

Paraprofessional

As I enter the role of an RA this upcoming fall, there will be a few changes regarding my paraprofessional role as an RA. Included in those changes are how I address my friends about my position, how I communicate with my roommates/ suitemates, and establishing boundaries with my residents.

When I present my paraprofessional role as an RA to my friends, I have to let them know that this job is very serious to me and I cannot step out of line for their benefit. For example, I cannot give any of my friends special treatment if they are caught violating school policy. They need to know that I am part of Residential Life at all times even if I am off duty: giving anyone a “free pass” would put my job at risk. The overall idea is that if I have “true friends,” they wouldn’t put me in a situation where I would have to choose between my job and my friends.

As an RA on Indian Quad, I will be living with random freshman and I would have to let them know how important my job is. First, since we will be living together, it is completely fair to establish “rules” that everyone agrees on in the suite. Just because I am the RA doesn’t mean I have “more authority” over the bathroom, for example. Just like any suitemate, I would have to respect everyone else. With that being said, I would tell my suitemates that they have to respect myself and my job by not drinking in the room or anywhere in my hall. I would probably warn my roommates that the walls are thin and if they are drinking or playing any drinking games, I would be able to hear it right through the walls and I would have to write them up. To be honest, if I caught them drinking in the room it could make me a little uncomfortable because they are my roommates and we will be living together for the rest of the year, but, just like my friends, I have to do it because I cannot put my job at risk. My main goal with my roommates is for us to have respect for each other’s living preferences.

Finally, the most important part of establishing my paraprofessional role is to have boundaries with everyone. While I want to have a friendly relationship with everyone in my hall, I have to make sure that they respect my role and make sure they know that I am not going to allow anyone to walk all over me. In order to successfully go about this, I have to establish boundaries. For example, although I don't have a lot of personal information on my Facebook, it would be best to keep that away from my residents because you never know if someone will post on your wall or tag you in pictures. Next, if I am every downtown and see my residents, it is my job to leave the situation because residents could make up rumors about what I was doing and it could spread to my supervisor. Moreover, it is not worth it for any of my residents to see me and stop taking me seriously just because we ran into each other downtown. Furthermore, if residents are having any trouble it is 100% okay for them to talk to me, but I shouldn't talk to my residents about any of my personal problems. The overall gist is to be there for your residents, but make sure they know their limits with you.