



HONORS RESIDENTIAL COMMONS

Role Description for Active Senior Fellows

Overview:

Founded in 2011, the Honors Residential Commons (HRC) at Virginia Tech is a multi-generational, multi-disciplinary living-learning community with our own traditions and sense of belonging. We foster a supportive, yet challenging community that creates the conditions for students to pursue meaningful encounters with the wider world. The community includes more than 300 Junior Fellows (undergraduate students), several Graduate Fellows (graduate students), and more than 30 Senior Fellows (Virginia Tech faculty and esteemed members of the New River Valley). While the HRC is student-governed, it also receives consistent leadership from a Faculty Principal (live-in tenure-track faculty member) and Student Life Coordinator (live-in Housing and Residence Life staff member). In addition, a Senior Fellows Council provides oversight of the HRC and ratifies nominations of additional Senior Fellows. The role of individual Senior Fellows is to engage Junior Fellows in pursuing development of themselves, relationships with others, and the projection of their passions into the greater community. This role is captured in the HRC motto: “In fellowship, all things grow.”

Baseline Goals for Involvement:

There are no minimum attendance requirements for HRC events. Some may be able to develop lasting relationships with 10+ students after attending a single event; others might need 10+ events to make those same connections. Each Senior Fellow should set personal goals for involvement that make sense for them. However, we recommend that all Senior Fellows commit to the following measurable outcomes:

- Be able to recognize by name and face at least 10 Junior Fellows that you did not know before the start of the year.
- Annually nominate at least one Junior Fellow for an award^{*}, scholarship, or prestigious opportunity.
- Would encourage you attend at least 3-4 of the main events: Principal’s Tea and D2uesday dinners.

Specific Opportunities for Involvement:

The role of a Senior Fellow can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The following are common opportunities for Senior Fellows to engage with the community. The Faculty Principal can provide further guidance on how to get involved:

- Principal’s Teas: These events occur in the Faculty Principal’s apartment every Friday afternoon (3-5pm) during the academic term. Senior Fellows may serve as guest speakers or simply attend and socialize.
- D2uesday Fellowship Dinners: Each Tuesday of classes, fellows gather in the east dining

* The expectation to nominate Junior Fellows for awards may seem like a challenge, but there are a wide variety of opportunities to accomplish this. Consider the Division of Student Affairs Aspire! Awards (www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations/aspire.php), University Relations’ Illuminator Awards (www.unirel.vt.edu/illuminator), and New River Valley Leading Lights Awards (www.leadinglightsnrv.org).

room of Dietrick's D2 Dining Hall, 5:30-7:00pm. We have brief announcements at 6:00pm, but that is the only structure to the dinners; you may come and go as needed.

- Honors Course Support: There are a variety of opportunities to teach or support courses offered by the Honors College. For example, while students serve as peer educators for first-year educators, Senior Fellows can serve as faculty mentors and participate in the weekly small group meetings. For guidance on involvement with Honors courses, contact Dr. Paul Heilker, the Honors College's Faculty Fellow for Curriculum Development.
- End-of-Semester Reception or Banquet: The HRC's end-of-semester celebrations are typically on the last weekend of the academic term and are an excellent opportunity to engage in fellowship with the community.
- Flash Seminars: Both Senior Fellows and Junior Fellows may offer one-time seminars that reflect a particular passion or timely topic for discussion.
- Hall Social Events: To help make the community smaller and more accessible, many events are designed for residents of a particular hallway in East Ambler Johnston. We often assign Senior Fellows to a specific hall to develop closer relationships. Examples of past hall events have included dinners, hikes, attendance at performing arts events, board games, soda tasting, ultimate frisbee, trips to the farmer's market, and more!

Qualifications:

- Unique ability to contribute to the mission of the Honors Residential Commons.
- Desire to support a holistic living-learning environment.
- Ability to sustain a high level of engagement with students.

Building Access Requirements:

Virginia Tech administration maintains a requirement for a Criminal Background Check (CBC) for anyone with access to campus residence hall. The University works with a vendor to process these CBCs, and we ask all Senior Fellows to supply the necessary information.

Remuneration:

This is a service position. Senior Fellows are encouraged to support or organize programming that enhances the intellectual and academic life of the students in the residential college. In support of that goal, each Senior Fellow receives a minor meal plan that covers the cost of participation in the D2uesday Fellowship Dinners. In addition, each Senior Fellow may request up to \$200 to support an event or activity that includes HRC Junior Fellows as targeted participants. Senior Fellows also receive access to facilities in Ambler Johnston Hall, including the Senior Commons Room in the college, as well as to classroom space and fitness center in the building.

Quotes from Senior Fellows Regarding Their Experience:

- “One of the most fun times I had with HRC students was a dinner at my house for the girls on one of the halls. I very much enjoyed that. I also enjoy the D2 dinners and find that time to be a good opportunity to connect with a few HRC students.”
- “I've really enjoyed the Principal's Tea. The guests have great stories and the students ask awesome questions.”
- “All the activities and events are wonderful opportunities to engage with the HRCers and other Honors students.”
- “The HRC is the best part of my VT experience. We like to have students over to our house in groups. I also hire students for my lab.”
- “I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to connect with students in the HRC. The opportunity to serve with an STA for the FHRCS has been a nice way to meet new students.”
- “I really enjoy having the opportunity to interact with students in this capacity, and have a great time spending time with them when I can.”
- “HRC provides a space on campus where students can practice informal networking with faculty, staff, and administrators. This kind of interaction prepares students for future leadership roles, gives them insight into the workings of the academic world, and facilitates connections among the various aspects of the intellectual and personal lives. I have thoroughly enjoyed conversations with students across the university, beyond my department and college.”

Quotes from Junior Fellows Regarding Their Experience:

- “It is exciting to see interaction between senior and junior fellows, and I think it makes for a good opportunity to network. In all, it has helped me become more comfortable talking to people in a professional sense.”
- “Since D2uesday also includes senior and graduate fellows, it provides junior fellows with a unique and incredible to get to know graduates and professors and learn about their life experiences, what they are currently working on, and what amazing opportunities they have taken advantage. Their experience gives insight to junior fellows as to what amazing opportunities are available and advice for pursuing them.”
- “After three years in the Honors Residential College, the idea of fellowship is a value that has worn a path in my heart. Within the Virginia Tech community as a whole I have met a variety of people who have gone on to become my dearest friends, inspirational mentors, and passionate colleagues; furthermore, the fellowship I have found in the Honors Residential College has granted me some of the most influential, lifelong relationships ever possible.”
- “I feel that this exposure to people, who have the opportunity to pursue unique experiences offered by the Honors College, who are at different phases of life, who come from non-homogenous backgrounds, is vital, especially during my college years.”