



Department of Residence Life

Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life Press Packet

Table of Contents:

1. KSU Housing Background
2. KSU ResLife SWOT Analysis
3. KSU ResLife PR Planning Chart
4. KSU ResLife Nest Lease Celebration Press Release
5. KSU ResLife Nest Lease Celebration Pitch Letter
6. KSU ResLife Nest Lease Celebration Fact Sheet
7. KSU ResLife On-line Strategy Suggestions
8. KSU ResLife Feature Release

Please note: All pieces written for KSU ResLife are not in any way endorsed by the Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life. All written pieces were written in assignment for Public Relations Writing. Nest Lease Celebration event was entirely fabricated to fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

Kennesaw State University Housing Background

Kennesaw State University Housing is a large program within Kennesaw State that services more than 3,000 students across the campus. Formerly, the operation of on-campus housing was separated into two different entities, KSU Residence Life and KSUF Housing Management, LLC. As of last year, the two combined forces to become the single KSU Housing. The focus of this project will be on KSU Residence Life (KSU ResLife).

KSU ResLife is responsible for the on-campus residential population. The website of the organization says that KSU ResLife “strives to provide students with a safe, healthy and attractive living environment which supports the educational mission of the University. The overall emphasis of the residential education program is to continue to promote learning outside the classroom and support the academic enterprise,” (KSU Residence Life, 2010).

Basic Information

History

The Residence Life program within KSU is still relatively new. In the fall of 2002, KSU ResLife was launched with the opening of University Place. Shortly thereafter, KSU Place was purchased and renovated into student housing. In 2005, the University Village was opened for students and in 2008, the University Village Suites followed suit. In the fall of 2012, ResLife’s newest and final complex, University Place Phase II, was opened up for leasing. With the opening of each new community, staff had to grow to accommodate student needs. In 2002, ResLife employed 10 resident assistants (RAs) and had about three professional staff members (non-student staff). The staff has increased tenfold (KSU Residence Life, 2010).

Facts and Figures

ResLife currently employs 77 RAs, seven residence directors (RDs), three area coordinators (ACs), two assistant directors (ADs), two in-office managers and one director, with each answering

to the staff following them (i.e. RAs to RDs, RDs to ACs, etc.). The staff works together to engage 3,500 residents, as well as to deal with parental issues, coordinate in times of crisis, enforcing policy and make sure all residential students have a fulfilling time in their growth as students at KSU.

The mission statement for the department says, “The Department of Residence Life seeks to create an innovative and collaborative living-learning community that fosters success, growth and responsibility.” The mission statement goes on to state that the mission is achieved by encouraging active participation and engagement, supporting students as they develop, holding students accountable and providing opportunities for development (Department of Residence Life, 2013).

In recent years, off-campus student housing has become a really big problem for the department. With the opening of UClub in fall 2013, Housing saw its first decline in room reservations ever. Previously, there was said to be an 800 person waitlist for rooms. Not only did that not happen last year, but capacity could not even reach 90 percent. However, this year housing capacity reached almost 98 percent, even with the opening of even more off-campus housing complexes (such as West 22, The Collegiate, etc.).

Every year at RA training, Director of Housing Jeff Cooper gives a call-to-action to all staff members. He requests that staff be not only proactive, but reactive to anything that may come up. If UClub can provide a pool party, then Housing can and will provide a better one. The difference between KSU on-campus housing and non-KSU off-campus housing is the fact that on-campus actually cares about residents. ResLife will provide what the community is asking for and if it is not doable, KSU ResLife will find a way and make it doable. Cooper says that this is why KSU ResLife will thrive. No one can match the passion and compassion of the KSU ResLife staff (Cooper, 2012/2013).

ResLife boasts 2,519 likes on Facebook and 1,169 followers on Twitter. The department has put a big emphasis on enhancing their social media presence. Every semester, the department puts on

several hundred programs to engage every single on-campus resident; these programs include individual RA programs, as well as larger-scale programs such as concerts, dances and theme weeks. Each RA is expected to build a community within their hall or building of 17 to 90 residents. There are several theme communities available to live in including the Honors building, THRIVE, ROTA (Residents of the Arts) and ERGO (Engaging Residents of Global Origins). The department of Residence Life is currently looking at how to further improve the experience of the average on-campus resident.

References

Cooper, J. (Director) (2012, August 1). Call to Action. *Fall RA Training*. Lecture conducted from Kennesaw State University Residence Life, Clayton.

Cooper, J. (Director) (2013, July 31). Call to Action. *Fall RA Training*. Lecture conducted from Kennesaw State University Residence Life, Clayton.

Department of Residence Life Resource Guide (p. 7). (2013). Department Orientation. Kennesaw: KSU Residence Life.

Housing KSU. (n.d.). *Twitter*. Retrieved January 30, 2014, from <https://twitter.com/HousingKSU>

KSU Housing - Welcome to Your New Home. (n.d.). *KSU Housing*. Retrieved January 30, 2014, from <http://ksuhousing.com/>

KSU Residence Life - About Us. (n.d.). *KSU Residence Life*. Retrieved January 30, 2014, from <http://kennesaw.edu/housing/history.shtml>

Kennesaw State University Housing - Kennesaw, Georgia - College & University | Facebook. (n.d.). *Facebook*. Retrieved January 30, 2014, from <https://www.facebook.com/HousingKSU>

Strengths

- The Kennesaw State University (KSU) Department of Residence Life (ResLife) already has a 10 year old established program on campus (KSU Residence Life, 2014). This is a strength because parents can trust the stability and reliability of the department.
- ResLife is *on-campus* student housing backed by the university. This is a strength because no other student housing can make this claim.
- ResLife is a destination on campus tours and a hot point in orientations. This is a strength because from the start of the college process, students are able to learn about how on-campus housing is the best fit for them.
- ResLife features premier housing that is one of the top in the country. This is a strength because students like quality and ResLife is able to provide it.
- ResLife has a really nice budget for programming. This is a strength because the department can provide a residential experience that gives a social life on campus as well as an academic one.

Weaknesses

- A lot of parents see living on-campus as an unnecessary expense and are instead choosing cheaper options. This is a weakness because ResLife is unable to make the prices cheaper for residents.
- Social media accounts are not the most engaging. This is a weakness because social media is a great way to hook a customer and really get students excited about on campus living.
- Off-campus student housing is very strong with their advertising campaigns. This is a weakness because they can attract on-campus residents to their properties using cheaper prices and incentives.
- Off-campus student housing is hitting ResLife very hard as far as room reservations go. This is a weakness because for the first time in its program, ResLife and Housing has not been at full capacity.
- Off-campus housing is able to offer amenities that ResLife cannot not, such as a Mac Lab, free tanning, etc. This is a weakness because residents want these new amenities, but ResLife is not able to provide them.

Opportunities

- Even though ResLife is being hit hard by off-campus student housing, they have the opportunity to rebuild their program to be what the residents want.
- Through the gaining of a football team and the Southern Polytechnic State University merge, ResLife has the unique and great opportunity to transform the Kennesaw State from a commuter college to an on-campus housing school.
- ResLife has the opportunity to attract more people through its social media accounts (Housing KSU, 2014). Since they have so many likes and followers, the department can really get a buzz going about what it means to live on campus.

- ResLife can give each student a personalized experience, from the start of their student housing process all the way to the end. This unique opportunity can be utilized fully through orientation and tours.
- ResLife can revitalize its image with its new marketing, if used correctly. If marketed correctly, ResLife has the opportunity to show just how the department was formed just for students, unlike with off-campus housing which just seems to be doing it for the bottom line.

Threats

- Off-campus student housing is popping up virtually out of nowhere. This is a threat because, in general, students like what is new and in style.
- Off-campus student housing does not have a resident assistant (RA) staff that can “tattle”. This is a threat because a lot of students get really turned off by the RAs and would like less supervision than they would find on-campus.
- Parents are becoming more budget-conscious. This is a threat because they are looking more intensively at housing options rather than just allowing their student to live on campus.
- Ratings sites are becoming more frequently used before signing a lease (Kennesaw State University – Campus Housing, 2014). This is a threat because rating sites are generally used by people who have had a really good experience or a really bad one and the bad ones stick out more.
- The promotional items of off-campus housing are seen frequently on campus. This is a threat in that potential students can clearly see how current students support off-campus housing and gives them the idea that they too should be in support of off-campus housing.

Bibliography

Housing KSU. (n.d.). *Twitter*. Retrieved February 6, 2014, from <https://twitter.com/HousingKSU>

KSU Residence Life - About Us. (n.d.). *KSU Residence Life - About Us*. Retrieved February 6, 2014, from <http://kennesaw.edu/housing/history.shtml>

Kennesaw State University - Campus Housing. (n.d.). *College Prowler*. Retrieved February 5, 2014, from <http://colleges.niche.com/kennesaw-state-university/campus-housing/>

Kennesaw State University Housing. (n.d.). *Facebook*. Retrieved February 5, 2014, from <https://www.facebook.com/HousingKSU>

Public (listed in order of priority)	Characteristics	What do you want them to do?	What is their opinion of the organization?
1. Potential Residents	Looking for “real college experience,” have no prior knowledge of on-campus life, new to college, unsure of what to expect	Choose to spend their first year on campus.	They know about the department and are usually very excited about on-campus living.
2. Current Residents	Already know the lay of the land, have already experienced on-campus life, can help improve the service provided, have option to renew room	Choose to continue living on campus in lieu of the competition.	Mixed opinion. Some residents have very good experiences living on campus, while others not so much.
3. Parents	Want the best for their child, are a big deciding factor in the final housing decision, overly concerned with every option available to their child	Want their child to live on-campus in a safe living environment.	Mixed opinion. Some are not in favor of the rates for rooms or the customer service of Housing.
4. Off-Campus Residents	Generally upperclassmen, knowledgeable of campus and most housing options, very budget-conscience	Choose to leave their current residence and move to an on-campus apartment.	Mostly negative. Most off-campus residents choose to live off-campus because of bad experiences or because they can't afford the rates.

Goal	To increase on-campus residential room sign-ups.
-------------	--

Objectives	1. To increase new resident room sign-ups by 10% by Fall 2014.
	2. To increase current resident room renewals by 20% by Fall 2014.

Tactics	Objective 1	Objective 2
	1. Write and distribute a press release and fact sheet about Residence Life's promotions for on-campus room sign-ups for new residents.	1. Write and distribute a press release about Residence Life's promotions for on-campus room renewals for current residents.
2. Write a pitch letter to pitch press release about ResLife's promotions for on-campus room sign-ups for	2. Write a pitch letter to pitch press release about ResLife's promotions for on-campus room renewals for current	

	new residents.	residents.
	3. Write and distribute feature story about residential life for new residents to major student media outlets and parent magazines.	3. Write and distribute feature story about residential life for new residents to major student media outlets.
	4. Outline and implement online strategies to reach and inform potential residents.	4. Outline and implement online strategies to reach and inform current residents of promotions and benefits of staying on campus.

Strategy	To increase awareness of on-campus living and its benefits among current and potential residents and their parents, I plan to use promotions and testimonials from real residents who have benefitted from living on-campus. These promotions will help families of a lower socioeconomic status and those looking to save some money. Using testimonials will instill in the students that living on campus is really the only way to go if they are looking for the real college experience. These will both help aid in the realization of the students that the department of Residence Life and Housing aims only to help the student succeed in all of their endeavors.
-----------------	---

Strategic Message(s)	The Department of Residence Life is the place for potential and current residents to find their home away from home in a place that completely cares about them.
-----------------------------	--



Department of Residence Life

For Immediate Release

Kennesaw State University Residence Life to Host Nest Lease Celebration

Kennesaw State University Residence Life will host a celebration for all students who signed up for housing for fall 2014.

KENNESAW, Ga. (Mar. 11, 2014) – The Kennesaw State University (KSU) Department of Residence Life will host a Nest Lease Celebration for all fall residential students on April 18 at 7 p.m. in the University Village Center (UVC). The celebration is open to any student who has signed a lease for the upcoming school year.

The Nest Lease Celebration will feature many attractions in honor of new and current residents. The event will be set up like a carnival. Some of the activities that will be available include a Ferris wheel, carnival games and free food. There are also contests planned for a variety of prizes including gift cards, T-shirts, cash, Apple© products and chances to win reduced rent next year.

There will also be opportunities to get to know the Resident Assistants better and to have any questions answered about the on-campus living experience from current residents.

“From what we hear, the students are super excited for this event,” says Natalie Reckard, assistant director of Kennesaw State University Residence Life. “We wanted to give the students something they can be excited about, something that shows just how special an experience living on campus really is. This carnival will hopefully do just that.”

The Nest Lease Celebration is an invite-only event. While it is open to any student who has signed a lease for the fall, an RSVP is required to save a space at the celebration.

More information on the Nest Lease and information on how to RSVP to this event can be found at www.kennesaw.edu/housing/Nest_Lease.

“We really hope this event shows the residents both old and new just how much we appreciate them,” says LaVel Heintz, area coordinator for the University Village. “At KSU, we like to do it big and the residents are why we do it. Without them, KSU culture would be so much more different and without them, we would definitely have no KSU Residence Life. I really hope they see that at the Nest Lease.”

-more-

About Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life:

The KSU Department of Residence Life has facilitated on-campus housing since 2002. The department hosts hundreds of programs each year for residential students. Residence Life provides a year-round on-call staff to assist with any residential needs that may come up. For more information, please visit our website at www.kennesaw.edu/housing.

###

Contact:

Lauren Jacques, public relations assistant
Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life
555-555-5555
ljacque3@gmail.com



Department of Residence Life

Devon Zawko, The Sentinel, dzawko@students.kennesaw.edu, entertainment news

Email subject line: Lease a Nest and Celebrate

Hi Devon,

As a writer for the student newspaper, I know you care very much about major events happening on campus and I have a huge one! Kennesaw State University Residence Life is hosting a Nest Lease on April 18. This event is to celebrate residents, both current and future.

We will have carnival games and a lot of free food for the guests of honor. There will also be prizes to win such as gift cards, T-shirts, cash, Apple© products and chances to win reduced rent next year.

I know your readers are clearly very interested in good times and are (hopefully) interested in getting more involved on campus. It would be absolutely wonderful if you could run the story for this event in your column for *The Sentinel*.

If you need any more information, please feel free to contact me anytime at 555-555-5555. I can provide interviews with staff, pre-event pictures and anything else you might need. The press release for this event is pasted below.

I hope to see you there!

All the best,

Lauren Jacques



Department of Residence Life

“NEST LEASE CELEBRATION” FACT SHEET

Description: The “Nest Lease Celebration” is an event held to thank students for signing up to stay in an on-campus apartment. The event will have many attractions and is set to be one of the largest events the Department of Residence Life will do all year.

Event Date and Time: The event will be held on April 18 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Event Location: The event will be held in the University Village Center attached to the University Village and the surrounding courtyards.

Attractions: Ferris wheel, carnival games, dunk tank, airbrush T-shirts, caricatures, fair food (funnel cakes, corn dogs, etc.), mini roller coaster and more.

Reservation Information: The “Nest Lease Celebration” is an invite-only event. While it is open to any student who has signed a lease for the fall, a RSVP is required to save a space at the celebration.

Special Guests:

- Scrappy the Owl, KSU’s mascot
- Jeff Cooper, Director of Residence Life and Housing
- Adam Sandler, Actor, Comedian and former RA
- Mindy the Monkey, special act

Prizes: All guests will be entered to win one of several big door prizes including an iPad, a Mac Book Pro, gift cards to surrounding area businesses and a chance to be a feature model in an upcoming ad campaign.

Schedule of Events:

Time	Schedule
7 p.m.	Doors Open
7:30-8:30 p.m.	Mindy the Monkey Arrives
8-10 p.m.	Appearance by Scrappy the Owl
8:30-9 p.m.	Speech by Adam Sandler
9-9:30p.m.	Raffle Drawing
9:40-10 p.m.	Closing Speech from Jeff Cooper

About the Department of Residence Life: The Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life has been housing students since 2002. With four communities to choose from, there are more than 3,500 beds available to students. Residence Life employs a full-time staff of 77 resident assistants and has a rotating on-call roster of professional staff members, making sure students are safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Media Contact:

Lauren Jacques
Public Relations Assistant
Kennesaw State University
555-555-2984 (day)
555-123-9876 (evening)
ljacque3@gmail.com

###



Online Strategy Suggestions for Kennesaw State University Department of Residence Life

Website suggestions:

- * Add a constantly updated social calendar. This will keep residents informed as to what is happening around the different communities and will keep them engaged throughout the year.
- * Add an “Ask An RA” page where residents can anonymously ask questions they may be too embarrassed to ask. This provides another way to connect with the RAs, building a connection that will encourage them to renew their leases.
- * Clean up your website. This is very important as a website filled with dead links quickly disengages residents. Make sure to update with current pictures and events that take place that year and not just ones that took place in the past.
- * Use pictures of actual residents for promotion and not just staff members. People like being able to say they know a person from their friend group when they see a poster.

Social media suggestions:

- * Promote RA Twitter accounts. This will provide followers with a more personal face to the organization while also allowing them to better know their on-campus staff.
- * Hold contests more often. Exciting contests promote constant viewership of your social media accounts. Make sure to stay consistent with contests.

- * Regularly monitor social media sites of off-campus competitors. Know what kinds of contests they are holding and when. Use this information for more engaging and efficient content.
- * Have residents “guest host” one of your social media accounts during major events. This will provide a more personal account of what events you’re doing and gives them a more genuine feel.

Blog suggestions:

- * Update the blog regularly—at least once per week. Consistency in updating will promote residential traffic to blog.
- * Hide “Easter Eggs” on the blog (fun additions such as an exclusive graphic). Easter eggs will provide extra attention to the blog, attaining a higher readership page average.



Department of Residence Life

Feature Release

RA Loves His Job—Who Woulda' Thought?

A look into what it means to be a resident for one of the most outstanding RAs on campus.

KENNESAW, Ga. (April 10, 2014) – Another day, another program—this has become the motto for many Resident Assistants (RAs), professional staff members who work for the Department of Residence Life and particularly RA Joe Kim.

Whether he is hosting an individual program or helping out with a large scale celebration, Joe Kim is fully committed to bringing residents as much fun as they can handle.

Kim often begins his day with many texts from his residents asking what events are happening today and as he reads and receives them, he happily answers each and every one with a smile on his face.

“I love that my residents are so involved,” says Kim. “I mean, any RA would. I don’t think I’m all that special—I just got super lucky.”

Around lunch time, it is not uncommon to see Kim sitting in the Commons with a few of his residents talking about whatever hallway drama may have come up the night before or working through some intense school problems.

“I seriously think I have the best RA ever to exist ever in the history of ever,” says Wyatt Kane, resident of the University Village Suites (UVS). “He’s always willing to help me understand my homework and read over my essays and when he isn’t the best on a subject, he can lead me to someone who is.”

After his afternoon classes are over and he is off from his on-campus job tutoring in the math lab, Kim literally runs across campus to his awaiting residents. Oftentimes, he will have an impromptu program already waiting, such as a game or movie night.

“It’s really cool to be able to hang out with an RA,” says Noah Haden, resident of UVS. “My big brother told me after he graduated that RAs are jerks and I would come to hate mine, but nope! He was the first person I met when I got on campus and I’ve always been comfortable going to talk to him.”

-more-

In the off-chance of a crisis, Kim is usually one of the first RAs to step up and help out. He is usually seen running around corralling residents into designated safe zones or making sure his fellow staff members know are fully updated on what is going on.

“I rely on Joe Kim so much,” says Jessie Pniewski, residence director of the UVS. “I probably rely on him more than I should. After the infamous Black Out 2013 and Snowpocalypse parts 1 and 2, he has more than proved himself a great source of help.”

If ever in search for a good time or just someone to talk to, Joe Kim is your man. In all of his work anyone can tell that he loves what he does, which is really all that any resident can ask for.

###

Photos and graphics: High resolution images of Joe Kim playing games with his residents are available. We can also provide an infographic that shows a timeline of a typical day with Kim, as well as programs he has put on over the years.

Media Contact:

Lauren Jacques, director of public relations
Kennesaw State University
555-555-5555
ljacque3@gmail.com