University Housing – University of South Carolina Lesson Plan

Strategy 3: Learning Community Initiatives–Community Orientation into First Floor Gathering

Facilitator(s): Resident Mentors

Date (When Lesson Takes Place): August- Within the first few days of move-in

Target Audience(s): Floor communities

Community Involved: All

Rationale/Purpose:
Community orientations serve as an opportunity to educate our residents on the facilities available to them, welcome them to our communities, facilitate discussion on University policies, and give an introduction to the opportunities and events that will be provided in hall and on campus. First floor gatherings are the first opportunity for the whole floor to come together as one. This is a time for the Resident Mentor to lead team community activities, to help acclimate the students with one another, and get the community off to the right start. It is also a chance for Resident Mentors to cover specific policies that pertain to the residents on the hall.

University Housing Learning Outcomes:

Academic Progress Goal 1–
- Tier 1- Identify and locate campus support resources to enhance their academic performance

Academic Progress Goal 5–
- Tier 1- Identify the role of faculty and staff in beyond the classroom experiences

Awareness of Self Goal 1 –
- Tier 1- Identify campus resources and their functions

Awareness of Self Goal 4 –
- Tier 1- Identify personal goals and potential leadership experiences

Awareness of Self Goal 5 –
- Tier 1- Identify professional goals and potential leadership experiences

Awareness of Others Goal 3–
- Tier 1- Identify policies and procedures of the residence hall community

Materials/Preparation:
- Set times/dates/locations/tour leaders prior to community orientation and first hall gathering
  - Consider setting different times for different floors based on size of residential population
  - Invite all CET Members to attend to introduce themselves and begin their relationship with your community
- Prior to hosting community orientation and floor gathering, send provided email on the University’s policies and procedures (make necessary changes for your area).

Dear [Your Community],
We want to officially welcome you to the University of South Carolina! Hopefully you are all moved in and ready to explore the wonderful opportunities provided during welcome week. [Insert welcome week activities that your area is supporting]

Our community orientation is [Insert date, time, and location]. The gathering is mandatory as it will be beneficial to your success as a Carolinian and member of [insert community name] Community. Below is the link to University Housing’s Policies and Regulations. If you have any questions about a specific policy, bring questions to this gathering or come see me separately. These policies are important and you will be held accountable for the specifics listed. http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf403.pdf
Welcome home and GO COCKS!!!
Sincerely,
[Insert Name]

- Have any marketing for welcome week available for students to pick up during the orientation.

Outline for Strategy:
Community Orientation (Community Supervisors)
- Welcome to the community and set expectations [5 minutes]
- Highlight important welcome week events [5 minutes]
- Cover community events and leadership opportunities [10 minutes]
- Review University Housing policies and procedures [15 minutes]
- Rm’s will highlight specific policies a second time during floor gatherings
- Open up for questions [5 minutes]
- Lead tour of facilities [time varies based on community]

First Hall Gathering (Resident Mentor on hall)
- Tour the facilities on your hall [5 minutes]
- Introduce yourself and your position [3 minutes]
- Facilitate Icebreaker [25 minutes]
- Introduce the community and who lives in the community [3 minutes]
- What it means to be a positive member of the community [2 minutes]
- Introduce Roommate Agreement [10 minutes]
- Welcome week events [5 minutes]
- Questions [5 minutes]

Facilitator Guide:
Community Orientation (Community Supervisors)
*Where applicable, please consider additional speakers to convey content (ie. Have returner RMs present sections, request campus partners participation several weeks in advance of event, request Assistant Director participation, etc.)*

Welcome to the community [5 minutes]
- RLC and RM introductions
  - Explain your roles/responsibilities within the community
- Welcome to Carolina!
- What it means to be a Carolinian and living in [insert community]
  - Stress open door policy and that getting to know hall mates is extremely important
- Let them know what LLCs are in the community
- Distribute handouts on the residential program and our goals and strategies for learning
  - Explain to students the different opportunities that will be provided throughout the year and what they will gain by participating. Encourage them to get involved with their community early and through any of the opportunities on the handout.

Highlight important welcome week events [5 minutes]
- Highlight importance of getting involved, students that get involved are more likely to succeed in the classroom and on campus
  - Making friends
  - Community connections with peers, faculty and staff
  - Learning about new things, ideas, and concepts
- Reference the welcome week calendar
  - Address events that RM’s will be taking residents to
  - Talk about community email system or how you plan to publicize events throughout the year.
  - Email or post schedule of events and RM guides
University Housing – University of South Carolina Lesson Plan

- Let them know where extra calendars are located

Cover community events and leadership opportunities [10 minutes]
  - Highlight community events for the semester
    - Educate on card swipe system and importance of bringing Carolina cards (let them know we are not taking a meal swipe when they swipe their card 😊)
    - Mention specific events coming up in the next few days/weeks
  - Introduce leadership opportunities in the hall
    - Talk about Hall Government elections, CET involvement, and being a leader
    - Ask for event ideas that CET or Hall government can plan

Go over University Housing policies and procedures [15 minutes]
  - Reference the email you sent with the link to the policies
  - Safety in the community
    - Talk about locking doors; both exterior and interior
    - Empower residents to question someone they do not know entering the community or walking around the community
      - Give an example of how to do this appropriately and safely
    - Explain front desk coverage and RM duty protocol
      - Review desk/phone coverage in your specific community
      - Rounds, security guards, “who’s on duty” boards, and RM duty phone numbers
    - Talk about Carolina Alert and encourage residents to sign up
  - Policies and procedures to cover:
    - Visitation for your community and OTHER communities
      - Residents should know that there are different visitation policies in different communities
    - Alcohol/drugs (cover sanctions with 1st and 2nd offenses for each)
    - Shared Responsibility
    - Quiet hours
    - Breaking the plane
    - Fire alarm protocol for your area
    - General respect to the community and common spaces (damages and cleanliness)
    - Any other specific policies that you feel need to be addressed
      - Rm’s will highlight specific policies a second time during floor gatherings
  - Cover the conduct process
    - Explain to residents that there is a process in place to uphold expectations of these policies where they would potentially meet with either their Residence Life Coordinator or the Office of Student Conduct. Ultimately, these policies are in place for the safety and well-being of each resident in the community.

Open up for questions [5 minutes]
Lead tour of facilities [time varies based on community]
  - Highlight academic spaces, laundry facilities, common rooms, kitchens, and common bathrooms
    - Highlight specific regulations for each space

First Hall Gathering (Resident Mentor on hall)
- Tour the facilities on your hall [5 minutes]
  - Highlight common spaces and other amenities
- Introduce yourself and your position [3 minutes]
  - Name, hometown, class year, major, what you’re involved in on campus, favorite USC traditions, personal hobbies, and other interesting facts
  - Explain how the resident mentor serves the community through personal and community wide support by doing the following:
    - Hosts events to develop community on the hall
University Housing – University of South Carolina Lesson Plan

- Enforces policies like quiet hours and others that will help support academics and general wellness
- Meet with each resident individually to check in with them
- When the RM will be in their room and what their schedule looks like
- How to contact their RM or the RM on duty if an issue arises
- The balance between friend and RM and that you will have to hold them accountable if they put themselves in a situation that requires it

- Facilitate Icebreaker [25 minutes]
  - Talk with supervisor for specific icebreaker ideas

- Introduce the community and who lives in the community [3 minutes]
  - What Living Learning Communities are housed in your community?
  - Talk about how the community supervisor is a support for the RM and residents
    - They are a full time staff member or graduate student
    - This is their job
    - They are here for us
  - Discuss community demographics (get this from your supervisor)

- What it means to be a positive member of the community [2 minutes]
  - This is the opportunity for you to set floor expectations prior to the development of your “House Rules” which will be completed later in the semester
    - Treat the space as if it was their own
    - Discuss noise policy and how thin the walls are
    - Bathroom, kitchen, and common space cleanliness
    - General civility and respect towards others

- Roommate Agreement
  - Roommate agreements allow each resident of the room to voice their opinion on the environment within the living space. These are to be completed by the second floor gathering.
  - You will receive a digital copy of the roommate contract and directions on how to fill out your agreement.
  - Once the agreement is completed your RM will review with the Residence Life Coordinator and you may have to update this document based on your responses.

- Welcome week events [5 minutes]
  - Stress the importance of attending welcome week events and hall events
  - Discuss with your supervisor for which welcome week events should be highlighted and locations for group travel
  - Make sure to share all welcome week events so that everyone’s interests are covered
  - Where flyers/notification for events and groups on campus will be posted or how they will be sent out in your community

- Social Activity
  - This is a chance for you to use your RM community development funds. A list of appropriate activities is listed below, but it is not comprehensive. If you want to something that isn’t on this list, it must be pre-approved by your supervisor.
    - Baking cookies/cupcakes/brownies for your residents and allowing them to mingle on the floor.
    - Floor Dinner.
      - Example: Ordering pizza/other foods for a meal.
    - Take your students to Yoghut, Russell House, etc. as a floor outing.

After the Community Gathering:
  b. Begin to chat one on one with residents about their Roommate Agreement. All materials will be provided to you by your supervisor.
c. Process the “Muddiest Point” index cards by synthesizing common themes and answering questions that are still lingering on the floor. Send any major themes to your supervisor via email.

d. Submit an Interaction Form.

Assessment
- Community Orientation (Community Supervisor)
  - Card swipe
- First Hall Gathering (Resident Mentor on hall)
  - Quick reflection piece
    - 1-2-3 notecard
      - Hand out notecard and ask them to write their names and room numbers
        - Tell me one something about yourself
        - Two things you learned today
        - Three things you are excited for this semester