



The College of New Jersey Residential Education, Housing & Dining

**Using Benchworks to Understand Student Needs, Prioritize Resources,
and Improve the Residential Experience**

Background

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) is a public institution serving approximately 7,000 students, with Residential Education, Housing & Dining supporting about 3,700 beds across campus. As a state institution navigating declining appropriations, TCNJ relies heavily on data to make informed decisions, justify investment, and strengthen the student experience. Within Residential Education, Housing & Dining, assessment helps the team understand what students need, where resources should be focused, and how decisions affect students across class years, buildings, and campus experiences.



2003

Benchworks
adopted



3,700+

On-campus
residents



15

Professional
staff

Challenge

TCNJ Residential Education, Housing & Dining needed a clear, credible way to understand the student residential experience and use those results to guide decisions across housing, dining, facilities, and student support. The team needed data that could help them prioritize limited resources, explain major decisions, and understand how student needs were shifting over time. Key challenges included:

- **Prioritizing resources:** Identifying where limited time and funding could have the greatest impact
- **Understanding student needs:** Gathering feedback across housing, dining, facilities, and class-year experiences
- **Comparing results in context:** Understanding performance in relation to peer institutions
- **Tracking change over time:** Following year-over-year trends without manual analysis
- **Sharing findings:** Communicating results clearly with leadership, campus partners, and students

Goals

TCNJ Residential Education, Housing & Dining sought a solution that would help the team move from collecting feedback to making confident, data-informed decisions. These goals reflected the need for assessment results that could support leadership conversations, guide local improvements, compare results in context, and help the team focus resources where they mattered most.

What The College of New Jersey Needed in a Solution



Save Time on Assessment

Reduce the setup and reporting burden so staff can spend more time interpreting and using results



Understand the Full Residential Experience

Use research-based, nationally validated surveys that help teams collect credible feedback about the residential experience



Prioritize What Matters

Use student feedback to identify where housing, dining, and residential experience improvements would have the greatest impact



Compare Results in Context

Add context by comparing results with peer institutions, residence halls, and student groups



Strengthen Data-Informed Decisions

Use credible findings to support conversations with leadership, students, and campus partners

Solution

TCNJ Residential Education, Housing & Dining uses Benchworks to gather student feedback, compare results, understand trends, and turn findings into action. Reports such as the executive summary, priority matrix, peer comparisons, and longitudinal results help the team identify where to focus time and resources. Results also support conversations with senior leadership, student government, campus partners, and residence life staff. Rather than treating survey results as a static report, TCNJ uses Benchworks as an ongoing tool for interpreting data, building staff ownership, and improving the residential experience.

What The College of New Jersey Gained with Benchworks

Simplified Administration

Ready-to-use surveys, reporting, and support helped the team save time and focus on using results



Trusted Data

Research-based survey content and clear reporting gave leaders confidence in the findings



Clear Prioritization

The priority matrix helped leadership quickly identify where to focus time and resources



Longitudinal Tracking

Multi-year data helped the team to monitor satisfaction trends and understand the effect of changes



Actionable Insights

Reports helped staff connect student feedback to practical decisions and next steps



Comparative Context

Peer comparisons and building-level results helped TCNJ understand their results in context



Benchworks in Action

Benchworks helped TCNJ put survey results to work in different ways across Residential Education, Housing & Dining. The examples below show how the team used student feedback to guide resource investments, strengthen staff ownership, and turn building-level results into practical next steps.

RESOURCE DECISION

From Cable to Wi-Fi



TCNJ used Benchworks results to determine that cable service was no longer a priority. That finding helped the team redirect funding toward Wi-Fi, a higher-priority service for residents.



Service Evaluation:
Used Benchworks to assess whether cable service still aligned with student needs



Resource Reinvestment:
Redirected funds toward expanded Wi-Fi, a higher-priority service for residents



Practical Action:
Connected survey results to a specific operational change students would experience

STAFF PRACTICE

The Benchworks Bazaar



TCNJ created a “Benchworks Bazaar,” an internal staff process where residence directors analyze building-level results, build assessment skills, and identify changes for their own communities.



Building-Level Results:
Gave residence directors a clearer view of student feedback in their buildings



Staff Ownership:
Helped residence directors build program assessment and implementation skills



Repeatable Process:
Created a consistent way to review data and turn results into action

Results That Matter

Benchworks helped TCNJ Residential Education, Housing & Dining turn student feedback into practical decisions, clearer communication, and more targeted improvements across the residential experience.

- **Better Resource Decisions:** Student feedback helped the team evaluate services, focus investments, and identify where changes could have the greatest impact.
- **Stronger Leadership Conversations:** Trusted reports and the priority matrix helped leaders quickly understand where to focus time and resources.
- **More Context for Major Decisions:** Peer comparisons and trend data supported conversations about housing requirements, pricing, and other major decisions.
- **Building-Level Improvements:** Building-level results helped residence directors identify needs, build assessment skills, and plan next steps.

In Their Own Words



“Benchworks helps us understand where to focus our time and resources. The reports give us context for campus conversations, help us compare results over time and with peers, and support decisions that improve the residential experience.”

Tina Tormey

Executive Director
Residential Education, Housing & Dining
The College of New Jersey

Surveys Give You Data. Benchworks Gives You Answers.

Benchworks offers housing and residence life programs the tools they need to turn student feedback into clear, actionable insights. Benchworks helps programs understand the residential experience, compare results to peers, identify priorities, and communicate decisions with confidence.

With Benchworks, housing and residence life programs can:



Collect Better Data

Research-based, validated surveys capture credible student feedback



Know What Matters

Identify the top issues for your program without the guesswork



Gain Comparative Perspective

Compare with peer institutions for a broader context



Prove Your Value

Track longitudinal trends to show improvement over time

Benchworks isn't just for housing—more than 50 Benchworks surveys support student affairs, academic affairs, and professional programs across higher education, providing trusted, comparative data to guide improvement at every level.

For housing and residence life teams working to prioritize resources, improve the student experience, and tell a clearer story with data, Benchworks delivers the clarity, efficiency, and context needed to turn feedback into action.



Ready to turn survey data into impact?

[Contact our team](#) to learn how Benchworks can help.