Don’t Get Stuck in a Programming Rut

We can get stuck in all kinds of ruts. Maybe we’ve had the same hair cut for years or we do the same thing every Friday night but getting stuck in a programming rut can cause problems for both you and your residents. The programming rut makes thinking of new and original programs tough. It takes what should be an enjoyable process and turns it into torture. All you want to do are the same old things: the game night, the movie night, maybe taking some of your residents out to play football. All fun but they have all been done before.

How do you fix it? Look for trends on your floor. Be observant and figure out what your residents enjoy doing. If that doesn’t work, ask! People like to talk about themselves and they would love to tell you what they are interested in. Don’t fit your residents to your programs; fit your programs to your residents.

There are tons of new and interesting programs on this campus that most of us don’t even realize. The faculty and staff of this university have all kinds of interesting things to talk about. Think about classes you are taking now or have taken in the past. Did any of the teachers strike you as being particularly competent? Did they have an interesting background or teach a subject you think your residents might also find interesting? Bring them into the halls! Look at the other activities that you are involved in. Is there anything that might interest your residents?

Remember, to get your residents interested, you have to be interested. To get your residents excited, you have to be excited!

-By Katie Ardner

Program of the Month

Programming is one of the most important parts of being an RA. Hall Government is one of the most important components in a residence hall. Hall Government and RA staffs have to work together to meet the needs of their residence hall and its residents. This is why Gallucci’s Hall Government program received this month’s Program of the Month Award.

Gallucci had an excellent turn-out for Hall Government Elections. Gallucci RAs rallied the residents to go down to the service desk to vote. 155 ballots were collected and Gallucci residents elected a full executive board to hall government. Sure to be a milestone in residence life and housing.

Inside this issue:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Get Stuck in a Programming Rut</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program of the Month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ten Deadly Myths of Programming</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA Resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap of First 6 Weeks of Programming</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoming Events &amp; Monthly/Weekly Themes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Government 2003-2004 Officers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why We Need Staff Development</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quote Of The Month

"A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better."

-Jim Rohn
The Ten Deadly Myths of Programming

1. The size of the audience is EVERYTHING. If there are not 40 people, then I have failed. (Numbers should never be an evaluation of success. The size of the audience is more important to your ego than to the benefit of the person present and the program.)

2. All programs cost a good deal of money to succeed or Spending=Success. (The amount of funds has nothing to do with the potential of the event. Speakers are almost always free and publicity supplies are provided by the department.)

3. If you succeed with one kind of program then you should use it exclusively. (There really is such a thing as too much of a good thing. People are not going to go to the same kind of program every time. You have a diverse floor that will need diverse programs.)

4. Programming is easy and does not require much work. (Looks can be deceiving. Programs that don't have a lot of work put into them will inevitably look that way. The message is that you don't care about your programs - and then people will respond to you that way. It is the program that is well thought out, organized, and publicized that looks quality.)

5. Doing everything yourself is the best way to program. (No one says that you have to do this all by yourself. You can involve fellow staff members or even better your own floor members. That way you receive the benefits of awarded creativity, less individual work, alternative ideas, and helping others take leadership!!)

6. Planning ahead is dumb because things will change before then and besides, my residents won't plan ahead to be there. (Of course things will change, but you have to account for that. A well planned program can withstand those last minute changes - especially if you account for possible problems with you plan.)

7. There's nothing to do on this campus. (There is always something to do on a college campus. Take your residents to something they would not normally think to do like a student organization meeting or even something a bit out there like bowling becomes a great time when a group goes. Remember a strong community creates much of its own growth.)

8. If the program is good the publicity isn't important or Word-of-Mouth is the best way to publicize. (Publicity is vital to people responding to your program. If nobody knows the facts then nobody goes. Many great programs have died in their tracks because of poor attention to publicity.)

9. It's not my fault that they don't want to do anything. (OK, so maybe it's not exactly your fault, but you have to work pretty hard to totally un-motivate a whole floor of residents. If you can get relationships established with your floor members and them with each other they naturally will do all kinds of activities together - are you starting to see a theme here.)

10. Pizza Equals Community. (It is simply not true. Think about what exactly does equal community in your eyes. If the relationships on your floor are strong then they will show up without food.)

Adapted from: RASource
- http://www.wiu.edu/users/mirac/main_page.htm

“Pizza Equals Community...is simply not true.”

RA Resources

These websites are very informative and useful tools for programming ideas, staff development, icebreakers, community builders and much more. Take the time to visit these websites and take advantage of what they have to offer. Your Program Source (YPS) is the site created by and for RA’s at The University of Akron.

Your Program Source
- http://www.uakron.edu/yps/

Reslife . Net
- http://www.reslife.net

Resident Assistant . Com
- http://www.residentassistant.com

RASource
- http://www.wiu.edu/users/mirac/main_page.htm
Recap of First 6 Weeks of Programming

The first 6 weeks of school have been packed with some awesome programs from all staffs. We have gotten off to a great start at building our communities thanks to all of you. Here are some of what each staff has been up to that we thought was worth giving special mention to:

**Low-Rises:** Low-Rise Volleyball. All staff has participated so far which include, Rachel Sopko, Dani Pierce, Laura Bishop, Amanda Patterson, Larissa Kapitancic, Jolean Daily, Jim Faucett, and Lisa Brown and Shaun Harkness. It has been a great way for residents to get in some activity and a great community Builder.

**Gallucci:** Gallucci had an excellent turn-out for Hall Government Elections. Gallucci RAs rallied the residents to go down to the service desk to vote. 155 ballots were collected and Gallucci residents elected a full executive board to hall government.

**East Quad:** Brown Street did a Madden Football Tournament. Kassim Ahmed, RA Brown 3, rented the screen and projector to have a Madden Football tournament in the Brown St. Lounge. A total of 25 guys participated in the program, several from other floors in the building, not just Kasim's! Everybody seemed to have a good time and the program lasted for about three hours!! This was a great social so that guys in the building could get to know one another.

**Spanton:** Spanton’s program involved residents from the 6th and 7th floor teaching each other how to do laundry. They learned how to sort, detergent amount, how much is too much clothes in the washer, what to dry and what not to dry, etc. Then they went to the laundry room to teach/learn how to use the machines. This program allowed residents to help each other and hopefully prevent them from wearing pink shirts that used to be white.

**Grant/Garson/Townhouses:** Grant/Garson/Townhouse staff had a great turnout for their program, “Sex Tac Toe”. The program was done in the penthouse and there were almost 80-90 residents there. Initially floors competed against each other to answer serious questions about STD’s and their history. Each time a team answered a question correctly they were able to place their mark where they wanted in order to get “tic tac toe”. Residents responded really well to the program. Two teams competed at a time. The program was so successful that at the end the teams were the boys vs. the girls.

**Programming Advice**

**Things to remember when planning:**
Don't do all the work! - Utilize the resources that you already have available! Check to see what your residence hall or housing department has available and use it!

**Bring in the experts!**
You DON'T know everything, (sorry) so bring in someone who does. Ask a community business-person to come in and speak about what employers are looking for, or have an employee at the health center help with your nutrition program.

Again, you don't need to do all the work!

**Remember to be inclusive.**
This includes financial considerations, gender, ability and more. If you don't challenge yourself in the area of diversity, you surely won't challenge your residents!

**Adapted From:**
- ResidentAssistant.com

Upcoming Events & Weekly/Monthly Themes (For the month of October, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upcoming Events</th>
<th>Weekly/Monthly Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 10th</strong>-Homecoming Dance</td>
<td><strong>Week 5th-11th:</strong> Get Organized Week, Mystery Series Week, National Newspaper Week, Squirrel Appreciation Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 11th</strong>-Homecoming Game vs. Cal Poly</td>
<td><strong>Week 12th-18th:</strong> National Adult Immunization Awareness Week, National School Lunch Week, National Food Bank Week, National Pet Peeve Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 13th</strong>-Sex Week Begins</td>
<td><strong>Week 19th-25th:</strong> National Character Counts Week, National Chemistry Week, National Health Education Week, National Rando...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 24th</strong>-Alcohol Awareness Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 23rd</strong>-Singer Ron Irizary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 30th</strong>-Psychic Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Check the YPS Calendar at www3.uakron.edu/yps for more events).*
Here are the Hall Government Officers, listed by building/area.

**Brown Street:** President - Karl Betz, Vice President - Luke Anderson, Treasurer - Carlo De Guzman, Secretary - Josh Gray, and RHC Rep - Heath Luikart.

**Bulger Hall:** President - Scott Nicholson, Vice President - Brian Nicholson, Treasurer - Chase Colantuoni, RHC Rep - Dan Loesch

**Gallucci:** President - Joe Tucker, Vice President - Pat Dobrowolski, Secretary - Jon Knapp, Treasurer - Tom McFarland, and Historian - Katie Dudek, RHC Reps: Stefanie Gabel, Nathan Klettlinger, Megan Matosky, and Brittany Shields.

**Grant/Garson/Townhouses:** President - Barry Barbe, Vice President - Ashley Lawrence, RHC Rep - Jessica Rennicker

**Low-Rises:** President - Megan Gatts, VP (Orr) - Christina Ochuat, VP (Sisler) - Katie Brooks, Treasurer - Whitney Thompson, Secretary - Dana Cameron, RHC Rep - LaTasha Smith, Awards and Recognition/OTM Writer/2nd RHC Rep - Marsharee Siner, Historian/Web Page Chair - Christina Bade, Publicity Chair - Kara Freeman

**Spanton:** Hall Government Officers are still being confirmed.

**UA Apartments:** President - Ron Krosky, Vice President - John Miner, Secretary - Kelly Jenkins.

---

**Why We Need Staff Development!**

Before the semester started we were faced with intense staff training. Some of us were new RAs and had to get to know the returning staff. And the returning RAs had to re-adjust to get to know the new RAs.

As the semester began, up through the first of our staff meetings, we all slowly realized how many different personalities and ideas we would eventually have to adjust to. From the person on staff that has a lot to say, to the person who doesn’t say enough, we realized how diverse our staffs really are. Hence, we realized that after the intense staff training, we needed to undergo some intense staff development.

What is staff development? If you are a new RA, don’t worry, there are returning staff members who have yet to fully grasp and come to appreciate the term. Staff development is learning how to peacefully coexist, understand, appreciate and respect your staff so that you maximize each other’s potential and help to strengthen each other’s weaknesses. Staff development is vital to producing a successful staff. Positive staff development, or lack there of, can help to make or break your staff. Current returning staff members can attest to that.

So now that you know a little about staff development, its time for you and your staff to start up your engines and get going. One misconception about staff development is that it has to be dry, boring and all about learning. Although the learning and growing together part is vital, staff development can also be FUN. Playing games together, games that challenge you to obtain a goal with your team is a good staff development tool. Doing icebreakers and team builders here and there are great tools as well. These are considered to be “gradual staff development” tools. Although these “gradual” tools are great, it is usually the planned out, daylong events that leave the greatest impact on a staff.

So think of ways to make your staff stronger because staff development can directly affect your personal development as an RA and in most cases, as a person.

-By: Abbas Hill

---

**Submit an article, general information, or simply some friendly (RA) Advice.**

**Editors:** Katie Ardner, Laura Bishop, Abbas Hill

**Committee Chair:** Maria McBride

**The YPS Website:** www3.uakron.edu/yps

---