

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

November

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

- Poison Prevention Month
- American Red Cross Month
- National Caffeine Awareness Month
- Umbrella Month
- National Nutrition Month
- International Ideas Month
- Optimism Month
- National Ethics Awareness Month
- National Frozen Foods 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).