Planning a Program in Seven Easy Steps

Step I: Find out what your residents are interested in. At your first community meeting, you should start to get an idea of what your residents are interested in doing or learning about. You will continue to discover more about them throughout the year through conversations, as well as observations about how they spend their time.

Assessing Student Needs
Before you begin to build community through programming you must first assess the needs of the community. There are many facets of the community to explore. This will give you insight on your residents as well as the entire community. Below are things to remember when assessing the needs of your community as well as tricks of the trade to get to know your residents so your programming is a benefit to them.

What Residents Want
In determining what your residents want, you are observing their expressed interests, desires, and ideas. This can be observed in many ways:
Floor Meetings: Getting your entire floor together is one important and effective way to determine what type of activities they want and need. You will want to offer some suggestions and listen closely to their responses. Try to reach a consensus rather than putting it to a vote or letting a few speak for the many. Remember, you will never have a program which interests every floor member. Try to meet the needs of as many as possible and don’t be disappointed if less than you’d hoped for actually attend.
Interest Survey: These are particularly useful for all-hall programs and also early in the year on a floor. At your first community meeting, have your residents fill out an interest survey to get some preliminary information about your residents. Interest surveys give you hard data on the students and what they want and expect from their residence hall environment.
Word of Mouth: LISTEN carefully to members of your floor when they complain to you, get excited or upset about something or talk informally about likes, dreams, and desires. This is the stuff that activities are made of. If you hear common themes from community members then it probably means that they need a program in that area.
Interviews: You may want to take the time to sit down individually or in small groups with your floor members to learn more about them, their personal goals and how you can help them meet these. This gives you personal contact, establishes shared expectations and provides useful information. It can be done spontaneously (“Hey Bif, come on in my room and let’s talk about how you are doing for a minute”), or by setting up specific times. Yes, these take extra time, but they are very valuable, especially on difficult floors.
Suggestion Box: In order to collect ongoing input on student needs, you may wish to have a permanent suggestion box available. This may be particularly for all-hall programs. Be creative with the design and placement of the box. Also, you’ll need to devise some incentives for getting people to contribute their suggestions. Be prepared for some anonymous harassment and what it really says.

Developmental Needs
In determining what students' needs are, we are talking about their own development and the certain developmental tasks they need to master (according to Chickering and Reisser:
developing autonomy, building competence, managing emotions, establishing identity, etc.). An RA/HR/AHR can assess a resident's developmental needs by watching for:

DISCOMFORTS. The level of discomfort that someone experiences in certain situations can be a big clue as to where he/she is developmentally.

BEHAVIOR. Inappropriate behavior related to adhering to rules, for example alcohol abuse, vandalism, or violence may indicate a developmental need.

RELATIONSHIPS. A person's relationships (or lack of relationships) can tell you where a person is with trust, sexuality, managing emotions, autonomy.

LIFE MANAGEMENT. Observing how a student balances grades, time, budgets money, and keeps his/her room can give you clues as well.

Examining Students’ Living Environments
Examine the way a student personalizes his/her room to discover a students' interests, abilities, and skills. Keep in mind the Six Ps of Room Personalization:

1. Posters, pictures, paintings, etc.
2. Paraphernalia collections, interest objects, plants, etc.
3. Printed Matter books, magazines.
4. Pleasures music, computer games, stereo systems, fish, models, etc.
5. Pride Objects awards, trophies, certificates, etc.
6. Packaging arrangement of the room, lofts, and general decor.

Formal Assessment
Formal assessment is more structured than informal assessment and is usually more successful in determining wants, as people are usually more comfortable expressing what they want rather than what they need.
Here are some suggestions for conducting a formal assessment:
1. Use the student interest survey on the following page.
2. Ask questions periodically throughout the year.
3. Talk to residents one on one or create a graffiti wall bulletin board that poses questions to the residents and asks them to write their ideas on the board.
4. When you present programs, have residents complete evaluations of the program. Often this will tell you what they would like to see in the future.

Student Interest Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___Assertiveness Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___Acquaintance Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
__Relationships
__Interracial/Interfaith relationships
__Avoiding Burnout
__Adjusting to College Life
__Communication skills
__Dealing with divorce
__Suicide Intervention
__Interpersonal conflict
__The Alcoholic family
__Parent/Family relationships
__Stress Management
__Long distance relationships
__Other_______________

Spiritual
__Current issues in faith
__**Death** and dying
__Astrology
__World faith perspectives
__Inspirational people
__Peace education
__Values clarification
__CC Religious organizations
__Meditation
__Cult Awareness
__Music/Art Appreciation
__Other_______________

Social
__Games night
__Floor study breaks
__Floor dinners
__Floor/hall exchanges
__Effective listening skills
__Holiday Celebrations
__Exploring Colorado
__Friendship relationships
__Environmental Awareness
__Roommate games
__Blood drive
__Local Community issues
__Volunteer opportunities
__Communication
__Other Physical
__Hiking/Camping
__Ice skating
Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Bicycle repair workshops
Nautilus/weight lifting
Self defense
Tennis
Pro Sports games
Running
Arts and crafts
CPR/First Aid Training
Massage workshops
Aerobics
Intramural Sports teams
Swimming
Ski trips
Rollerblading
Alcohol/Drug Awareness
Bicycling trips
Survival techniques
Health and nutrition
Eating disorders
Canoeing
Birth control
Body Image
Other

Intellectual
Time management
Current issues discussions
Student legal discussions
Test Anxiety
Computers
Faculty interaction in hall
Photography workshop
Public speaking skills
How to use the Library
Study Skills
Test taking tips
Other

Leadership
Assertiveness
Leadership skills
Balancing your life
Running an effective meeting
Conflict Management
Being an Effective Leader
Leadership Retreats Life Planning
Choosing a major
Job search strategies
Peace Corps
Interviewing skills
Finding a summer job
Career services on campus
Graduate school options
Internships/volunteer service
Financial aid information
Income tax preparation
Balancing career/lifestyle
Goal setting
Resume writing
Professional panel
Work study/student jobs
Money management
Other

Human Awareness
Exploring cultures
Study Abroad
International awareness
Foreign films
Local theater productions
Environmental Awareness
Affirmative action
Ethnic restaurant trips
Museum visits
Traveling abroad
Racism/racial awareness
Voter Registration
Multicultural potluck dinner
Exploring prejudices
Cultural dance
Ballet/opera performances
World music
Local GLBT community
Recycling

Sexual
HIV/AIDS Awareness
Relationship Issues
Safe Sex
Sexual Assault
Sexuality Issues
Protecting against STDs
Step II: Initial Planning

Make a short list of the program ideas you got from the assessments you have done. Refer to your [programming calendar](http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/campusactivities/guide.htm) if you need more ideas. Evaluate each idea based on timing, level of interest, and feasibility. Take into consideration how developed your community is and the skills of your residents. Choose the idea that best fits the timing, needs and wants of your community.

Helpful Colorado College websites to consult when planning your program:

The Guide [http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/campusactivities/guide.htm](http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/campusactivities/guide.htm)

Events Calendar [http://www.coloradocollege.edu/news_events/ThisMonth.cfm](http://www.coloradocollege.edu/news_events/ThisMonth.cfm)

Catering [http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/ccdining/html/campuscatering.html](http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/ccdining/html/campuscatering.html)

Community Service [http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/Students/CommunityService/WelcomePage.htm](http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/Students/CommunityService/WelcomePage.htm)

Minority Student Life [http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/Students/MSLO/](http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/Students/MSLO/)

Add your own here:

Involving Residents in Initial Planning

- Use the 1-2-3 Level of Commitment Questions to get an idea of resident buy in and commitment to the program. What is your level of commitment to this program?
  1. I am 100% committed and will help plan the program myself.
  2. I am partially committed and can commit to attend the program.
  3. I am not sure if I can even attend the program.
- Do not simply ask for volunteers. Ask residents, by name, if they will take part of the responsibility. Provide support and follow up with them.
- Make sure residents have a say in choosing the topics of programs and deciding how money will be spent for the program.
- Ask them what publicity ideas they have. Ask if they want to help create publicity.
- Tell them the agenda. Ask what would appeal to them most and include that.

Step III: Rough Outline of Program

Now is the time to make an outline of what you plan to do.
Don’t get into details yet, just brainstorm all the aspects of the program that you can think of on a piece of paper.

Step IV: Motivation Think about why your residents should be interested in helping with or attending the activity. Some ways to do this are to spread your enthusiasm, reward those residents who attend the activity, and most of all involve them in the planning of the event. Their involvement can range from providing the music to flipping the burgers, or helping you advertise the activity.

Getting Residents Motivated and Committed to the Program
• Delegate tasks to willing people (e.g., making phone calls, picking up food, posting flyers).
• Ask them to talk up the program with friends and to bring friends to the program.
• Develop the program so that residents can take part in the facilitation of the event—introducing a speaker, setting up, decorating, etc.
• Take into consideration when the best time of day is to hold the activity. Have you gained any insight into your residents’ schedules?
• Think about the most visible and accessible areas of the floor. Lounges or lobbies generally have the maximum ability to attract residents. Don’t be afraid to experiment with different locations.

List below any residents who you decided to ask for help with the activity.
Resident’s Name Potential Involvement in Planning the Activity

Step V: The Nitty Gritty Use your programming form (found in the Forms section of the manual) to arrange for all details of the program. Think about space, food, money, timing, speakers and resources. Think about what you want residents to get out of the program and what aspects of the education model it addresses. Go through the Diversity Checklist on the following page with all aspects of your program in mind, to assess whether it is inclusive to all members of your community. Be sure to submit the form to your RLC in advance so they have time to review, provide input, and approve the budget!

This is the time to be detail-oriented and to plan ahead. Some easy ways to take short cuts without hurting the quality of your program:
• Team up with a campus office to ease your workload
• Pair up with another RA to increase resources
• Use your community members’ strengths and connections
• Get students to sign over meals to cut costs
Diversity Checklist

One important thing to consider is programming for diverse populations. The following list will help ensure that the programs you plan are inclusive of many different populations. The list may challenge you to use more thought and creativity in your programming efforts, but your programs will be more fulfilling and accessible for you and the students with whom you work.

0 This program does not coincide with specific religious observances that may exclude some members of the community.

0 This program does not reflect stereotypes or harmful assumptions about any ethnic or political group, lifestyle, sexual orientation, or gender.

0 The publicity does not use or depict persons by stereotypes, nor is it exclusive to one group.

0 The cultural traditions for this program have been well-researched and accurately reflect the highlighted cultures. The agenda of the activity does not convey the message that particular groups are included because they “have to be.” Examples include calling an Easter or Christmas Party a Holiday Party while not celebrating all the holidays that occur at that time.

0 The program and its publicity invites all community members to attend, not just those who are members of the topic being presented (i.e. black history programs, women’s issues, Christianity or other religions, gay, lesbian, and people who are bisexual).

0 This program does not promote heterosexism (i.e. semi-formals, dating games, escort dinners, etc.).

0 This program is accessible to community members of all ability levels.

0 Planners of the program are prepared to confront insensitive comments or gestures from participants.

Remembering to be inclusive in your programming efforts sets the tone that ALL people are welcome in your community.

Step VI: Publicity. Get the word out! Sharing information about the activity is important or no one will attend. Creative advertising is also important. See the information below, as well as the creative ideas on pg. 15 and start thinking about how you will let residents and staff know about your program.

Unique, timely, and creative publicizing is almost as important as the content of the program itself; advertising draws people to the event. Residents need to know when and where the program is and what the program is about. They may get used to seeing the ordinary posters, flyers, etc. So RAs need to find an original, creative way to draw people’s attention to their
programs.
Advertising should go up four to six days before the event. If advertising goes up too soon, people will forget about it, but you want people to have enough notice that they will be able to plan to attend.
While visual publicity is important, it needs to be reinforced by word-of-mouth and personal invitations: that is the best way to get residents excited about your programs.

Calendars: If your program is open to the entire campus or community, consider getting it listed on the following calendars once all details of your program are set:
→ The Campus Activities block calendar- contact Keri Shiplet the block before the event.
→ Get on the Worner Desk computer calendar by talking to Lynette DiRaddo.
→ Contact Jane Turnis to get on the on-line CC Calendar.

Chalking: Advertise your program by using a small section of chalkboard in classroom buildings. You could even target your program to specific audiences (Sidewalk chalking is also a possibility- but check into advertising requirements)

Door Hangers: Cut out a doorknob hanger with the program's information. Ask RAs to hang them on room doors while walking through the building. Make them interesting and even useful! Perhaps add a "Do Not Disturb!" message to the other side.

Shaped Signs: Create signs in the shape of a key component of your program. For example, a "Learn to Do Laundry" program might have signs shaped like shirts, pants, etc. A food drive might look like cans or boxes. Habitat for Humanity might be shaped like houses or tools.

Table tents: Give people something to read while they are eating by advertising your program on each table.

Technology: Technology is rapidly changing and you and your peers are usually the ones on the cutting edge. Take advantage (responsibly!) of the latest method of communication and spread the word about your program.
→ Send an Evite
→ Post information about the program on your Facebook page
→ Create an online calendar of programs; talk to other staff in your building about creating a programming calendar for the whole building that residents can access online

Creative Ways to Promote Your Program

- post on listservs, Facebook
- personal invitations
- signs hung at angles
- table tents
- word of mouth
- chalk on sidewalk
- balloons
- buttons
- free munchies
- colorful signs
- catchy phrases
- peak their curiosity
- show excitement
- have a small door prize
- talk up a program
- post a picture on a mirror
- signs in bathroom stalls
- notes on toilet paper
- write the sign backwards
- notice on mailboxes
- string notices across the hall
- post signs upside down
- make a mobile
- make a huge wall puzzle
- make a human billboard
- posters
- large banners on newsprint
- t-shirts
- door knob hangers
- decorate a window
- put footprints down the hall
- put a flyer over the key hole
- have each floor member bring a guest
- provide discount coupons that help facilitate wellness
- invite guests from other wings or floors
- offer something physical or beneficial to "get out of it"
- put up a different kind of poster each day
- tell them they are getting something for nothing
- get them involved in the planning of the program
- put up nice posters so they don't get torn down
- place pointing hands down the hall towards the printed hats, pencils, cups, Frisbees, etc.
- lead ins (i.e., "It's coming" signs weeks before for suspense)
- posters or flyers in each bathroom
- use colorful newsletters to advertise
- give the program a catchy title
- use a couple of quotes from the program to make them wonder what it's about, and they have to attend to find out more
- make arrows out of the flyers to direct students to the program
- hang up riddles or questions that can only be answered if the person comes to the program

BE CREATIVE!!!! LET YOUR IMAGINATION GO WILD!!!!
- do it in French, calligraphy or symbols
- cut posters and flyers in different shapes
- use boxes, boarders and highlighting
- be colorful
- use illustrations
- get ideas from magazines and newspapers
ALWAYS REMEMBER TO INCLUDE THE FOUR W'S
- What-name of program and description
- When-day, date, time
- Where-specific place
- Who-name of sponsoring group(s) and who is involved

***The more creative the better! Don't be afraid to try different things! If at least one person attends your program and gets something out of it--you were successful! Remember, not everyone gets excited about the same types of programs. GOOD LUCK!

Step VII: Evaluation
This is an important step that is often overlooked. After the program, don’t forget to complete the evaluation on the bottom of the programming form and resubmit the form to your RLC to discuss how things went.

Community Development

Some Characteristics of Positive and Healthy Communities
Residents respect one another
Residents do not abuse alcohol or drugs
Residents talk out their differences
People are valued
People talk to one another
Programs and activities are successful
Students care about what happens to one another
People trust one another
Residents can study peacefully in their rooms
Residents hold each other accountable for violation of group norms
Residents make successful academic progress

Some Characteristics of Unhealthy communities
Excessive alcohol use
Drug use
Facilities damage and vandalism
Intolerable noise levels
Separated racial groups
Residents don’t know each other
Residents can’t study in their residence hall
Residents don’t participate in programming efforts
Residents are afraid of or uncomfortable with each other

What does your ideal community look like?
You are logged in as Paul York (L)