

“We have not done an overall study of Cornell housing since the economic downturn in 2008-09, and a lot has changed since then,” said project manager Marty Rauker, senior director of strategic initiatives for Student and Campus Life. “I look forward to seeing how our students’ needs and concerns have changed, and developing plans to address those changes, in concert with the university’s master plan.”

“We would like to get an objective assessment of how well our housing matches students’ preferences and interests. Even though there is no requirement for any student to live on campus, the overwhelming majority of first-year students choose to live on North Campus.” Rauker noted that student behavior over time indicates first-year students frequently want a roommate in a double room. After freshman year, students generally look for singles, suites or apartment living for more independence and privacy.

“We would like to quantify how our housing stacks up against those student preferences and proactively plan for the future,” he said. “U3 will help us identify changes we can implement that will make a difference to our students.”

A working group of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff has been formed and held its initial meeting with U3 Advisors earlier this week. The group includes Student Assembly President Juliana Batista '16; Graduate and Professional Student Assembly President Richard Walroth; undergraduate and graduate student trustees Yamini Bhandari '17 and Annie O'Toole '16; and representatives from Infrastructure Properties and Planning; Campus Life Enterprise Services; Residential and New Student Programs; the Office of Fraternities, Sororities and Independent Living; West Campus House System; Admissions and Financial Aid; and other administrative units.

Rauker said Tompkins County has begun a similar planning process, using a different consultant and looking at local demographics and housing. He said Susan Riley, deputy director of community relations, is organizing a Community Advising Board comprising representatives from across the city to ensure coordination between the two planning processes. “We look forward to comparing our results and recommendations to benefit our community overall,” Rauker said.

“We are committed to creating optimal living and learning environments in which students become scholars and citizens, and to working with our local partners as they plan to meet the demand for affordable and sustainable housing,” Lombardi said. “We look forward to the dialogue with our students, campus leaders and local officials to determine how best to meet these goals.”

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