

# THE SIGNPOST

Volume 26, issue 7

September

## Madame Presidents

**From Your State and Regional Presidents... By Gay Perez and Lisa LaBarbera**

First let us say thank you to the Signpost for giving us the opportunity to share our thoughts with our colleagues and friends around the state. As Lisa and I were contemplating what we might share with others, it occurred to us that we needed to be upbeat, profound, and witty (okay I might be stretching our talents a bit far with that one) especially in a year filled with many challenges and uncertainties. At my opening welcome in August with the student staff at UNCH, I challenged them to find their "edge". I further illuminated the need for them to take advantage of their position as staff members in housing and residential education to find that "edge" that would propel them on their way to future success while having a positive impact on their residents. As I was sharing these remarks with Lisa it dawned on us that it was just as important for our full time professionals to find their "edge" in housing and residential education re-

gardless of where they fall in years of experience. Given that budgets continue to be excruciatingly complex and limited, we need to continue to move forward in fulfilling our purpose in contributing to the success, development, and satisfaction of the residents living in our communities and attending classes on our campuses. So how do you go about finding your "edge"?

Be.....

**ENTHUSIASTIC:** Both new and returning residents arrived on our campuses a few short weeks ago full of energy and optimism for the academic year ahead. As these are life-changing times for them, so should we take a moment to reflect that what we do on a daily basis profoundly impacts the student experience. We have the unique opportunity to make a difference in their lives so we should start each day with enthusiasm and look forward ways to impact resident success.

## NCHO Executive Council wants YOU!

The NCHO 2010 Annual Conference is right around the corner (October 21st & 22nd). The Annual Conference also marks another year to seek leaders for our organization. Nominations are being sought for the following positions:

**President-Elect \* Member At Large Representative**

**SEAHO Representative \* HBCU Representative**

**Graduate Student Representative \* New Professionals Representative**

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*Nominations are also being sought for the following positions. These positions are selected by the NCHO Executive Council.*

**Newsletter Editor** (Communications Coordinator)

**Program Chair**

**Program Chair-select**

#### Process Timeline

October 11 Nomination/Application is due

October 21 Election of Individuals to positions

*Details on the various positions as well as the election process can be found on the NCHO website*

### *From Your State and Regional Presidents... (Continued)*

**DEDICATED:** Our profession is never static but is constantly in motion. Whether you are experiences calm seas or preparing for a storm, it takes dedication to ensure that we reach our ultimate outcomes. Although our outcomes may vary by institution, our common goal is always to see our residents matriculate to graduation. Living on campus is not just convenient to classes and campus resources, it also may be the difference between having a resident return for the next semester or next year. Dedicated housing professionals contribute to student success by increasing retention rates and academic progression.

**GENUINE:** Everyone is an individual. In order to fulfill our promises of creating an inclusive on-campus housing environment that promotes student success, self-awareness, and satisfaction, we need to be genuine in not only our words but our actions as well. Always remember that you need to "say what you mean and truly mean what you say".

**ENGAGED:** It is much easier to pick the low hanging fruit then to reach for the juiciest fruit that is just out of reach, but we are here to tell you that you always need to "stretch" yourself in order to reach your professional goals. Don't let the fact that your institution may not be

able to fully support you in your conference attendance this year hamper your investment. Instead get engaged in opportunities that might be new for you...one of my famous sayings is "Create your own Experience". Being engaged in what is happening on your campus, in NCHO, and in SEAHO will further increase your networking base, help you on your professional skills, and assist you in finding your passion.

NCHO is coming up in six weeks and is a joint conference with NCPPA. It will be a wonderful opportunity to share ideas with colleagues from across all units in student affairs. Thanks to our colleagues at UNC-CH for hosting this experience. In addition, SEAHO is right around the corner. Program proposals will be accepted shortly. Our colleagues in Mississippi are excited to welcome you to Mobile, AL in February. Please mark your calendars now and begin plotting how you can attend both of these conferences.

Perhaps you will find your "edge" at one of these wonderful professional development events...Best of luck in your search. Please know that as current presidents of NCHO and SEAHO, Lisa and I are here to help and cheer you on.

### **New Staff and Staffing Changes at Elon!**

**Angel Garcia** is the new Assistant Director of Residence Life for East Area. Angel joins us from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale where he recently completed his M.S. in Student Affairs with emphasis in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

**Richard Baker** is filling a new split position between Residence Life and Judicial Affairs. He will serve as the Assistant Director for West Area and work 10 hours each week in the Judicial Affairs office. Richard finished his M.A. in Higher Education – College Student Personnel from the University of Arizona in May 2010.

Our new Assistant Director of Residence Life for the Oaks is **Taryrn Njagu**. Taryrn is returning to the Triad area after working for a year as a Hall Director at Georgia Tech. She graduated from UNCG in 2009 with her M.Ed. in Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education.

**Amy Allocco** is the new Faculty-in-Residence for the International Pavilion. Amy earned her PhD from Emory University in the Program in West & South Asian Religions, where she developed specializations in Hinduism and South Asian Islam. She holds Masters and undergraduate degrees from Harvard Divinity School and Colgate University, respectively.

**Tal Fish** transitioned to a split position within Residence Life continuing his current responsibilities as Housing Operations Manager and adding the role of Resident Director of the Colonnades Area.

**T.J. Bowie** moved residential areas and he will serve as the Assistant Director of Residence Life for Danieley Center

**MarQuita Barker** was promoted and she will serve on the Residence Life LEAD team. She will oversee all housing operations and information management as the Assistant Director of Residence Life for Operations and Information Management. MarQuita has been at Elon for the past two years and has served as Assistant Director for both West Area and Danieley Center.

**Beat the Presentation Jitters!: Tips for a Successful Conference Presentation**

by: Kavitha Dharmalingam

The moderator tells you have about five minutes till your presentation begins. You calmly nod and smile, but you can feel your palms drenched in perspiration and your mind racing. You start thinking a million different thoughts like “did I proofread my PowerPoint?”, “did I make enough copies of the handout?”, “did I remember the instructions to my activity?”, and “oh man, there are a ton of people here!”. You gulp slowly and take a quick drink of water. The moderator then steps forward to introduce you and your presentation topic. This is your first time presenting at a conference, so you are not sure what to expect. However, there’s no time to think about that now, so you thank the moderator for introducing you, move to the front of the room, and think “here goes...”.

Presenting at a conference, whether it is local, regional, or national, can be a daunting and sometimes overwhelming process. From brainstorming the actual presentation topic to executing a flawless, engaging, and innovative presentation, the entire duration of the planning stages can be a tedious, tiring, but also exciting time! This article will give you some tips on what needs to be done prior to your presentation in order to have a successful course of action while planning and implementing your forty to fifty minutes of conference fame!

**Tip #1: Present on something you enjoy!** You may recall writing papers in college and in graduate school on topics that did not relate to your passions or interests, and you may also remember how boring those papers were to complete. We all have areas of passion or interest under the larger umbrella of Student Affairs, so find a creative and engaging topic that will be fun for you to present on and explore it to a greater depth. While the presenting process is stressful, an interesting topic will make it that much more enjoyable! In addition, make sure you are knowledgeable about the topic you choose to present so that you will be able to entertain and answer questions at the end of your presentation.

**Tip #2: Determine your target audience.** Decide what type of population you are catering to soon after deciding on your presentation topic. For example, if you are doing a presentation on supervision, decide if you are going to be serving a population that supervises student staff, graduate staff, or professional staff. You do not want conference participants coming to your presentation expecting one thing and then getting another. Make sure your target audience is clearly conveyed in your program abstract as well.

**Tip #3: Make your program abstract creative and inviting!** No one is going to want to attend a presentation that sounds uninteresting and dry from the get-go. Therefore, make the presentation abstract that is going to go in the program as electrifying as possible! That means a catchy title, colorful and descriptive words, and exclamation points!!

**Tip #4: Utilize a variety of presentation techniques.** PowerPoint is a great presentation *aide*, but it should not be the only mode of presentation if at all possible. Try to incorporate teambuilders, interactive discussion topics, case studies, video clips, or engaging activities into your presentation. You want your audience to be absorbed in the presentation instead of constantly checking the clock to see when your presentation will be over. In addition, make sure to proofread all of your materials before the day of your presentation. All PowerPoint slides, handouts, assessments, etc. should be thoroughly checked by you and a supervisor or colleague to catch any typos, spelling and grammar mistakes, and content errors.

**Tip #5: Practice your presentation ahead of time.** You might be tempted to just “wing it” since you know the material in your presentation; however, practicing the logistics of your presentation ahead of time will help settle your nerves and will assist you in developing seamless transitions. Practicing is especially essential if you are presenting with others. If you have a presentation partner, divide up your presentation ahead of time and ask some of your colleagues if you can practice presenting in front of them. This strategy will allow you to get some feedback on your presentation prior to the conference.

After going through these tips, you hopefully will be much more prepared to present at a conference. Remember, while it is important to make a lasting impression on conference participants and to educate in an innovative and creative way, it is also imperative to enjoy the journey of presenting! Conference presentation deadlines are quickly approaching, so start brainstorming now to find a topic you love! Happy presenting!

## NC State's Housing welcomes new staff for 2010-2011!

**Andy Petters**, our new **Assistant Director for Southeast Campus**, arrived from UNC Chapel Hill where he served as Community Director. Andy worked his way up the ranks at NC State from RA at Sullivan to RD at Bragaw Hall, Wolf Village and ES King Village, earning both his BA in political science and MA in education.

**Chris Dobek**, our **Assistant Director for Conference Services and Outreach**, previously worked at NC State in Campus Activities, and has seven years combined experience in higher education and building management at Murray State University, Bowling Green State University and NC State University. He earned his MA in human services at Murray State.

Prior to joining the NC State family, **Yulisa Lin**, **Assistant Director for Sullivan Hall**, received her MS in student affairs in higher education from Colorado State University, where she worked with residents from more than 80 countries. Her former position as **Community Director for Central Campus** has been filled by **Christina Gillar** who comes to us from the University of West Florida where she received her undergraduate degree in marine biology with a minor in music. At UWF she was a Grad Assistant for Housing and Residence Life and a Program Advisor for the Campus Activity Board and Homecoming Committee.

*Each year brings renewed energy to our campus via first-year Residence Directors:*

**Toan To and Natalie Geist** are the new **Residence Directors for Lee Hall**. Toan did his undergraduate at NC State in sociology with a minor in Africana studies. Toan was an RA at Wolf Village, grew up in Smithfield, and enjoys sports. Natalie hails from the University of Arizona where she received her BA in creative writing. She worked as an RA and in Residence Life at UA. Ultimately, Natalie is interested in working as an academic advisor, or in the field of social justice.

NC State welcomes **Courtney Brown**, **Residence Director for the Triad**. She spent the last 2.5 years teaching high school in Wake County public schools. Courtney received her undergraduate degree in Spanish at DePauw University in Indiana and enjoys traveling, music and going to concerts.

**Alma Buljina** has filled the **Residence Director for Wolf Village** position. Alma has been a three-year RA at NC State, having received her BA in psychology. She would like to work for the World Food Program as a Youth Outreach Coordinator after graduating.

Supporting Central Campus as **Residence Director for Carroll Hall**, **Jillian Zalewski** studied at Roger Williams University, receiving a BA in communication. Jillian was involved in various leadership programs at Roger Williams, as well as Residence Life and Campus Entertainment. She hopes to pursue a career in student affairs after graduating, and enjoys kayaking, bike riding and scrapbooking.





**Emily Baker**, the new **RD for Central's Owen Hall**, matriculated from Hope College in Michigan where she earned her BA in management. She also worked in Residence Life at Hope. Emily enjoys reading, being outdoors, and spending time with family.

**Victoria Spisak and Jennifer Fisher** are the new first-year **RDs at Avent Ferry**. Before coming to NC State, Jennifer served as a college adviser with the Carolina College Advising Corps at UNC-CH and she worked at three high schools in Warren County. She's a graduate of UNC-CH with a BA in psychology and Afro-American studies. After graduating, she would like to work to improve minority college access and retention. Victoria is an NC State alumna, having earned her BS in biological sciences and plant biology. She contributed to NC State as an RA. Victoria enjoys sewing, reading and watching movies.

On West Campus, **Meaghan Murray and Jacob Lawrence** are the new **RDs for Bragaw Hall and Sullivan Hall**, respectively. Jacob received a BA in interpersonal communication from Bowling Green State where he was involved in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals (A.S.A.P.) and soccer volunteer work. Meaghan enjoys sports, outdoor activities, and has a passion for social justice issues. She comes to NC State from Florida State University with BAs in sociology and religion. At FSU she worked as an RA and with New Student and Family Programs.

*Offices and departments need dedicated staff to keep them running and organized:*

**Signa Carter** has filled the position of **Executive Assistant for the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs**. Signa is not new to NC State where she has been employed for more than eight years in the University Payroll office and was part of the implementation team responsible for the PeopleSoft conversion.

**Ashley Chilton, Account Technician** for Housing acquired a BA in accounting at UNCG. She most recently worked at Materials Science and Engineering. **Susan Wassmer, Account Technician**, comes to Housing from University Advancements and the NC State Foundation. She received a BS in finance from Ramapo College of New Jersey.

We have two **administrative associates** who have joined our Housing team: **Richard Hopp** keeps Western Manor operating, having earned his BA degree in business administration at UNCG. **Charlene Macaulay**, who received a Bachelor's in math at Ohio Dominican University, moved from temporary to full-time employment at ES King Village Apartments.

*We welcome several newcomers to Housing's Facilities:*

**Garret Myron** has joined the **Labor Crew** and has a Certification in Welding/ Welding Technology. He is pursuing a BA in health and exercise science at American Public University. **Cliff Hargrove** earned a BA in political science from NC State and is a **Specialty Trades Technician** in Housing's Facilities Office.

## Turning an Idea into a Presentation, By Matthew Clifford

Have you ever been to a conference presentation and wondered how you could be the person standing in front of a packed room being showered by praise and applause? You can be that person, and the NCHO-NCCPA Conference is the perfect chance for you! Presenting at a conference is a wonderful professional development opportunity, but before developing the handouts, planning the format of the session, and getting your technology ready on the day of your presentation, it all starts with an idea.

Think you don't have anything worthy of a presentation? Think again. Here are some suggestions that should help you think about a presentation topic:

Are there some great programs happening in your area or department?

Have you recently implemented a new policy or change in practice that you would like to share?

Have you found a different way of addressing challenges that present in our professional lives?

Have you struggled with something as a professional and found a way to deal with it effectively?

Are there trends you have noticed among your students?

Is there something unique about your job or role at your institution?



Take a look at the program topic areas for the conference and see if anything piques your interest.

Now that you've found a great idea, how do you turn that idea into a presentation? Here are a few tips for getting your great ideas presented at the NCHO-NCCPA Conference and beyond:

The first step for a program is submitting a proposal. A proposal can be good even if the program isn't fully planned. Take a look at the proposal submission form and make sure you understand the necessary items. Make sure to give the Program Committee enough information about the program so they can make an informed decision, but you don't need to include every detail!

Consider presenting with a colleague. Presenting by yourself can be a daunting endeavor. Get together with another colleague at your institution, or, better yet, from another institution! Planning a program with other colleagues will help you build relationships and will improve the program itself.

Be confident! Even if you haven't presented before, be confident that your idea has value to other NCHO members. If you need a boost, touch base with your supervisor or a mentor who may have

presented before. That person might have some good pointers for your presentation.

## Grad Corner, By Annie Kehoe

The annual conference is coming up, October 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, so make sure to get involved with some of the many professional growth opportunities for graduate students to take part in with the conference. Visit [www.ncho.org](http://www.ncho.org) for more information.

Also one of the easiest ways to participate in the NCHO annual conference is to sign up to be a program moderator. The sign up to moderate programs will take place after programs have been decided for the conference so look for opportunities to sign up to be a moderator in the end of September.

In addition, at the annual conference the election for the new Graduate Student Representative will occur. I have greatly enjoyed the position of Grad Rep, being able to sit on the Exec-board of NCHO, connect with several professionals across the state, be published in the SignPost and the opportunity to participate in additional NCHO committees. It is a great experience for a new graduate student or even a veteran to step up and get involved on the state level.

Please contact me for more information about becoming the new Grad Rep as well as other ways to be involved in NCHO at [bowenhall\\_rd@ncsu.edu](mailto:bowenhall_rd@ncsu.edu).

## “Team-Building Activities For Every Group”

A book Review by Mindy Bliss

When working with my Residence Life Staff I always like to start meetings and training sessions with a quick team building activity if time permits. I have found that this is a great way to help staff loosen up and unwind from their active lives, plus have a little bit of fun.

Over the years I have encountered many resources which to expand the list of activities I can choose from. One of the resources that I use on a regular basis is *Team-Building Activities for Every Group* by Alanna Jones. This book is broken down into four areas.

The first area is “Mix It Up” which is designed to help introduce new individuals to each other and encourage sharing. This section contains 15 activities that are encourage communication and having fun. I have used this area with the new staff to begin to open the students up and have encouraged staff to use many of these activities in their first hall meetings to being forming communities.

The second area is “Stir It Up” which takes the participants to the next level of interacting and communicating. This area contains 11 activities that can be used as transitional activities into your harder teambuilding. These are great at building confidence in the group and assisting in letting participants to let their hair down a bit. There is one activity that I do not use called “Water In the Face” although many of my staff would love to throw water in the face of some of their fellow staff members, I find that at this stage the participants are not ready for this type of activity and hurt feelings can ensue from having the water throw in their face as well and grudges forged.

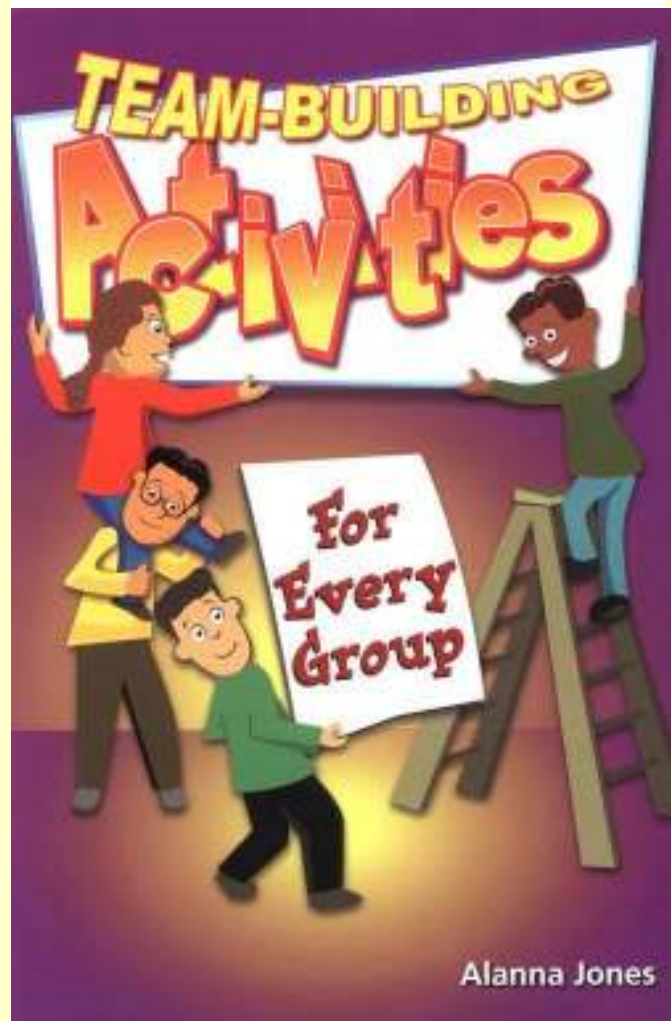
The third area is called “Team Up.” This is where we begin to take participants into the teambuilding time. This section contains about 65 activities to choose from. The activities are set up to promote an atmosphere for all the participants to work together toward the same goal as well as building relationships. In this chapter each activity I set up with six areas. The first is the objective of the activity, the second is the group size, the third is the materials needed, the fourth is the description of the activity, the fifth is discussion prompts and the sixth is variation ideas for the activity.

One of my staffs’ favorites from this section is “The Teddy Bear Toss.” This activity involves dividing the group into smaller groups of 4 to 10 people. The more individuals in each small group increase the difficulty of the activity. Each small group is given a piece a cloth, beach towels work great. Then the small groups pass the teddy bear back and forth only using the cloths to toss and catch. As the groups become more confident in catching and throwing skills we begin to move them farther and farther apart. I have adapted this activity to start

off with small groups of four and then after the participants have gained confidence combine two of the small groups into groups of eight.

The fourth area is called “Open Up.” This area contains fifteen activities that assist groups in affirming one another and focus on the positive attributes of the activities they have participated in. These activities can also provide closure of the groups’ time together encouraging discussion and sharing.

If you have a limited budget and are in search of an activity building book this would be a great one to add to your collection. You can purchase the book on line at Amazon from \$10.88 for a new copy to \$5.99 for used editions. The ISBN number is 0966234162. Happy Teambuilding!



“The Final Stretch” Finishing your Grad years with Finesse

By Annie Kehoe, NC State

It is easy and fun to start counting your “lasts” during your final year in your graduate program: last training as a grad, last opening as a grad, last RA training as a grad, last beginning of the year celebration as a grad, etc. With all these endings it can be hard to concentrate on the present year at hand. Finishing with finesse takes focus but it is a perfect time to take what you’ve learned in the past year or two and really go all out. From one enthusiastic grad to another here are some things to remember as you enter the final stretch:

**Help Transition-** What better way to finish strong but to serve as a role model and a mentor for the new grads so while you are job searching or gone next year your campus will still be strong. Also don’t forget to create a detailed transition binder for the grad who will take your place. You put a lot into your assistantship so don’t let it go to waste.

**Stay Involved-** It’s easy to check out when you see the light at the end of the tunnel but making sure your committed to the end will really mean a lot to your colleagues as well as your professional reputation.

**Create Something New-** By now some of your job responsibilities may have become old hat so take an idea you’ve had previously but never found the time to initiate and finally set it into motion. You may be surprised at how well it goes.

**Leave a Legacy-** You’ve committed a lot to the position and the university during your time so make sure what you are leaving behind is a strong reputation. What you create this last year may become a tradition for years to come so make sure whatever you do is intentional and lasting.

**Step Up-** Look for opportunities that will give you experience in areas that you wish to encounter in your first professional position. More responsibilities, sure but asking to shadow or to take on more of an entry level task can really set you up to succeed in your interviews as well as your next position.

Putting the effort in this last year can really make a difference in your grad experience. Especially in the fall, if you put a lot into your position and your staff it will be easier to take time for the job search and to leave the next person with a strong foundation to hit the ground running. Even during the job search don’t let things fall by the wayside as you should run across the finish line with as much enthusiasm as you did when you first hit the gate. So ready, set, graduate!

## RA Drive In Conference!

Website: <http://housing.appstate.edu/drivein>

Location: Appalachian State University

Program Proposals Due: October 1, 2010

Early Registration: By October 15, 2010 for \$30

Keynote Speaker: Wine to Water’s Doc Hendley

Win Awards!!!!





## Challenge and Support: “An Advisors Tale of How Their Inter-Residence Council Came to Host the Largest Silent Disco in North America”

Mia Hawlk, Community Director

You probably won't find “Silent Disco” in Webster's Dictionary, but it does exist. Let me explain.

Last spring, at our annual spring retreat, the students of the Inter-Residence Council (IRC) at NC State University were asked to “think big” when planning their programs for the upcoming semester. However, as the advisor of the organization, I didn't realize just how big they were actually thinking. During the discussion, one of our Executive Board members, Kristen Gower, presented her “Silent Disco” programming idea. She explained that while she was in London, she attended a Silent Disco with her sister. It was an amazing event, and Kristen decided NC State University should host a similar event. She described a Silent Disco as a large club-style dance with one big difference - the room is silent. The participants at this club wore headphones and danced to the music offered by an array of DJs stationed around the room. The individual club member would choose a DJ and tune in.

To my surprise, and slight confusion, the program idea was a hit with the general assembly and they voted to hold this program during the University's opening Wolf Pack Welcome Week series of events. After the vote, I immediately pulled Kristen aside to address the logistics of this program. I insisted that if the IRC was going to invest in such a large and expensive event, there were certain steps that had to be taken. Kristen assured me that she was ready for the challenge, and we began to schedule planning meetings.

The first meeting was short and sweet, covering the need for fiscal responsibility due to the size of this program. If IRC was going to spend large funds on a Silent Disco, it was imperative to do some initial assessment and research. Kristen began to craft a survey to send to the residential population, gauging interest in an event of this nature. Again, as the advisor, I had lots of reservations. However, I also believed that if the students were willing to put in the effort, it was my job to continue to support them with this challenge. I continued to hold firm that we would have student and institutional support. After assessing the residential population, 78% of the respondents said they would likely attend an event like Silent Disco. With this information IRC cautiously moved forward with its plans.

Initially, IRC planned to purchase hundreds of headphones. There were many logistical concerns, including the storage and usage of the headphones after the event. The Silent Disco Committee decided that they needed to research other avenues to facilitate this program. In March, IRC approached Ryan Dowd, the owner of Silent Events out of Memphis, Tennessee, with their concerns. His company was able to provide IRC with the headphones, lighting, and DJs to make our Silent Disco a reality. It was much more feasible and fiscally responsible to work with Silent Events than to purchase 700 headphones.

At this point I became aware there was a distinct possibility this program might actually come to fruition. The Silent Disco Committee then created a detailed budget that they presented to the general assembly. Once again, the IRC general assembly fully supported the Silent Disco program. I realized at that meeting that IRC had just committed to spending a large amount of money on a program that I was still not fully able to envision. The excitement of the students was becoming contagious, however, and they began to solicit other student organizations to join the Silent Disco band wagon. In the end, our Union Activities Board, Student Government, and GLBT Center all contributed funds and student power to make this event a success.

The week leading up to Silent Disco was very busy and tense. IRC was busy with various programs and events that they traditionally participate in during the University's Wolf Pack Welcome Week. In addition to those obligations, we were all wondering how Silent Disco would turn out. Two days before the event, IRC had already distributed all the available tickets. Since this event was free to students, we were not confident that people would show up, even though they had waited in line just to get their tickets.

On August 21, 2010, all of the planning that went into Silent Disco proved to be well worth it. At 8:00 p.m. there was already a line of students who hoped to get one of the few remaining tickets at the door. At 10:00 p.m., IRC hosted the largest Silent Disco in America! With over 500 students in attendance, it was an unforgettable experience for NC State University. It was surreal to walk into a ballroom FULL of students dancing to music that couldn't be heard. It was more surreal when some of those students started singing songs out loud, while others were singing completely different songs, and all while dancing together! I could not have been a more proud (or bemused) advisor than I was at that program. The experience truly demonstrated the merits of challenge and support (teamwork and trust, too?)!

It has been almost a week since IRC hosted its Silent Disco program, and I continue to find articles praising the success of this program. However, the best indication of success came at 1:30 a.m. on August 22, 2010. As they were leaving the event, sweaty and exhausted from hours of dancing, at least a dozen students stopped to tell me that the Silent Disco was an amazing event and they hope we'll do it again.

## NCHO Awards and Scholarships!

The Scholarships are:

[HBCU Scholarship](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

[Small College & University Scholarship](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

[Graduate Student Scholarship](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

[Undergraduate Student Scholarship](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

Please go to [www.ncho.org](http://www.ncho.org) and follow the scholarship link to apply for the scholarships. Remember September 10, 2010 is the DEADLINE!

Also, NCHO offers a variety of Awards in which we recognize outstanding contributions. Our deadline for Award Nominations is September 17, 2010. The awards are:

[Graduate Student of the Year Award](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

[Outstanding New Professional Award](#)- DUE September 28, 2010

[Al Calarco Commitment to Excellence Award](#)- DUE September 28, 2010

[Bob Dunnigan Lifetime Service and Achievement Award](#) - DUE September 28, 2010

[Dan Wooten Award](#)- DUE September 28, 2010

*Housing Function Award*- DUE September 28, 2010 **NEW THIS YEAR**

[R. Randy Rice Service Award](#)- DUE September 28, 2010

## Staying Focused on My Goals

I have found myself settling back into eating and running around like an eighteen year old again. It happens every year when the Fall check-in takes place. I switch back to the old habits of eating junk food, not exercising/relaxing, and working way too much. There just does not seem to be enough time in the day to do everything.

So this year, I took a good look at what I was eating, how I was exercising/relaxing, and the hours I needed to work. It was a bit overwhelming to say the least, but I did come up with some ways to stay on track with my goals for a healthy lifestyle and still meet all of my deadlines.

Now, I am not the most health conscious person, but I do love good food, especially anything salty or sweet. I know that I cannot work off a cheese burger or pizza like I have in the past. So this year, I started in mid July cooking healthy meals and freezing them in individual servings. I used "Gladware" containers. They work great. Then I took a couple of the frozen meals to work and placed them in the community fridge with my name on them. This made it easy for me to have a great meal while on the run. Also, I would take a frozen meal out in the morning and take it with me to work. By lunch time, it would be on its way to being defrosted and only took a few minutes in the microwave.

I made sure that I had easy to eat staples on hand at home and in the office. My list included: individual containers of yogurt, carrots sticks, apples, string cheese, grape tomatoes, green beans (surprising enough they are not bad raw if they are picked in a young stage), V8 juices, roasted peanuts, grapes, and various dried fruits. I packaged these items in single serving portions and had them on hand when I was in a rush. With these items available, I was less likely to grab a candy bar or bag of chips. I also carried a 10 oz. refillable water container. I found that I would drink more from a smaller refillable container as opposed to a larger container for the entire day.



Once I had the food under control, I moved on to exercise. We all know that during check in times it is hectic and sometimes we are doing quite a bit of running around. I noticed that even though I was exhausted at the end of the day, I still had not worked out. So I started looking at what I was doing during the day. I noticed that I was riding from building to building to save time and then taking the stairs once I got to most of the locations. I thought that walking to the buildings instead of riding would be a simple solution to my fitness problem. This lasted about half a day. I was not getting to the locations quick enough. Furthermore I needed to take with me a huge bag of items or I needed to keep going back to the

office for supplies. I decided that this was not using my time effectively and it was causing my stress level to rise. To keep everything running smoothly, I went back to riding from location to location. This still left me needing to exercise.

I started looking at times when I could take 15 to 30 minutes several times a day to walk or get my work outs in. I set a few restrictions on the times.

First of all, I needed to be by myself when I was walking. So that I could use that time to decompress and enjoy nature.

Second, I had to set boundaries and take a route that was away from my work areas. This made it less likely that I would bump into someone from work and drop back into that work mode.

Third, I turned my phone on silence. It is hard to relax when the phone is ringing off the hook. So I would send the staff an e-mail letting them know I would be out of phone range for a certain period of time during the day.

This worked well and the staff honored my phone free time. I also chose my walking times when I thought there would be fewer issues to address. At the end of the walks, I took a few minutes to complete several yoga stretches. This also decreased my stress level and allowed me to loosen up. I did not do any complicated stretches, but ones that focused on breathing and stretching my upper and lower back as well as my neck area. These are areas that I can feel stress, especially in between my shoulder blades.

Additionally, I looked into ways I could relax away from campus without spending too much money or time. By checking around I found that one of the spa's in our county gives discounts on Tuesday nights to residents of our county. So I set aside a two hour time slot on Tuesday evenings to enjoy a bit of me time. I allotted thirty minutes for travel to the spa, an hour for soaking in the hot tub for \$10 and thirty minutes to change and travel back. Now it did not take 30 minutes to travel to my destination, but the goal for the time was to relax and not be rushed. This was the best thing that I could have done and I was refreshed for the rest of the week.

I have to admit that it was not easy to make these changes and it did involve quite a bit of planning and preparation. In the end it was worth the effort. I found that I was a much more pleasant person to be around. My staff from last year noticed the change in my attitude and how I was more relaxed. I still was able to meet all of my deadlines for work and be active on campus. This may not work for everyone, but for me it was an eye opening experience. It gave me the freedom to enjoy my job and keep myself happy and healthy.



# Dear Andy, an Advice Column

*Written by Andy Petters*

**Dear Andy,**

**How do I know if housing/residence life is the career for me?**

Career-Minded Caroline

Dear Caroline,

I appreciate you emailing me and asking a great question. Lots of student affairs professionals I've met over the years all same the same thing... well back when I first entered the field back in aught two, I was in housing... I know what your life is like. I keep wondering when I'm going to have that moment where I tell myself that it's time to leave housing. For me though, I'm beginning to think I may not have that moment, as I'm hoping to be in housing for a long time to come.

For others, you may find housing to be a stepping stone. Whether it's a graduate assistantship or best option at the time, sometimes working in housing is only temporary. There is no career out there for everyone. You will inevitably reach a day where you decide housing is for you or not.

Ok Andy, I'm with you but where do I start in my career assessment?

Alright, let's get down to business. Here are the steps you can take to figure out whether housing/residence life is the career for you.

**Step 1: Self-reflection.** This can be done through several ways. You can take a mirror and talk to yourself like Stuart Smalley from the mid-90s SNL skit. It worked for Al Franken, he's a US senator now! Another method is to remove all distractions and think about the pros and cons for a career in housing and residence life. You'll want to ask yourself, "What are the tangible and intangible benefits of a career in housing," "What other careers are possible options," "What are the factors influencing your positive or negative feelings about a career in housing?" You can write down your thoughts to these questions in a journal. Then put the journal aside for a week and see if your thoughts from a week ago match your current ones.

**Step 2: Process with Others.** Society places unnecessary pressure on us to know exactly what we want to do in life and certainly not reveal to others that we don't know what we want to do. I urge you to throw these societal pressures into the trash can. Schedule a coffee chat with your friends, mentors, and colleagues. Talk with those that you can feel secure in being open and that not impacting your current position. Let them know your thoughts after self-reflection and be open to their feedback.

**Step 3: Make a Decision.** You have several options – you can stay in housing, leave housing, change positions for a new challenge, or table the discussion for another time. Pick a path forward and be confident in your decision. You may reverse it two weeks later or years down the road, but you'll know what to do when the time comes.

Caroline, I wish you the best of luck in this process. If needed, feel free to send me an additional question.

Sincerely,

Andy

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Just like Dirty Jobs, the only way to keep this column going is through your support. Please email Dear Andy at [andy\\_petters@ncsu.edu](mailto:andy_petters@ncsu.edu) with your questions or comments. Please note that your real name will not be used in this publication and will be changed to an alias that is completely different.

