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ROOMMATE CHARACTERISTICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Your relationship with your roommate will play a powerful part in your overall college experience. In order to match you with a roommate whom you will be most compatible with, please answer each question below. The Housing Assignment Services staff uses a computer program that will evaluate and weigh each of your responses, and will attempt to match you with another student whom you would be comfortable living with. Please note that you may not necessarily be matched with another person who answered each question with the same selection, but with someone who would be compatible according to the combined answers of all questions. Also, please take time to read each of the "Tell me more" sections, which will offer an explanation as to why the question was asked, and what you should keep in mind when responding to that question.

1. Which statement best describes you?

- A. I am a morning person and prefer to live with a morning person.
- B. I am a morning person and can live with a night person.
- C. I am a night person and prefer to live with a night person.
- D. I am a night person but can live with a morning person.

Tell me more: Late nights quickly become part of the college routine. 8:00 a.m. classes are also a college reality. Adequate and consistent sleep increase both memory retention and recall. Make sure you communicate with your roommate about your weekly schedule. If you have an early class on Friday, you don't want your roommate to build a late Thursday night into the weekly routine. It is virtually impossible to "come in quietly" at 3:00 a.m., so realize that you are waking up your roommate each time this occurs. It will take some time for you to get in sync with another person's sleep patterns, so it is important to communicate early and often about each other's needs. A major part of your freshman year should be the development of your ability to demonstrate responsibility for yourself. With that in mind, it is important that you understand that when your roommate is inconsiderate of your sleep needs, you have the responsibility to discuss your concerns directly with her. Should you fail in that responsibility, you have contributed to the overall problem.

2. Which statement best describes your preference of study environment in your room?

- A. I prefer a study environment that is very quiet.
- B. I prefer a study environment with some noise (e.g., music, TV, etc.) in the background.
- C. I am able to study regardless of the noise level.
- D. I must have some level of noise in order to study.

Tell me more: Earphones are a fantastic invention. If you need noise, you can have it without infringing on someone else. You should not have to escape your room in order to have a place to study. Nor should your room become a 24 hour quiet sanctuary. In this area, much like so many others, general consideration, communication of needs, and flexibility are key. Most students make too many assumptions that their roommate is fine with noise simply because they have not said otherwise. Conflicts in this area are generally the result of poorly communicated needs. You have the responsibility to be flexible when someone requests quiet time for study AND the responsibility to be reasonable with your need for quiet. All residence hall students engage in a process of both creating and actualizing community expectations. As a member of a community of approximately 40 people, you need to contribute to creating the type of community that is both accommodating of the social needs as well as the academic needs, You will take part in a Community Agreement process during which you will shape group expectations about noise levels.

3. How do you feel about your roommate's significant other frequently spending time in your room?

- A. I would usually be comfortable in this situation.
- B. I would usually agree if I didn't plan to be there.
- C. Only if my roommate asked and I agreed.
- D. I would agree if the significant other was not spending the night.
- E. I would not be comfortable in this situation.

Tell me more: Roommate guests, primarily those of a romantic nature can become especially problematic in living situations regardless of sexual orientation. Residence hall rooms are limited in size and no one appreciates having to share space with someone else's significant other. Overnight stays by guests are the leading cause of roommate tension in the residence halls. Although policies do not limit the number of hours a guest can stay or the type of guest a student chooses to host, it is expected that all roommates agree about who is allowed in the room and the duration of a guest's stay. Even with roommate agreement, guests are not allowed to stay longer than three consecutive nights. Hosts are responsible for all actions of guests and must make sure that guests do not infringe upon community expectations.

4. How do you feel about groups of people socializing in your room?

- A. This would be fine with me except when I am trying to sleep or study in my room.
- B. This would be fine occasionally.
- C. I would be okay only if I didn't plan to be there.
- D. I would expect to find privacy in my room most of the time.

Tell me more: While it can be enjoyable at times to be living in a highly social room, all floor communities eventually develop patterns in which certain rooms are the most common hang-out point for groups of students. Keeping your door open and being open to meeting new people is important, but learn how to set some parameters about your needs for privacy and others' use of your personal property. Make sure that you and your roommate see eye to eye on this issue. If you enjoy having a constant crowd and stream of activity around your room, you must make sure that you continually check with all members of the community to determine if your room is a source of disruption. If you don't enjoy having this stream of activity in or around your living area, it can be difficult to go against the crowd. Make sure you take a step back to examine how

others influence you and make sure you are comfortable with the degree of influence. Every member of the floor is responsible to create and live by community standards even when challenging steps have to be taken.

5. Which statement best describes your standards for the condition of your room?

- A. I like my room to be clean almost always.
- B. I like my room to be generally neat, but I am willing to put up with a little clutter from time to time.
- C. It does not bother me if my room is cluttered and disorganized.

Tell me more: Your room will be clean when you enter it for the first time, but from that point on, it is up to you and your roommate to determine your living conditions. Most people can handle their own mess, but find others' messes annoying. In general, if you keep your clothes put away, take out your trash, there is usually not an issue. It is helpful to establish individual cleaning responsibilities for your room. For example, one person can handle sweeping or vacuuming each week while the other handles the trash. If you are someone who is comfortable living in a more chaotic, messy environment, make sure you periodically ask your roommate if she/he is OK with the conditions in the room. Don't assume that your roommate will say something if bothered. As with sleep and study time, this area requires that you accommodate reasonable requests of your roommate and that you are reasonable in your need for cleanliness.

6. How would you feel about your roommate borrowing or sharing your personal belongings?

- A. I would not mind at all.
- B. I would not mind sharing things like TVs, stereos, etc. but would mind sharing personal items like clothing.
- C. I would not mind if I had been asked and had given my permission.
- D. I would not use other people's things and expect others not to use mine.

Tell me more: Everyone defines "personal" as something different. Roommates generally don't want to come off as rude or territorial and thus fail to communicate that some personal items are completely off limits. It is strongly suggested that each roommate communicates which items are for shared use, items that guests can use, and items that should not be handled by anyone but the owner. We also suggest that you password protect your keyboard on your computer. Many problems arise each year when computers are left unprotected.

7. Residence halls are composed of a wide variety of individuals of different social identities (nationalities, races, sexual orientations, socio economic groups, cultural, and religious backgrounds). Your community members have a multitude of characteristics and values. How do you feel about living on this type of environment?

- A. It's really exciting!
- B. I like it.
- C. I can tolerate it.
- D. I'm not really comfortable with some or all of these differences.

Tell me more: You are expected to learn, grow, and change as a result of your college experience. Exposure to different ways of being and thinking are some of the best ways to closely examine yourself. While it is very beneficial to actively seek out and learn from those who are different than you, it is also understood that everyone has a different level of experience and openness to differences, especially differences in race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The Residence Life staff is highly committed to helping students learn and helping students challenge themselves to explore differences. You should examine and explore how your social identity influences the way you view the world. You should also determine the specific areas of social identity where you have the least exposure and knowledge so that you can establish a sense of what you need to learn in this area while you are in the college environment. If you have the good fortune to live with someone whose social identity is in an area where you lack exposure, please take advantage of this powerful learning opportunity. The Residence Life and the Housing Assignment Services staff do not consider room change requests based on a difference in race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation to be emergency in nature.

8. The University prohibits the use of alcohol when in violation of state law; however, your attitude on alcohol use is important. How would you describe your attitude toward the use of alcohol?

- A. Very approving of its use.
- B. Accepting, if it is used occasionally.
- C. Tolerant, if it is not used in my presence.
- D. I do not tolerate its use.

Tell me more: Both you and your roommate are responsible for what happens in your room. If alcohol is present and you are each underage, you will both face judicial action. Excessive alcohol use on or off campus virtually guarantees roommate conflict. Coming home intoxicated is rarely something that occurs without disruption and often results in some fairly inconsiderate actions. If your roommate is engaging in alcohol use in a manner that is disruptive to you, do not ignore it in hope that it will go away. This is an issue that must be confronted early before the roommate relationship is damaged beyond repair. Those who frequently disrupt the community with alcohol related issues not only damage the environment for the whole floor, but place themselves in situations that have a high potential for harm. If you observe a community member in need of assistance, please do all you can to assist and alert the staff so that help can be obtained.

9. I see my room as a place to be used primarily for:

- A. Studying
- B. Socializing
- C. Quiet, sleep, and relaxation
- D. Playing (music, TV, computer games, video games)

Tell me more: Some students see their room as the primary study sanctuary. Other students see the room as purely a place to socialize and relax. Chances are that these two types will be living together. Up front, early communication of how each person expects the room to be used can eliminate a great deal of frustration. If you are the type of person who invests 30 hours a week into video games, chances are that you are driving

your roommate out (unless that person happens to be player #2). The most important thing to keep in mind in this area is that balance is best. Your room should be a place where all the listed options are possible.

10. In dealing with conflicts:

- A. I am able to clearly express my feelings and concerns.
- B. I will generally express my concerns in a joking fashion so that the other person gets the hint.
- C. I usually wait until I am really annoyed or angry.
- D. I am not comfortable asserting myself in conflict.

Tell me more: Failures to assert or ineffective assertiveness techniques will contribute greatly to every possible roommate problem. Most students believe that they are both effective problem solvers and effective communicators in conflict. The reality is that almost everyone could improve in expressing themselves in conflict and negotiation. If you are the type to “drop hints” or to make a off-handed remark or joke about things that bother you, don't expect the other person to change. It is incredibly rare that someone will hear and understand your concerns without you clearly expressing them. It is fully expected that you will experience conflict. In fact, negotiating conflict is something you should encounter enough so that you become skilled by the end of your college career. If you are concerned that you may have potential for conflict with your roommate, we suggest that you make every effort to contact this person even before you arrive on campus so that you can negotiate boundaries. If you are experiencing frustration in this area after move-in, you can work with your Resident Assistant or Hall Director to develop a strategy to express yourself to your roommate. The Residence Life staff can also act as impartial mediators in conflict situations. Please note that avoidance of conflict is both a guarantee of continued problems and will limit your success later in life. Take advantage of the college experience to become a conflict expert. It is also important that you understand how your own social identity (race, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion) can influence how you and your fellow community members respond to conflict. Take the time to get to know all community members so that conflict can be navigated smoothly.

11. Although smoking is prohibited in the Residence Halls, your smoking habits can influence your roommate relationship. Do you smoke?

- A. Frequently.
- B. Occasionally.
- C. No.

Tell me more: If you are a smoker, please realize that you must never smoke within the residence hall. It will be noticed quickly by your neighbors and those living above or near you, and is a policy violation. Actions such as covering smoke detectors are considered serious violations. Some Complex Community Councils also set guidelines for smoking near the exterior of the building; remember that you are responsible for following rules as established by your peers and community. If you would like to change the guidelines for smoking near the building, please become active with your Complex Community Council.

12. Do you object to your roommate smoking?

- A. Yes.
- B. Yes, and I am smoke-sensitive.
- C. No.

Tell me more: If you are a non-smoker, you may notice the smell of smoke on your roommate's clothes. If you are allergic to smoke or are very sensitive to the smell of smoke, you should answer "Yes, and I am smoke-sensitive". Please understand that selecting this option will not result in any special accommodation such as an assignment in an air-conditioned hall.