A Guide to the Academic Year

August

Student Staff Issues:
- Establishing relationships with other staff members
- Acquiring skills and knowledge related to the position
- Adjusting to a new supervisory style
- Sharing and setting expectations
- Being honest about other activities and commitments
- Preparing for the fall semester/classes
- Adjusting to “staff life”
- Having high expectations that nothing will go wrong, everyone is a team player, all residents are wonderful, and everything will go smoothly

Resident Issues:
- Adjusting to college life
- Feeling lonely and/or homesick
- Having a lack of social life
- Having a lot of questions, but not quite sure where to get them answered
- Anxiety about new beginnings, policy restrictions, living with a (new) roommate, etc.
- Roommate conflicts
- Managing money
- Experimenting with alcohol and/or drugs
- International students may feel confused about social customs, the language; may also feel like they do not have an advocate in the states

August is:
- National Inventors Month
- Happiness Happens Month
- Cataract Awareness Month
- National “Win with Civility” Month
- Neurosurgery Outreach Month
- National Immunization Awareness Month
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month
- Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month
- Psoriasis Awareness Month
- National Panini Month
September

Student Staff Issues:
- Meeting and getting to know residents
- Adjusting to the position and role as a leader on the floor/wing or in the building/community
- Assessing floor needs
- Balancing non-res life friends with staff friends and responsibilities
- Developing community on the floor
- Learning to manage time and responsibilities
- Experience “withdrawal” of not being with other staffers all of the time once training is over

Resident Issues:
- Students run the risk of feeling disconnected from their peers if they don’t feel “connected” to school and/or other organizations
- A desire to fit in
- Exploration and acknowledgement of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain
- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness increase
- Roommate conflicts
- Continued experimentation with drugs/alcohol
- Wondering how they’ll handle their academic load

September is...
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Month
- National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month
- National Chicken Month
- National Cholesterol Month
- Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 – Oct. 15)
- Sports and home Eye Safety Month
- Skin Care Awareness Month
- College Savings Month
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month
- Update Your Resume Month
- National Organic Harvest Month

October

Student Staff Issues:
- Some staff members will begin to skip class to make up for lost time and sleep
- Staff conflicts may develop
- High volume programming month
• Roommate conflicts increase
• “Cliques” within the staff begin to form
• Goal review and updates
• Dealing with floor discipline and damages
• Starting to feel overwhelmed as tasks and responsibilities multiply

Resident Issues:
• First Time In College (FTIC) students may begin to realize that college is not as idyllic as they believed
• Diversity issues become apparent
• Conflicts between friends
• Falling behind in class work, not getting expected grades, and a fear of meeting with professors one-on-one
• Anticipation and anxiety over midterm exams
• Fear of failing
• Masks begin to come off; the “honeymoon” phase is over with roommates
• Job panic for mid-year graduates

October is...
• Gay and Lesbian History Month
• National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
• Domestic Violence Awareness Month
• National Chili Month
• National Depression Education & Awareness Month
• National Dental Hygiene Month
• National Bake and Decorate Month
• National Crime Prevention Month
• Eat Better, Eat Together Month
• Emotional Wellness Month
• National Go On A Field Trip Month

Student Staff Issues:
• Low energy levels – changes in weather affect mood and activity levels
• Realizations about the RA position and the amount of time and dedication it requires
• Feeling that residents and supervisor do not appreciate them
• Thinking “Why didn’t I just move into an apartment?”
• Marginal staff members stand out
• Difficulty finding time to spend with friends who are not staff members

Resident Issues:
• Roommate problems and group tension
• Academic pressure has mounted because of procrastination, difficulty of work, lack of ability, or burnout
• Problems from increased alcohol consumption
• Increasing thoughts of isolation, loneliness, and hopelessness could spike thoughts of suicide
• Job search stress over finding a winter break job
• Lack of initiative to find new friends or new activities because social groups already seem to be established

November is...
• American Indian Heritage Month
• American Diabetes Month
• Epilepsy Awareness Month
• Military Family Appreciation Month
• National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month
• National AIDS Awareness Month
• National Peanut Butter Lovers Month
• Vegan Month
• National Scholarship Month
• Family Stories Month
• National Inspirational Role Models Month

December

Student Staff Issues:
• Review of community and evaluation of RA performance
• Noise/quiet hours issues develop
• Final exam pressure and high stress levels
• Assessment of semester and planning for training
• Anxiety about closing
• Damage assessment
• Lots of social engagements and holiday celebrations
• Saying goodbye to those staff members and residents not returning next semester and welcoming new ones

Resident Issues:
• Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
• Excitement about returning home for some; dread for others
• Much panic, fear, and cramming as finals approach, papers are due, tempers are high, and the realization for some that they may not return next semester
• Religious conflicts
• Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs
• Pressures increase to participate in sexual activity because of the approach of vacation and extended separation

December is...
• National Tie Month
• Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
• National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month
• Bingo Birthday Month
• Write a Friend Month
• Safe Toys and Gifts Month
• Universal Human Rights Month
• Spiritual Literacy Month
• Rising Star Month
• National Write a Business Plan Month

January

Student Staff Issues:
• Winter Training renews energy and motivation
• Welcoming new staff members
• Refreshed from break and ready for a new semester
• New residents on the floor
• Fall semester grade checks done on staff; some will be placed on probation
• Developing goals for the spring semester
• Focus on study skills and better time management
• Reevaluation of staff dynamics and expectations
• New leaders start to emerge on the staff

Resident Issues:
• Renewed interest in classes
• New leaders begin to emerge within the community
• Feelings of happiness/restlessness from break
• Resolve to do better academically
• New students feel out of place, like they are intruding on established friendships
• Unwanted weight gain
• Possible roommate changes
• Cold (cooler) weather blues
• Not many social activities scheduled
January is...
- Financial Wellness Month
- National Get Organized Month
- Gourmet International Coffee Month
- National Personal Self-Defense Awareness Month
- National Poverty in America Awareness Month
- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- National Volunteer Blood Donor Month
- International Creativity Month
- National Oatmeal Month
- Hot Tea Month
- Learn Spanish Month

February

Student Staff Issues:
- Winter “blahs” set in/cabin fever
- Burnout starts emerging
- Discipline picks up again
- Challenging the system
- The grass is greener on the other side syndrome
- High programming month
- Staff cliques are apparent and hard to combat

Resident Issues:
- Routine month – for many, school starts to feel like home
- Missing family and friends from home as well as friends who did not return to school
- Problems getting into study mode
- Cliques becoming stronger
- Cabin fever and burnout
- Valentine depression if not in a relationship
- Vocational choice/internship search causes anxiety
- Spring break planning begins
- Social calendar is not very active

February is...
- National Black History Month
- National Dental Month
- National Heart Month
- Library Lovers Month
- National Hot Breakfast Month
• Relationship Wellness Month
• Youth Leadership Month
• National Condom Month
• National Time Management Month
• International Boost Self-Esteem Month
• National Cherry Month
• Learn Italian Month
• Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month

March

Student Staff Issues:
• Reassessment of floor community
• Finding ways to motivate other staff members and residents
• Mid-terms
• Showing interest in staff development initiatives
• Pre-Spring Break excitement
• High stress time – a lot of assignments due
• Goal review/update
• Interest in who will be on staff next year
• Preparing for April – high programming month with weather change
• Hiring of new staff members

Resident Issues:
• Hidden conflicts with roommates and friends begin to arise
• Drugs and alcohol use may increase
• Low energy levels and restlessness
• Changing or deciding on a major
• Mid-semester slump and sickness
• Midterm anxiety
• Next year plans: academics, housing, financial aid
• Seniors thinking about graduation – senioritis sets in
• Excitement or depression over Spring Break plans

March is...
• National Women’s History Month
• Music in our schools Month
• National Craft Month
• Youth Art Month
April

Student Staff Issues:
- High density programming month
- Coasting until the end of the semester...the end is near
- Thinking that things were not so bad after all
- Floor discipline issues increase
- Mentally making notes for things they will do differently next year (if returning as a staff member)
- Anxiousness about meeting new staff (if returning)
- Staff starting to come to closure
- Bringing closure to floor community
- Final exams
- Noise issues/quiet hours problems
- Low tolerance levels/short tempers
- Seniors focused on graduation and leaving friendships
- First year staff members anxious about being returners in the fall
- Pressure to close hall
- Dealing with staff group ending

Resident Issues:
- Spring fever (and problems) as students become restless
- Anticipation and anxiety of the end of the year
- Frustrations and confusion develops because of registration
- Papers and exams piling up – loss of motivation; lots of cramming
- Summer job panic
- Feeling like they are no longer accountable for their actions
- Sexual assault incidents increase
- Concerns about moving home or somewhere else for the summer
- Packing, checking out, and saying good-bye
April is...

- National Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Mathematics Education Month
- Zoo & Aquarium Month
- Celebrate Diversity Month
- National Poetry Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Injury Prevention Month
- National Humor Month
- Jazz Appreciation Month
- National Car Care Month
- Emotional Overeating Awareness Month

For a complete listing of holidays and dates, please visit the following website:
http://www.holidayinsights.com/everyday.htm

This information adapted from a publication by PaperClip Communications (2009).