

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY LIVING

WELCOME!

Welcome to the world of on-campus living at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). The staff of Residence Life & Housing (RLH) has been eagerly awaiting your arrival and is looking forward to getting to know you better during the coming year.

The character of residential living is often a good indication of the quality of life on campus. For this reason, MCLA and Residence Life & Housing (RLH) strive to make each of its residence areas a place where students can establish lasting friendships, develop positive self-esteem and learn in an atmosphere which fosters academics, creativity and personal growth.

The overall quality of a residence life program is directly linked to the strength of student participation. For that reason, we invite you to become involved in the activities and governance of your residence area. Applying for an RLH leadership position will enable you to enhance your leadership skills and contribute to the overall quality of campus life. The members of the RLH staff are here to assist you in discovering ways to get involved in campus activities and to help ensure that your experience at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts is a positive one. Please do not hesitate to ask for information, help or support when you need it.

LIVING IN A COMMUNITY

MCLA has three on-campus residence areas: Berkshire Towers, Hoosac Hall and the Flagg Townhouse Apartment Complex. While they share some similarities, each of the residence areas forms its own distinct, complex and diverse community. Residence Life & Housing (RLH) highly values the development of community within each of the residence areas and has designed its programs and services in such a manner as to foster community-building.

What exactly is a community? A community is a group of individuals who 1) are engaged in social interaction, 2) possess common interests and goals, 3) show concern for and are sensitive to the needs of other members, and 4) are primarily interested in furthering the group's goals over all others. For students in the three residence areas, a community provides a sense of belonging and a set of shared experiences. Ultimately, a sense of community enables individual students to feel part of a mutually identifiable group, that in many ways, is like a substitute family.

Why is living within a community so important? Residence Life & Housing (RLH) strongly believes that the learning process is not limited to the classroom experience. The majority of a resident's time is spent in the residence areas - getting to know fellow residents, participating in social and educational programs and discovering the balance between individual rights and group

responsibilities. Living within a community enhances the out-of-classroom learning experience by teaching each individual how to develop common goals and values; a greater acceptance of self and others; and deeper, more intimate relationships. Further, living within a community aids in shaping and developing a sense of personal integrity and ethics. It is one of the key ways individuals learn that there are some situations where "the group" is more important than any one individual.

In the residence areas, your Resident Advisor (RA) will meet with you and other members of your floor or section to discuss the importance of community development and solicit your input on how to build a positive community that is sensitive to the needs of your floor/section members. Issues you can expect to discuss include activity planning, recognition events, quiet hours, use of common areas and how to handle any problems or concerns that may arise.

CELEBRATING AND PROTECTING DIVERSITY WITHIN THE RESIDENCE AREA COMMUNITIES

Each residence area at MCLA is a microcosm of the overall College community and society-at-large. Our residents represent all different sizes, shapes, genders, ages, skin colors, physical and mental abilities, sexual and gender identities, religious beliefs & ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Residence Life & Housing (RLH) highly values the diversity that our residents bring to the residence areas and encourages all members of the on-campus communities to join us in learning about and celebrating the richness that is created by our many differences and similarities. Residents are encouraged to help plan programs and activities that explore all areas of diversity. The Resident Advisor (RA) staff has been trained to assist with this process of discovery.

Residence Life & Housing (RLH) firmly believes that we share in the responsibility of ensuring the residence areas provide an environment in which all community members are able to participate and develop intellectually and emotionally, free from fear, violence or harassment. Toward that end, our policies and programs have been designed in accordance with the College's Affirmative Action Plan which was developed in an effort to promote a respect for diversity and ensure the equitable and fair treatment of all campus community members.

Additional information about the College's Affirmative Action Plan can be found in the MCLA Student Handbook which is available in the Student Life section of the MCLA website (www.mcla.edu). Residents who have questions about diversity-related policies and programs should contact their Residence Director.

THE R.L.H. STAFF: A CARING & DEDICATED TEAM

To help you make the most of your on-campus experience, each residence area is staffed by a variety of trained students and professionals. The staff in each area includes the following individuals:

Residence Directors (RDs) are professional staff members with a degree and/or experience in Higher Education. RDs live in the residence area and assume responsibility for the total operation of the facility including advising and counseling individuals and student groups; coordinating activities and programming; and administering residence life policies. The RD staff coordinates the work of all the other staff members to make living in the residence area an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, our live-in staff members are:

Hoosac Hall: Annemarie Boyle,
Residence Director

The **Resident Advisor (RA)** staff is comprised of full-time students who have successfully completed an intensive selection process and rigorous training program. Each floor or section of Townhouses has its own RA. The RA's role is to assist with personal and group problems; coordinate activities and programs; and ensure that the guidelines for community living are upheld. At the start of each semester, RAs are instrumental in helping the residents on their floor/section get to know each other, forming the basis of a community of friends.

Residence Area Security Monitors (RASMs) staff the main desk in Hoosac Hall 24 each day. RASMs greet and assist visitors to the residence area, coordinate the services offered at the desk, answer the area desk telephone and provide frontline security by managing building access.

The **Residence Life & Housing (RLH) office** is located in Townhouse #89 (H Block) and is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 am - 4:45 pm. The RLH office coordinates the operation of all MCLA residence areas and assists students with questions and referrals. Administrative Assistant, Terry Burdick and Director of Housing Operations, Dianne Manning have their offices in Townhouse #89. Heather Quire, Dean of Students oversees the Residence Life & Housing department and maintains weekly office hours in Townhouse #89.

THE 2022-2023 RESIDENT ADVISOR STAFF

Whether you're having a problem with your roommate, need some information or just want to talk to someone, contacting your Resident Advisor is a good place to start....

Hoosac Hall

H100-H110	Bobita Atkins (H407)
H111-H119	Alex Holcomb (H607)
H207	Pablo Calderon
H307	Aedan Maginnis
H407	Bobita Atkins
H507	Armanni Rios
H607	Alex Holcomb

Flagg Townhouse Apartment Complex

T25	Lucien Thomas-Vickory (T01, T17-T36, T51 & T52)
T39	Lauren Henne (T37-T50)
T59	J.C. Innocent (T53-T64 & T91)
T69	Heather Hughes (T65-T76)
T79	Alyna Cubilete Carbonell (T77-T88)

CARE & FEEDING OF A ROOMMATE

To those of you who are new, we congratulate you on your admission to MCLA. To those of you who are returning, welcome back. In either case, now that you've arrived and moved into your residence area and your new home for the next nine months, you're probably starting to wonder about what the year will be like. "What about my roommate?" "Will we get along?" "What will it be like to live with someone else?" Then your confidence builds, "Of course we'll get along. I'm an easy person to get along with and besides, my roommate is a college student just like me."

If it were only that easy! For many college students, sharing a bedroom, especially when it is also your living room, is a new experience. Your new roommate may be an old high school friend, distant cousin, friend of a friend of somebody's sister or a total stranger. Regardless of how well you think you may know your roommate, Residence Life & Housing (RLH) has some suggestions to help make your relationship with your roommate more enjoyable.

The following is a list of topics you and your roommate should discuss during the first week and some helpful hints about living with a roommate. Please read this section carefully and take the time to go through it with your roommate. If problems arise and you and your roommate feel the need to talk with someone who can help you sort things out, please seek out your Resident Advisor. Each RA is trained to assist with roommate issues.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

A good place to start is to compare notes on your different backgrounds and your thoughts about being at MCLA.

- What is your hometown like? Your neighborhood?
- How would you describe your family?
- What do you think you'll miss most about your home?
- Why did you decide to go to college? How did you pick MCLA?
- What most excites you about being here?
- What is there about being here that scares you a little bit?
- What do you expect from a roommate?

EXPLORING EACH OTHER'S LIFESTYLE

Taking the time to share information about each other's habits, likes, dislikes, preferences and need for personal space is essential to building a strong and responsive relationship with your roommate. Some of the many topics to discuss include:

- How will we set up the room? What about food in the room? Do we share?
- How neat and clean do you want the room? How do we decide what to clean and when?
- Which of your possessions may be borrowed? Which are off limits?
- What temperature do you like the room?
- What kind of music do you like? How loud? Can you use headphones?
- How much do you study? When do you study? Where do you like to study? How quiet does the room have to be for you to be able to study?

- What time do you go to sleep? What time do you get up? Are you a light or heavy sleeper? Do you snore?
- What about visitors dropping by? How often? How late? What about overnight guests on the weekend?
- How do you deal with anger? Stress?
- If you or your roommate are of legal age in an area where alcohol consumption is permitted, will alcohol be allowed in the room?

ROOMMATE SURVIVAL TIPS

- Never assume your roommate is just like you - you are each individuals.
- Always ask permission. Don't just automatically use your roommate's iron or eat their cookies, even if you think it might be OK.
- Express your feelings to your roommate. Share what's on your mind. Holding things that are bothering you inside is a sure way to destroy a relationship.
- Listen to your roommate and make sure you understand how your roommate feels.
- Discuss the items in the "Getting To Know Each Other" and "Exploring Each Other's Lifestyle" sections as soon as possible.
- Take good messages.
- Appreciate your roommate. Praise, concern and common courtesy can help strengthen any relationship. Never take your roommate for granted.
- Ask your Resident Advisor or Residence Director for help if you and your roommate have a conflict that you can't seem to resolve. They are both trained to help mediate conflicts.
- While a good roommate relationship is an essential part of adjusting to college, it is important to remember that your roommate doesn't have to be your best friend. Roommate relationships run the gamut from acquaintanceship to close, personal friendship. Try to remember that it's how well you communicate, not how much you socialize, that really matters in the end.
- Most importantly, don't expect too much too fast. It takes time to get to know each other. Enjoy the journey!