How UNCP's Residential Curriculum Came About

Introduction

The UNCP Housing and Residence Life team attended the ACPA Residential Curriculum Institute at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg VA, in October 2014. The team was comprised of the Director and Associate Director for the department as well as two Community Directors; one from a traditional residential community and the other from an apartment community. During the conference, the team learned of the key components needed to begin drafting a residential curriculum. After an extensive week of presentations and workshops on residential curriculum models, strategies and case studies, the team returned to campus with a skeletal framework to use in the beginning phases of drafting a curriculum that would not only fit campus culture, but would align with the educational priorities the team developed and identified during the conference as well as with the CAS (**C**ouncil for the **A**dvancement of **S**tandards in Higher Education) standards that the department had began working on in summer 2014 in preparation for CAS review in 2016.

First Steps

The first step to developing any residential curriculum is to determine the **educational priority**(s) for your particular campus. Another way of describing this function is to determine what as a department do you want to focus on, in other words, *"what do we want our students to learn or take away,"* from our programming and community development efforts? This statement then becomes the **educational priority.** After the educational priority statement was developed, the next step was to set learning goals based on the educational priority. The learning goals indicated specific areas we would focus on to help meet the education priority. With leaning goals in place, we began working on identifying a number of strategies we believed would assist in meeting the learning goals. This is specific activities, programming or processes that would take place within our residential communities or university wide that would support the learning goals. The final steps were developing learning outcomes and a method or methods to assess anticipated learning outcomes.

Development Phase

In anticipation of the development and implementation of a Residential Curriculum, the Residence Life Staff under the leadership and direction of the

Associate Directors of Residence Life began transitioning from a traditional programming model to a curricular approach in the fall 2014. This process began with several very comprehensive brainstorming sessions designed to help reprogram mindsets as it related to programming and community development approaches. Prior to these sessions, staff was asked to read a series of journal articles on residential curriculums as well as visit the websites of a number of universities currently using residential curriculum models. These sessions focused a great deal on learning outcomes based on CAS standards and were largely successful.

Implementation Phase

In August 2014, a modified, rudimentary version of a residential curriculum was introduced in campus housing with the understanding that a full curriculum will be in the development phase for at least year. The goal at that time was to push for a full residential curriculum roll-out in fall 2015. Community Directors were responsible for overseeing the development of programs along with Resident Advisors. The process included the development and writing of learning outcomes based on the CAS model using **Bloom's Taxonomy** verbs for each program and identified an: **audience, behavior, condition and degree** for each outcome. Additionally, each program had to meet one or more of the following: **UNCP Strategic Plan, Student Affairs Mission, and Housing & Residence Life Missions and/or CAS Outcome domains**. This modified version proved highly successful, and the following academic year saw the full implementation of the Residential Curriculum within campus housing.