4-25-2017

Tales from the "Bad RAs"

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There are certain days where the clouds perfectly reflect the world below them, dirty smudges across what could have been a clear sky. Thick enough to block out the sunlight, yet spaced far enough apart so you could recognize what you were missing.

Much like Brendyn’s new staff.

Three days of training had already exhausted them beyond chipper voices and school chants, beaten them down to forgotten nametags and long-suffering sighs. Allison Wolfe raised a single, perfectly coiffed eyebrow every time the newest Graduate Assistant (GA in Residence Life lingo) spoke, hip cocked to the side and a patronizing smile on her face.

“Oh, honey,” she said, “stop acting like you know what you’re doing.”

Of course, it was never said loudly enough for the GA to hear, just enough for a small group of first year Resident Assistants to understand that Allison was who was actually in charge, that she would be running the building this year with snide comments and undercut instructions. Five foot two had never been so intimidating as when paired with Allison Wolfe and she damn well knew it.

Brendyn cleared his throat. “Allison, could you speak up? I didn’t catch that.”

Both of her eyebrows were raised now as she looked at him. Despite the easily stereotyped blonde curls and Kappa Delta membership, Allison was easily the brightest person on the staff and on the fast track to become the first gay female president. Brendyn’s unpracticed attempt at being conniving didn’t faze her in the least.

Instead, she smiled at him, all thirty-two pearly whites showing. “Of course,” she said. “I was simply saying how excellent our new GA Sarah was doing in running the building. I know it
can be a really hard role to step into, especially with no prior experience.” She turned back to Sarah. “If you ever need anything, please let me know.”

Sarah beamed at her. Brendyn pursued his lips as Allison tossed her hair over her shoulder. The new RA’s behind her giggled nervously, each trying to hide their smiles as if they weren’t guilty in the manipulation of professional staff. This would likely be the peak of their careers, most of them currently studying Communications or other inferior majors as compared to Brendyn’s Chemical Engineering major. They could enjoy their little reign of terror now and he’d actually do his job.

“Okay,” Sarah said, clapping her hands together. “We’re gonna do a little scavenger hunt.”

A collective groan sounded and her smiled faltered.

“C’mon guys, it’ll be fun! We can run around the entirety of campus. First to win gets a prize!”

“If it isn’t an end to training, I don’t care about it.”

Liam slouched against the pale cinder block, evidently too cool to stand like every other human being. The neon green *ResLife = Best Life!* polyester t-shirt hindered his aviators and All-Stars aesthetic by a significant amount, which Brendyn took a moment to relish in as Allison gave an Liam an appraising look. A slow smile spread on her face and, as Liam mirrored it, Brendyn registered the fall of Sarah’s authority. She didn’t even realize it, awkwardly laughing off Liam’s snide comment.

“Not that...no. It’ll be a surprise!” Sarah raised both hands, ready to begin clapping to the beat of the school chant, but, with startling amounts of energy, the entire staff pushed passed her
to begin the scavenger hunt. Sarah’s face and hands fell as the students walked ahead of her.

Brendyn stepped closer, taking a large gulp from his water bottle in preparation.

“I think one or two rounds of the fight song would do us some good, right?”

Sarah immediately brightened. She was an Elementary Education major in undergrad.

The August heat was doing nothing to improve the staff’s mood. All ten neon green shirts were soaked through with sweat, clinging to the least flattering parts of everyone, and the only ones who actually knew where to find the items on the scavenger hunt were Brendyn and Allison. After about ten minutes, Sarah had realized this and banned the two of them from speaking or gesturing.

“What a great communication exercise,” she said. “How can you communicate when all the usual routes aren’t available?”

Immediately after this, she snatched Allison’s phone out of her hand, smiling thinly. Brendyn was itching to ask her when they would ever be in this situation on the job, but his drive to obey her orders overpowered his need for a logical explanation. Allison, in a desperate attempt to maintain a facade of being a good RA, stayed near the front of the group, casually walking ahead of everyone except Liam. Every now and then, he would look back at the group, lean in to whisper something undoubtedly snotty in her ear and they would both laugh.

“Children.”

“Brendyn, no speaking!”

He bit the inside of his lip, resisting the urge to tell Sarah everything that Allison really was, fully aware of his lack of proof. A forced smile appeared on his face and he nodded, just once. The other new RAs startled giggling to themselves, glancing periodically at Allison and
Liam for approval and Brendyn became very aware that he was already on the outside of every staff joke. He scrunched his nose, as if smelling something disgusting below him and raised his chin anyway.

“Next stop is campus police,” Sarah said. “We’re going to go through drug policies!”

The campus police were not nearly as enthusiastic about the process as the Graduate Assistants. As opposed to the bright flashing powerpoints and loud music of every residence life presentation over the past week, the chief simply leaned against a table decorated with various oddities. He watched each of the RAs file into the room, his eyes drooping with sleep, and didn’t speak until all of them were seated.

“You’re mostly going to call us for weed. It’s probably the stupidest call we get, but it’s the main one we get.”

He waved his hand across the table and Brendyn leaned forward in his front row seat to gain a better view of the glittering objects. He raised his hand as high as possible, determined to be the first with a question. He could hear Liam let out an exasperated sigh behind him.

The chief stared at him for a moment before gesturing for him to speak.

“Pardon me, but what are those?”

“Bongs, bowls, blunts...the usual.”

“Usual what?”

“Drug paraphernalia. Like for pot.”

If he were honest with himself, twelve years of schooling in a conservative Christian private school had left Brendyn at a loss for most pop culture references and social norms. Seeing so many different, artistic methods of getting high was mildly overwhelming.
“People have those in the dorms?”

“Residence halls,” Allison corrected.

The chief nodded, now looking positively gleeful. “That and more. We get calls for coke, and meth, and molly…” He lifted a blunt and examined it for a moment, playing with it in his fingers. “I’m gonna teach you something, kids.”

He strode forward and crouched directly in front of Brendyn, who promptly leaned back in his seat. “Breathe deep kid.” And he lit the blunt.

For a moment, no one really processed what was occurring. Sarah was busy chatting with one of the heads of the department and all the RAs simply froze, eyes wide and mouths open. Brendyn, for his part, was at least able to follow basic orders and inhaled as much scent as his nose would allow. When he was in the fifth grade, his father had run over a skunk and the smell filled the car for hours. If that smell had been just a bit softer, just a hint smoother, this would be that smell. He exhaled slowly.

Then all hell broke loose.

Sarah jumped in front of him, clearing the room in a few quick movements and smacking the blunt out of the chief’s hand. The head of the department was screeching about professionalism and appropriateness while trying to motivate the RAs out of the room and a small burn began to form in the carpet.

“Sarah,” said Brendyn.

“Not right now.”

“But, Sarah.”

“Not right now, Brendyn!”

A small fire started.
Training was cancelled the next day, officially for “bad weather”, but the university was small enough that every RA on campus knew the truth. Liam had used blue painter’s tape to cross out the Best Life! on his t-shirt and replaced it with LIT in bright orange fabric paint. Allison and a few of her followers decorated the lobby of the residence hall with paper cutouts of flames during the night. Two RAs in another building were rumored to be on probation for tweeting about the event on their public Twitter accounts.

Brendyn spent the day re-reading the expectations list for his job, trying to figure out if forcible drug usage was in the contract, though Sarah had reassured him repeatedly that the smell of weed was not enough to get him high. When he asked, she refused to give a clear answer how she knew this, only replying with “science”.

“But you were an education major,” he’d said.

“Education majors still take science. Let it go, Brendyn. And please tell Liam to give me at least one idea for a program before five pm.”

So he wandered up and down each hallway, fiddling with locked doors and checking on fire extinguishers and smelling his own breath to see if the weed was really gone. Liam was likely in his own room, as he had announced he would be after lunch, but Brendyn was dreading speaking to the most obnoxious person on staff, so he walked each and every stairway to the sixth floor rather than expedite the process in the elevator.

When he reached the door, already covered in decorations with his name, Brendyn hesitated before knocking. All the others just walked into each other’s rooms like they lived there too, clearly comfortable enough to belong with the others. He wasn’t there yet, but he had always been taught to “fake it till you make it” and, frankly, it was getting to be lonely being the only
good RA on staff. He took a breath and pushed the door open to a smell far too similar to skunk and Liam with a little white stick in his mouth. A blunt. A weed blunt.

Liam froze, eyes wide, before pulling the blunt from his lips and dropping it to the ground. He pressed the toe of his boot over it, grinding into the ground. His hands were held up in surrender.

“It’s not real,” he said. His eyes kept darting to the door and Brendyn drew himself to full height, completely blocking the doorway. “Really, it’s a fake.”

“I know what weed smells like, Liam. They literally trained us on smelling weed yesterday.” He paused for a moment, thoughtfully. “I nearly died.”

“Brendyn.” Liam wrung his hands together, his top row of teeth biting down hard on his bottom lip. “Please.”

“Sarah wants you to send her a program idea by five today,” Brendyn said. “I’ll be working on some programming things in my room if you want to discuss later.”

It was two hours before Brendyn heard a soft knock at his door. He looked up from fifty-three paper cutouts of hot air balloons to Liam poking his head through a barely cracked door.

“You can come in,” Brendyn said. “Just shut the door.”

Liam shuffled in quickly, locking the door behind him, just in case. He crossed his arms, then let them hang by his side, and then pulled them in to hug himself. He was looking anywhere but at Brendyn, head down and standing on his own two feet without a wall to support his devil-may-care aesthetic. He looked...vulnerable.

Brendyn took a moment to relish in it. He’d long since made up his mind about what he was going to do, but there was nothing sweeter than the moment in which the power is shifted.
“I want in,” he said.

Liam frowned, looking sideways at Brendyn. “In where?”

“You and Allison. Your little reign of glory. I want in.”

Liam opened his mouth in protest then closed it. “You can’t even hint about the blunt,” he said. “And I can’t promise anything for Ally.”

“Oh you’ll give me something for Ally. Or find new housing three days after being fired.”

There was a stillness in the room as Liam processed what was being asked of him, what he was supposed to do to his newfound friend. Brendyn sat Indian-style, hands folded in his lap and a smile on his face. Liam nodded, once. He left the room, slamming the door behind him and Brendyn relished in his newly acquired power.

Incident Report

One night a week, a pair of RAs had to suffer through what was affectionately “duty nights”. These nights consisted of the simple task of walking up and down every floor of the building and checking for the safety of fire extinguishers, locked utility closets, and the general well being of the residents. The “rounds” were done three times a night, two hours apart, with a black walkie talkie clipped to your hip and a pad of paper for any unusual sightings. Ideally, the night would run smoothly, with a short summary email to the Graduate Assistant in charge of the building and she would wake up, read it over, and give a gold star on the RA pair’s day on the calendar.

Tonight, Liam and Brendyn were duty partners. Allison had traded away her Thursday night rounds for shots at the bar with her fake I.D. and abandoned Liam to suffer through with
his most despised staff member instead. Every time Liam attempted to shorten the rounds by skipping a floor or bypassing a fire extinguisher, Brendyn would mimic smoking and Liam would correct himself. He tugged on the collar of his shirt, wondering if this was how dogs felt.

“Liam, we need to check the emergency stairwells.”

Liam closed his eyes. “We really don’t.”

The sharp sound of Brendyn inhaling through puckered lips told Liam that they really did need to and he allowed himself to be led on yet another wild goose chase down three flights of stairs. He held out the walkie talkie the entire time so that the antenna dragged against the walls, pressing it closer to the wall the longer Brendyn attempted to ignore him. Eventually the sound became unbearable to the other RA and he turned to Liam, scowling.

“Listen, I don’t like you anymore than you like me, but we have to do this together anyway. All I really wanted was for you and your jerk friends to stop...what are you staring at?”

Liam grabbed Brendyn by the shoulders and turned him around. He shrugged at it, turning back to his staff member with puzzled expression.

“What is it?”

It was approximately five feet tall and made out of a cheap plastic. The majority of it was an yellowed beige with sporadic breaks for a bright red, neon blue, and golden yellow. It had arms and legs, puffy and indistinct with black sharpie scratched in place of fingers. It was the punchline of every bad joke in middle school, a myth in high school hallways, and, now in college, an unfortunate reality.

“It’s a sex doll,” said Liam.

The corners of his lips pulled down in disgust as Brendyn stared in horror.

“Like, people...they…”
“We’re not going into details. I’m calling Sarah.”

Initially, the words that answered the phone were unintelligible, just basic sounds strung together muffled by a pillow. Liam pulled the phone from his ear, quickly double checking the dialed number.

“Sarah?”

“Grad Assistant on duty,” she said. “Oh, Liam. I was sleeping.”

“It’s not even ten.”

“I wasn’t expecting a call.”

When Graduate Assistants were on duty, they had an entire week in which they carried a barely functional cell phone that was old enough to become a modern legend. Every RA on campus was given this phone number to call in case of emergency or, in the case, exceptional situations. The idea was that the GA would be more than prepared to guide the RAs through whatever situation they were suffering through and be on the scene within ten minutes, if required. Liam had once asked another GA on campus how he slept while on duty and he responded with “I don’t”. Clearly, Sarah had no such hindrances with her sleep.

“Well,” said Liam. “We found a blow-up sex doll.”

After two minutes had passed without a response, he pulled the phone from his ear again to see if the call had been dropped.

“Sarah, we need you to tell us what to do.”

“I don’t know.”

During training, Sarah and Ally had regaled the newbies with their tales of being an RA. Ally told them a story about chasing down a set of students attempting to sneak a keg of beer into the residence halls by sticking it in a trashcan. Sarah told them about how her residents used
to play water pong in the hallway, but always mysteriously ended up drunk after. Liam had sworn to always call Ally for advice before his GA after that story.

But Ally was currently too busy trying to scrub her brain of having ever worked for Residence Life because she was probably the most entitled and reckless RA on campus and Sarah was his only ally in this situation.

Technically, Brendyn was his assigned partner. But he was currently turning shades of green that Liam wasn’t sure had been documented as existing yet and of no actual help.

“Sarah, that’s not what you’re supposed to say. Brendyn’s going to start crying any minute.”

“I’m not,” Brendyn insisted, but Liam ignored him.

“Find the owner, then.”

“No one is going to own up to it being theirs. Can’t we call the cleaning company?”

“They won’t be here until morning and by then my boss would probably fire all of us.”

“So what do we do?”

“I have no idea, but it needs to be gone. Please just handle it, okay? I’m super tired. I need to sleep.”

*Click.*

For Brendyn, the concept of knocking on a door and bluntly asking residents whether they had lost their obscene and vaguely mortifying sex toy in the filthy hallways of their dorm seemed a very practical idea. Liam let him suffer through it at first, but after the thirty fourth door slammed in his face, it ceased to be as amusing.
Brendyn rubbed his nose. He had insisted standing in the doorway would make people less likely to slam the door on him and was now looking reminiscent of Rudolph the Reindeer as consequence.

“We need a different approach,” he said.

“I told you this wouldn’t work forty five minutes ago.”

Brendyn waved a dismissive hand, prattling on as if he hadn’t heard Liam.

“We should be more subtle in our questioning.” Liam threw his arms up in frustration as Brendyn continued to pretend he had a single original thought of the situation. “It would be a great idea to open without mentioning the doll.”

“Amazed. Incredible. I would have never thought that mentioning the doll right off the bat to residents we barely know might come across as offensive.”

“Sarcasm unappreciated.”

“Underappreciated, that’s what’s really happening.”

He kicked at a wall, momentarily under the impression that he had bothered to stay in his combat boots for rounds rather than stubbornly changing into bright red Red Wings socks. Brendyn watched him topple to the ground, cradling his foot and swearing, with vague amusement. Liam flipped him the bird and dialed the only person he could actually rely on in his entire staff.

Allison answered the phone by screaming his name and then singing along with whatever Top 40 Chainsmokers song was playing at the bar. He held the phone a few inches from his ear, wondering when his life had become a bad sitcom, until the volume on the other end decreased.

“All, Brendyn and I found a sex toy.”

“I didn’t know you swung that way. Why Brendyn though, that’s gross.”
He sighed. “No, like on rounds. Nothing you just said is right, sorry to disappoint.”

“Lame. Wait a sec.”

He did, listening to the sounds of a five-foot-two blonde managing to bully her way through swarms of angry drunks two times her size. A few (probably) frat boys attempted to hit on her, much to their dismay and Ally’s entertainment. There were few things she loved more than ruining her sorority girl stereotype with the revelation that she was gay.

“This is why I don’t wear my letters at bars,” Ally said. There was no background noise behind her at last.

“Did you find a bathroom?”

“Bathrooms are too loud and someone’s always crying. No, I’m in a closet. What’s this about a sex toy?”

“We found one. In the emergency stairwell.”

“Why are you calling me?”

“For advice?”

“I don’t know.”

Liam hung up the phone without a word, burying his head in his knees. There was a sex doll, likely used, not that he was going to check, laying around in his building. The only experienced RA on staff was several shots into being of no use, and his GA was useless as a general rule. His only ally was the pretentious, panicky snitch that insisted on holding a threat over his head for control.

And apparently dropping a box on his head too.

“What the hell?”
Liam looked directly above him to see Brendyn looking down at him, half of his faintly green face covered by a medical mask and the other half by green goggles. He held a duplicate of each in his hands.

“Take them,” he said. “And that box has chemistry gloves in it.”

Liam obeyed and looked at his duty partner in bemusement. “We’re not cleaning it ourselves, are we?”

“You grab the ankles and I’ll hold the head.”

“This is disgusting.”

“Yeah, but it’ll be gone in like two minutes.”

The boys maneuvered the doll down the empty emergency staircase, each holding it as far from their own bodies as possible. They were fortunate enough to only pass on resident during their trek. The student had been so preoccupied with his phone, he didn’t even notice the two RAs freeze with a larger than life sex toy in their arms next to him. Liam walked backwards down the stairs the entire time, taking a single deep breath before pushing open the emergency door with his back and setting off the alarm.

“Just keep walking,” Brendyn said, immediately. “Not our problem.”

Liam raised an eyebrow at him, considering how not their problem the doll should have been but said nothing. After all, Brendyn had been the only one with a feasible solution that night. Benefits of having a duty partner in the sciences.

Once they were down the stairs, they quickly crab-stepped over to the dumpster, lifting the doll higher and higher above their heads to toss it in. It would have been a foolproof method had they been the same height, but Brendyn was a solid three inches shorter. He didn’t freeze
when it fell on him, though, simply pushing the doll the rest of the way to the trash. Then he disposed of his gloves, goggles, and mask before vomiting.

Liam had his phone out in an instant, the camera button ready to be held down and capture the entire event. It would be his own blackmail, finally cutting the leash Brendyn had held since training.

Brendyn looked so pitiful hunched over and puking. Liam stuck his phone back in his pocket and went over to his duty partner. He stood there, awkwardly, until the entirety of Brendyn’s insides were out. Then he guided him, pale faced and wobbling, back into the building.

Brendyn wandered into Liam’s room after his shower to help him with the duty report. He opened the door without knocking to Liam leaning out the window with a blunt in his mouth. This time, neither boy reacted to it, Brendyn simply sitting Indian-style on the floor and Liam remaining at the window.

“You know,” said Brendyn. “I could still hold this over your head.”

Liam exhaled the smoke. “You won’t.”

“Why didn’t you just record me puking?”

Liam thought about it a moment. He pulled the blunt from his mouth and put it out in his ashtray. He pulled the bag of burned popcorn from his microwave and threw it out. It had served its purpose, covering the smell of marijuana from spreading beyond his room, just in case any nosy residents wanted to track the scent themselves.

“You held the head of the doll,” he said, finally.
Brendyn looked at him incredulously, but simply shook his head. He opened his laptop and started typing the summary email. “I never really felt the need to tell on you,” he said, absently. “I just wanted to not be the odd one out on staff.”

Liam nodded. “Yeah, I usually make threats to people in order to become their friends too.”

“Sarcasm unappreciated.”

“Underappreciated.”

The boys grinned at each other briefly before Brendyn returned to his summary email. It was half past midnight, they’d only truly completed one round of the building that night, having spent the rest of the time too preoccupied with the doll. They were both tired, Liam had an eight o’clock lecture the next day, and Brendyn...well, Liam didn’t really know what Brendyn had going on, but he assumed something.

What they needed was to de-stress.

Liam walked over to his mini-fridge as Brendyn typed away and grabbed out two bottles. Brendyn looked up, smiling.

“I just finished the email,” he said. “Is that beer?”

Liam wiggled on bottle in front of his face. “Take it.”

“It’s beer, isn’t it?”

“Loosen up; we’re friends now, right?”

Brendyn took the bottle and rolled it in his hands. Liam popped the top off of his on the side of his desk with ease, then offered a bottle opener the Brendyn.

“We’re underage,” he said. “Like, not legal.” But he was opening the bottle, taking a sniff of it as it opened.
“It tastes better when it’s illegal.”

They clinked the bottles together and Liam took a full swig of his, while Brendyn sipped timidly. He pulled a face, setting the bottle to the side, and Liam laughed.

“Okay, okay. Just thought I’d offer.”

Brendyn nodded, though he looked thoughtful. “So substance use is your way to de-stress.”

“Jesus, you sound like a textbook.” Liam eyed his bottle a little more resentfully. “I’m not an alcoholic. Sarah just shouldn’t have had us clean that up and I want to scrub my brain clean of it.”

Brendyn nodded again. Then a smile spread on his face. “So let’s get to the root of the problem,” he said. “Sarah.”

“What?”

“RA’s aren’t supposed to clean up biohazards. She probably would hate for her boss to be copied on that summary email.” Brendyn paused suddenly in his typing. “Oh wait, no. That’s bad. I shouldn’t do that to my boss, I should respect her.”

Liam sat down next to him, clapping one hand on his shoulder. “You know,” he said. “I think this is the start of a good friendship.”

Brendyn looked conflicted for a moment, his instinct to be a model employee at war with his desire to not spend the entire year on the outside of the staff. He let out a sigh and added “Elaine Simpson” to the copy line of the email. Then he hit send. He picked up his abandoned beer bottle and took another timid sip. Liam finished the rest of his own. The start of a really good friendship.

Mediation
In a perfect world, Resident Assistants would not have suitemates. Officially, the reason they did share a bathroom connected to the room with the very same people they were required to write up for bad behavior was to form a closer bond with the residents and become more integrated into the floor community. In reality, it resulted in Cleo’s toothbrush being used to clean the sink.

The most beautiful part of the whole situation, really, was how oblivious her suitemate was to what was wrong with her actions. She waved cheerily at Cleo as she entered the bathroom, soon after resuming scrubbing away at soap scum without a care in the world. She was even humming a Disney song. A real life princess in a $4,000 per semester hellhole.

“Abigail, what are you doing?”

“Cleaning.”

A small voice in Cleo’s head was telling her to be more direct in her questioning and actually obtain the answer she was looking for, but the passive aggressive part of her always tended to win in these scenarios.

“Is this how you clean at home?”

“Usually.”

She shifted her scrubbing to the actual basin of the sink, now removing someone else’s toothpaste (Cleo only used blue toothpastes, she never used white because it lied about the color of your teeth) with Cleo’s $5.76 plus tax purple and gray toothbrush with bristles specifically designed to prevent gingivitis.

Cleo was confident she was having a heart attack. Or a panic attack. Either was equally likely to happen to her at twenty-one years old.

“Do you always use toothbrushes?”
“No, we buy small scrubbers for this at home.”

Finally she looked up at Cleo, a bright smile on her face that slid away as she registered Cleo’s own expression. Abigail looked at the toothbrush and then back at Cleo.

“Oh.”

“Yeah.”

“Well, I’m sure you could just bleach it or something,” Abigail said. She ran the water through the sink, tossed the toothbrush on the counter top, and left the bathroom. She paused briefly in the doorway to her room, glancing back at Cleo.

“I knew you were a cool RA,” she said. Then the door shut.

The next week, Cleo found a candle warmer on the bathroom countertop.

Residence Life was full of inane little rules, most of them relative in importance for the actual function of the residence halls. Regardless of their actual importance, each and every rule was outlined in a handbook printed on glossy, five inch by eight inch paper with sunny photos of campus. There was an edition for RAs that was twice as long as the one handed to residents when they retrieved their keys at the beginning of the year. ResLife had every RA read both handbooks thoroughly during training, which is how Cleo knew very well that an “open-heat element, such as candle warmers and traditional coffee pots” were considered a fire hazard and strictly banned from the halls. She had even specified this with her residents in a floor meeting the night before, a meeting at which her suitemates had been present at.

She unplugged the candle warmer, idly examining it as she knocked on the bathroom door to her suitemates’ room. The tv was blaring some trashy reality show about rich people’s problems and she could hear Abigail’s distinct laugh in the other room, but Cleo’s knock
received no response. She waited a moment and then repeated, still to no avail, though the
laughter ceased and the tv volume decreased. Cleo rolled her eyes and opened the door to
Abigail standing with her hand outstretched. The other girl quickly pulled away, pasting a toothy
grin on her face.

“Hey, Cleo. What’s up?”

“I knocked,” Cleo said.

“I was about to open the door.”

“That was the second time I knocked.”

“The tv was too loud.”

Cleo narrowed her eyes at her, fully aware that Abigail’s reach had been for the lock
approximately four inches above where she would have reached to open the door. By the
stiffening of the smile on the other girl, she knew that Cleo knew. Neither of them addressed it.

“Is that my candle warmer?”

“Good to know,” said Cleo, holding it out to her. “I’m not sure, but I don’t think it’s
allowed.”

Abigail didn’t reach for the warmer. “I think it is. Why wouldn’t it be?”

“Fire hazard,” Cleo said, shaking it slightly. “So probably not.”

Still there was no move from Abigail to take her contraband, so Cleo shoved it into the
other girl’s chest and let go, forcing her to catch it. The smile that had been firmly in place was
traded for one pursed lips.

Cleo, for her part, smiled. “If there’s any suspicion that it could be against the rules, you
should keep it out of the bathroom. If I see it or smell it or hear it, I’m required to report it.”

“Fine. Whatever.”
The door slammed in her face.

“I think one of my suitemates has been using my shampoo,” Cleo said. “I bought it on Tuesday and it’s already half gone.”

May, her graduate assistant, was sprawled across the floor of the office. In the few short months in which Cleo had worked for her, she had seen her boss in various odd positions, including upside down on the couch and laying halfway off of the desk. For her to lay on the floor during their weekly meeting was nothing of merit anymore. According to May, she had a slipped disk in her back. However, Cleo had also listened to her boss insist she had a brain tumor (she didn’t) and that her dry skin was an early sign of ebola (it wasn’t).

“Have you confronted her about it?”

“No. I’m her RA. I feel like I’d be bullying her.” Cleo sighed, leaning back and running her hands through her hair. “I really don’t need all of this with midterms next week.”

May murmured her agreement, scrolling absently through her phone. She paused and then looked up.

“You like Game of Thrones, right?”

“Yeah.”

She held up her phone and Cleo leaned forward to see a picture of Ned Stark huddled in the snow with the text MIDTERMS ARE COMING across the top. She rolled her eyes and May started laughing.

“Okay, okay, suitemates.” May propped herself up on her elbows. “If it’s a big enough issue, you’re going to have to confront them.”

“So not just leave a little note.”
“Precisely. Now shoo, I have another meeting that starts five minutes ago.”

“Rude” Cleo threw her backpack over shoulder and swung the door open to one of her staff members standing in the doorway. “You’re up.”

“Cleo,” May said. “Call me if you need anything.”

Cleo ended up calling the police long before calling May.

A part of her felt guilty dialling instead of talking to her suitemates, but it was standard policy to call campus police when the smell of weed was so thick that it was nearly visible. She wasn’t even on duty. Cleo avoided everything ResLife related as much as possible when she wasn’t on duty. That was how bad the smell was, which made ratting her suitemates out that much more justified.

Still, she felt awful listening to the Abigail answer the door to two police officers, who then searched every inch of her room. Until she could hear a pause in the searching and Abigail’s panicked protests. Cleo let out a sigh of relief. Justified call to the cops.

She returned her attention to her textbook, trying to find some amount of interest in the logistics of building an argument. *In order to give a sound argument, there must also be validity.*

Her door opened and she looked up to see Abigail standing there with her arms folded.

“What the hell was that?”

“The campus police. Tends to happen when you smoke weed in the dorms.”

“I didn’t.”

*An argument is only valid if both the premises and the conclusion are true.*
There was still an overpowering smell of weed in the room, increasing in thickness the longer the bathroom door was open. Cleo made a point of sticking her nose in the air and smelling it, holding eye contact with her suitemate the entire time.

“Huh. I guess the candle must have gone bad.”

“Don’t be rude.”

“There was a strong smell of weed in your room. The police found something in your room. And,” Cleo peered around around Abigail as much as possible to see into the other room, “your roommate isn’t here, is she?”

“Baylee’s studying.”

“So, you smoked weed in the dorms.”

Cleo was fairly certain she would do well on this exam. Conclusion, premises, all valid. Abigail was not nearly as appreciative of Cleo’s careful construction of an argument and instead stormed out of the room, yanking on the cord of Cleo’s lamp on the way out. She slammed the door, yet again, always for the dramatics.

Baylee was the next to arrive uninvited in Cleo’s room. Evidently, the RA had left her door unlocked because the other girl was simply sitting on her bed waiting when she arrived.

“Abigail has had a guest for nearly an entire week.”

“Why are you in my room?”

“An entire week.”

“You’re fixating. And also breaking and entering.”

Baylee threw her hands up in frustration. “I can’t study in my own room, or sleep, or even be there because of her stupid boy toy.”
“You could have said that so much better.”

A small leaflet was thrown at her and Cleo barely caught it before it hit her forehead. She had never been particularly athletic and took a moment to congratulate herself before registering what was in her hand. The Resident Handbook. Section 2, part B: *No guest may stay in the halls for more than two consecutive nights.*

Honestly, she was beginning to resent that there wasn’t a ResLife class. A midterm on the Handbook would certainly improve her GPA, probably to Elle Woods status. Law school would be at her fingertips as opposed to multiple gap years volunteering and really good recommendation letters away.

“I want to not live with Abigail’s gross whoever-he-is,” Baylee said.

Cleo sighed. “I’ll talk to her.”

Cleo’s exam was in thirty minutes and here she was trying to play mediator between her two roommates. Baylee agreed to hang around to talk to Abigail herself instead of making Cleo do it as long as she stayed to help the conversation go smoothly. Two weeks worth of training in the hot August sun had really only prepared Cleo to do programs and and fill out paperwork, but it was technically part of her job to be a roommate therapist so she agreed.

“Okay.” Cleo rubbed her hands together, trying to think through the twenty minute run through of mediations from training. “So ground rules. Use ‘I’ statements and don’t call each other names.”

Baylee was perched on her own bed, wringing a blanket in her hands. “That’s it?”

“Sure.”
“I feel that Baylee is a bitch and targeting me,” said Abigail immediately. “I also feel like you just want to get me in trouble.”

Baylee stopped wringing the blanket in her hands and looked at Abigail in disbelief. Cleo closed her eyes and took in a deep breath.

“Abby,” she said. “This is about you and Baylee.”

“No,” said Abby. “This is about how you keep always finding things to get me in trouble for.”

It had been barely two weeks of frustrations with Abigail and only her own use of illegal substances had resulted in any amount of trouble. Cleo was having a hard time comprehending how that constituted as “always” in any way, shape, or form.

“Abby.” She paused, considering her options. May had said to not be passive aggressive. “You need to get your boyfriend out of the hall tonight because Baylee doesn’t want to live with him.”

“Baylee doesn’t want to live with him.”

“That’s what I just said. Make it happen.”

Baylee shot her two thumbs up and gave Abigail a smug look. Abigail didn’t say anything for a moment, simply watched Cleo check her phone for the time. Ten minutes and her class was at least a five minute walk from the dorms. She snatched her backpack from the ground and started for the door, trying not to resent having forfeited her last hour of study on the two girls.

“Thanks!” called Baylee.

Cleo raised a hand in acknowledgement and headed for main campus.
As a reward for acing her exam, Cleo stayed on main campus and away from the residence halls until every dining hall on campus had closed. She debated going to the library for a moment, but there was nothing that would make her desperate enough to spend time there during the midterms crowd. So she headed back to her room.

There were three police officers outside of it and a mountain of personal belongings. For a few seconds, she froze in the hallway, panicking about the officers having found her mini-fridge full of alcohol. Then she remembered she was twenty-one, perfectly within her rights, and strode to the problem instead of avoiding it.

To her relief, none of the personal objects were hers. Instead she recognized Baylee’s blanket from earlier, a guitar, and a toaster oven that was definitely also a fire hazard. Baylee herself stood in the middle of the chaos, her entire face bright red.

“She’s literally insane,” said Baylee. “She stole my keys and locked me out.”

“Now, now,” said the officer. “We don’t need to call names.”

“I’m not. She’s actually nuts.” Baylee caught Cleo’s eye and waved her over frantically. “There’s my RA! She can vouch for me.”

Cleo slowly stepped back as the three officers all turned to look at her. She ran through the week’s schedule in her mind, registered that she was not on duty tonight, backtracked to the main lobby. The cops had been called. It was definitely someone else’s issue. She readjusted her backpack and headed for the library.

Three hours later, May sent her a text confirming that Abigail would no longer be welcome in the residence halls.

Performance Improvement Plan

Elaine Simpson had been working for Residence Life for twenty-three years.
Every August, when all of the new student staff spent two weeks on campus early than anyone else for training, she gave them a short speech about her history at this school. How she came in a scared undergraduate student, too shy to confront her own roommate about her drug usage and how she rose to her position today as the head of one of the country’s most renowned ResLife departments. At least, in regards to schools with less than one hundred resident assistants on campus.

She always ended her story on a high note of how anyone could do it, reassuring the terrified new staff and giving a renewed motivation to the returners. Every year, she held onto the hope this speech would inspire each and every RA to perform at top notch in their position and every year, she was let down. There was nothing more frustrating than her frequent disciplinary hearings with RAs who insisted their school work caused them to miss deadlines or skip creating programs for their residents. The concept of balancing their careers and classes seemed to a foreign concept to most of these students. They would flippantly use the phrase “student first, RA second” to try to argue their carelessness, only furthering Elaine’s belief that none of them had a true grasp on how to approach the job.

She tried to dissuade these hearings from occurring. Each year she gave an alteration to her methods of motivation; one year, she even wore the same tee shirt as the RAs during her speech as opposed to her usual pantsuit and nude Louboutins. She even mentioned hashtags at the end.

Regardless, she spent at least two days a week trekking from her state of the art, thermal-regulated townhouse to the permanently overheated residence halls with a stack full of papers to develop yet another Performance Improvement Plan.
P.I.P.s were fairly standard at this point, the earliest step in the discipline system for RAs. The concept was simple: the student staff member had an area of their job of which they could improve upon and a plan would be developed for that staff member to improve. Twenty-three years, however, had taught Elaine to be extremely specific in the steps to be taken to increase productivity in the exact manner of which Elaine expected. What was once a two page document only outlining the atrocity committed with a space for the student to sign had been perfectly revised into a thirty-two page document with subsections and diagrams tailored to each RA’s situation. Elaine poured her heart and soul into these documents, pulling research from other schools about what made the perfect ResLife department, which was always meticulously cited in APA format for the last ten pages of the document.

Somehow, the RAs never appreciated the amount of work she put into the P.I.P.s. They usually greeted the forms with groans and eye rolls and skimming the document as quickly as possible. There was never a thorough reading of the how other schools handled the same issues or what Elaine suggested the RA do with their time instead of the inane partying they inevitably lied about.

Such as the girl in front of her. Returning RA Allison B. Gagnier, member of Kappa Delta Sorority and the corresponding Lambda Gamma Beta Tau. She studied political science, with a minor in marketing and a plan to become the first lesbian president, as she informed ever. She was incredibly involved on campus with her sorority and volunteer groups though her involvement in her own job was yet to be seen. Her programs were of legend in theory, but nonexistent in practice. She had never documented a single resident despite a year and a half as an RA and floor assignment full of the hardest partiers on campus.
Currently, she sat on the couch in her GAs office, idly picking at her cuticles and examining her nails for any chips in the paint. Her hair was curled and pulled into a neat side ponytail. She wore a crisp navy blazer with a black and white dress. Overall, she seemed thoroughly unfazed by her disciplinary hearing with her boss’s boss.

Elaine dropped the stack of papers on the desk in front of her, making Allison jump at the sound, before easing herself gracing into the well-cushioned seat. Sarah, Allison’s GA, stood anxiously to the side, biting at her nails and looking between the two of them repeatedly.

“Sarah,” said Elaine. “Sit.”

She did, next to Ally on the couch as opposed to in the free chair to the side of the desk that Elaine sat at. She raised a single eyebrow at the GA, who blushed, but didn’t move.

“So Allison, do you know why we’re here today?”

Allison, didn’t reply, taking a moment to check her hair for split ends before looking up at Elaine. The girl’s expression was carefully disinterested and Elaine had to squint to see the slight tightness in her jaw, the only giveaway at her true nerves.

“I dropped the ball and we’re going to make a plan for me to pick it back up again,” Allison said. “For funsies.”

“Please use real words during this meeting. It is a professional environment.”

Sarah began to fidget in her seat, tugging at the spotted sleeves on her giraffe onesie.

Elaine tried not to notice; she had required the meeting to be run two hours before usual office hours to ensure it didn’t conflict with the high standard of customer service promised by the Residence Life office. Still, she didn’t expect a graduate assistant in charge of an entire building of undergraduates to be incapable of dressing appropriately at seven in the morning.
Allison gave Sarah a brief smile of reassurance to directly counter Elaine’s own countenance. She shrugged in response to Elaine’s critique of her butchering of language, returning her attention to the search for split ends.

“I’m here in this meeting because I was not a good RA.”

Elaine nodded, tapping one finger on the stack of papers in front of her. “Do you want to elaborate or do you want me to?”

Allison rolled her eyes. “I ran into a resident at a social gathering that was not pre-approved by ResLife.”

“Ally, you should probably take this a bit more seriously.”

“No, let her speak, Sarah,” said Elaine, leaning back in her chair. “This is interesting.”

Now, there was tension in Allison’s shoulder, though she did her best to maintain her carelessness. Her fingers stopped running through her hair and she clasped them tightly in her lap.

“What more do you want to hear?”

“What event were you at?”

“A social one.”

“Involving what activities?”

“Nothing with cupcakes and a Privilege Walk, I’ll tell you that.”

Sarah interrupted her again. “Ally, just be completely honest. It’ll be okay.”

Allison looked at her for a long moment, then turned to Elaine and her packet of papers.

“Those are the infamous P.I.P. papers, right?”

“Yes.”
The girl sighed and Elaine pursed her lips together to prevent herself from smiling. There was always a single moment in these meetings where it turned to her favor, when the RA gave in to the persuasion of their trusted grad assistant and spilled the truth. She lived for that moment, the total power shift back to the actual woman in charge.

“"I was at the bar with a fake ID and my residents saw me,” Allison said.

“Why is that a problem for an RA?"”

“Because we have a standard to uphold. Kind of like the cops.” Allison paused, thoughtfully. “Though a lot of them have been making some bad choices lately.”

“Ally, focus.”

Elaine pushed the papers further forward on the desk, hoping to coax Allison to pick them up herself. When she did, it was all Elaine could do to restrain herself from standing up and walking out in victory. She settled for pressing her fingertips together. There was a book she once read on power poses and it had changed her life.

Allison looked over the document, flipping aimlessly through the pages. She paused briefly at some of the graphs with an incredulous look and skimmed the bottom of each page for a space to sign.

“So this is it, huh?”

“No.”

“What?”

Sarah seemed startled by the response, clearly communicating that she hadn’t read the email Elaine had sent to her. Sarah had been fired from being an RA at her old school, but it was in her senior year and after three years of service. Clearly, though, she had been fired for good reason. Elaine refused to meet her eye.
“No, Allison,” she said. She reached into her purse and pulled out a single sheet of paper. “This is the form for you.”

“Oh shit.”

Allison snatched the sheet from Elaine’s hand and quickly scanned it. Predictably, it took only moments for her to fixate on the word “terminated” and, finally, her obnoxious facade of self-control fell.

“You’re firing me?”

Elaine tried to look sympathetic, but Allison Gagnier had been the bane of her existence from the day she made the mistake of employing her. The girl wouldn’t do her programs, stayed out past curfew, and there had been rumors circulating about her drinking with residents from day one. All before she even turned twenty-one years old. Three semesters before Elaine had caught her with any of it, but it had certainly been worth it.

“Of course,” she said. “It’s outlined in your contract that if you are caught doing illegal activity, you could be terminated. This is your termination.”

Mistakenly, Elaine had prepared for Allison to cry, underestimating the girl’s sheer willpower to maintain control in any situation. If it hadn’t been for her arrogance, she would have gone far in ResLife. Instead, Sarah began to cry and Elaine questioned her own hiring capabilities.

“You have seventy-two hours to move your belongings out of your room,” Elaine said, raising her voice to be heard over Sarah’s sobbing. “Then your replacement will be moving into your room.”

“Well oiled machine you run.”
Elaine stood, chin up, shoulders back. Allison signed swiftly at the bottom of the page and handed it back, mirroring Elaine’s posture. She smiled.

“I’ll be back to get your final signature on the paperwork then,” she said. She strode out the office at a steady pace, aware of Allison keeping her in her sight until she was out of the building.

When Elaine returned three days later, there was a long sheet of paper with the words “Bring Back Ally” in bold black letters hanging in the lobby. Allison herself stood in front of them, a little pink suitcase by her side and one hand on her hip.

“How very Elle Woods of you,” said Elaine. “Though the sign is a little tasteless.”

Allison raised a single eyebrow. Then she looked back at the poster she was using as her current backdrop. “Oh, that,” she said, feigning ignorance. “I think my residents made it. They liked me.”

“I would like an RA who wouldn’t get me in trouble too, if I were them.”

Allison held out her hand for the remaining paperwork. Elaine pulled the sheet back out of her purse and passed it to her with a pen.

“Sign the back,” she said. “There’s a spot specific to the day you move out, in addition to the day you were terminated as an employee.”

Allison did as she was told, holding the paper against the wall nearest to her. Sarah walked out of her office as the sheet was handed back to Elaine, both women maintaining their neutral expressions. Sarah’s eyes were a little pink, by contrast. Elaine had appreciated the girl’s emotion when she first hired her, thinking it would help her connect to residents. She was not expecting the mess she received.
Sarah pulled in Allison for a hug, which the latter returned albeit stiffly. Elaine tapped her foot impatiently. She was required to escort any terminated RA from their building directly in order to ensure their departure. It was her own rule, but she still hated it.

Finally the two separated and Allison grabbed her suitcase and walked just past Elaine. She paused, turning back to give the woman a once-over.

“I hope you’re satisfied firing me,” she said.

Elaine raised a single eyebrow. “I am.”

Elaine Simpson had been working for Residence Life for twenty-three years. Every year, she ended firing at least one obnoxious, arrogant RA who was incapable of following the most basic of rules. Every year, she held on to the hope that she would have staffs composed of only truly dedicated RAs and every year, she was let down.

Allison left and Elaine went over to inspect the sign on the wall. There were smaller statements in bright colored pen scrawled across the sign. Little personal stories about Allison from the residents she had worked with during the fall semester.

*Thanks for telling me about the tutoring lab! Saved my calc grade.*

*Always a sunny face, even on really bad days.*

*Wildest stories.*

Elaine huffed and started to pull down the sign with no intention of maintaining its integrity until one phrase caught her eye.

*Thanks for suggesting the campus counseling. Saved my life.*

She rolled her eyes and carefully tugged at the sign, easing it slowly off the wall and rolling it into a careful tube. Sarah watched her the entire time, rubbing at her eyes periodically.
Elaine explained nothing, taking the sign out of the front door and to the car Allison was getting into.

“Ally,” she called. She held out the sign in her hand and the girl walked over to her, suspicious. Even so, she accepted it being handed to her.

“You were a terrible employee,” Elaine said. “But maybe not an altogether terrible RA.”

“You regret firing me?”

“Never.” Elaine stepped back and looked closely at the young woman in front of her, head still high, despite everything. “Good luck out there.” She turned and walked back in, preparing herself to begin training for the replacement RA. She only heard Allison’s car leave and smiled as the sound faded. On to the next staff member.

**Spring Program Training**

Welcome to Residence Life, new staff! There are so many wonderful tasks in your position, but by far the most important is programming. I know you think it’s duty rounds, where you are entrusted with the safety of over a hundred young students over the course of 12 hours or even an entire weekend, but it’s really programming. We charge each resident an additional fee just for this. However, if you could be careful not to tell them it would be much appreciated.

Your enthusiasm for this aspect of your job could use some improvement, but don’t worry, as we explain it, you’ll be just as invested in programming as we are. Smile! He’s taking a photo for ResLife recruitment for fall RAs and we want them to know how much fun we’re having. We always have fun in ResLife. If you’re not having fun, it could result in a disciplinary meeting, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing in seventy-two hours. So have fun!
The key aspects of a successful program is to **keep the residents in mind**. That’s always our number one priority in this job. The residents are paying $4,000 a semester to enjoy our programs and gain the full college experience. Also, they don’t want to have to remember to grocery shop in order to get three meals a day and their parents know that their student will spend more time drinking than studying if there isn’t an authority figure down the hallway.

But our residents love programs! They tend to attend every program in full and contribute so much to the discussion that many programs run longer than originally scheduled. After all, you used to be a resident as well and if you didn’t attend programs, please do not use this moment to inform us. Just be aware that you wasted money every year you skipped them all.

Every program has a purpose. We in ResLife feel that the students that live on campus don’t get enough education in their own classes so we try to make up for that with our super fun programs. There are four topics we like to cover twice each semester: Alcohol, Diversity, Time Management, and Safe Sex. No, we do not train you to be a professional on these topics, but Pinterest should be a huge resource for you!

With Alcohol, we make a very big emphasis that there are one million other cool things to do than drink. Ever. Please don’t make a huge deal about the safe drinking and the proper number of drinks and all of that because it just encourages them. You could play flip cup with water, or beer pong with root beer, or even quarters with apple juice! Very creative ideas.

The best way to do a diversity program is to have a Privilege Walk. It’s especially great if you do about five of these a year. Sometimes just walk up to a group of residents and have them join you. It’ll be great; you’re shaking your head but it’s really something they love, you’ll see. And if you don’t see, then it could result in a disciplinary hearing, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within seventy-two hours.
Oh, paint! Paint is also great with diversity programs. Paint is also very cheap, ask Liam. He started as an RA last semester and uses paint in almost all of his programs. Very budget-friendly for the department. He almost always has full resident attendance marked on his forms, but we know he’s lying. Still, we accidentally let him clean up a biohazard last semester so we try not to notice it.

All right, let’s show you to the programming room. This is where your supplies will be kept. As you can see, it’s much bigger than any other the rooms you live in and also bigger than your Grad Assistant’s apartment. We take programming very seriously.

On the shelf to your right are all of our paints. We have blue paint, red paint, green paint, orange paint, sparkle paint, Harry Potter paint. Every paint you think you might need to be as diverse as humanly possible we’ve purchased. That’s probably close to $1000 worth of paint on that shelf. Please, please do not waste the paint. Even if the paint is too old, we prefer if you spit in it and try to save it. If you waste the paint, then it could result in a disciplinary hearing, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within seventy-two hours.

We keep programming food in this room too, carefully labeled and in the fridge. Sometimes the paint and the food get mixed up, like at Liam’s paint diversity program. He had pizza and the paint spilled, but we hate for the paint to be wasted so the pizza was used to finish decorating the art. We threw the paper used in the trash.

Using our most valuable tool right now is Brendyn. He’s one of our best staff members. Every now and then, he loses an entire night of sleep to prepare the perfect program, so we value his enthusiasm very much. Be like Brendyn. He actually has high attendance at his programs. If you have any questions, you may speak with Brendyn, though we would much prefer if you do not distract him from his job. If he gets distracted, he may become less dedicated and fall into the
same pit of debauchery that many have fallen into before. If this happens and we discover that it was your fault, then it could result in a disciplinary hearing, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within seventy-two hours.

Why are you asking about the hot glue gun? Oh, yes, it is one of our most valuable tools. Very valued. You plug it in and it become warm and you can make decorations with it. It’s very nice. I have no idea in what capacity it could be used in a program, but, much like the projector on the ground, it was said to be really good for programs so we bought it.

Let’s leave the programming room. It can be very overwhelming, can’t it? There’s a Keurig in there, by the way. If you’re ever up late for a program, we made sure you could do so efficiently and without the fire hazard of a coffee pot. Please do not use your own cups in the Keurig. It changes the settings and you are not the only one that uses it. If you change the settings and it breaks, you may have to replace it. If you cannot afford to replace it, then it could result in a disciplinary hearing, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within seventy-two hours.

You’re going to not only give the residents educational programs. We also need you to be friends with your residents. So, once a month you will have one educational program and two weeks later we would like you to also give them a super fun social program. Just for fun. Please, however, make sure it has at least two elements. So if it involves food, you should also involve arts and crafts, like paint. Paint is a really good idea; it goes with every program really. You could have residents play Twister in paint and then eat pizza. Great idea! Really glad you just came up with your first program.

To really drive home that friendship between RAs and their residents, we would like you to eat most of your meals with your residents. By most, we would prefer if it were all. Every
meal. We pay for your food, so if you could just remember that instead of having that look on
your face, it would be much appreciated. Your residents aren’t going to want to eat with you, by
the way, so you’ll have to just force them to sit with you. We usually advise finding a table that
they’re already sitting and just joining. It’s very uncomfortable, but we’d appreciate it if you
pretend that it is not. If you are unable to do so, then it could result in a disciplinary hearing,
which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within seventy-two hours.

We would also like you to keep your door open at least one hour every night. Twice as
long if you’re on duty. We love open door policies. We pay for your housing, so you can
sacrifice your privacy. If you could remember that and close your mouth, that would be great.

As long as you hit these requirements, you’ll be perfectly okay in all of your
programming for the semester. And if you do successfully, you may even become very good
friends with your residents. We do need to warn you however, to not become too close with
them. The RA that had your room before you was fired for being too good of friends with her
residents and not following ResLife policy. We had to, unfortunately, have a disciplinary hearing
with her, and it resulted in her being fired and needing to find housing in seventy-two hours.
Technically, she was fired for drinking underage. But the important thing to know is that she
didn’t respect programming and ResLife, so we released her from her contract.

Now, do you have any questions? No? Any suggestions for a way to improve the
programming here in Residence Life? Yes, yes. I hear that. Okay, that sounds like a great idea,
so I’ll put a pin in it and we can talk again when you have my job. Please respect the ResLife
policies, remember that we do house and feed you. If you forget, then it could result in a
disciplinary hearing, which could result in you getting fired and having to find housing within
seventy-two hours.
Training will continue tomorrow morning with your arts and crafts requirements. It would be wise of you to work on programming until then. Wonderful! Enjoy your time as an RA!