

Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year

Objectives for August/September:

- RAs will be able to list and explain their top 5 signature themes
- RAs will be able to compare and contrast their top 5 signature themes with other RAs
- RAs will be able to demonstrate how signature themes influence each person's role while planning a program as a staff

**August/September - RA Training
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- RAs will be instructed to bring an item or create an image that represents their signature themes.
- Small staffs will have area time for each RA to present the item s/he brought.
- Complete signature theme chart to highlight common themes and what themes are missing

Discussion:

- Discussions will take place to highlight the challenges that GRC and RAs may face working together; staff dynamics; cliques; supervision

Follow Up:

- Using RA strengths, GRC will work with staff to plan and supervise RAs as they organize their first program as a small staff.

Notes:

To help with this month's activity, you should read the following pages from Now, Discover your Strengths: pp. 83-116

We will complete the activity during GRC training with each Associate Director working with the ADs and GRCs that they supervise.

Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year

Objectives for October:

- GRCs will be able to articulate how a RA's performance is progressing and how their signature themes are influencing the RA's engagement and success
- RAs will be able to discuss how they applied their signature themes to their job performance
- GRCs and RAs will be able to create an action plan if improvement is needed before RA performance evaluation

**October
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- GRC writes a letter to their RAs discussing how their Strengths are playing out thus far in the semester. Each of the top 5 themes should be addressed.
- GRCs will give each RA their letter at least 3 days before their one-on-one meeting

Discussion:

- GRC will discuss the letter with their RA during a one on one.
- After the GRC has met with each RA, the GRC will discuss with his/her staff to get their perspective of how strengths are playing out in the staff. (Which strength themes are most evident during meetings/programming/staff dynamics?)
- GRC will solicit feedback from RAs on the activity.
- GRC will discuss the letters and the feedback with his/her AD. Also, develop an action plan to assist RAs struggling with maximizing their Strengths.

Follow Up:

- The letters should be saved for GRCs to refer to while working on evaluations in November and December.

Notes:

This is approximately the mid-point of the semester. You will complete evaluations next month. This tool will help shape your one on one conversation with your RA and give you an opportunity to discuss with your staff what their performance evaluations may reflect.

To help with this month's activity, you should read the following pages from Now, Discover your Strengths: pp. 171-210

SAMPLE LETTER

RA: John Doe
GRC: Britney Jolie Jackman
Themes: Focus, Strategic, Connectedness, Woo, Analytical

Dear John,

In this letter, I will discuss how I perceive your Strengths to be playing out on our staff – which may include meetings, programs and interactions with other staff members and your residents. This letter is not your performance evaluation. This is just one tool to help us frame conversations about our Strengths. We will have an opportunity to discuss everything mentioned in this letter. This is your copy, feel free to write on it, but remember to bring it to our next one on one.

Thank you for your continued hard work. I can definitely see how your focus and strategic themes come out in meetings. You are always on time and want to get right to work. I appreciate that you come to staff meeting and one on ones always prepared. I know you suggested that RAs get the agenda before the meeting so everyone would know what to expect. I understand how that would help you feel more prepared and it might save time. Unfortunately, I am at my externship all day and I do not get to meet with Pablo (the AD) until after 5pm. We work on the agenda at 5:30 and since our meeting starts at 7:00pm that would not give the staff enough time to check email and prepare. I hope this explanation helps you better understand my system. Knowing your analytical mind, I know you are thinking of other ways to approach this process and we can discuss any of your ideas in our next one on one.

Last month we talked about how well you collaborate with other RAs across campus and I can see how your connectedness is playing out in the roles you take when working in a team. I want to encourage to not take it personal when certain people do not participate or seem interested in working together. Remember, not everyone has connectedness in their top Strengths. Be sure to use our staff meeting time to find out who is interested in working with you on a particular program. This will save you time and emails. Also, consider connecting with some campus offices and their staff. Keep in mind they are interested in programming in the residence hall and can help you plan and pay for events. I can get you a list of contacts in several offices across campus.

Finally, one of my concerns is sort of related to your Woo-ness. I am very impressed with how you took the lead on greeting students and families during move-in. Your energy was amazing and I could see your Woo-side dazzling and comforting everyone during move in. I know you are some times tired and want to stay on track during staff meeting but it would really help me if you could bring some of your great energy to our meetings. It may help time go by quicker. What do you think of leading an icebreaker or game at the first staff meeting every month? It would be a great help to me – I know you can get everyone feeling good and positive about spending time together. ☺

I hope this letter will help you understand how I am seeing your strengths play out. This letter is a conversation starter for our next one on one so be sure to bring any feedback you have after reading my opinions.

Continue to keep up the hard work and let me know if I can help you with anything.

Sincerely,

Brit J.J.

**Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year**

For November/December GRCs will work with their staffs to reflect on the semester: what worked well/success, the challenges the staff encountered, transitions with study abroad RAs leaving/returning, closure to the entire semester.

Objectives for the November/December:

- GRC will be able to evaluate each RA's performance throughout the Fall 2008 semester
- GRCs and RAs will be able to create an action plan if improvement is needed during Spring 2009 semester
- RAs will be able to demonstrate how another RA's signature theme influenced the staff throughout the semester

**November/ December
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- At a November staff meeting RAs will pick the name of another RA with his/her signature themes listed. Each RA will buy or make a holiday gift for the person s/he picks.
- Each RA will have up to \$5, use of the resource room and additional supplies in their area office. The gift should reflect either the person's top signature theme or a combination of all signature themes.
- At the last staff meeting or holiday party, RAs can give each other their gifts and explain their understanding of the person's signature themes.

Discussion:

- During these months GRC will have 2 very important one-on-ones with RAs: One to discuss RA job performance and the other one-on-one to get feedback on each RA's experience thus far

Follow Up:

- Action plan should be created for RAs that have areas of concern; information from discussions should help shape goals for the Spring 2009 semester

Notes:

To help with this month's activity, you should read the following pages from Now, Discover your Strengths: pp. 67-75

**Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year**

Objectives for January:

- GRCs will introduce and/or refresh Strength Quest themes to RAs joining their small staff for the first time in January and RAs returning
- GRCs will assist RAs exploration of how their strengths play out differently under stressful conditions
- GRCs will assist RAs in understanding how strengths can help and hurt conflicts in their communities and on staff

**January
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- During a staff meeting, GRCs will present this problem to their RA staff – One of your residents is upset about moving to your community. Barry just returned from studying abroad and is very disappointed that is he not living with his friend because Student Life could not find a room with 2 open male spaces. Barry tells you he is mad at Loyola and will not attend your programs because he doesn't want to live on your floor/stairwell. Barry's attitude starts to affect his roommates and they stop coming to programs and speaking to you. What do you do as the leader of this community?
- Instruct your RAs to select only one of their strengths themes and try to resolve this problem through the lens of that single theme. The RAs should not tell their co-RAs which theme they are focusing on.
- After a few solutions are presented and a course of action is decided by the group, have RAs try to guess which theme their fellow RA were using to solve the issue with Barry.

Discussion:

- Talk with your RAs about how much they know about their own strengths and the strengths of their co-RAs; how does this information help them refer residents and use each other as resources?
- Discuss the value of understanding each other's themes as they work on programs, confront together, staff dynamics and work on administrative tasks.
- Ask RAs to critique which Strengths were "most successful" in resolving the conflict.

Follow Up:

- Talk with your Assistant Director and co-GRCs about how your staff approached problem solving.
- Process with RAs who disengage during Strengths conversation. Find ways to help them see value in the themes and exploring other themes they have to work with.

Notes: Make sure to take descriptions of your RA's strengths to the meeting. Instruct RAs to bring their Strengths books to the meeting so they can use it as a reference. Allow each RA to review his/her strengths before starting the activity.

If the case study scenerio is not relevant to your area of campus, please work with your AD/co-GRCs to develop a scenerio that is applicable to your staff and residents.

Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year

Objectives for February/March:

- GRCs will encourage RAs to test their understanding of the Strengths themes
- GRCs will facilitate conversations that show how Strengths can manifest themselves in “positive” and “negative” ways.

**February/March
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- At a March staff meeting RAs will be given a list of famous people. The RAs should discuss the perceived Strengths of each of the people listed.

Discussion:

- The conversation should include how the perceived Strengths helped each person develop relationships, influenced positive and negative behaviors, successes and failures, rapport with the public, attitude, accountability and productivity on the job.
- How can our Strengths shape our image and how other perceive us?
- RAs should explore why some themes stick out more than others.
- RAs should also discuss how their Strengths may be interpreted by others, how they may influence positive and negative behaviors, productivity, accountability and attitude.
- Discuss with RAs a plan to help all their themes shine throughout the semester.
- Discuss the value of understanding each other’s themes as they work on programs, confront together, staff dynamics and work on administrative tasks.
- Talk with your RAs about how they have seen each other excel on staff. This conversation highlights how a person’s strength led to them stepping up, creating successful programs or supported Loyola’s values. This information can be used by RAs and GRCs to complete nominations for RA of the Year, Programming of the Year, etc awards. Nominations are due late March or early April.

Follow Up:

- Process with RAs who disengage during Strengths conversation. Find ways to help them see value in the themes and exploring other themes they have to work with.

Notes: See pages 39-61 of Now, Discover Your Strengths for help with this discussion; Make copies of the attachments for your meeting.

What do you think are their top 3 Strengths?

- Jesus Christ:

- General Colin Powell:

- Suze Orman:

- Elton John:

- Britney Spears:

- Whoopi Goldberg:

- Anderson Cooper:

- Michelle Obama:

- Michael Phelps:

- Bill Gates:

- Mother Theresa:

- Neil Patrick Harris

34 Themes of Strengths Quest

RELATING THEMES

Harmony
Communication
Empathy
Incluer
Individualization
Relator
Responsibility

IMPACTING THEMES

Command
Competition
Developer
Positivity

STRIVING THEMES

Achiever
Activator
Belief
Significance
Discipline
Adaptability
Focus
Restorative
Self-assurance

THINKING THEMES

Analytical
Arranger
Deliberative
Connectedness
Context
Fairness
Futuristic
Ideation
Input
Intellection
Learner
Strategic

Loyola College Office of Student Life
Strength-based Supervisory Curriculum
For 2008-09 academic year

Objectives for April:

- GRCs will explore with each RA how their understanding of Strengths Quest has increased this academic year
- GRCs will discuss with each RA what he/she has learned about other RAs based on their strengths
- GRCs will have a conversation with each of their RAs about future applications for strengths development.

**April
Strengths planning and activity**

Activity:

- During the month of April, GRCs should allocate at least 30 minutes with each RA to discuss their understanding of each other's strengths and how that shaped their experience working on a staff together. This activity is done during the time that returning RAs are getting ready to transition to their fall 2009 staffs and those not returning are deciding on the future directions for careers and/or life after Loyola.

Discussion:

- Where do you go from here with your strengths development?
- How do you plan to introduce and discuss your strengths to other people in your life: family, friends, classmates, supervisors at internships/jobs, professors?
- Looking towards future teams that you may work on, what strengths do you think compliment yours the best?
- Discuss a time that you really tapped into your strengths while working as a RA this year?

Follow Up:

- Inform your Assistant Director of the feedback you get from your RAs. Save forms of returning staff members – they will be returned to them during August training.

Notes:

RESIDENT ASSISTANT STRENGTHS YEAR END REFLECTION

RA Name _____ Date _____

Strengths	How I Have Come to Define this Strengths for Myself	Why It's a Strength and What It Has Enabled/Empowered Me to Do This Year	How I Can Use This Strength in the Future
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			