A Word from the Director of Educational Initiatives

Ralphel Smith, Director of Educational Initiatives

Hello. I am Ralphel Smith. I am the Director of Educational Initiatives in the Department of Residential Life. First of all, I would like to say what a joy it is to work at UConn, such a great public institution. In addition, it is a pleasure to work with such great students. I have worked here for less than a year and am very happy to be a part of the Husky family. As the Director of Educational Initiatives, I have three primary roles and those are to oversee the Residential Learning Model, serve as liaison to the Faculty Directors in the Learning Communities, and oversee the academic course that all Resident Assistants must take as part of their ongoing training.

The Residential Learning Model, also known as the RLM, within the Department of Residential Life is an intentional way of promoting learning in college and university residence life programs. It is a very specific approach to structuring learning outcomes. The philosophy of the RLM maintains that programming is only one way to connect and engage students.

In 2015 the department began to consider a curricular approach to student engagement and education in residence halls. For many years, UConn and many other institutions throughout the country relied upon programming models to guide student engagement and residential education. The more research higher educational professionals conducted the more it was proven that traditional programming models did not have a significant impact on students’ learning.

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The RLM is about supporting the learning, growth, and development that is happening in the classroom for our students. All curricular models have an educational priority. The educational priority is a statement that describes the overarching outcome of the educational efforts of Residential Life. At UConn, our educational priority is, “As a result of living on campus, students will grow personally, interpersonally, and intellectually.”

By moving onto campus, your student has become part of a large residential living community. Being a community member, no matter where, comes with a sense of belonging and responsibility. This may be the first time your student has had the opportunity to shape the community in which they live and so there may be times when they are unsure how to express what they want the on-campus community to be like. Students come with differing expectations about what living will be like. Hopefully they are learning what reasonable behavior is, both from others and through self-evaluation. Once again I will say if your student is struggling, they need to reach out for help. If they are not getting along with their roommates or haven’t gotten involved in any campus groups or activities, they should seek out advice about how to change these conditions. College is about learning, not only academic material, but information about one’s self and others. This opportunity to attend an institution the caliber of UConn is not afforded to many in the world; we hope that students understand and appreciate this opportunity for growth and change.

In Residential Life, we want to help our students be successful, learn to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and make good decisions while in college and after college when they move into their future careers as professionals and as they become citizens of the world.

Resident Assistant Training and Development

Kymberley Hendricks, Assistant Director Residence Education

The 2018-2019 Resident Assistant Staff has jumped “on board” with fall staff training and we are moving “full steam ahead” as we hold in-services and plan for winter training

Resident Assistants, or RAs, are such an essential component to the Residential Life department at the University of Connecticut. They go through a rigorous recruitment and selection process and once hired, they endure many multifaceted training opportunities throughout the academic year. Fall 2018-2019 RA Training took place August 16-August 23, 2018 under the theme of “Get On Board!” and educated the staff on topics that included, but were not limited to: crisis response, campus resources, behind closed doors scenario training, Title IX, mental health, diversity, and the list goes on. These skills learned not only will apply to their roles as RAs, but will provide lifelong skills that will carry them into any occupation or profession once they graduate and enter into the next step in their journey of lifelong learning.

One significant facet of the Residential Life department here at UConn is the utilization of a Residential Learning Model, or RLM for short. It is an intentional way of promoting learning in college and university residence life programs. It is a very specific approach to structuring learning outcomes. The philosophy of the RLM maintains that programming is only one way to connect and engage students.

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RA Training has adopted the Residential Learning Model to formulate how we will train the RA Staff as a unit and plans to continue to implement the RLM as we plan for Winter Training that will occur January 16-18, 2019.

On Wednesday, October 24, 2018, the RA Training and Staff Development Committee collaborated with the University of Connecticut Fire Department to provide in-service training to the RAs on Fire Safety. Motivational speakers Alvaro Llanos and Shawn Simons, both survivors of the 2000 Seton Hall University fire came and spoke about their experience and showcased their documentary “After the Fire”. This in-service opportunity will help RAs prepare to engage in dialogue with their residents as we approach the Fall Health and Safety Inspection process coming in November.

Midyear Move Room Change Process

*Vince Walker, Interim Assistant Director Housing Services*

Applications are being accepted until November 16 for the Mid-Year Room Change Process. The process is open to students who are currently living on campus and will continue to live on campus for Spring 2019.

Students who participate in the process will completely check-out of their fall assignment including taking all belongings home and handing in their keys to the Hall Staff by December 17 at 12pm.

Students will then return in the Spring on either January 20 or 21 more details about check in will be sent during winter break.

Students will have the opportunity to select into any open and available space for the spring semester the last week of November/early December.

Email us for more information: livingoncampus@uconn.edu

As of October 30th

239

Room change applications received
How to Best Support Your Student Through a Roommate Conflict

Amy Crim, Associate Director Housing Services

As the excitement of move in day is a distant memory and midterms lay ahead, roommate disagreements typically increase for residents. Issues that they thought could roll off their back have suddenly piled up after weeks of not being directly addressed. Your student comes to you for advice and support. We are counting on it! Who knows your student better than you? We are happy to partner with you to best help your student. We provide many resources to help your student and want to provide information to help coach your student through this stressful time.

1. Ask your student if they completed their roommate agreement in Roompact. Roompact is a web based platform for students to complete their roommate agreement. Here they determine expectations for each other, negotiate, and agree to uphold these expectations. If they have not completed, it would be a good place to start.

2. Has your student had a conversation with their roommate about their concerns? Encourage them to give their roommate the benefit of the doubt when they can and talk with their roommate. Handling conflict is difficult for many students, share your tips and offer support. Help them to understand their role in the conflict as well. Self-awareness can help tremendously instead of responding on the defensive. Many students don’t realize they are creating an issue for their roommate. Think of your roommates, past and present. They don’t know they are upsetting you unless you tell them!

3. We have Resident Assistants (RAs) that live on the floor. If your student would like the support of their RA, their RA is able to help mediate. They are student leaders with special training to lead these conversations. Investing the time in this process early can save your student from unnecessary heartache and stress.

4. Done it all? If your student has completed items 1-3 and there is still conflict, if appropriate, circling back to the roommate agreement and make updates with follow up conversation can help. Time and energy is necessary in building and maintaining a relationship. Sharing space with someone is hard work!

5. Irreconcilable differences? We offer a midyear room change process. Students are able to apply and select into a different space. They move out in December and return in January to check into a new space. Information can be found on www.reslife.uconn.edu.

6. Questions or concerns? Your students’ Hall Director https://reslife.uconn.edu/residence-hall-directors/ may be able to assist or our central office staff https://reslife.uconn.edu/staff/ . Our main office phone number is answered primarily by student workers and they offer great tips and insight as well. Our central office number is 860-486-2926.

Our Mission is to enhance students personal, interpersonal, and intellectual growth by creating safe and inclusive environments, producing innovative programs and services, and fostering meaningful relationships. We strive to uphold this statement and want your student to be happy, comfortable and safe in their space. Sometimes in order to get to happy and comfortable, they need to be uncomfortable having difficult conversations. Help us encourage your student into being uncomfortable with these conversations. Even if the relationship cannot be saved or repaired, the process in and of itself offers growth and experience.
Meningitis Vaccination Compliance

The State of Connecticut requires that any student living in on-campus housing be vaccinated against meningitis. All on-campus residents missing meningitis vaccination information were notified in September and given instructions on how to obtain compliance.

Spring 2019 residents who are non-compliant with this requirement, who submit a 2019-2020 housing application by the deadline (January 21, 2019), will be placed in-queue and not guaranteed housing.

Students can view the vaccination information that Student Health Services has on file at http://myhealth.uconn.edu > My Profile > Immunization History.

All vaccination questions should be directed to Student Health Services. Residential Life is unable to accept medical information.

ResLife Student Advisory Committee

Martin Sagendorf, Housing Assignments Specialist

We value the input of the students who live in the residence halls at UConn. As a venue to receive feedback and suggestions, the Department of Residential Life hosts the Residential Life Student Advisory Committee (RLSAC). The RLSAC has existed for a number of years to provide students from around campus the opportunity to discuss and share their perspective on the services, facilities, programs, processes, and staff of Residential Life. The RLSAC meets bi-weekly throughout the semester. The meetings are hosted by a staff member from the Residential Life Central Office and a Hall Director. Weekly agendas are shared with participating students to guide the conversations, but an open floor is always provided to allow students to contribute their thoughts to the conversations.

As a department, we have found the RLSAC to be a valuable resource to guide our work and ensure that we’re providing the best residential experience. We also find that students who participate in the RLSAC enjoy the opportunity to share feedback and suggestions as they are challenged to think critically about concerns and how to best address them. Participating in the RLSAC is a great leadership opportunity for residential students and many go on to apply to be a Resident Assistant (RA). During the fall semester, our remaining meetings will be held on November 7, November 28, and December 5 from 2-3pm in the Student Union. All residential students will receive an email at the start of the spring semester to schedule spring meetings. New members are welcome to join at any point in the semester and can simply email livingoncampus@uconn.edu to let us know that they will be coming.
Would Your Student Like to be a RA Next Year?

There’s still time to apply...

Please feel free to direct any questions about the process to: Nancy.Abohatab@uconn.edu

Living in on-campus housing is not only about living close to your classes, it’s about the relationships you make and learning more about yourself while you are part of this community!

Now more than ever, students are choosing to #LiveonandLearn at UConn!
**Important Dates**

**November 16th**
Spring 2019 housing app deadline

**November 17th-25th**
Thanksgiving Recess - no classes, halls remain open

**December 1st**
2019-2020 housing app available; room and roommates selected online in Spring 2019

**December 17th**
Halls close at noon for Fall 2018; students can request to remain over Winter Recess for additional fees

**January 20th**
Halls open for Spring 2019

**January 21st**
2019-2020 housing app deadline for returning residents; deadline for Spring 2019 residents to turn in meningitis vaccination verification to Student Health Services

**January 22nd**
First day of classes

**March-April 2019**
Spring 2019 residents choose rooms and roommates online for 2019-2020

**March 17th-23rd**
Spring Recess (no classes, halls remain open)

**May 13th**
Halls/suites close at noon for Spring 2019

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**We Hope That You’re Enjoying Fall!**

We are here for you and your students if you have any questions!

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**Contact Information**

Department of Residential Life

Whitney Hall, ground floor

(860) 486-2926

livingoncampus@uconn.edu

http://reslife.uconn.edu

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**Find us on Social Media!**

www.facebook.com/UConnResLife

@UConnResLife on Twitter and Instagram

We encourage all residents to use #LiveonandLearn to showcase the benefits of living on campus!