

RLPA HALLWAYS

October 2007, Volume II



Welcome to the second volume of HallWays, the RLPA's newsletter!

As the leaves change colour and fall from the trees, traditionally students move in to residence for the first time as new students or return as upper class students. Now that the school year is underway, it's time to hear from the membership about what is going on with their campuses.

University of Saskatchewan

The U of S has seen a number of changes in the last year. John Olson the Director of Consumer Services retired after 30+ years of service with the U of S and was replaced with Greg Fowler. Neil Nickel the former Residence Manager of 30+ years retired and Sylvia Cholodnuik took over the position. Mark Charmbury, the former RLC became the Assistant Manager, Student Life; and Gord Snell holds the position of Assistant Manager Facilities. Cindy Cantelon, our former RLC was accepted into the College of Education at the U of R. And we are pleased to announce that Eric Matheson and Keane Gruending have joined our student leadership team as Residence Life Coordinators.

We are in the final stages of implementing Star Rez. This year was the first year we accepted applications for two of our facilities on line. It was a good learning experience. We also went live with online payments and electronic lease signing both of which speeded up registration multi-fold. All that said it's been an exciting year. We look forward to reconnecting with all of you at the next RLPA meeting ☺

U of S

Red Deer College

Everyone here at RDC Res is excited to be back in the thick of it as we start another academic school year. As of Sept. 24th all of our beds are full and the RA's are cruising along with programming. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest employee Kailey Bastura, our new office Administrative Assistant.

The final details of our Tower 3 & 5 renovations wrapped up just before students arrived (phew) and students staying in those Towers seem to be enjoying the new digs. The college is also currently progressing through the first phase of an ambitious expansion project called BCTL (Building

communities through learning). Building communities through learning is an exciting growth initiative, launching major expansions in facilities, learning programs, services to students, and increasing bursaries, scholarships and awards for learners. Currently phase 1 is scheduled to be completed August of 2008.

On a side note, Glenice is gallivanting around New York from Sept. 19-28 (nice timing) and Tim is trying to catch up on his sleep as he and his wife welcomed a new addition to their family on August 22nd.

We hope to see everyone in Olds in November. Have a great first semester!

NWACUHO

Hi there folks. Tim here, your NWACUHO Alberta Representative with a some news on what's shaking for the upcoming conference. There has been a slight change in plan, and location for the 2008 NWACUHO Conference. Originally we were supposed to be headed to Ashland, Oregon and enjoying "Student Learning, Taking Center Stage", but after some changes we are now heading to a new location with a new theme. So again, please mark your calendars for "Bridging Communities, Defining our Future" in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area February 24-26, 2008. The hotel this year is the Red Lion at the Quay in Vancouver. For more information, the official 2008 NWACUHO Conference website is up and running. Check it out at www.nw-acuho.org/conferences/2008/



If you have any other questions feel free to pass them my way. I am headed to the Portland-Vancouver area in mid-October for the next

NWACUHO Conference Planning meeting. Will bring everyone back information for the Olds FBM in November.

See ya soon...

University of Lethbridge

As you were aware Marge Nordin has retired and now enjoying a leisurely life of relaxation with family and friends. Joining our enthusiastic team is Terri Thomas, our new Associate Manager of Hospitality Services.

On behalf of the RLPA, I would like to welcome Terri to our organization!

SAIT

I have just recently taken over the Residence Life position, and want to be a part of it all! The Residence Life Staff at SAIT are now:
Heather Read - General Manager
(403) 284-8013 ext 4782
hread@studenthousing.com

Carmen Hintz - Assistant General Manager
(403) 284-8013 ext 4783
chintz@studenthousing.com

Still anxiously awaiting the completion of our new Residence! We're definitely looking forward to the extra rooms, and the students are looking forward to being the first ones to sleep in a new bed! We've been watching it go up before our eyes, it will definitely be great once completed. Other than that, SAIT Polytechnic has some "big" ideas for changes to the Campus, it looks like we're going to have a lot of things going on for quite a bit!

University of Alberta

On February 16th, 2008, 9 students living in residence at the University of Alberta will embark on a once in a lifetime opportunity intended to develop exceptional global citizens and promote the qualities of a civil society by reaching out to the global community. This service learning pilot project is aimed at increasing global perspective and supports the university's "Dare to Deliver" vision of becoming a university that is great for the world! Service Learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to

community problems, and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves.¹ In partnership with Habitat for Humanity we have planned an 8 day trip to travel to Thibodaux Louisiana over the February 2008 Reading Week break to rebuild and renovate homes affected by Hurricane Katrina. Thibodaux is a small community about one hour out of New Orleans that was harshly devastated by the hurricane that hit in 2005. The students will be living in the community that they are helping to rebuild and will take part in reflection exercises aimed at increasing self awareness, cultural diversity and sensitivity.

Sources: ¹ Elyer & Giles, 1999

Augustana Campus, University of Alberta

This August the RA staff dreamt, dared and delivered as they participated in another successful training! A very special thanks to keynote speaker Lorne Williams who came in and reminded us all just how important the student staff working in residence life really is, and that you never know what kind of impact you will have on residents.



Also at Augustana, Rob Ford revamped our programming model to make it more collaborative for our students groups, and as well to increase student attendance at residence

programs. The new Discover Program is off to a good, if a little slow, start and we look forward to promoting more of it in the upcoming year.

Augustana is a place of construction, with the new land crossing finally being completed, and progress of a new library coming along smoothly. It was a big deal the day they poured concrete on our campus! Marken, our Ravine residence building taken off line for renovations is almost complete, and we welcome the opportunity to have students return there!

We are also excited about hosting the 25th anniversary of the Alberta Services for Students Conference in May, the 12th-15th. The theme for this year's conference is Foundations and Formations, and we are very excited to welcome our keynote speakers: Dr. Will Keim and Dr. Peggy Patterson! Keep these dates open and plan a trip to Camrose!

University of Calgary

Greetings from The University of Calgary. Operationally, we are experiencing a busy fall after welcoming a full house on labour day. Our key projects and issues of interest include the following:

- 1) Construction is underway on our new residence project with the arrival of our crane earlier this month and preparations for the foundations and basement are nearing completion. This six story, \$26.1 million building will be the University's first fully functional hotel (74 rooms) and executive accommodation (11 private apartments for faculty, staff, and visitors) in addition to providing two floors of beds for 78 graduate students. The building will house a new café and convenience store and a new central check-in desk for all single student housing opera-

tions. The administration wing will primarily house our business operations and hotel and conference services staff. The project designed by Toronto architects Baird Sampson Neuert in partnership with Riddell Kurczaba remains on track for LEED platinum certification. We will bring pictures and additional details to the fall business meeting. As this project continues, we intend to launch into the construction of our next residence facility over the next several months.

- 2) In response to the need to develop a master plan for our residence facilities, a renewal and development project was created to assess our overall building conditions. Residence Services appointed engineering firm Morrison Hershfield Limited (consulting services) in partnership with Toker and Associates (architects) to facilitate and report on all aspects of our building conditions including envelope, mechanical, electrical, structural, interiors, furniture, fixtures, and equipment. This report will align with Alberta Infrastructure's model for determining deferred maintenance and assigning a facilities condition index (FCI). Following the delivery of the report to the University, Residence Services will determine and implement a multi-year strategy for renewal that will finally see much needed investment in our aging facilities.
- 3) Our waitlist reached a record 750 students this summer. Our final occupancy numbers will essentially land at or near 99%. This is driving our interest in the further expansion of our bed capacity as soon as possible.

- 4) I have recently completed a significant reorganization. You will read in Randy's report, information on a number of new positions and staff in his area. This same theme is true for other units within the Residences and The Student Experience department in preparation for expansion and shifting priorities including preparations to respond to the facilities audit, new construction, and an aggressive expansion of our conference business.

Take care everyone. I look forward to seeing you all at the fall business meeting.
Joel Lynn
Director, Residences & The Student Experience
University of Calgary

A Residence Life update from the U of C

As many of you already know, in April I (Randy Maus) left the University of Alberta. After five years of working with that incredible team, I was given the opportunity to come to the University of Calgary as the Associate Director, Housing Services and Residence Life. In this position, I am responsible for all aspects of the student housing operation including, professional staff development, assessment, housing marketing strategies, application management, vision and long term planning as well as budget management. One of my first roles was to hire new staff who would add their contributions to the solid staff already working here. Starting this summer, we cast an almost entirely new crew for our system. Even our solid veterans are relatively new to the team. As a result, I'd like to introduce you to the new Residence Life Team at the University of Calgary.

Camille de Lacy
cjdelacy@ucalgary.ca
Camille is a graduate of Wilfred Laurier University. During her time there, she was heavily involved in residence life, especially her last three years. Her contributions were such that after she graduated, McMaster University noted her skills and hired her into a specialist position. As a Program Assistant, Camille provided various resources to staff for active and passive programs while serving as a member of the management team. In addition, she was heavily involved in the service learning program. She brings all of this experience to the UofC where she is working as the Residence Life Coordinator of Rundle Hall as well as heading up our own service learning initiatives that we like to call Community Impact.

Brianna McElroy
bmcelroy@ucalgary.ca
Brianna graduated from Guelph University. During her tenure there, she was involved in both the student government side of residence as well as the residence life staff side of things. Some of her many passions are diversity, service and multicultural awareness. In fact, immediately after graduating she went on a three week trip to Ecuador where she participated in a Minga that helped build a school. Minga roughly translated means "a coming together of all for the betterment of the community." She brings her strong residence life and diversity background to the Residence Life Coordinator position. In this role, she is responsible for Kananaskis Hall and advising our Diversity in Action committee.

Jason Kaminski
j.kaminski@ucalgary.ca
Jason is a graduate of Nipissing University. His first degree just wasn't enough, so he completed his education degree there as well. Jason has experienced a couple different aspects of residence. He started out in conference services and then shifted to residence life. He applies his skills, ex-

perience and talents to our GONBC (Glacier, Olympus, Norquay, Brewster, and Castle) apartments. In addition, he advises our Residence Academic Mentoring Program (RAMP). Always keen to learn, he has already taught his team much this year.

Rounding out our Residence Life Coordinators are two of our stellar returning staff members. Jeff Kerswill (j.kerswill@ucalgary.ca) continues to work in our other apartments complex, Cascade Hall. Starting his second year with the UofC, Jeff has developed our staff website, helped to transition the rest of our staff and has started classes towards earning a General Management Certificate. Likewise a continued value asset to our program is Sean Ryan (sryan@ucalgary.ca). Sean runs our family housing operation and has done a great job with promoting community and family living, transitioning our staff and moulding our residence life program to fit our family student needs.

Also returning to take care of our assignments, website, student portal and front desk operation is TJ Fedyk (tjfedyk@ucalgary.ca). TJ has also celebrated one year with the UofC and has revamped the look of our residence handbook as well as created some wonderful brand new promotional materials. Thanks to his hard work, our residence halls are full and we had a successful summer student operation. You may recognize some of these folks if you were able to attend the NWACUHO conference last February. Jeff, Sean and TJ were all part of the core conference planning team.

Mark Keller mbkeller@ucalgary.ca
To lead this team, we were fortunate enough to bring in Mark Keller from the Western Oregon University. Mark actually hails from Alberta and graduated from the University of Alberta. After completing his undergraduate degree he went on to complete his Masters in Higher Education

from the University of Arizona. After that, he started working at WOU. He was given progressive responsibility during his tenure there, and we are thankful to bring such a seasoned leader to the UofC to lead this new crew. As the Manager, Residence Life he is directly responsible for all aspects of the Residence Life Program including paraprofessional training, orientation, discipline, supervision and professional development of the Residence Life Coordinators, on call and crisis management procedures as well as guiding the programming model and providing support on all day-to-day operations of the residence.

We are fortunate to have such great people on staff, and I strongly encourage you to connect with them. They are all wonderful resources and we are very glad that they have joined our team at the UofC and our region in the RLPA. Please don't hesitate to contact them to share ideas and resources. They are a keen group of professionals and look forward to what they can learn from and share with you.

RLPA Fall Business Meeting

We're going back to Olds! This year's Fall Business Meeting will be held at Olds College November 22nd and 23rd. My most sincere apologies to everyone to whom I gave the wrong date! It has been confirmed that the meeting is the 22nd and 23rd of November, and I promise not to broadcast the wrong date again.



RLPA Executive Board

Got questions? Concerns? Items for the Fall Business Meeting agenda? Please feel free to contact any of the Executive Board members at the following email addresses and we'll be happy to respond:

President: Janet Athanasiou, ja9@augustana.ca
Past President: Randy Fines randy.fines@lakelandc.ab.ca
President Elect: Mark Chytracek mc8@augustana.ca
Treasurer: Glenice Grover glenice.grover@rdc.ab.ca
Secretary: Rob Routledge robert.routledge@ualberta.ca
Conference Chair: Tracey Mason-Innes tracey.mason@ucfv.ca

Succession planning

Thinking about getting involved with the RLPA, but unsure how? The executive board is always looking for enthusiastic, energetic people committed to residence life who are looking to get involved. At our Fall Business Meeting at Olds we'll elect a new conference chair-elect (for more information, contact Tracey Mason-Innes at the email address listed above). At our Annual General Meeting, March 14th in Camrose, we'll elect a Treasurer and President Elect. If you would like more information on either of these positions, please contact a member of the executive board.

RLPA Bags

If you were at the meeting in Lethbridge, or missed it but heard about the great RLPA, 20 Years Strong bags that were given out to certificate recipients, and want to get one, you can still purchase them! The black tote bags can be purchased from Randy Fines at the cost of \$10 per bag.

Recognize a Co-Worker or a Special Student Leader

Work with a great coworker or coworkers? Have some student leaders that constantly and consistently impress you with their dedication and enthusiasm? It's never too early to start thinking about those in our field who are great at what they do. Each spring at the Annual General Meeting the Josie Lamothe Award for Outstanding Service is awarded to a residence life professional who is constantly going above and beyond their required duties to make residence life a good one at their institution. Look for the call for nominations in the new year.

This spring, the RLPA will also hand out its first ever New Professional Award to someone who has worked in the field for 5 years or less. With all the turnover that has been happening at our institutions take a couple of minutes to recognize those up and comers who have really started to make a difference in residence life

Also this spring, the RLPA will honour its student leaders who help us all do the jobs we do. The RLPA Leadership Society is a way to enhance the feeling of appreciation we have for those outstanding students who really make a contribution to their residence community. Each member institution is allowed to nominate ten percent of its student leaders involved in their community. Recognize those outstanding students leaders soon!



The Benefits of Blackboard in Residence Life

Over the past year the professional staff at the University of Calgary recognized that our paraprofessional staff members were limited in many ways by the amount of time they spent looking up information for passive or active programs, completing forty question program evaluations online, accessing a non-user friendly program database, and constantly playing email or phone tag with their fellow Community Advisors. Over the summer I strove to find a way to make the everyday aspects of our residence life program easier and more user friendly by providing both professional and paraprofessional staff the opportunity to utilize an online tool that not only acts as a means of communication but also as a tool for providing an online resource library and centralizing key aspects of the Community Advisors roles, including logs, training and incident reporting.

Blackboard and WebCT are institutional internet-based education platforms that are widely used within RLPA member institutions. The University of Calgary utilizes Blackboard to support its academic needs and has just recently extended the program to include many student services departments. This summer I developed a Blackboard “course” to encompass the many different aspects of our paraprofessionals’ activities in our program as a whole. Choosing to use Blackboard as the platform instead of purchasing software gave us the confidence that our paraprofessional staff would have easy access and a firm understanding of the different tools we would use within our Blackboard resource. We were also looking to find a way to make it as easy as possible for our paraprofessional staff to access this resource without needing to constantly remind them of the web address or how to locate the software.

There are many features that can be tooled to match the needs of your residence program through the current framework provided by a platform such as Blackboard. Although only a month old we have incorporated the following aspects of our program into Blackboard: the ability to post online announcements, providing easily accessible links to online resources, a resource library of prepared passive programs that staff can view and access, a program database in the discussion board where we have divided the staff by building teams where they now complete a program evaluation which is easy to read and fully accessible for their teammates to gain useful knowledge about what has worked nor not worked in their communities, professional development and training materials, an open forum for each building team and the team as a whole to discuss programming and other issues, and finally we were able to pull all of our outside links to our online discipline tool, maintenance reporting, and weekly logs into one easily accessible location for our staff. When looking to develop an online course with Blackboard you as the administrator have the ability to enroll and monitor the users so that you know who has access to your resource. The last essential tool I will discuss is the performance database, a tool only accessible to the “course instructors” or in our case the Residence Life Coordinator team, this tool allows you to monitor who on your team has accessed the different tools provided. This is a means of understanding how your resource is being utilized and also a means of evaluation and feedback to your paraprofessional staff.

This project began as a trial not knowing how our paraprofessional staff would adjust to using an online tool such as Blackboard. Over the past few weeks we have seen wonderful results especially in the program evaluation discussion board as staff are not only able to easily post their evaluation but also able to read and continuously learn from each other’s experiences. We have also heard many positive comments on how much this has improved their experiences as Community Advisors as we have placed all the information and resources they use into an easily accessible format and tool. Blackboard also provides you the opportunity to easily modify your online resource to continuously meet the needs of your program.

I would encourage you to contact me Jeffrey Kerswill (403-220-3411 or j.kerswill@ucalgary.ca) if you have any questions or would like to hear more about our use of Blackboard at the University of Calgary.

Jeffrey Kerswill
Residence Life Coordinator
University of Calgary

A Note from the Editor

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through the month of October. The leaves are changing colour and falling from the trees, Thanksgiving, hopefully, brought lots of turkey to all of you, as well as time with family and friends, and in only a few days, many of our student leaders will be heading back to Nordegg, Alberta for the L.E.A.D conference held at the Goldeye Centre.



For more reasons that it brings students back to my campus (though that is a big one!) Autumn is my favourite time of year. I love watching the leaves change, the crisp smells of fall, and the brisk air and bright sunshine. Beyond that, I love the start of the school year that brings new students to campus, full of hope and trepidation, and the returning ones who are back after a summer away. I love the excitement and energy that the students bring with them as they move into the different residences on campus, and wondering what the upcoming year will bring. Now that we've reached the mid-point in the semester I enjoy watching my residents interact with each other, figure out their roles in groups, and yes, even seeing what kind of mischief they'll get into!

I hope that everyone's semester got off to a good start, that the snow hasn't started falling yet, and that you can make it to the Fall Business Meeting November 22nd & 23rd!

janet athanasiou
HallWays Editor