

2008-2009  
**Residential Academic Success Program**  
Department of Residence

### **Background**

Several academic and student affairs departments support students in the pursuit of academic success. Among these departments are the Department of Residence and Academic Advising Services. A collaborative effort between these departments was begun in 2002. It is called the PAIR (Peer Advisors In Residence) Program. The 2007-2008 PAIR Program involved one peer in each of eight halls, working 5 to 8 hours a week in their respective buildings. Their jobs varied slightly, according to the populations and the results of consultation with the in-hall staff.

#### PAIR Responsibilities:

- Gave out business cards to invite residents to consult them with academic performance concerns
- Created and posted bulletin board topics designed to improve academic performance
- Presented programs on academic excellence, during house meetings and hall gatherings
- Held “office hours” for students to stop by for consultation regarding academic performance issues
- Sent a monthly newsletter of academic information and tips to RAs, who forwarded them to their residents
- Consulted with RAs and residence life coordinators on strategies to best serve residents of specific halls

PAIRs’ fulfillment of these responsibilities resulted in very favorable evaluations of the program by residents (according to an April 2008 online survey completed by 829 of the residents in the eight residence halls who had PAIRs):

### **Conclusions About Survey Results**

The following are conclusions drawn from the April 2008 PAIR Survey results, as they relate to the Residential Academic Success Program (Survey item results are at the end of this document.)

- Almost all (95.9%) of respondents were aware of the PAIR program, indicating that awareness of its availability is not an issue. Goal: maintain high levels of awareness.
- Approximately half (47.5%) the respondents utilized the PAIR program during the academic year. Goal: increase this to 60%.
- Approximately one fifth (21%) of the respondents utilizing the program indicated that it was very (16.6%) or extremely (4.4%) important to their academic success. Goal: increase this to 30%.
- The areas that received the highest percentage of “extremely” and “very” important regarding “how important it is to have PAIRs provide information and resources” were, from most to least: Scheduling Issues (68.4%); Majors, Minors, Certificates (68.4%); Advising Issues (57.5%); University Resources and Tools (57.3%) and Skills to be Successful (53.3%). Goal: Maintain an awareness of these priorities when allocating time devoted to them in providing programs and services.
- The “most beneficial” aspects of the program were ranked as follows: “availability” (#1); “advice from a student perspective” (#2); and “programs offered in the hall” (#3). Goals: make PAIRs even more accessible and provide better (more and/or higher quality) programs.

### **Residential Academic Success Program**

In order to more aggressively and specifically assign tasks to the PAIRs and residence life staff in the work of supporting residents’ academic success, the PAIR Plus Program will replace the PAIR Program in 2008-2009. The *primary purpose* of the new program is to help equip on-campus residents to enjoy higher levels of academic success. Because many variables that impact academic success (e.g. faculty influence, individual differences in preparedness for success) are difficult to control for, the specific goal will be to increase from 21% to 30% the percentage of residents who indicate that the Residential Academic Success Program was “extremely” or “very important” to their academic success.

In addition to what the PAIRs do, specifically, there will be other elements, coordinated by the Assistant Director of Residence/Education, in cooperation with the residence life coordinator staff.

### **Residential Academic Success Program Outcomes for Residence Hall Students** (as indicated by them):

The following are the Residential Academic Success Program’s desired outcomes for students living in residence halls. Students will indicate that they feel:

1. Adequately equipped to obtain information about and select a major, minor, certificate program
2. Adequately equipped to schedule classes for the next semester and do long-term schedule planning

3. Adequately equipped to obtain and utilize academic advising assistance from an advisor
4. Adequately equipped to use university resources and tools (e.g. MyUNLiverse, degree audit; where to find tutoring, internships, student organizations)
5. Adequately equipped to set goals, study effectively, get the most out of classes and manage my time
6. Sufficiently supported and encouraged about pursuing academic success.

### Elements of Residential Academic Success Program

PAIRs will do the following:

- Replace “office hours” with other efforts to directly encounter residents (programs, house meetings, individual appointments, bulletin board maintenance, sending RAs emails)
- Meet bi-weekly with RLCs to fine-tune efforts in the hall
- Provide feedback cards at every program to obtain immediate impressions about how to improve subsequent programs
- Schedule brief time at every (possible) house meeting to provide timely, helpful tips and promote residents making individual appointments for “preventive” and “responsive” help with academic issues.
- Do four Academic Success sessions for Springboard students at Aug 21 *Dive In Days*
- Facilitate *I.C.E. It!* (self-directed academic assessment and commitment) sessions in Springboard house meetings throughout September and non-Springboard (except upperclass) house meetings throughout October
- Present Fall and Spring pre-registration hall programs
- Lead (with RAs) campus tours during the first week of classes for all new residents to identify helpful offices where they can help with issues related to academic success
- Gather immediate feedback cards when programs (and tips at house meetings) are done, in order to continuously improve content and delivery
- Establish and maintain a hall-wide PAIR bulletin board that is refreshed at least monthly
- Replicate Academic Success sessions from Fall *Dive In Days* for all new hall residents in every hall in January

Other aspects of the program:

- RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs will work with RAs to develop multiple-per-hall campus tours/visits for all new residents. These tours will focus on key support offices on campus: Academic Advising, Career Services, Math Lab, Counseling Center, Health Center, Writing Lab, including relevant handouts, to encourage residents to be aware of the services and their locations. These will take place within the first two weeks of classes each semester.
- RAs maintain an A board in each house to recognize good grades throughout the year
- RAs generate semester-long campaign to win “Top Academic Houses” awards that will be given out by RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs to 5 (Noehren, Campbell), 3 (Dancer, Bender) or 2 (Bartlett, Hagemann, Lawther, Rider and Shull) houses, based on Fall Semester House GPA. Winning houses recognized at *Among the Stars*.
- Dean’s List individual letters recognition by RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs
- “One Tip” bi-weekly academic e-newsletters handed out and put under doors by PAIRs making rounds in houses
- Honor (with their permission) those in attendance at *Among the Stars* who made the Fall 2008 Dean’s List and got 4.0s
- Send monthly “One Tip” academic e-newsletter to RAs to forward to house residents
- Provide multiple hall-wide pre-registration programs in anticipation of both Spring and Fall registrations.
- Two centrally coordinated programs put on by RAs and PAIRS during “The Word Is…” immersion weeks: “Preparing for Finals” (November 30-December 6) & “Grades” (January 11-18).
- RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs will send e-letters (prototypes provided by the Assistant Director of Residence/Education) to all residents who get D & F slips each semester, letting them know that the RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs knows they got the slips and encouraging them to work hard to finish the semester strong and providing concrete information about resources they can access, including the RLC.
- RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs will send e-letters (prototypes provided by the Assistant Director of Residence/Education) to all residents within a week of D & F slips coming out each semester, encouraging them to work hard to finish the semester strong and providing concrete information about resources they can access.

- RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs will send e-letters (prototype provided by the Assistant Director of Residence/Education) to all residents immediately prior to the first week of spring semester, encouraging them to work hard to improve their grades and providing concrete information about resources they can access, as a part of the “The Word Is...GRADES!” January 11-18 immersion weeks program.
- The Assistant Director of Residence/Education will work with the RLCs and Assistant Director of Residence/Marketing to publicly (campus-wide) honor the residents who make the Spring semester 2008 Dean’s List (in October 2008) and the residents who make the Fall Semester 2009 Dean’s List (in February 2009).

**Evaluation**

In addition to learning from compiled results of individual program feedback from cards, program organizers will ask residents to assess their level of success at achieving the six outcomes, above, during online surveys in November and March. Results will be fed back in a timely fashion to Residential Academic Success Program educators (RAs, RLCs, GRLCs, GRECs and PAIRs) to encourage on-going development of their abilities to excel at their jobs.

**Training/Prep for the Program**

Specific training regarding the elements that require RLCs/GRLCs/GRECs execution will be thoroughly reviewed during RLC training in July, 2008, and again with PAIRs during their August 2008 training.

**Program Elements in Development:**

The following pages include elements of the PAIR Plus program that are in development.

A-Board

The Assistant Director of Residence/Education will provide several optional approaches to RAs for maintaining an “A-Board” (which goes by other names, as well). The purpose: promote the importance of performing at levels that result in good grades.

I.C.E. It!

A self-assessment survey will be completed and discussed at house meetings during fall semester. These will be led by PAIRs. The purpose is to re-iterate information provided at summer orientation, while helping new students begin to actually do what they need to do to be academically successful. Springboard houses will be targeted in September. Other houses with new residents will be targeted later in September and into October. This may be done again in January.

The instrument is in development. The theme of the self-assessment will be on three elements (I.C.E.): identifying what needs to be done, committing to what are immediate actions and executing the details necessary to fulfill the commitments.

\*Survey Item Results

How IMPORTANT is it to me that the PAIR Program provide information and resources on these topics?

5=Extremely Important 4=Important 3=Somewhat Important 2=Slightly Important 1=Not Important

	5	4	3	2	1
MAJORS, MINORS, CERTIFICATES (how to find information, selecting one)	276 (33.3%)	291 (35.1%)	137 (16.5%)	44 (5.3%)	81 (9.8%)
SCHEDULING ISSUES (steps for immediate or long-range schedule planning, scheduling resources, changing your schedule)	283 (34.2%)	283 (34.2%)	145 (17.5%)	46 (5.6%)	71 (8.6%)
ADVISING ISSUES (preparing to meet with your academic advisor, referrals, peer advice)	204 (24.8%)	269 (32.7%)	197 (23.9%)	71 (8.6%)	82 (10.0%)
UNIVERSITY RESOURCES AND TOOLS (using MyUNiverse, degree audit; where to find: tutoring, internships, student organizations)	221 (26.7%)	253 (30.6%)	199 (24.0%)	77 (9.3%)	78 (9.4%)

SKILLS TO BE SUCCESSFUL (goal-setting, study strategies, time-management)

203 230 182 88 109  
(25.0%) (28.3%) (22.4%) (10.8%) (13.4%)

Total Responses: 829

I prefer to obtain academic assistance services by (rank top two):

	Avg Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank
Attending programs put on by my PAIR in my residence hall	1.5/7	1	2
Meeting individually with my PAIR in my residence hall	1.6/7	1	2
Meeting individually with a PAIR at the Academic Advising office	1.6/7	1	2
Meeting individually with a professional advisor at the Academic Advising office	1.4/7	1	2
Meeting individually with a peer in my academic department	1.7/7	1	2
Meeting individually with a professional (faculty member or advisor) in my academic Department	1.4/7	1	2
	1.8/7	1	2
Total Responses:			826

I have utilized the PAIR program in my hall this academic year (attended a program or a presentation at a meeting, personally talked with, corresponded via email, etc):

	Percentage	Responses
Often	5.2%	43
Occasionally	12.2%	101
Once or twice	30.1%	249
I know about the PAIR program but have not utilized (please skip to the end of the survey)	48.4%	400
I was not aware of the PAIR program and have not utilized it (please skip to the end of the survey)	4.1%	34
Total Responses:		827

On a scale of 1 – 5 how important has the PAIR Program and resources been to my success as a student (answered by those who used the program)?

	Percentage	Responses
5 Extremely Important	4.4%	22
4 Very Important	16.6%	83
3 Somewhat Important	33.3%	166
2 Slightly Important	23.2%	116
1 Not Important	22.4%	112
Total Responses:		499

The following aspect/s of the PAIR program has been the most beneficial to me? (Rank up to 3)

	Avg Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank
Available in the hall	1.9/7	1	7
Quality of resources	2.5/7	1	7
Programs offered in the hall	2.3/7	1	7
Advice from a student perspective	2.2/7	1	7
PAIR's connection to Academic Advising	2.4/7	1	7
Knowledge of subject	2.6/7	1	7
Other	3.9/7	1	7
Total Responses:			472

