

RA Role

As I enter the role as an RA this upcoming fall, there are many guidelines to learn prior to the job. After reading the Student Staff handbook, I learned a heavy amount of new information that I was previously unaware of, including the three “I’s” of Residential Life and the necessary planning required to have a program. With knowledge of this information, I will successfully be able to take on the role as an RA this upcoming fall semester.

Some information I learned about being an RA are the three I’s, Intellectual, Inviting, and Inclusive and how to plan a program. First, an RA should always be “Intellectual, Inviting, and Inclusive” when it comes to approaching residents. Intellectual is being knowledgeable about the campus in order to provide residents with any information he/she is looking for. Furthermore, everyone goes to college in order to receive an education. Therefore, it is the job of an RA to promote an enriched environment to remind students they are here for school. Inviting is being welcoming to the residents and letting them know that if there are any problems, his/her RA will be there for them. Inclusive is being open-minded to other people’s situations and allowing him/her to feel relaxed expressing his/her “uniqueness” within the group. The University at Albany is a large campus and it is easy to lose yourself; so it is important to have all the residents feel comfortable in their own room. Another relevant piece of information I learned is the necessary steps to plan a program. An RA cannot just tell his/her RD that he/she wants to have a program on a certain date in a specific area. Instead, the RA is required to fill out a Special Function Form at least 10 days before a program in order to reserve the required space. Prior to filling out the form, it is ideal to know what the program will be and the required materials. After learning this new information, I will successfully be able to carry out my duties as an RA.

The newly learned information will help me have a successful, healthy semester from the very beginning. For example, as soon as the semester begins, it is important to give off a friendly vibe. It could be as small as having a smile on your face when you hand your residents his/her keys and letting him/her know who you are, be inviting. Within the first day, it would be ideal to have the first hall meeting where everyone could meet each other. It could be fun with ice breakers; everyone is excited to be in college for the first time, being inclusive and welcoming. It is also important to check up on residents every once in a while to see how they are adjusting to a different environment and to see if they need any resources to help adjustment, be intellectual. While the RA wants to give off a positive, friendly vibe, it is also important to emphasize that being an RA means there are limits. For example, even if an RA has a friendly relationship with a resident, the RA has to his/her job if anyone is caught violating policy, no exceptions. Furthermore, after learning the steps of having a program, I will be able to think of programs which will further enhance being intellectual, inviting, and inclusive. For example, a program I would like to implement is one where two floors compete against each other to see who could recycle more. This is intellectual because I could educate them on the university's mission regarding sustainability, inviting because everyone is welcome to participate, and inclusive because each floor would think of their own unique way to go about this competition. Overall, in order to have a successful semester it is important to implement the three I's through events like programs.

Learning about Residential Life's mission statement is teaching me that being an RA is so much more than just watching over students and making sure they stay out of trouble. Instead, it is about creating an environment where people feel comfortable because this is their "home away from home." As a student leader, I want my residents to feel comfortable walking through

the halls and I want them to look at me a role model. I want them to know that whether it is problems adjusting to college, trouble with classes, or roommate problems I will be there for them.