

Higginson Hall



Ninja Turtles!

It's all about the Turtle Power!

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Higginson Hall

Western Washington University's Bid for Community of the Year

No Frills 2004

TURTLE POWER!!

The Higginson Hall Community at Western Washington University is the most wholly radical Hall, and should totally be named Community of the Year! Like the four Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Higginson has shown it has leadership skills, a strong work ethic, grit and determination, and a great sense of fun! (Also, as everyone knows, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles love pizza, and Higginson Residents have it almost every night, either from the Viking Commons Dining Hall, or else a late night delivery!) Also, like the Ninja Turtles, there is a very extraordinary story as to how the Residents of Higginson got **Turtle Power!!!** What is **Turtle Power**? Well, it starts with....

Mutation!

In years past, Higginson Hall has been identified as being a less than desirable place to live on campus. Higginson used to be like the sewer the baby turtles originally lived in: a dark, sinister hole that no one dared venture into! Then one day, the Residents came into contact with the mysterious **ooze**, the Higginson Hall community atmosphere that permeates the very air we breathe! This ooze quickly and drastically changed the Residents into superheroes! They have four different identities, and represent four different qualities that make Higginson so totally awesome!

- ✦ Leonardo - leader of the turtles, he uses his head in all situations!
- ✦ Donatello – the genius with a strong work ethic!
- ✦ Raphael – the grit and determination to accomplish anything!
- ✦ Michelangelo – knows how to have fun while getting things done!

Together, this group of awesome individuals has created an astonishingly stellar community. The Residents and Resident Advisors have strived, and will continue to do great things, in order to build a lasting, positive community for Western students to live in.

Leonardo

Leonardo leads the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to victory, no matter what odds may be stacked against them. The leadership that has been shown by Higginson and its Residents this year has been outstanding. Students are taking the initiative everywhere in the hall, whether in leading by example to peers, or by attending Hall Council on a regular basis. Collectively, Higginson has demonstrated massive leadership qualities through participating in and creating programs for developing leadership skills.

- ✎ Executive Board Retreat for Higginson
- ✎ Campus wide Leadership Retreat

There have been more than just group contributions, though. There are some phenomenal individual students that contribute to the Hall (the “Leonardos” of the Hall, if you will. And we do.).

- ✎ David Tsuru, the Hall Council Treasurer, was Male Student of the Month for Campus, and also a Regional winner
- ✎ Dave Burden, the Vice President of Higginson, was Executive Board Member of the Month
- ✎ Erin Thompson, the 5th Floor Representative, was Female Student of the Month
- ✎ Jamie Fischer, Vice President of activities for Higginson, was also Executive Board Member of the Month.
- ✎ Malia West, the 2nd floor RA for Higginson, was RA of the Month
- ✎ Heidi Bay, the 3rd floor RA for Higginson, was RA of the Month

Donatello

Donatello, the brainiest of the Ninja Turtles, always works hard at his studies, and never, *ever* neglects them. In Higginson, there are outstanding students that achieve tubular goals when

it comes to their education! There are many different study groups that have meetings and members in Higginson Hall. Higginson also supports Residents in their studies by putting on many Educational Programs throughout the year.

- ✎ Veteran's Day Memorial Stars was Educational Program of the Month
- ✎ CORE Bible Study Group
- ✎ Spanish Speaking Society
- ✎ Finals Study Groups
- ✎ Back to Kindergarten (sometimes you just need to do a little finger-painting)
- ✎ Textbook Exchange Connection
- ✎ Time Management Skills
- ✎ Love Shouldn't Hurt (educated students on healthy relationship practices)
- ✎ National Mentor Month Information Bulletin
- ✎ Planned Parenthood Information Night
- ✎ Cranium Game Night
- ✎ FAFSA Program

Raphael

Raphael has great determination to accomplish his goals, no matter how difficult they turn out to be. Whether up against an unbeatable number of foes or facing punishment, Rafael never backs down! Residents contribute their time to many different activities and volunteer projects, and they *always* follow through on their commitments.

- ✎ Higginson had the most donations for the "All You Need to Survive Drive."
- ✎ Mentor Night was Community Service Program of the Month
- ✎ Junior Achievement Night
- ✎ Valentine Making Party, Valentines delivered to a local retirement home
- ✎ Youth Art Project

There are also countless Residents of Higginson who took the initiative and created informal, free of cost programs that all the Residents could enjoy. Excellent!

- ✎ Fourth Floor Friends Night
- ✎ Saturday Night Mafia Game
- ✎ Board Game Night on the 5th Floor

- ✎ Midnight Pool Games
- ✎ Self Defense Classes

One of the most remarkable things about the Higginson Community is the feeling of caring that seems to float, nay, *drift*, down its halls. You would have to walk through these hallowed halls to understand this unparalleled phenomenon. This aspect of caring can be recognized by the awards the community has received thusly.

- ✎ Higginson has been named Community of the Month two out of three monthly awards so far this year!
- ✎ Higginson is leading the campus wide competition for Hall of the Year with 150 pts., the nearest competitor having 70 pts!
- ✎ Higginson has been honored with receiving the majority of “Of the Month” Awards every month so far this year.

Michelangelo

The great thing about Michelangelo is his ability to take any situation and turn it into a rockin’ good time for everyone! Higginson also knows how and when to have fun! There are many opportunities for the Residents of Higginson to interact with each other through social programs geared specifically towards totally hanging out in Higginson. These social events help keep the camaraderie level in the community off the charts. “What charts?” you may be asking? We totally don’t even know!

- ✎ End of the Year Luau and Barbeque
- ✎ Higginson Halloween Bash and Dance Party, was also Social Program of the Month
- ✎ Holiday Celebration and Holiday craft making
- ✎ Semi-Formal Winter Social
- ✎ Mexican Food Party
- ✎ Hall Movie Night
- ✎ The Higginson Hall Pool Tournament
- ✎ Chinese New Year celebration for Higginson
- ✎ Open Door Night
- ✎ Floor Dinners and Floor Meetings
- ✎ Multi-Hall Ski Trip to Mt. Baker

- ✎ Midnight Ultimate Frisbee
- ✎ Newly Roomie Game
- ✎ Pumpkin Carving for Halloween
- ✎ Dead Parrots Society Comedy Night
- ✎ Spank the Monkey and Rubberware Party
- ✎ Sportsplex Night
- ✎ Super bowl Party

Go, Ninja, Go, Ninja, Go!!

All of these factors come together to form **Turtle Power**...or maybe it should be called **Higginson Power**! The most remarkable thing about all of these changes is they occurred in a very short time period. Throughout last year's term, there were colossal amounts of utterly appalling vandalism. There was \$1,049 in damages for vandalism just for Spring Quarter, the second highest on campus. Total bummer! This past quarter, there was only \$20, the second lowest amount on Western's campus! Higginson has literally come from being the worst community on campus to being the most righteous. With less than 200 Residents, Higginson has accomplished more as a community than other Halls with three times as many Residents have. Higginson Hall has transformed and become a new building, a place where superheroes live! The paint is still chipping off the façade, the rooms are smaller compared to other Halls on campus, and yet, Higginson is the most awesome place to call home. Though, like the Ninja Turtles' sewer, our home appears to be a bit rundown, it is filled with warmth and caring, and a generous and giving attitude that is exemplified in its Residents. It is the people who make the community, not the building. The community of Higginson is a diverse group of people who have come together to create something fantastic, marvelous, and totally wicked! Again like the Ninja Turtles, the Higginson Community will carry on, fighting to keep all of its Residents safe and happy, as any bodacious, loving of all that is termed "good," pizza-scarfing superhero team would! Righteous!

January 29, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great joy and excitement that I write this letter of recommendation for Higginson Hall at Western Washington University to be named PACURH Community of the Year. As their Resident Director and advisor this past year, I have witnessed the positive influence that inspired student leadership can have on a community and the transformation a community can have when it is given recognition for its efforts and the opportunity to take pride in its accomplishments.

Higginson Hall is not the building on campus that everyone wants to live in. It is not nestled in a particularly picturesque part of campus; it does not boast a million dollar view, the largest rooms on campus, nor the most recent renovation. Frankly, it is an eyesore to an otherwise architecturally fluid campus. The 1950's "motel-style" construction of the building has often been the source of many Western student and administration jokes. Higginson Hall has historically been the building that everyone tries to avoid, and if by some cruel twist of fate one did get placed there they would do everything in their power to move elsewhere as soon as possible. As one might imagine, despite constant vigilant staff efforts, vandalism has historically been extremely high, community respect and involvement was historically next to none existent, and community spirit was something you enjoyed while visiting friends who were lucky enough to gain residence in other buildings on campus. However, much of that has changed this year.

From the very beginning of this academic year, the Higginson Hall council has worked tirelessly with the student staff to invest in the one advantage it does have over other communities: the potential to change the image and attitude of its community. They kicked off the year with a commitment to furiously recognize any and all positive efforts put forth in support of the Higginson community. As a result Higginson Hall has more than doubled any other Community on campus for the number of "Of the Month" (OTM) nominations through the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH). Additionally, Higginson has won the most all-campus nominations as well being involved with two regional awards so far this year.

Higginson is a different building this year. The residents of Higginson enjoy and take pride in the relationships they have formed in the community. Retention is up. More students have decided to stay in the Higginson community rather than move to other buildings on campus or move off campus. Vandalism/building damage is down by approximately 2500% in comparison to this same point in the year compared to the last three years. Community involvement is burgeoning. Higginson raised the most donations for the "All you need to survive" drive campus wide event. I am especially proud of some of the educational programming that has occurred this year. Higginson Hall Council, in conjunction with University Dining, hosted a Vegetarian dinner to raise awareness around the various social and political issues surrounding this lifestyle while having the opportunity to sample different Vegetarian dining options. Hall Council hosted "Spank the Monkey," which is an inclusive, interactive workshop about safe sex and the versatility of latex. They also hosted "C is for Cookie," an evening of baking cookies with members of the LGBTQA, discussing issues that we all face. Higginson Hall council all worked invited Junior Achievement, LINK, HASTA, NAMP, Partners in Reading and Writing, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters to come and share a little about their programs to support student interests in being more involved in the community surrounding campus. They have worked to empower their fellow residents to be informed about the resources available to them around the campus community.

I am very proud to be a member of the Higginson community. I am humbled by my residents' vision and their subsequent effort to improve their community from the inside out. Higginson has my full support for their bid for Community of the Year.

Sincerely,

Joel Bynum
Resident Director Edens-Higginson
Western Washington University

January 29, 2004

It is with great pleasure that I write this reference for Higginson Hall as Community of the Year. I have worked in the hall for two years and I can give an accurate representation of its strengths and of the challenges that it has overcome.

Higginson's residents are simply amazing. They are energetic, eager, and incredibly dedicated. They are eager to get involved in programming, not only in attending but also helping with planning and implementing programs that the Resident Advisor (RA) staff and Hall Council put on in the hall. This is especially true for Higginson's largest program, which is the Higginson Festival of Music (HigFoM). This program brings people to the hall from all over campus and the Bellingham area. It involves the performance of a few large bands, some smaller, local bands, and ends with karaoke and a dance. The event would be impossible to run without the help of a number of residents. They aid in advertising, decoration, security, setup, cleanup, and countless other tasks that pop up throughout the evening. They willingly volunteer for their tasks and keep everyone energized through the entire process.

The dedication of Higginson's residents has not gone unnoticed. Each month, numerous "Of the Month" (OTM) nominations are written for the residents, and the programs, in the hall. Higginson has consistently received a large number of nominations each month for the current academic year. Several OTM's have been awarded to Higginson each month as well. For December, Higginson won six of eight OTM's awarded, including Resident Advisor, Educational Program, Male Student, Spotlight, Executive Board Member, and Community of the month. Higginson was also awarded with the Community of the Month for the September/October awards. That month, OTM's were also awarded to Higginson for Male Student, Resident Advisor, and Social Program. The award for Male Student of the month moved on and won at the regional level.

The OTM awards serve to showcase the incredible transformation that Higginson has undergone over the past year. Traditionally, Higginson has been considered a loud hall with a large amount of conduct and high costs for vandalism. This image has been dramatically altered. Higginson has proved, this year, to have more programming than conduct and the second-lowest cost for vandalism across campus for fall quarter. The cost to Higginson, twenty dollars, was not only low in comparison to other halls, but more so, in comparison to the cost for spring quarter last year, which exceeded a thousand dollars.

In conclusion, I feel that Higginson is a worthy candidate for the Community of the Year award. From its dedicated residents to its incredible transformation, it proves to be more than qualified. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me at (360) 650-2101.

Megan Maruca

Assistant Resident Director
Edens and Higginson Halls