

# Roommate Tips/Tools For Success

Your happiness in your living environment is directly related to your relationship with your roommate(s). Personal problems with a roommate can cause unnecessary stress in trying to deal with the conflict. And remember: *friends* are not always the best *roommates*.

In general, living with other people during your off-campus living experience can be fun and exciting. Keep in mind, however, there are many implications that go along with signing a lease with other individuals.

## **Clear expectations**

The best way to present clear expectations is by drafting/signing a roommate contract, and agreeing that each roommate retains a copy. Feel free to utilize SLLO and/or Housing Office to get a sample roommate contract. It is imperative that you and your roommate(s) discuss all items on the roommate contract and come to an agreement.

## **Unforeseen circumstances**

You can't predict everything in life, but you can certainly plan for the future. For example, a roommate may run into financial difficulties and be forced to move out without paying rent. This may leave the financial burden on the remaining roommate(s). Decide how the household would deal with a situation such as this. In addition, students often plan to study abroad and try to find a replacement roommate. Discuss if the remaining roommates will have a say in the selection of a replacement roommate. Discussing such scenarios can help resolve potential conflict in the future, if expectations are clear from the very beginning.

## **Discuss the lease term**

Although most off-campus leases are 11 1/2- or 12 month leases, many students choose to go home during the summer months. Regardless of whether you are living in the rental property, you are responsible for paying your rent on time. Make sure you and your roommates are aware of one another's summer plans and that you are all in agreement on issues such as:

- Will each roommate be responsible for paying a share of the utilities, even if he/she is not residing in the property?
- If a roommate wants to sublet his/her room (and the landlord permits this), is everyone comfortable with the agreement? Will the current roommates have a say in selecting the new/temporary roommate?

## **House rules to consider:**

- 1 Will the household have quiet study hours?
- 2 Will everyone share the cost of food or shop individually and have a hands off policy?
- 3 Will everyone be permitted to have overnight guests (and if so, rules pertaining to that)?
- 4 Will there be stipulations on what temperature the thermostat will be set at?
- 5 Will the household have a cleaning schedule?
- 6 Will everyone be permitted to host parties (and if so, rules pertaining to that)?