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Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Lindy Holt, a resident assistant in Dymont Hall, hands out information to resident Angie de Antonis.

**The job takes time, dedication,  
but campus RAs say it's worth it**

**By Pamela Turia**

*Of the Emerald*

Any student who has lived in a residence hall knows the resident assistant, or RA, is an important part of the hall. Some students imagine RAs as superhumans who make the hall tick or omnipotent students who possess all knowledge of dorm life. However, many people are unaware that it takes an enormous amount of responsibility and dedication to be an RA.

According to sophomore Shannon Leith, the RA for Watson Hall, the position consists of not only enforcing housing rules and policies, but helping residents with academic, social and emotional problems.

"Mainly it's to be here for residents in emergencies and as a friend and counselor," she says.

RAs also must coordinate hall activities such as weekly advisory board meetings and deal with the abundant amount of paper work that comes with maintaining a dorm — responsibilities that can make being an RA time consuming, Leith says.

Lindy Holt, the RA for Dymont Hall, a female freshman dorm, says being an RA means having time restraints placed on both her personal and academic life. "I definitely don't get to see my friends as much," she says.

Chris Johnson, an RA for the seventh floor of the University Inn, agrees, saying being an RA makes it tougher to do well in school. Often, his job comes first and his schoolwork second, he says.

But there are benefits. RAs receive free room and board, and, depending on the hall, may have a bathroom, office area and kitchenette. They also receive \$160 per month for spending money and can earn extra money if they work over the

holidays.

There are personal benefits as well, Holt says. The job often builds confidence, yet RAs learn from their mistakes at the same time, she says.

"I like knowing I'm helping people," Holt says. "RAs work very hard to make it as though people fit in and belong."

Dick Romm, University Housing residence life director, says the camaraderie of the RA staff is a great advantage of being an RA.

"They have so much in common as far as their job is concerned," he says. "They may be very different people and have very different interests, but that job really bonds them."

Romm says there are four essential qualities needed to be RA: sensitivity, a good attitude, emotional maturity and good judgment.

Being sensitive to the different needs of the residents is most important, he says. RAs should "be able to pick up signals because sometimes they (the residents) don't tell you things directly," he says.

"When one student complains about another, we want RAs to be sensitive to both people, not just the one that's complaining or the one that's being complained about," he says.

A willingness to help others with mundane chores such as restocking toilet paper or counseling residents after a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend is a necessary quality, he says.

Last year about 160 people applied for 55 positions, Romm says.

"We look for people who aren't on a downward spiral with their grades," Romm says. If an applicant's grades are questionable but he or she seems capable of being a good RA, the person

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