

Leadership activities abound in residence halls

Residence halls offer many opportunities to participate in advising, leadership and government roles

By Lisa Catto
Freelance Reporter

When she moved into the University residence halls this fall, freshman Chelsey DeBois was slightly apprehensive about how to make friends and learn her way around campus. But those worries were soon eased.

"I didn't realize that the residence halls would have so many ways for me to get involved and meet other people living on campus," DeBois said.

Students living in the residence halls can join housing government and academic programs, and apply for jobs — all without leaving their complex.

John Hollan, assistant director of residence life in University Housing, helps organize different residence hall programs. He deals specifically with leadership within the halls.

"Basically, I am in charge of promoting opportunities and creating opportunities for students," Hollan said.

The Residence Hall Association is one of the largest programs Hollan works with. The association provides opportunities for students to sit on the executive board and take part in the different committees that plan hall events.

Association members also attend several conferences during the year, and involved students have the opportunity to network with students and faculty from other campuses.

In addition to the association, students can also get involved with their own complex's government and make decisions regarding their immediate living situation as well as what they would like to see happen in their complex.

Individual halls also have their own governments that deal with activities and funding decisions. If a student's hall does not have a hall gov-



Danielle Hickey Senior Photographer

Carson Hall resident assistant Jaime Wren shares pluses and minuses for the week with fellow RAs Ismira Brkich (front), Bryon Burleigh and Marc Thayer (right to left) on Thursday.

ernment, he or she can work with other members of the hall to start one.

If students prefer to get involved in academic-related pursuits, the two hall advisory boards offer numerous opportunities.

The Honors Hall Advisory Board, located in Walton Complex, hosts panels that bring in speakers on a variety of topics. The Hamilton Advisory Board is new but has similar objectives. Students from each complex control the direction and activities of the academic advisory boards.

University Housing provides many employment opportunities for students, including jobs in the various dining facilities and the housing office. There are also opportunities for current students to become resident assistants or freshman interest group

academic assistants.

RAs and FIG assistants live with their peers in the residence halls and work to create better communities for residents.

Hollan said RAs and FIG assistants work as "crisis managers, counselors and friends."

Cindy Ruggles, a senior accounting and psychology major, has been working as a resident assistant for three years. She currently lives in Stafford Hall in the Earl Complex.

"Each year I decided to return because I found that during my time as a RA I could really make a positive impact and enjoyed getting to know lots of people," Ruggles said.

Ruggles said the involvement opportunities in the residence halls provide students with a chance to develop and implement their leadership skills. They also get to make connections with other students and student leaders on campus and are able to voice their opinions

rather than have them spoken for them, Ruggles said.

"I enjoy the fact that I get to be a part of so many residents' first experiences at the UO, and that I am able to help or guide them through it," she said. Students who want to become involved with their hall should contact their resident assistant for more information.

Lisa Catto is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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