
Residence Life believes that community building is the cornerstone of student success in the residence halls. We use Boyer’s Six Principles of Community to define how successful communities are created.

As you build your community this year, focus on how it is...

1. **Educationally purposeful** – A place where students, staff and faculty share in holistic growth and where learning is strengthened
2. **Open** – A place where free speech is respected and civility is encouraged
3. **Just** – A place where each person is honored and diversity is pursued
4. **Disciplined** – A place where individuals understand community policies and consequences for themselves and others
5. **Caring** – A place where the well-being of each member is supported and service to others is encouraged
6. **Celebrative** – A place where history and traditions are meaningful, shared and celebrated

_Campus Life: In Search of Community._ The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Ernest L. Boyer; Princeton, New Jersey; 1990.

**Community Building Expectations**

The ultimate goal is for you to intentionally interact and connect with as many residents as possible. In a perfect world it would be 100% of your residents. An ongoing connection with ALL residents is expected (including those more challenging residents).

**On Being Educationally Purposeful**

- Use the Residence Life Program Model as your guide for planning events and work with your hall team to create a plan for your collective communities. Use one on one and staff meetings to update and make changes to your plan.

- Between August 22th and August 31st provide at least two community events: one individually with your floor and one collectively as an RA group. Use existing events like Gone to Texas (Tuesday, August 26th), Residence Hall Council, University Residence Hall Association and Residence Hall Program Team events.

- Get your faculty mentor involved early! Invite your faculty mentor to socials so residents can get to know them as a person and an additional resource beyond the topics they teach. Also, work with your faculty mentor on how they can share institutional knowledge with your floor. If you don’t have a faculty mentor, ask a current or former professor to help!

- Complete one passive bulletin board each month. At least one other bulletin board should be devoted to flyers and other information distributed from other departments. Your Hall Coordinator will determine when and where boards should be updated. This is a great way to get information out for residents in a non-invasive yet “in your face” way.

- Use **Directed Discussions** (in September, November, February and April) as an opportunity to assist your residents and seek their feedback and guidance for your community plan.

  _Use the following topics to open a dialogue with each resident:_
  - Their transition from high school to college or from last year to this year
  - How things are going with their roommate/floor mates/community
  - General academics (choosing a major, subject interest, current course load, professors/assignments)
  - Balancing time (school/life balance)
  - Extra-curricular activities, leadership and/or work

**Creating an Open Community**

- Connect active residents with less active residents so they can support each other and so you are not their only resource.

- Reach out to and connect with the residents who are less visible and try and get them involved.
• Encourage residents to get involved on the floor, building, on campus and off campus.
• Help residents explore how to become leaders or grow their leadership skills. Examples include your Residence Hall Council, University Residence Hall Association, Judicial Board, and the Residence Hall Program Team.

**Encouraging a Just Community**

• Use your building’s diversity plan to ensure that your community building efforts remain comprehensive and inclusive to your community’s needs.
• Identify ways you and residents can share information about individual cultures (“about me” door tags, rotating bulletin board, discussion groups)
• Continue to seek education for yourself and residents regarding political standing, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality, cultures and social justice. There is always more to learn and many ways for your community to engage in learning. Get their feedback about how residents can participate and what they want to know more about.
• Encourage discussion and challenge assumptions you encounter on your floor in a respectful and individual manner.

**Creating a Disciplined Community**

• Get to know your residents (name, where they are from, interests, needs, etc...) starting on day one. Having a positive relationship with residents will help when confronting them about policies and/or procedures.
• Read through Residence Life 9.11 policies on your own to have a full understanding so you can comfortably explain to residents why policies exist.
• Empower residents who are unsatisfied with policies or services. Introduce them to your Hall Coordinator and/or your Residence Hall Council to see if change is possible.
• Encourage and coach residents on who to keep floor mates accountable with community standards and policies.
• Confront all policy violations that you encounter, not just the big ones. If you have questions, follow up with your Hall Coordinator in a timely manner.

**On Building a Caring Community**

• Learn more about your staff and other community members (other lifers, building services, facilities staff, food service staff, and other campus partners).
• Give a detailed weekly account during one on one meeting and weekly reports to your HC about how you are connecting with your residents, questions about approaches and plans and follow-up for students in crisis.
  o Weekly Reports and One on One Meetings with your Supervisor
    1. How have you been an educator or resource this week?
    2. What meaningful conversations have you had with residents? Any general trends or common threads in your interactions? Please give details, examples, and/or possible program ideas centered on these trends.
    3. Did you find someone that has been hard to connect with that you did not know before?
    4. Potential resident/roommate, wing, floor, staff issue(s).
    5. This week I was challenged or encouraged by... Explain.
    6. If there is one thing I could do differently this week pertaining to the job or in life, it would be...
    7. Things I need from you as my supervisor and/or the RA staff this week.

**On Being Celebrative**

• Participate in floor, building and area and campus traditions and encourage residents to do the same.
• Identify ways for residents to learn more about the history of your building.
• Share our Residence Life and Division of Housing and Food Service structure with residents.
• Reward positive resident (and fellow staff) behaviors that you see from the other listed community principles. Encourage community members to do the same.
• Nominate fellow community members for campus, regional and national awards. The University Residence Hall Association and The Texas Longhorn National Residence Hall Honorary can help with this.
Resident Assistant Event Prep Checklist

- What is the purpose of your activity or event? (describe your event)
- Who are you trying to target? (Your hall/wing, building, the whole summer program)
- Who is the lead person planning the event?
- What is your event title?
- Date of the Event?
- Time (duration)?
- Location?
- Did you submit a Program Planner and get budget approved?
- Are you working with another RA? Have you discussed who is doing what?
- Are you collaborating with another on-campus organization? Who? Have you contacted the dept./organization? What have you discussed? Who is going to do the below tasks?
- Did you reserve a room or the space you are having the program?
- Do you need to reserve equipment? Which equipment (projector, tables, chairs, screen...needs to be done at least 3 business days in advance)?
- What things do you need to buy (food, materials)? Environmental Health form need submission?
- When and where are you going shopping? (Be sure to give yourself enough time before the program so that if you can’t find something you have enough time to go somewhere else)
- How are supplies going to get to the program?
- Who is setting up?
- What time are you setting up (did you really give yourself enough time to have everything ready before the actual time the program starts...don’t be setting up while people are arriving)?
- Who is cleaning up?
- What specific jobs during the event and who is completing each role?
- How many people do you expect?
- What is your advertising plan (specifics...who, what, where, etc)?
- When are flyers/posters going up?
- Who is making the advertisements (Be specific)?
- Are you going to advertise online? (Facebook, twitter, etc.)
- Do you need to ask permission of anybody in the community to run your program?
- What do you need from your staff?
- Is this event meeting any of your programming requirements? Which?
- Are you going to have a guest speaker (Who, how much, when are they available)?
Bibliography


