Building Blocks to Community

Building Blocks is designed to help you assess the needs of your community and to develop goals for the months to come. Included will be the following sections:

- A **monthly assessment** section for you to reflect on where you and your community are currently
- A **planning section** for you to set goals for the month to come
- A list of suggested **Meaningful Interactions** for you to engage in with your residents.
- Ideas for bulletin boards and programs

### August/September Monthly Assessment

1. Do you feel prepared from RA training? What areas/responsibilities would you like your HC to review or go over again?
2. New Staff: What did your RA do well when you came in as a freshman? What are some things you would like to do differently?
3. Returners: What will you do the same as last year in preparing for your residents? What will you do differently?

### Monthly Planning

1. How will you get your residents to interact with you and know that you are there as a resource for them?
2. How will you get residents to start interacting with one another?
3. How do your residents differ from one another? How will you be an effective RA for each resident?
4. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?

### August/September M.I.s

- Have a floor dinner showing how to use dining facilities
- Conduct first community meeting
- Get to know your residents and their names. Take pictures at your first meeting to help you remember everyone
- Organize residents to attend Gone To Texas
• Establish a reoccurring activity—one that you do with your residents at a set time every week or two. It can be as simple as watching a weekly TV show, having a movie night, game night, or chat night, going to dinner, etc.
• Complete Roommate Agreements
• Hand out a Resident Interest Survey to your residents asking them what they like to do
• Bring residents to first RHA meeting and get them involved
• Match residents up with the appropriate Faculty Fellow in the building based upon their major
• Inform residents of campus activities & organizations to join

August/September Bulletin Board Ideas

August
• Where’s Bevo?—map providing locations of malls, grocery stores, restaurants, movie theatres, etc.
• Top 20 cheap places to eat in Austin
• Campus Resource Locations & Options
• Alcohol Awareness
• Study Tips
• The Art of Being a Good Roommate
• Safety & Security of Person & Possessions on Campus.
• Community Study Buddy match-ups
• Notable Women or Feminists (in honor of Women’s Equality Day Aug 26th)
• Dine-In Dollars & Bevo Bucks overview

September
• Famous Hispanics (celebrating Hispanic Heritage month)
• Test Taking Tips
• College on a Budget—how to live and have fun cheaply in Austin
• Rosh Hashanah
• Deaf Awareness week
• National Native American Day
• Confucius’ Birthday: Sayings by Confucius
• UT Football game schedule/highlights

August/September Programming Ideas

August
• Ice Breakers and "get to know you" activities
• Mixers with other floors
• Tours of campus and Austin
• Scavenger hunt to find services on campus/Give out list of resources and phone numbers
• Life skills (set up e-mail, bank account, how to do laundry…)
• Study/Academic skills
• Tips for college survival
• Community awareness
• Roommate discussion guides
• Alcohol awareness
• Floor outing to everyone's first class location
• Sexuality awareness
• Personal safety
• Night at the student recreation center
• Attend campus activities
• Marathon games night
• Open door/houses; visit each others room night
• Returning student panel for questions and tips

**September**

• 9-11 remembrance program
• Assertiveness, motivation, goal-setting, time management
• How to get involved in campus org.
• How to leave friends, family and significant others at home and survive
• Campus/hall scavenger hunt
• Night in Gregory Gym or Rec. Center
• Explore Austin: go to various restaurants, activities throughout Austin
• Roommate relationships: how to make them positive and how to resolve conflicts
• Rape awareness for men and women
• Personal safety strategies
• Alcohol education: responsible drinking, responding to peer pressure
• People awareness relating to diversity
• Human sexuality values clarification
• AIDS, safer sex, birth control information
• Dating/relationships
• Intramural teams
• Roommate games
• Stress management
• Taking your first college exam
• Test anxiety, note-taking, study skills
• Volunteering and service learning
• Money management
October Monthly Assessment

1. Do you know all of your residents names? Are there people that you do not know?
2. Are there sections of the floor that you do not visit as much as others?
3. Have there been any resident issues/concerns and/or roommate issues/concerns develop? If so, what are they?
4. Are residents starting to interact with one another? Who in the floor seems to be alone or withdrawn?
5. What is the academic climate in your community? Are residents adapting well to their class schedules and the increased pressures of academics?
6. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
7. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?

Monthly Planning

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the Oct calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. Have you identified any leaders who would potentially make a good RA? In what ways could you get them involved?
4. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
5. What other goals do you have for your community this month

October M.I.s

- Draw a floor plan of your community and fill in the names and one fact about each of your residents
- Conduct a ‘Warm Body Count’
- See if anyone is always eating alone and make an extra effort to get to know him or her
- Check to see how residents did on mid-terms
- Encourage residents to apply for the RA position, help them understand the process
- Have a spontaneous activity with your floor
- Start a community recognition award

October Bulletin Board Ideas

- LGBTQ info or celebration board for Coming Out Day Oct. 11th
- HIV/AIDS awareness board
- History of Halloween
- Day of the Dead traditions and history
- Tips for Mid-terms
- Ways and places to volunteer
October Programming Ideas

- HIV/AIDS awareness
- National Coming Out Day
- National Make a Difference Day
- Study skills/test anxiety
- Self-concept/self-esteem workshop
- Eating disorder awareness
- Birth Control awareness
- Sex a la Mode w/ UHS
- Creating a balanced lifestyle
- Interviewing skills, resume preparation
- National Coming Out Day celebration/awareness
- Continue values clarification programming
- Develop floor, campus or community service project
- Community attendance at athletic events
- Volunteer with resident community at Longhorn Halloween
- Career planning workshop for upper class residents
- Plan a road trip

November Monthly Assessment

1. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
2. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?
3. What developments occurred in your community that you did not necessarily plan for?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that are negatively impacting it?
5. How connected do you feel your residents are to each other? How can you tell?
6. Does your community seem to be open and communicating? What are some examples of this? If not, what can you do to make this better?

Monthly Planning

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the Nov calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
4. What other goals do you have for your community this month?
November M.I.s

- Check with residents to see how they did on mid-terms
- Fill in 3 more facts about each resident on your floor plan
- Write down the names of people you have not seen in 2 weeks, touch base with each resident
- Write down the names of each resident and ask yourself if you feel each one is doing well academically, socially, and personally. If you are unable to make a fair assessment, go see how that person is doing.

November Bulletin Board Ideas

- Check with residents to see how they did on mid-terms Suicide Awareness—signs to watch for
- Where to Vote/Platforms of candidates
- Nutrition/fitness
- Learning Styles and resources
- History of Thanksgiving and various viewpoints

November Programming Ideas

- Time management, studying for finals
- Burn out, stress management, relaxation
- Suicide awareness
- Voting locations & info
- Do something special for residents
- Learning styles workshop
- Discussions about what it’s like to “go home again”.
- Community Thanksgiving dinner
- Community meeting to share +/- of what has developed on floor/community
- Communication/listening skills
- Nutrition, eating disorders
- Aerobic exercise and fitness
- Floor T-shirt or pictures
- Alcohol/drug awareness information
- Mocktails/alternative to alcohol program
- How to switch majors
- How to write a personal statement for graduate school applications for upper-class students
December Monthly Assessment

1. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
2. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?
3. What developments occurred in your community that you did not necessarily plan for?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that are negatively impacting it?

Monthly Planning

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the Dec calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. How do you plan on closing the semester with your residents? Are there any residents leaving the community for good? How might you recognize them?
4. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
5. What other goals do you have for your community this month?
6. Is there anything that you need to remember or focus on for next semester with regards to your residents?

December M.I.s

- Find out which holidays/religions your residents observe
- Have a closing meeting to explain the closing process and check-out
- Post “good luck on finals” notes on each resident’s door
- Go door-to-door and wish everyone a safe semester break, see what they have planned

December Bulletin Board Ideas

- Relaxation Techniques
- What is Date Rape?
- World AIDS Day; current AIDS statistics
- Coping with depression
- Winter Holidays—how different cultures celebrate

December Programming Ideas

- Stress Management
- World AIDS Day—show movie and have a discussion; provide red ribbons
- Making study time effective
- Budgeting money
- Dealing with friends and changes at home
- How to make inexpensive holiday gifts
- Wellness information for finals
- Inclusive holiday celebrations
- How to find an apartment for graduating seniors
January Monthly Assessment

1. What are two different challenges you feel you overcame from last semester and two new challenges you feel you will have to face in the new semester.
2. How do you feel about your community from last semester?
3. What positive things do you want to keep going?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns to continue addressing? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that may still need to be addressed? If so, what?

January Monthly Planning

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous semester?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the January calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. Do you have any new residents? If so, how will you get them involved in the community?
4. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
5. What other goals do you have for your community this month?

January M.I.s

- Go door-to-door and welcome everyone back, ask about their semester breaks
- Hold a community meeting to re-group with your residents, introduce new residents
- Complete new roommate agreements for new residents/roommates
- Complete Targeted Academic Guidance (HC will explain)
- Develop a project for the whole community: floor t-shirts, volunteering program, etc.

January Bulletin Board Ideas

- Martin Luther King, Jr. biography board
- How to Make a Resolution Stick
- UT Learning Center Seminars & Resources
- What is Lunar New Year?

January Programming Ideas

- Information about Housing Options
- Academic preparation and goal setting for Spring semester
- Social for reacquainting floor and introducing new residents
- Building a positive self-concept, improving self-esteem
- Responding to grief
- Nutrition and wellness
- Super Bowl party
- Sexual assault/Rape education
- Money management: getting an on-campus job
- Roommate communication
• Host a blood drive in honor of National Volunteer Blood Donor Month OR…
• *I Want To Suck Your Blood Party!* Get an old vampire movie and host a blood party. Serve red kool-aid, red chips, etc. Afterwards have a blood donor sign up.

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**February Monthly Assessment**

1. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
2. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?
3. What developments occurred in your community that you did not necessarily plan for?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that are negatively impacting it?

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**Monthly Planning**

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the February calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
4. What other goals do you have for your community this month?

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**February M.I.s**

• Walk through your community and listen to what your residents are talking about. Does this tell you anything about where your community has developed?
• Valentine’s Day can be an emotional time for residents. Take the time to recognize each one during this time.
• Plan a purely social activity

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**February Bulletin Board Ideas**

• How to Find an Internship
• Resume Writing Tips
• Origin of Valentine’s Day
• Noteworthy African-Americans (in celebration of Black History Month)
• 101 romantic things to do for your significant other

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**February Programming Ideas**

• Plan or attend Black History Month celebrations
• Pool/Ping-Pong/board game tournament
• Plan a trip to visit the elderly
• Apartment hunting 101
• Service project
• Watch *Groundhog Day* the movie, talk about the traditions of the groundhog.
• Floor Valentine’s celebration, go out to dinner together
• Beating the winter blahs
• Creative Writing Contest

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**March Monthly Assessment**

1. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
2. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?
3. What developments occurred in your community that you did not necessarily plan for?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that are negatively impacting it?
5. How would you describe the identity of your community?

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**Monthly Planning**

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the March calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
4. What other goals do you have for your community this month?

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**March M.I.s**

• Do something nice for your residents
• Have your residents plan an activity
• Follow-up with your residents (particularly TAG residents) to see how they did on midterms

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**March Bulletin Board Ideas**

• Spring Break Safety
• Drug and Alcohol Use & Abuse
• Finding an apartment—things to look for!
• Choose Your Roommate Carefully—ensure a happy apartment experience
• Timeline of Women’s rights (in celebration of Women’s History Month)
• For Ethics Awareness Month, do a bulletin board on business or legal ethics.

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**March Programming Ideas**

• How to have a safe and fun Spring Break
• Nutrition and fitness program
• Have some local travel agents come in and do a talk.
• Alternatives to alcohol during Spring Break
• Car maintenance
- Academic advising
- Resume workshop
- How to choose a major workshop
- Finding a summer job
- Host National Craft Month in your hall. Each week have a craft like decoupage, embossing, crochet, etc.
- Dance lessons
- Sports Movie Week
- First Aid Course
- Used CD exchange
- Women’s History Month Activities
- Income tax preparation
- National Chocolate Day celebration

### April/May Monthly Assessment

1. What goals were you able to meet from last month?
2. Which goals were you not able to meet? Is it vital to still try and accomplish them this month?
3. What developments occurred in your community that you did not necessarily plan for?
4. Are there any resident issues/concerns? Roommate issues/concerns? Behaviors within the community that are negatively impacting it?

### Monthly Planning

1. How do you plan on addressing any issues or concerns from the previous month?
2. Are there any monthly issues/concerns on the Apr/May calendar that you are starting to see develop? If so, how do you plan to address them?
3. What programs/activities do you want to do this month?
4. What other goals do you have for your community this month?
5. What closing activities do you have planned? How do you plan to recognize your residents?

### April/May M.I.s

- Walk your community and thank each resident for their contributions to the community. Ask residents to also share what they have appreciated about their experience.
- Create a “yearbook”, community quote book, or some other memento for your residents to take with them.
- Compile summer addresses for residents to keep in touch
April/May Bulletin Board Ideas

April

- Tax Filing Resources
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Prevention (April is STD Awareness month)
- Motivate Yourself—May is almost here!
- Favorite moments scribble board
- Closing Information
- Springtime activities in Austin
- Things to do before graduating

May

- Make the Move Easy—how to pack, where to find boxes, how long to allow
- Fun & Crazy Ways to Spend the Summer
- Message board for residents to write farewells

April/May Programming Ideas

April

- Generate a list of “what was good” and “what could be better” for next year or do a resident survey.
- Study break activities
- Finals study sessions
- Recognize residents for contributions made to floor/community
- Dealing with stress/anxiety positively
- How to transition back to home with family
- Health/Wellness program
- Summer living options
- How to effectively use the Career Services Office for job hunting
- Financial planning
- How much I’ve changed during college…
- For National Poetry Month, host a poetry contest. This is a great way to explore the creative side of the residents
- Post jokes on the floor for National Humor Month.
- Have a stress reliever or stress tests for Stress Awareness Month.
- Host a Condom Give Out for STD Awareness Month.

May

- Closure party: Say good-bye to UT and all those who have made the experiences here positive and enriching
- Older Americans Month—volunteer at nursing home
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month —highlight residents in your community, show Asian film w/food.
- Exam breaks
- Packing party
- National Mental Health Month—CMHC program