

***Statement  
Of  
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**Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee  
Oversight and Government Reform Committee**

***Monday, February 22, 2010***

***Field Hearing***

***Brooklyn Borough Hall***

***209 Joralemon Street***

***Brooklyn, New York***

***2010 Census: “Enumerating People Living in Group Quarters”***

Chairman Clay and other distinguished Members of the Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee, and Chairman Towns, Chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tom Ellett, I am the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at New York University, responsible for overseeing the universities’ residence hall system. As background for those unfamiliar with the university, NYU is the largest private non-profit institution of higher education in the United States with a student population, including undergraduates and graduate students, of approximately 40,000. 12,000 of these students live in 23 number of university residence halls. The halls are located in the lower end of Manhattan spread throughout a few mile radius interspersed between the New York City general population.

95% of first-year students reside in our facilities and 1,000 graduate students. The facilities range in size and level of amenities.

In my opening statement, I will briefly discuss NYU’s interaction with Census officials to date and give an overview of the universities efforts to assist in enumeration efforts.

During the question and answer period, I will be happy to expand on some of the difficulties encountered by NYU throughout this process and provide my thoughts about how census officials may be able to ensure a more accurate student count as they prepare for the 2020 Census.

Census officials initially made contact with the universities Office of Public Affairs last December. Shortly thereafter, NYU administrators responsible for faculty housing, government relations and career services met with Census officials. They were seeking NYU's assistance in getting the highest student return rate as possible, communicating the importance of the Census to our student body and to use university space to interview potential door to door local workers. Thus far, two meetings have taken place, the most recent being earlier this week. We have scheduled an additional meeting where census officials will meet with our Residence Hall Directors (RHD) to explain the process of getting an accurate count of student living in our facilities. RHD's are key to this process because they reside in the hall and are the professional / administrative staffs who oversee the student experience.

NYU is planning a series of proactive actions to both communicate to our students the importance of census participation and assist officials in receiving the highest possible rate of return. On April 1st, the university will send an email to all students reminding them of the importance of completing census forms. NYU will also provide census officials with a list of all 11,600 students living in NYU residence halls. This list will be in the form of envelope labels that officials will use to send census forms to each residence hall.

Residence Advisors (RA) in each building will then hold floor meetings to urge participation then follow-up individually to ensure full participation. Census officials will then pick up these materials from each residence hall by the third week in April.

Professionally, I have served on the Executive Board of the non-profit professional association, The Association of College and University Housing Officers - International and have queried my colleagues who also run large campus housing programs. During the question and answer period, I would be happy to share both my views and the thoughts of my colleagues and about how universities could more effectively work with census officials on our shared goal of ensuring a more accurate count at university residence halls. Again, I thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today.