Context: Many college and universities are implementing new initiatives to retain students based on both academic and social components. Student retention is important to athletic training education programs (ATEPs) as students have more programs from which to choose. One initiative used to improve student retention is a residential living community (RLC) devoted to a certain content area. To date, limited data exists on the use of a RLC in athletic training education. Objective: To understand the perceptions of athletic training students involved in a residential living community. Design: Qualitative study. Setting: Athletic training education program at a liberal arts institution. Students complete one semester of coursework and clinical observation during the pre-professional phase before applying to the professional phase of the ATEP during the spring semester of the first year. The RLC was composed of first semester students interested in applying to the ATEP who all lived in one floor of a residence hall. The resident assistant for the hall was a third-year athletic training student. Patients or Other Participants: Ten students (8 females, 2 males; average age = 19.50 ± 0.97 years) who participated in the RLC during their first semester in college volunteered to participate. All of the participants gained admittance into the ATEP during the subsequent spring semester. Data Collection and Analysis: We used Question Pro™ to complete in-depth online interviews by having the participants journal their responses to open-ended questions. We used grounded theory to uncover the dominant themes utilizing open, axial, and selective coding. We negotiated over the coding scheme, completed member checks, and performed a peer review to establish trustworthiness of the results. Results: The overall theme of our data pertained to the supportive nature of the RLC allowing for early socialization of students interested in applying to the ATEP. Specifically, we uncovered three sub-themes explaining the effects of the RLC. The participants found study opportunities common due to the fact that they lived in close proximity to peers in the same classes. The interactions our participants had with their peers assisted in their integration into the institution and ATEP both academically and socially. Our participants felt that the RLC provided a supportive environment by fostering a network with classmates going through similar challenges. Students also enjoyed early socialization by having a resident assistant who was a third-year athletic training student. The final theme emerged from the unintended consequences of the RLC. Finding a quiet area in which to study became difficult and students often had trouble making personal connections outside of athletic training. Conclusions: The RLC helped first year pre-professional athletic training students find success by fostering relationships and providing early socialization to the demands of the ATEP. Our participants found success in the ATEP due to the relationships they built with their classmates. Some negative aspects did occur; however, these can be remedied by having quiet study spaces available and providing students with sufficient time outside of athletic training to pursue extracurricular endeavors. Key Words: Socialization, life-balance, student integration. Word Count: 500.