

## **Roommate Conflict Policy**

### **Office of Residence Life**

If a roommate disagreement or conflict arises in a room, we ask that you go through the following procedures before requesting a room change. Space is very limited on campus, and we ask that you try to discuss your problems and concerns, as a room change may not be an immediate option.

If you are having difficulties in your room and/or with your roommate, we encourage you to first discuss the issue with your roommate directly. Many times the roommate is not aware that there is a problem. If you and your roommate cannot resolve the issue on your own, you may approach your RA to discuss having roommate mediation. During this mediation, the RA will review the roommate contract and revise/make changes that all parties are in agreement with.

If the RA cannot successfully mediate the situation or assist in solving the conflict, you will schedule a meeting with your resident director or area coordinator. Resident directors and area coordinators are professional staff members who have been trained in roommate conflicts and mediations.

### **Step-by-Step Guide**

In the event you find your roommate incompatible, please follow the list of steps below:

- Talk to your roommate. Open communication is key, and this first step may solve the issue.
- Contact your RA. Your RA will schedule a meeting with all roommates in the room.
- During the meeting, the RA will review and revise the roommate agreement. Throughout this process, the RA will offer advice on how to improve the living situation.
- The RA will check in with all students two days after the mediation has occurred. If the conflict persists, the RA will refer you to meet with your resident director/area coordinator.
- The resident director/area coordinator will meet with all residents and mediate a discussion that focuses on the conflicts occurring in the room.
- If a situation is deemed irresolvable by the resident director/area coordinator and/or the residents have not complied with the outlined guidelines of the roommate contract, then a resident(s) may be directed to complete a room change request form.

Please note: The Office of Residence Life retains the right to move a student or group of students at any time, if it is found that a conflict cannot be resolved.

Our ultimate goal is to have a successful discussion with the concerned resident and respective roommates in which a roommate contract is formed. All residents must abide by the stipulations of the contract, which in turn leads to a more positive living experience.

### **Managing Roommate Conflict**

If you find yourself involved in a roommate conflict, here are some tips to help you address the situation:

- Do not become too dependent on your roommate for friendship. It is healthy and natural to develop good friendships with people who you do not live with. It is okay to not be best friends with your roommate, as long as there is mutual respect.
- Talk to your roommate directly and deal with issues as they arise. It is much more effective to assert yourself as things happen, rather than to let several small issues build up over time, and eventually explode. Create an open line of communication so that all roommates feel comfortable expressing their feelings.
- Talk honestly and directly. Level with each other. For example, "When you do X in situation Y, I feel Z." Be honest about your needs, thoughts and feelings.
- Validate others' positions. Try to understand other points of view even when they differ from your own. For example, "I understand how you might feel that way, but..."
- Attack problems, not each other. Come to an agreement on what the conflict is and what a solution may be. Make a plan of action, and set a future time to evaluate the situation.
- Use "I" statements to express your thoughts/feelings. For example, "I felt left out" sounds very different from "You never spend any time with me."
- Try not to involve your neighbors or mutual friends in your conflict. This can aggravate the conflict and complicate the situation.
- Avoid direct or indirect posting on social media. This often results in feelings getting hurt, and can escalate a situation that could have been resolved.
- If you find you cannot resolve a conflict on your own, seek out your RA. It can help to have an objective party to help talk things out.

Most importantly, always remember that none of us are perfect. If problems develop that you cannot solve on your own, there are people trained to help mediate these conflicts. Since room changes are not always an available solution, always seek out a professional to help navigate through a conflict.