EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Residential Housing Cancellation Fee

BACKGROUND
The Current Policy
According to our Residence Hall Agreement: "Except in the case of midyear graduation or withdrawal from the institution, this agreement is binding from the date of occupancy to the end of the current academic year... A resident may be released from this agreement only if approved by a special committee that shall review each request individually and with reference to prevailing University policy for granting such waivers."

The Special Housing Committee
Currently, instead of an early cancellation fee, a Special Housing Committee is charged with reviewing and approving or denying requests to break a housing contract. The policy of having a Special Housing Committee has been in the residential housing agreement for over 15 years, however, it has not been practiced until recently. For 15 years, students were able to cancel their housing contract by simply notifying the department. In Fall 2017, in an effort to reduce the number of housing cancellations the Special Housing Committee was reinstated. The members represent areas of Residential Life, Student Affairs, International Student Services, Admissions, Student Financial Services, Student Conduct, and the Budget Office.

OVERVIEW OF WHY PROCESS IS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT
The current Housing Cancellation Policy is not effective for the following reasons:
- Does not reflect industry best practices
- Invasive of student privacy
- Has not been effective in reducing midyear housing cancellations
- Missed opportunity for generating revenue by not having a cancellation fee
- Ineffective committee - members will vote to waive the policy based on "how good the excuse is," members feel committee is a waste of time

PROPOSED STEPS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE PROCESS
- Eliminate 10-person committee
- Clearly define early cancellation fees and refund schedule
- Establish an early housing cancellation fee of $1,500 for the fall semester and $750 for the spring semester
- Specific guidelines to be communicated to the residential students on what will qualify for the waiving of a cancellation fee
- Housing Cancellation Form to be available online
- Director of Residential Life and Housing is empowered to make an appeal decision based on students meeting specific cancellation criteria