valley will be minimal. Action should be taken by management to address the noted concern and reduce risk exposure to the organization.

APPENDIX II

Criteria & Methodology

Criteria

The audit criteria included the following:
- Department of Student Housing and Residence Life Resident Handbook, 2021-2022
- On Campus Student Housing Contract, 2021-2022
- UTRGV Room Rates, FY 2022
- Budget Breakdown, FY2022
- UTRGV Expense Resource Guide
- UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) ADM 09-101: Information Resources Use and Security
- UT System (UTS) Policy 165: Information Resources Use and Security Policy

Methodology

We conducted this audit in conformance with the Institute of Internal Auditor's International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. Additionally, we conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The Office of Audits and Consulting Services is independent per both standards for internal auditors. These standards are also required by the Texas Internal Auditing Act.

To achieve our objective, we gained an understanding of the Department of Student Housing & Residential life processes and the housing locations. We reviewed policies and procedures, conducted interviews, tested expenses, and compared StarRez activity to Banner activity.

APPENDIX III

Report Distribution & Audit Team

Report Distribution

Edna Zambrano, Director of the Student Union
Kimberly Rottet, Director of University Recreation
Dr. Maggie Hinojosa, Senior VP Strategic Enrollment & Student Affairs
Dr. Stephen Hirst, Associate VP for Student Affairs
UTRGV Internal Audit Committee
UT System Audit Office
Governor's Office - Budget and Policy
State Auditor's Office
Legislative Budget Board

Audit Team

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