33rd Annual Resident Assistant Conference

The College at Brockport, State University of New York
Saturday, November 14, 2015
Welcome to the 33rd Annual RA Conference at The College at Brockport. For more than three decades, The College at Brockport has provided an opportunity for forward-thinking and knowledgeable individuals to share their experiences and insights specifically within student affairs. By doing so, we have created a platform for professional development, partnerships and continued growth. This year’s conference sets out to continue that tradition.

Our theme, “Pursue Something Greater,” is meant to challenge conference participants to achieve greater and greater things, no matter what role they play in their department or campus, and to use that role to positively impact the communities in which they live and work.

RA Conference Committee

Kat Dennehy
Assistant Director of Residential Life/Learning Communities

Joe Goings
Committee Chair

Coty Cowles
Event Coordinator

Emily Phelps and Kate Loaiza
Program Coordinators

Kayla Cercone and Ben Bunker
Registration Coordinators

Megan Teft, Spencer Cottman, and Taylor Ransom
Student Representatives for Case Study and Poster Session

Learning Outcomes

Conference participants will be able to:

• Identify multiple levels of diversity, including the ongoing development of their identity, and ways to create an inclusive community.
• Describe ways to educate residents about healthy habits in relation to alcohol/substances, nutrition, stress, fitness, relationships, and conflict resolution.
• Create a network of student leaders and professionals.
• Identify and apply strategies in the areas of customer service, community building, motivation, leadership, conflict management, ethics, boundaries, etc.
8:30 – 9:10 am  **Check-in and Continental Breakfast**  
Seymour College Union, Main Lounge

9:10 – 10 am  **Welcome and Featured Speakers**  
Edwards Hall, Room 100

10:10 – 10:55 am  **Session 1**

11:05 – 11:50 am  **Session 2**

11:50 am – 1:10 pm  **Case Study Competition**  
Seymour College Union, Rooms 209 and 228

11:50 am – 1:10 pm  **Lunch and Keynote Address**  
Seymour College Union, Ballroom

1:20 – 2:05 pm  **Session 3**

2:10 – 2:40 pm  **Poster Presentations**  
Seymour College Union, Main Lounge

2:45 – 3:30 pm  **Session 4**

3:35 – 4 pm  **Closing Remarks and Giveaways**  
Edwards Hall, Room 100

Please post your thoughts, comments, or feedback throughout the day on Twitter!

#BportRAConf15
Session 1
10:10–10:55 am

Working through Staff Conflict and Effective Mentoring
Union 119

Presented by: Jamie Tombari, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
Charles Kuski, Resident Director, The College at Brockport

This session will include communicating with a shared vision of trying to get your point across in an effective and respectful way, mentoring and supporting your staff members, and also dealing with controversy with civility in a staff dynamic.

Do You Know How to Network?
Union Gallery

Presented by: Jill Wesley, Director of Career Services, The College at Brockport

Nervous about networking? Want to learn about how to enter and leave conversations? Come to this hands-on session about making the most of professional encounters.

Leadership Panel
Union 220

Presented by: Adam Griffith, Residence Coordinator, RIT
Tarra Ognissanti, Residence Coordinator, RIT
Melissa Shaw, Resident Director, Monroe Community College
Daniel Zdanowski, Chemistry Teacher and Varsity Baseball Coach, Union Spring High School
Gloria Ofori, Financial Controller, Carbone Smolan Agency
Garrett W. Roe, Admissions Assistant, The College at Brockport

The leadership panel consists of current student affairs professionals, former Resident Directors and Resistant Assistants from various institutions. Through an interactive dialogue, discovering skills and talents learned in the field of residential life, our panelists will share their stories in higher education, as well as highlight skills and attributes they have learned and implemented to their current careers from working in student affairs. Audience members are encouraged to ask any questions and engage with the panel.

#BportRAConf15
Lessons from the Most Positive Person in Town

Presented by: Dale Hartnett, Interim Administrator, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, The College at Brockport

For nearly five years, Dale Hartnett has traveled to small towns in Appalachia, looking for and interviewing “The Most Positive Person in Town.” This talk reveals 12 practical lessons that are pulled from those interviews, along with stories of incredibly resilient people who thrive in the face of hardship. Audience members will be asked to examine their own lives for positive people who influence them and will be challenged to consider changing their own outlooks to create more satisfying lives for themselves and those around them. They will be provided a window to help foster better relationships and decrease conflict.

“Be the Very Best”: How to Be an RA Pokémon Master

Presented by: Mark Poblocki, Resident Assistant, Daemen College

Becoming a Pokémon Master and a great RA are very much alike. This presentation will discuss similarities between Pokémon and residents and strengthening the bond with both, conflict with Pokémon rivals and amongst roommates, Gym Leader battles and RA situations, and other tips to enrich both journeys.

Finding Your Place in the Animal Kingdom: Navigating Your Animal Personality Type

Presented by: Felicia Heideman, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
Elyse Springer, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

If you were an animal, which one would you be? Dr. Gary Smalley has developed a spin on traditional personality types to answer this question. Each person has their natural tendencies aligned with an animal. This Animal Personality Test can easily be given to your residents as a passive or active program. So, come find out what animal you are so you can properly navigate the animal kingdom.
Treat Yo’Self: The Importance of Self Care
Edwards 107
Presented by: Kayla Cercone, Resident Director, The College at Brockport
             Emily Phelps, Resident Director, The College at Brockport

With all the responsibilities of being an RA, it’s easy to let your own self-care slip through the cracks. This presentation focuses on highlighting the importance of self-care as an RA, as a student and simply as a person. Come learn about what self-care is, how to work it into your day-to-day life and treat yo’self with some fun activities!

How LeaderShape Shaped Me
Edwards 103
Presented by: Alex Wright, Senior Resident Adviser, Rochester Institute of Technology

After attending LeaderShape, which hosts a six-day journey of self-discovery and commitment to becoming a better leader, I learned how developing a vision can impact my role as an RA. Today, students will be asked to challenge themselves in the same way by learning to define what our passions are and solidify the core values that guide us to be leaders. Students will walk away with a better understanding of leading with integrity and living in possibility.

Including Residents on the Autistic Spectrum
Edwards 101
Presented by: Nick Faulds, Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
             Aaron Dudley, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
             Jasmine Hennep, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

The purpose of this presentation is to develop strategies on how you can make a resident who is on the autistic spectrum feel like they are a part of the community.
The Restorative Justice League

Edwards 102

Presented by: Jenn Jerussi, Residence Director, Union College
Ryan Ribeiro, Residence Director, Union College

Batman, Wonder Woman, Superman; all of these great superheroes seek to pursue something greater. Res Life staff members are just like superheroes! This session will discuss ways to pursue great understanding and student learning through the student conduct process. We will discuss finding your superhero style and ways to creatively sanction!
Staff Dynamics: Inside Out
Edwards 102
Presented by: Devolson Smith, Townhome Assistant, The College at Brockport
Anabelle McDonald, Townhome Assistant, The College at Brockport
Katelynn Groh, Townhome Assistant, The College at Brockport
Elizabeth DelPrior, Townhome Assistant, The College at Brockport

Each staff member comes to the team with their own strengths, weaknesses, and crazy personality. Come explore the many emotions of an RA staff through the lens of Disney’s *Inside Out*. Learn how your staff members can come together to create a cohesive team, navigate staff conflict, and most importantly create long-lasting core memories of your RA experience!

We’re On Duty to Save Your Booty
Edwards 103
Presented by: Noah Chauvin, Assistant Residence Director, SUNY Geneseo
Michael Braunagel, Resident Assistant and First Response Chief of Operations, SUNY Geneseo

This presentation will focus on how RAs can better interact with EMS providers during medical emergencies. RAs will participate in a “choose your own adventure” style presentation, which will guide them through two of the most common medical emergencies seen in the residence halls.

What I Learned in Boating School Is...
The Value of Experiential Learning in the RA Role
Edwards 104
Presented by: Nick Greene, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
Spencer Cottman, Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

Our presentation seeks to show the value of observational learning, hands-on learning, and on-site experience. We also hope to bridge the gap between the theories of RA training and the actual experiences that RAs will have during the year.
The Highly Sensitive RA: How to Work with Your Highly Sensitive Personality and Use It to Set You Apart

Union 220
Presented by: Melissa Shaw, Resident Director, Monroe Community College

Higher education, especially in Residence Life, can attract empathetic and sensitive individuals. For some highly sensitive people, the RA role may have been the first time they felt like they “fit in.” This presentation will give insight and provide tools for utilizing your sensitive and emotional nature to advance you as an RA and allow you to pursue something greater in student affairs. Current RAs and professional staff welcome!

Quiet Leadership

Edwards 105
Presented by: Nicole Magliano, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

One third of the population are introverts (quiet, shy or reserved). People who identify as such prefer to listen rather than speak. If this sounds like you, join the Quiet Revolution! Learn more about the power of introverts and your own quiet leadership potential. In this discussion-based presentation, you will learn more about different activities to recharge your batteries, how to support introverts on your staff and strategies to navigate the high-energy, extroverted res life world.

How Far Can You Stretch YOUR Dollar?: Learning How to Budget, Save, Organize, and Become an “EXTREME COUPONER”

Edwards 106
Presented by: Sarah Heh, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

Every college student knows the struggle of having a tight budget. During this presentation, you will learn how to build your frugality and really stretch your dollar. You will be shown how to budget, organize, and save your money and learn how to extreme coupon. Senior RA Sarah H. is a self-proclaimed super-couponer and can walk out of Wegmans with $100 worth of groceries for only $30. Learn all the tricks!
**Habitudes: Costs of Winning**

**Edwards 107**

Presented by: Penny Glena, Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport  
James Burke, Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

“Sometimes the cost of winning is so great that we lose more than we gain. Good leaders don’t fight every battle. They carefully consider what’s at stake in each encounter with others and act accordingly. They never allow the situation to become more important than the relationship.”

Source: *Habitudes: Images that Form Leadership Habits and Attitudes* by Dr. Tim Elmore

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**Beyond the Blind Side: Re-Envisioning Disability to Create an Inclusive Residence Hall Community**

**Union Gallery**

Presented by: Christina Papaleo, Graduate Residence Director, Medaille College

We all have a “blind side.” For one student, it is a physical limitation; but for society, it is an attitudinal barrier that classifies an identity based on ability, or disability. Our perceptions and stereotypes are more disabling than the differences themselves. Attitudes, not architecture, affect inclusion. Our greatest weakness can become a catalyst for inclusion, if we choose to confront it. Are you willing to go beyond your blind side?

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**Lost in Translation**

**Edwards 101**

Presented by: Sirena Jones, Resident Director, The College at Brockport  
Jasmine Hennep, Senior Resident Assistant,  
The College at Brockport

The Circles activity engages participants in a process of identifying what they consider to be the most important dimensions of their own identities. Stereotypes are examined as participants share stories about when they were proud to be part of a particular group and when it was especially hurtful to be associated with a particular group.
Hot Topics in Higher Education

Union 119

Presented by: Charles Kuski, Resident Director, The College at Brockport

This session will be a roundtable-style discussion, where attendees will be able to actively engage with one another in talking about issues and trends we as professionals have seen in higher education. It will also serve as an opportunity to network with peers from other institutions, and learn how they address issues that affect their campus populations.
Don’t Be a Hater
Edwards 106
Presented by: Meghan Field, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

Being on a staff is one of the many complex parts of the RA role. Come learn how to properly deal with staff conflicts and get tips on how to hold a crucial conversation while still maintaining a good relationship.

Netflix and the RA Life
Edwards 101
Presented by: Jimmy Luckman, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

This presentation incorporates the RA life through the lens of various TV series on Netflix. The audience will view short clips that relate to RA responsibilities. This presentation will engage RAs and help them understand how to handle various aspects of the RA life such as diversity, building an inclusive community, and handling stress!

“You Want Me to Do WHAT?!”: How My First Job Made Me a Better Resident Assistant
Edwards 102
Presented by: Mike Geddes, Complex Director, Buffalo State College

Don’t think that your time heating bagels or folding cardigans has had an impact on you as an individual? Think again! In this session, the presenter will share stories about his nine years spent at Target and how it not only helped him define leadership more clearly, but allowed him to become a more successful residence life paraprofessional. Attendees should be ready to listen, laugh, and empathize as we have all been there!
True Colors: ALRIIIIGHT!!
Edwards 103
Presented by: Liz Herrmann, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
When coming together as a staff, one can think of each person as part of a burger! Come see how the True Colors assessment can help you build the best burger, while using characters from Bob’s Burgers as examples! Explore the Lindas, Tinas and Genes of your staff!

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PROGRAMMING

Engaging Apartment Communities
Edwards 104
Presented by: Kelly Kennedy, Resident Director for Upper-class Apartments, University of Rochester
Apartment communities are unique, and as RAs, it is important to find ways to engage the community. This presentation will focus on creative programming ideas and connecting with upper-class students.

New RA Survival Guide
Edwards 105
Presented by: Christopher Ramsay, Resident Assistant, SUNY Geneseo
Adjusting to your new role as an RA can have its challenges. In order to be great at what you do as a new RA, you should invest a good amount of time into your role. A new RA should ask questions, make connections with residents, build community, handle incidents strategically, and work on their time management skills, all while building their confidence. No matter if one is a new RA or a returning RA, mastering these abilities will help you succeed!
Work-Life Balance and Time Management Skills
Edwards 107
Presented by: Samantha Bobbe, Graduate Assistant Housing Officer, Canisius College
Kayleigh Swan, Graduate Assistant Hall Director, Canisius College

Sometimes the cost of winning is so great that we lose more than we gain. Good leaders don’t fight every battle. They carefully consider what’s at stake in each encounter with others and act accordingly. They never allow the situation to become more important than the relationship.

Don’t Pass Go! Don’t Collect 200 Dollars: Using Monopoly to Talk About Privilege
Union 220
Presented by: Coty Cowles, Resident Director, The College at Brockport
Ben Bunker, Resident Director, The College at Brockport
Rochelle Strassner, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

In this session, we will utilize a game of Monopoly to help facilitate dialogue surrounding privilege and income inequality, which allows for a not-so-delicate treatment of a normally taboo subject. Come play and see if you can own it all!

Art, Media, Culture: Reaching Diverse Populations
Union Gallery
Presented by: Kristi Welker, Resident Director, The College at Brockport

Join Kristi in learning about ways to connect with your residents through the lens of cultural individualism. She will be focusing on reaching residents through art, media, and popular culture.
Was That Helpful? Managing Tough Conversations with Students

Union 119

Presented by: Erin Halligan-Avery, Administrative Director for Student Health and Counseling, SUNY Geneseo

Challenging conversations with students can leave professionals feeling lost, wondering if they said enough, or if what they said was “right.” This session will provide strategies and suggestions for managing tough conversations with students so both parties can walk away feeling successful. This session will be helpful for any professional who has found themselves at a loss for words, feeling uncomfortable, unhelpful, or in over their head.
Are You a Life-Saver, Dum-Dum, Smartie, or Air-Head?
Edwards 101
Presented by: Cat Kwiatkowski, Resident Director,
Finger Lakes Community College
Buddy Chasteen, Resident Assistant,
Finger Lakes Community College
What sort of candy makes a great RA? Come find out! You’ll also learn which
type you are as an RA, how you can work better with other RAs who are different
candies than you are, and how you can pursue being a greater RA by being
multiple candies at once.

Hard Corps Leadership for the RA
Edwards 102
Presented by: Aaron Smith, Resident Director, The College at Brockport
The United States Marine Corps has the reputation of being the most elite
professional fighting force in the world. Similarly, RAs are generally known as the
most effective, professional student leaders on campus. Both you and the Marines
have important missions that require faithful, courageous, and decisive leaders
to accomplish. Come learn the leadership traits and principles that serve as the
cornerstone of the Corps and how you can apply them to your role as an RA.

Why Do We Fall?
Edwards 103
Presented by: Pradip Ananda, Area Director, Rochester Institute of Technology
We all fall down at times. We make mistakes, lose face, see our work count for
naught as our residents make bad decisions — but it’s what we do after those
moments that matter the most. Join a discussion of why it’s not about falling
down, but getting up that matters most.
...So You Think Your Resident is on the Spectrum

Edwards 104

Presented by: Elizabeth Shafer, Resident Assistant, Rochester Institute of Technology
Wendy Stapf, Assistant Director, Residence Life, Rochester Institute of Technology

As more autistic students come to college, many more are living in the residence halls. Come learn some different strategies for incorporating these residents into your floor community, working on roommate conflicts and interpersonal relationships. The presenters will share their personal experiences with students on the spectrum and allow some time for sharing and discussion.

Under Pressure: How to Overcome Stress, Fatigue, and Burnout

Edwards 105

Presented by: Dominique Adams, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

Feeling stressed? Haven’t slept in three days? You’re not alone! Student leaders often experience stress, fatigue, and burnout. Having effective and healthy alternatives to avoid them is important to not only your well-being but the well-being of others around you.

It’s a Bird, It’s a Plane, It’s an RA!

Edwards 106

Presented by: Devin Bonner, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
Abbey Rossman, Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport

While living in the fishbowl, RAs are critiqued all too often. They complete many unseen tasks. Without RAs, who would keep the residence hall from burning down?! During this program you’ll all take the time to give yourselves a round of applause!
We Are Not Our Stereotype
Edwards 107
Presented by: Matthew Farwell and Fernando Muller, Senior Resident Assistants, The College at Brockport
This presentation will describe a photographic program that encouraged our residents to think about how they have been categorized into a stereotype.

Religious and Ethnic Culture in Our Residence Halls
Union 119
Presented by: Angela Tona, Corey Rainboth, and Erica Disbro, Resident Assistants, Nazareth College
Religion and ethnicity are sometimes ignored to pursue a “colorblind” world. However, our residents come from a plethora of perspectives, faiths, and cultures. It is obvious that the misunderstanding of cultures and traditions can lead to destructive outcomes. In this session, we will become more aware of the diversity of local cultural and religious traditions, learn to ask questions respectfully, and learn fundamental guidelines and etiquette.

Social Justice: The Elephant in the Room
Union Gallery
Presented by: Kevin Duerr, Resident Director, The College at Brockport
In this session, we will talk about social justice issues and how they impact college students. We will also discuss how to address the biggest elephant in the room with your students: social justice issues!

Supporting Future Student Affairs Professionals
Union 220
Presented by: Tracy Gavin, Townhomes Coordinator, The College at Brockport
Devin Bonner, Senior Resident Assistant, The College at Brockport
We will be discussing the Future Student Affairs Professionals group at The College at Brockport, including its student involvement and activities. We will also discuss how students or professionals can help create this organization at their institution. There will be an open discussion about what kind of support Future Student Affairs Professionals need.
Featured Speakers

Daniel Zdanowski graduated from Brockport in 2012 with a BS in chemistry. In 2015, he graduated from Le Moyne College in Syracuse with an MSEd. Daniel is currently pursuing a Certificate of Advanced Study in School and District Leadership from Syracuse University. Daniel is also currently the chemistry teacher and varsity baseball coach at Union Springs High School, where his students have a 99% pass rate on the chemistry Regents exam and the baseball team has been state ranked for two consecutive years.

Gloria Ofori is a Financial Controller at Carbone Smolan Agency, a branding and design firm in the Flatiron District of New York City. She graduated with a BS in mathematics from The College at Brockport in 2012 and was awarded her MS in operations research from Rutgers University in 2014. Ms. Ofori was a member of the Math and Science Living Learning Community for two years prior to serving as a Resident Assistant during her time as an upperclassman at Brockport. Like many of the College’s young scholars, Ms. Ofori shares a strong passion for student success and hopes to inspire them to reach their highest potential regardless of the career field they choose.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Erin Halligan-Avery began her career in student affairs 11 years ago, as a Resident Director at Brockport. She worked at the University of Rochester as a Disability Support Coordinator and later went on to be the Associate Director of Student Support Services, creating the University’s CARE Network. The CARE Network is now a nationally recognized program for identifying and supporting students who are in or headed toward distress. In June, four months after giving birth to her son Carter, Erin started a new job at SUNY Geneseo as the Administrative Director for Student Health and Counseling.

Erin has her BA in psychology from SUNY Oswego, an MSEd in mental health counseling from Brockport, and a PhD in counselor education and supervision from the University of Rochester. Today, Erin speaks to us about the skills you acquire as an RA and why they are so valuable for your future job search.

Conference Evaluation

Please visit www.brockport.edu/reslife/raconference and complete an evaluation of the conference. Those who submit the evaluation by November 29, 2015, will be entered into a raffle for a $50 gift card good at any Barnes & Noble bookstore.