Strengthening Our Communities
From The Core:

Character and Integrity
Development of Student Leaders

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Assumption College Profile

• Located in Worcester, Massachusetts
• 4 year private
• Catholic
• Residential (90%)
• Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
Assumption College
Student Leaders

• 180 Student Leaders

• 11 Student Leader Groups

• Resident Assistants
  – 9 Head Resident Assistants
  – 47 Resident Assistants
Learning Outcome

RAs will learn, develop and demonstrate character and integrity.
Can character be changed/developed/formed in college?

• Character
  – Who you are when no one is watching.

• Integrity
  – Not only doing what is right but knowing what is right.
Common Character Issues

• Cheating/Plagiarism
• Not Taking Ownership for Mistakes
• Experimenting without Consequences
• Shift from Religious Schools to Secular
• What do we want our RAs to leave with?
• Increased Behavioral Issues (RA Code)

• Increased Terminations

• No Change in Behavior
Character on Our Campus

• Deciphering between right from wrong.

• Justifying certain behavior (this is bad but not as bad as…).

• Not addressing behavior among peers even though they see it as wrong.
Character on Our Campus

• Inconsistency with policy enforcement.

• Good RA/ Bad RA (turning in peers).
Character Education with Resident Assistants: A Model for Developing Character on College Campuses

-Christopher Daryl Healea
Character Education with Resident Assistants (CERA)

Intended Outcomes

1. What does it mean to have graduated from this school?

2. What virtues are relevant to the unique culture of the University?

3. Helps RAs to know the good, love the good, and do the good.
Character Education

Threefold Method

Exposure

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Letter from Birmingham Jail (Fall Semester)

- Elie Wiesel’s Night (Spring Semester)
Character Education

Threefold Method

Exploration

• Explore specific virtues, such as responsibilities, civility, and respect among others.
Character Education

Threefold Method

Application

• Writing and group activities.
• Keep a journal.
• Write an essay on how they believe the virtues demonstrating in reading are applicable to their daily experiences as an RA.
• Community Service
How We Did It

Multitier Approach

– Learning Outcome
– Goal Setting Worksheet
– Monthly In Services
– Staff Meetings
– One on One Supervision (goal setting revisited)
– Evaluations
– Portfolio
Learning Outcome

RAs will learn, develop and demonstrate character and integrity.
Goal Setting Worksheet

Use the Worksheet to Build a Comprehensive Character Education Through Self Evaluation and Recognition of One’s Environment

Front Page:
• Identifying Existing Role Models
• Identifying Positive & Negative Character Traits
• Identifying Moments Where Character and/or Integrity Were Exhibited
Create Realistic Goals and Pose Thoughtful Questions with RAs to Develop Moral Compass and Leadership Potential

Back Page:

• Outline of 5 goals to stimulate growth of character & integrity
• Address questions that will challenge RAs to think about their impact as a potential role model to others
In Services

- Identity
- Honesty & Cheating
- Giving through Leadership
- Confrontation
- Resident Assistant Alumni Panel
- Reflection
Identity

- Address need to develop student self identity prior to introducing character and integrity
- Children’s story Chrysanthemum
- Reflection and group sharing
Honesty & Cheating

- Present students with a reading of a real issue of integrity designed to challenge a student’s identity in the classroom and outside of the classroom
- Process reflections in small and large group setting
Giving through Leadership

• Share a reading of an illustrated book *The Giving Tree* by Shell Silverstein exploring the topics of role modeling and giving.

• Students will articulate how giving impacts one’s role as a leader on and off campus.

• Students learn about past and current world leaders form distributed character cards and draft their own character card.
Confrontation

- Students are presented with various scenarios that would occur in their daily work as an RA and scenarios they may encounter in the workplace.
- Students work in small groups for discussion and report back to the large group.
- Students should be able to connect real life examples of confrontation to the concept of integrity.
In Services

Resident Assistant Alumni Panel

- Six alumni who have been RAs for Assumption
- Students will visually connect what they have learned to the perspectives presented by the panel to understand how character and integrity impacts life beyond college.
- A series of questions are posed to the panel before opening up to the RAs for questions.
Reflection

• Student identify positive behaviors and example of character and integrity in one another.

• Students share their personal account of positive role model behavior they witnessed on staff encouraging all to share their accounts as well.
Staff Meetings

Opportunity to Reflect on What Has Been Learned at Training Sessions, In-Services, and Other Forums

Advantage of group dialogue

• Open up discussion in small group format separate from In Service

• Generate new perspectives and questions
One on Ones

Opportunity to Reflect on What Has Been Learned at Training Sessions, In-Services, and Other Forums

Advantage of individual dialogue

- Consistent private review of individual progress
- Regular opportunity to revisit goal setting worksheet
- Intimate setting allows RAs to ask personal questions of self
Evaluations

Opportunity to Reflect on What Has Been Learned at Training Sessions, In-Services, and Other Forums

Advantage of Evaluation Meeting

• Twice a year
• Established connection between professional and personal development
• Teaches the RA to regularly self-assess
Portfolio

Opportunity to Reflect on What Has Been Learned at Training Sessions, In-Services, and Other Forums

Advantage of Portfolio Presentation

• RAs must articulate what they have learned
• Demonstration of character & integrity
• Allows for a formal indication of program’s effectiveness with each student
Results

• In Service Evaluations
• Personal Observations
• Change in Selection Process
• Marketing Campaign
Results

• Change in Candidate Interest

• Change in RA Conduct Hearing Process

• Reduced Terminations

• Change in Training (spring training)
Resident Assistant Quotes

“The in-services that I have attended always made me re-examine myself as a person, including my integrity and character.”

“I turn to someone I trust on staff for advice now when I have a hard decision to make and am struggling with it.”

“I think of the line, ‘who you are when no one is looking’”

“These in services really made me look at me differently and have motivated me to want to be a better person.”
“Character isn’t inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action.”

-Hellen Gahagan Douglas

Thank You!
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