Role of In-Hall Staff:
Resident Assistants, Assistant Residence Hall Directors, and Residence Hall Directors

Sheila Morgansmith, Associate Director Residence Education

Residential Life’s Mission Statement states that we enhance students’ personal, interpersonal, and intellectual growth by creating safe and inclusive environments, innovative programs and by fostering meaningful relationships. One of the main ways we work to accomplish this mission is through our Residence Hall staff. I thought I would take a little time to let you know what they do for your students and our community.

Our fundamental staff position is that of the Resident Assistant, or RA. They are undergraduate students who live and work right in the residential communities with your students. They are the first point of contact for students and the number one resources in the halls. As their title suggests, they are there to assist students. They are well-trained and supported so that they can help students with mediating conflicts, building relationships, and learning about themselves and others. The RAs hold duty shifts to provide resources to students when traditional offices are closed, as well as address and document policy violations. These students are leaders on campus and balance the hard work of supporting individual students while managing the needs of the community.

We also have several graduate students working in our halls and they fill the role of Assistant Residence Hall Directors or ARHDs. This is a key role in the growth and sustainability of Student Affairs as a profession.

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These staff members work side by side with the professional hall staffers and share a portion of the responsibility for directing the activities in the residence halls. This is a crucial developmental experience for graduate students in our field and grows with the needs of UConn’s Higher Education and Student Affairs master’s program.

Last, but certainly not least, is the Residence Hall Director (RHD) position. They are the live-in professionals who set the direction for and manage the administrative functions of a residential area. The services they provide students are broad, but all tasks center them as educators. Among their varied responsibilities, they supervise the undergraduate and graduate staff of an area, resolve conduct violations, advise student organizations (including Hall Associations), and serve in duty rotations for large portions of the campus. They steer our Residential Learning Model (curricular educational plan for the residence halls), working to adapt our efforts to fit the needs of their community. They approach each task with a commitment to student learning and growth.

I am happy to provide you this glimpse into the lives of the staff that make our halls a home away from home for your students. I hope you can join me in appreciating the hard work and dedication that they provide for the students every day!

**Holiday Decorations in Residence Halls**

*Willie Garcia, Assistant Director Residence Education*

The University recognizes and supports the desire of its students to celebrate holiday seasons. However, very special care must be taken in the residence halls, apartments, and office spaces to ensure that decorations are not fire hazards, which could turn a joyous time into a disaster.

The following regulations (based on State Fire Code) must be observed. Residence hall staff are the primary enforcing agents, and the Fire Department will assist when necessary in determining the suitability of decorations.

1. All Decorations must be made of flame retardant materials and must be checked frequently.
   - Do not use flammable styrofoam or paper loop chains. Food decorations such as popcorn, cookies, or cranberries are allowed.
   - Do not use cotton balls or batting. An alternative is glass wool (like that used in fish tank filters). Glass wool won’t burn, but cotton often does.

2. The use of natural greens or cuttings, straw, or hay is prohibited in University Buildings.
   - No natural or live Christmas trees are permitted in any University building.
   - Artificial trees must be fire-retardant and labeled as such by the manufacturer.
   - No lights or wiring are permitted on aluminum or metal trees. Do not use brown paper, freezer wrap, construction paper, shelf paper, or tissue.

3. Candles and incense are prohibited in all campus housing.

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Students will then check into their new assignment in the Spring on either January 18 or 19. 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.

Applications are being accepted until November 15 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 2020.

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 16 at 12pm.

Email us for more information: livingoncampus@uconn.edu

As of October 29th
165
Room change applications received
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 2020 residents who are non-compliant with this requirement, who submit a 2020-2021 housing application by the deadline (January 20, 2020), will be placed on the waiting list and not guaranteed housing.

Students can view the vaccination information that Student Health and Wellness has on file at http://myhealth.uconn.edu > My Profile > Immunization History. All vaccination questions should be directed to Student Health and Wellness. Residential Life is unable to accept medical information.

ResLife Student Advisory Committee

Christina Gray, Policy and Process Coordinator

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 monthly throughout the semester. The meetings are hosted by a staff member from the Residential Life Central Office and a Hall Director. 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 6 and December 4 from 1:30pm - 2:30pm pm in the Rome Portico (South Campus). 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.
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/Huskymate 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 their Huskymate agreement yet, 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 and Hall Directors for each area. If your student would like the support of their RA, their RA can offer suggestions. They are student leaders with special training to support our students. The Hall Director can help support your student and their roommate with a mediation meeting. 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 making 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 and on page 3 of this newsletter.

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.

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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 that will help set them up for future roommate relationships.

### Important Dates

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 15th</td>
<td>Spring 2020 housing app deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 23rd-30th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess - no classes, halls remain open</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1st</td>
<td>2020-2021 housing app available; room and roommates selected online in Spring 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 16th</td>
<td>Halls close at noon for Fall 2019; students can request to remain over Winter Recess for additional fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 18th - 19th</td>
<td>Halls open for Spring 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20th</td>
<td>2020-2021 housing app deadline for returning residents; deadline for Spring 2020 residents to turn in meningitis vaccination verification to Student Health and Wellness</td>
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<td>January 21st</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
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<td>March-April 2020</td>
<td>Spring 2020 residents choose rooms and roommates online for 2020-2021</td>
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<td>March 14th-21st</td>
<td>Spring Recess (no classes, halls remain open)</td>
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<td>May 11th</td>
<td>Halls, Suites, Northwood Apts, Mansfield Apts, Stamford housing closes at noon for Spring 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 31st</td>
<td>Hilltop &amp; Charter Oak Apts close for Spring 2020</td>
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### We Hope That You’re Enjoying Fall!

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

**Contact Information**

Department of Residential Life  
Whitney Hall, ground floor  
(860) 486-2926  
livingoncampus@uconn.edu  
http://reslife.uconn.edu