



**BRONSON
UNIVERSITY**

A Case Study

Institution: Rowan University

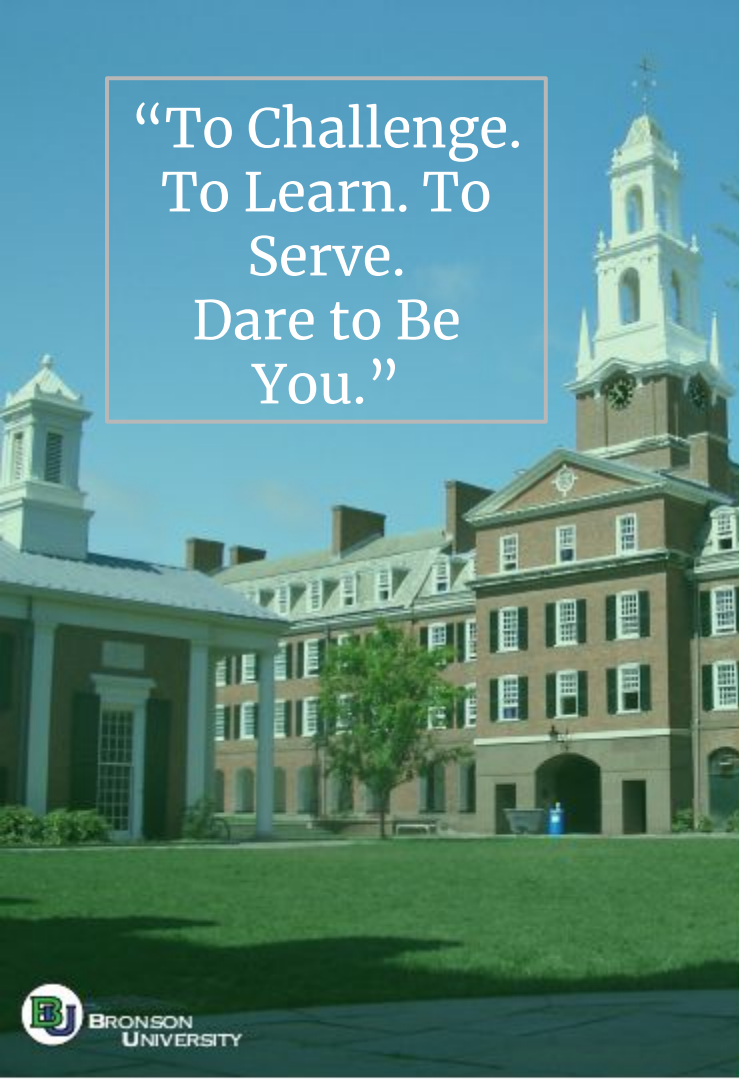
Team: Megan Henry, Andrew Gerber, Eleni Dendrinis

Advisor: Dr. Andrew Tinnin

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A photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent white steeple and clock tower. The building has many windows with black shutters and a covered entrance on the left. It is set against a clear blue sky with a green lawn in the foreground.

“To Challenge.
To Learn. To
Serve.
Dare to Be
You.”

Bronson University

- Location: Lewis County, NY
- Public Institution
- Enrollment: 11,245
 - 8,763 undergraduate
 - 2,482 graduate
- Mascot: Bobcats



Mission:

Bronson University is committed to providing high-quality education to students from a diverse background, striving to become an innovative model of education through inclusive and responsive experiences and instruction.

Values:

Inclusivity | Innovation | Responsibility
Academic Freedom | Community

The Office of Residence Life

- 4,872 Residents
- 5 Residence Halls
 - Douglas Hall
 - Centennial Commons
 - Alexandria Apartments
 - Goodman Hall
 - Luxman Commons
- 5 Resident Directors
- 140 Resident Assistants
- 6 Area Coordinators

“Just BU!”





The Assignment

- As the ResLife Team at Bronson University make preparations for training, Associate Director Jonathan Herbst tasked the team with developing changes to the training regimen.
- The team would like to expand on training by providing a variety of subject matter through an online education platform.





Training Model

Learn One

1. Complete self-paced modules

Teach One

3. Learning reinforced through student-led, monthly resident events and staff PD trainings

Do One

2. Demonstrate understanding by completing integrated assessments

Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion

- Self guided learning program
- Built on Canvas learning software
 - Already familiar to students
 - Multimedia delivery capability
- Utilizing written content and instructional video features created by the ResLife Staff
- Knowledge Check assessments to foster knowledge retention
- Course would open June 1st, 2019 and close August 11th 2019, just before RA training





Module Software – Canvas

A screenshot of the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) dashboard. The interface is clean and modern, with a light blue sidebar on the left containing navigation icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and features a large green card with a blue bobcat head illustration. Below the illustration, the text reads 'Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion', 'RA-100-001', and 'Manual Courses'. To the right of the main content, there are sections for 'To Do' and 'Recent Feedback', both showing 'Nothing for now'. A 'View Grades' button is located at the bottom right of the dashboard.

Dashboard

Account

Dashboard

Courses

Calendar

Inbox

Help

Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion

RA-100-001

Manual Courses

To Do

Nothing for now

Recent Feedback

Nothing for now

View Grades



Module Software – Canvas

The screenshot displays the Canvas LMS interface for the 'Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion' course. The top navigation bar shows the course name and a 'Modules' link. A left sidebar contains navigation icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and Help. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Introduction' and 'Residential Common Sense'. The 'Introduction' section includes 'Lesson 1 - Bronson University 101', 'Campus Resources A-Z', 'The Bobcat Campus Tour', and a 'Knowledge Check' (0 pts | Submit). The 'Residential Common Sense' section includes 'Fire/Safety Policy and Procedure', another 'Knowledge Check' (0 pts | Submit), and a 'Video: The Fire/Safety Walk Through'.

Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion > Modules

Account
Dashboard
Courses
Calendar
Inbox
Help

Home
Announcements
Modules
Conferences

▼ Introduction

Lesson 1 - Bronson University 101

📄 Campus Resources A-Z

▶ The Bobcat Campus Tour

📄 Knowledge Check
0 pts | Submit

▼ Residential Common Sense

📄 Fire/Safety Policy and Procedure

📄 Knowledge Check
0 pts | Submit

▶ Video: The Fire/Safety Walk Through

Bobcat Residential Assistant Summer Immersion

Topics to be covered include:

- Bronson University 101
- International Student Resources
- Residential Common Sense
- Constructive Conversations
- Resident Relations/Expectations
- Social Media 101
- Student Disability
- Mental Health First Aid
- Health and Wellness
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness



Bronson University 101

- Campus Resources A-z
 - Highlights include the Howard Counseling and Wellness Center, Bursar, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Tutoring Center, Carlton Library and Research Staff, Ways to Get Involved, etc.
- Campus Map Review Quiz



International Student Resources

What should we know?

- **CULTURE:** Managing roommate challenges
- **SUPPORT:** Appropriate campus resources
- **SOCIAL LIFE:** Homesickness, loneliness, friends

What can we do?

- **ADVOCATE:** helping residents navigate services
- **PAIR:** international and domestic residents
- **ENCOURAGE:** active participation in campus life



Residential Common Sense

Meeting Policies

➤ Policies to Follow

- Room Furniture
- Decorations
- Fire Hazards
- Common Area
- Patios/Balconies (if applicable)
- Pets
- How to Perform a Walk Through



Constructive Conversations

- How to have better and more productive conversations (or conflicts) that will help you communicate more effectively and professionally
 1. Listening
 2. Empathy
 3. Labeling Emotions
 4. Summarizing
 5. Brevity
 6. Building Mutual Ground
 7. Genuineness



Resident Relations/Expectations

- Basic Job Requirements
 - On call rotation, office hours, bulletin boards, bi-monthly programs, etc.
- A Guide to Community Development
 - How to facilitate group learning and relationship building most effectively
- Barrier Setting
 - What do appropriate RA/resident relationships look like and how to communicate your expectations to your residents



Social Media 101

Things to Consider When Using Social Media

- Do no harm
- Does it pass the publicity test?
- Maintain transparency
- Be a valued member
- Think before you post
- Respect your audience
- Protect your identity
- Monitor comments
- Correct mistakes



Student Disability

- **Who are residents with disabilities?**
 - Diverse, including physical, intellectual, and other disabilities; some are “invisible”
- **How do we accommodate disabilities?**
 - Room assignments match documented resident need to appropriate assistive amenities
- **What can I do to help?**
 - Help residents to access Office of Disability Support as needed, for documentation, services, and other needs



Mental Health First Aid

- An emergency action plan that instructs residents on how to respond to emergent signs of mental health and disorder

*Based on Mental Health First Aid USA and NCAA Guidelines

The LCARR Model

1. Listen
2. Compassion
3. Ask Questions
4. Refer
5. Respect



Drug and Alcohol Awareness

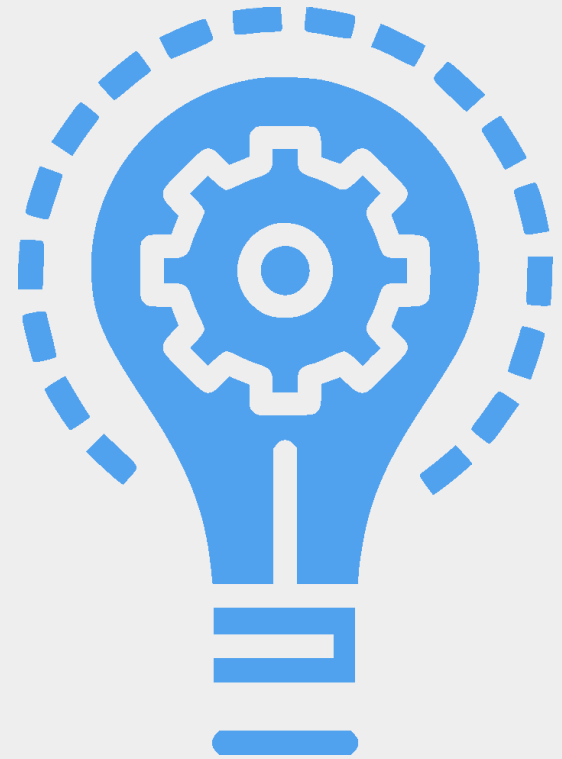
- **LEARN:** Drug and alcohol policies and procedures
- **CONNECT:** Your hall with campus resources, policies, and awareness
- **REMEMBER:** RA enforcement dos and don'ts, & warning signs of substance abuse
- **KNOW:** how you can help and who to contact for help

**DRUG
FREE
CAMPUS
& WORKPLACE**



Background & Rationale

- Program design conscious of evidence-based standards for best practices:
 - Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) guidelines
 - NASPA guidelines for student affairs professionalism





Assessment

Formative

- Checks for understanding
- Learner self-evaluations
- Learner-submitted questions

Summative

- Brief quizzes following each module
- RAs create programs and activities based on learning
- Feedback & surveys after implementation

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Bronson University: A Case Study

Rowan University

Team Leader: Megan Henry

Eleni Dendrinis, Andrew Gerber

Advisor: Dr. Andrew Tinnin

The story continues...

Bronson University Resident Directors Eleni, Megan, and Andrew were on their way to the Office of Residence Life, brimming with energy and excitement to warm them against the winter chill. As they trekked across the peaceful campus, snow began to fall, as if on cue. The team had worked diligently over the past few weeks to come up with a proposal for a virtual online training for residence life student staff, and they hoped that their ideas would be well received by their supervisors. Meanwhile, the Director of Housing and Residence Life, Kelly, the Associate Director, Jonathan, and the rest of the leadership team of directors and coordinators awaited the team in the office conference room, cupping warm mugs of coffee between their palms.

“Good morning!” the team sang out in unison, as they entered the conference room.

“We’re so excited to talk to you about our idea for the new virtual RA training course,” Megan added, as she and the others busily hung their snow-dusted coats in the corner, and unpacked their materials for the presentation.

Andrew started, “When you approached us several weeks ago to come up with some ideas for today’s meeting, we were very excited--”

--but we knew we had our work cut out for us too,” Eleni added.

“That said, I really think what we have to show you today is something you’re going to like,” Megan assured.

“Well,” Kelly responded, ever equanimous, “we’re certainly interested to see what you have prepared for us. We’re ready whenever you are.”

The team brought their presentation up on the screen, the leading slide bearing a familiar image of the Bronson campus on a perfect, warm spring day, flanked by a spirited touch of Bronson blue and green.

Jonathan remarked, “You know, by the time the campus is back to those warm days, I hope that we’ll be making finishing touches on the virtual training that you’re proposing.”

“And so do we,” Eleni added. “To start, we refocused on Bronson University itself--who we are as an institution, what our vision and mission are, what values bring our campus together. It was important to us to keep these tenets in mind as we designed every aspect of this virtual training, so that this new initiative can be integrated with our goals as a residence life office, to the goals of our division, and more broadly, to the objectives of our institution as a whole.” The team continued from here, situating the presentation with regard to the university’s size and scope, its tenets, and the reach of the Office of Residence Life.

“I like what you’ve done here,” Kelly interjected, “the fact that you’ve built this proposal to serve the goals of our office, and the mission of our institution, shows that you’re thinking about how we can work toward a culture of integration and assessment, with practices that are impactful to the attainment of shared objectives.”

“That’s exactly what we had in mind, Kelly. And in thinking about some of the institutional values we referenced in an earlier slide, it was our understanding that this supplemental, asynchronous

virtual training should be *innovative*, that it should be *inclusive*, that it should support the learner's sense that they have some *freedom* in learning the material. And when the learner is finished, this training should continue to have impact, helping residence life staff to feel empowered, *responsible*, able to apply what they learned and enrich their halls with a sense of *community*, where residents benefit from having well-informed staff living among them," Andrew said. "As a result, our training model was envisioned in three parts--learn one, do one, teach one. This framework ensures that we address learning at key points during, directly after, and in the months following the online training. In 'learning one,' we have devised this training to consist of a series of self-paced modules, which will engage the residence life staffer in a multimodal online course. There will be brief quiz questions that will pop up along the way, to help those taking the course to check their understanding at key points, and they will always be able to submit questions to us if they need extra help understanding something or if they run into a problem. Next, we want the learners to 'do one,' and this simply means that we want those taking the course to demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned by completing the module. This will be achieved through quizzes at the end of each one. Finally, we want to make sure that our residence life student staff continue to benefit after they have completed the modules, and we'll do this by engaging residence life staff in the professional development trainings that are usually run by senior staff each month. We'll make some time in our monthly PD sessions for the RAs to collaborate, in teams, to provide their fellow staff members a training on a topic that was covered in the virtual course. They will be able to go back into the online course modules to remind them of important topics, they will be allowed to format the training in any way they choose, and it will engage them with the content in a new way, to reinforce their learning in the months that follow."

"Our training will be run through Canvas which can be shown here. The course would open on June 1st, 2019 and close August 11th, 2019, just before the RA training begins. We chose Canvas as our learning software because we truly feel that it is easy to use and familiar for both student and administrators while allowing us to deliver this multimedia content and assessment - just like you see here in our module mock-up on slide 10," Megan explained. "I know this image gives you a preview, but it's time for the moment we have all been waiting for - the topics! These are the 10 topics we chose as the most important and appropriate content to include in our online training. These topics are both new and old, but mostly they don't discredit anything that we are already doing well in our traditional training and seek to complement the learning and performance of our RAs from the moment they get back to campus in August."

"Bronson University 101 is the nuts and bolts of campus," Megan continues. "This is especially helpful for new RAs as it gives an overview of what the resources and location are on campus that they need to know through information packets and a virtual campus walkthrough. Maybe this student has never even heard of the Bursar office before, let alone been there - who knows! This module is a good introduction to get into the RA mindset and prepare RAs with answers to questions that aspiring undergraduates will have."

"We included the module on International Student Resources to highlight this student population, who have needs that may differ from those of domestic residents," Andrew explained. "The module will focus on what residence life staff should know about international residents, and also what they can do to

support their residents from abroad. International students are more likely to have difficulty adjusting socially and making friends and may experience more feelings of loneliness and homesickness. We need our staff in residence halls to be aware of this, and also to know how they can try and guide their international students toward being engaged with campus life and campus activities, and how they can help them access services and support they may need.”

“It is important for our staff to give their residents support and also keep them aligned with our policies. Residential Common Sense was a lesson created to mention policies that are often broken by residents. These policies include unsafely moving furniture, lighting candles, and hanging up picture frames by nailing them to the wall. We would also mention that the residents who reside in our Alexandria Apartments must keep the patio/balcony spaces uncluttered and for health and sanitation reasons, no pets are allowed unless given special permission by Kelly.” Eleni stated as she smiles at Kelly.

“I can’t wait for that!” Kelly said, laughing and a bit sarcastic.

Eleni continued, “Many residents tend to break policy; therefore, our RAs are the ones responsible to have that conversation with their residents. This is where Constructive Conversations comes into play. Our staff will have to go through many tough conversations on duty so giving them the resources to learn how to have a productive conversation is imperative. In the training, we go through steps to better their communication skills, such as listening, empathy, labeling emotions, summarizing, brevity, building mutual ground, and genuineness.”

“Stemming off of conversations, we move on to Resident Relations/Expectations,” Megan chimed in. “This begins with some basic content - job description type stuff of what the RA position is expected to do. We then address the less articulated concepts of how to build good communities amongst your residents and how to set clear and reasonable barriers with them. We have an overview of what this looks like, with some examples of practices and language; this would be a great asset to RAs, as this can be an especially awkward topic to bridge amongst peers who oversee peers.”

“We also have expectations of our staff to always be professional and respectful even when off duty,” Eleni stated. “They will always reflect our department even when they’re not wearing our blue and green polos. That is why we think it is important to mention social media etiquette with Social Media 101. The points highlighted on this slide were areas we wanted to dive deeper in, such as being respectful and mindful of their audience, not sharing personal information to strangers, and really thinking about their posts and comments before they hit that ‘post’ button.” Eleni explained.

“Our residents with disabilities have very important needs, so we were sure to include a module on this topic. Even though a lot of the accommodations provided to our residents with disabilities are handled by the senior staff in this office, in collaboration with our Office of Disability Services, our RAs still need to know how to support these residents appropriately. This starts with educating the staff on what student disabilities can be, including some that are visible, or obvious, and others that may be less visible, like intellectual impairments and psychiatric needs. We want them to know that there is no set profile for a student with a disability and that disabilities are incredibly diverse from individual to individual. As a result, we’ll also include material on some of the room setups and room amenities that may be included to make resident accommodations accessible. In addition, our staff will need to know

more about what services our campus offers, through the Office of Disability Services, who they can contact there, and how to direct students there for additional support.”

Megan looks hopefully out at her colleagues in the conference room. “Has anyone ever heard of Mental Health First Aid before?”

Martha, one of the area coordinators present in the original staff meeting, lit up. “Oh, yes! I thought of exactly this topic as well when this type of training came to mind! It’s like Red Cross CPR and First Aid training, but for response to situations that involve mental health and disorder emergencies, right?”

“Exactly!” Megan proclaimed, “This module, inspired by that very training concept and the guidelines of the NCAA, would provide our students with an action plan when responding to mental health crises. I came up with this acronym, LCARR - like the thing you drive but with an L in front and two R’s. It stands for listen, compassion, ask questions, refer or report, and respect. With some fine tweaking from our team, it is my hope that this checklist will help RAs identify what a student in crisis looks like and when it is necessary to call in help. Also, as a side note, I could not find any good, residential life or university supported checklists in my research besides the ones provided by the NCAA. I may have found a dissertation topic for the future!”

Everyone in the room chuckled as Eleni moved on to the next topic. “The following topic has become very popular on college campuses, Health and Wellness. Addressing it with our staff and providing advice could hopefully help them better their own wellbeing. Unfortunately, this job can take a toll on students, so providing them tips on breaking bad habits, like going to sleep late, and building good habits, like eating breakfast in the morning, to Marie Kondo their spaces and become more organized, and telling them the benefits of taking some time here and there to rest and relax will hopefully help them when they are feeling stressed. We would also like to encourage them to get involved not only on campus but in our community of Lewis County. We would like to provide them opportunities to volunteer around the community throughout the year!” Eleni said excitedly.

“And speaking of health and wellness, Drug and Alcohol Awareness is kind of an old classic when it comes to topics for residence life staff trainings, but it’s such an important one!” Andrew added. “To keep it really fresh and relevant, we would construct this module to be mindful of the latest research on student substance use, including relevant campus policy that applies to e-cigarettes and information on other substance use trends that have developed in the past few years. It’s just as important for our staff to be aware of university policy and procedure for substance use and violations as it is for residents; so, we’ll include material to help train our staff on how to introduce awareness and resources in their halls. Enforcing policy on substance use can often be tricky for our RAs; their job is to enforce the rules, but if they are seen as sticklers, their residents may be more distrustful, and hide substance use, which is a concern. So, this module would help our staff in the residence halls to navigate that responsibility, and also would help educate them on how to spot substance abuse issues and warning signs.”

“Now that you’ve heard about all the course modules, and have gotten a feel for the course format, we wanted to start wrapping up, by giving you some background on our rationale for the training,” Megan explained. “In formulating our ideas for these modules, we were cognizant of widely recognized, well-supported standards for best practices in the field of student affairs. So many of these

topics we would cover in the Canvas course relate to programs, services, and offices that exist on our campus. For example, student health and wellness is supported by our Campus Health Services office, as well as our Center for Campus Recreation.”

“So, we wanted to make sure that these topics would be presented to learners in a way that student affairs professionals and experts would agree with,” Eleni continued. “As a result, these modules would be constructed in reference to standards created by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, which are guidelines that departments on our campus already put to use in building their programming and services. In addition, in holding our student staff to the highest standard of professionalism, we can integrate NASPA Standards of Professional Practice, where appropriate, into the professional ethics that we introduce to our staff in these modules.”

“That’s right. And finally, we wanted to talk about how we would use assessment to measure the outcomes of this training, how we would use regular evaluation to advance us toward the goals that we set to achieve by creating this course in the first place. We would integrate both formative and summative assessments into our plan, some of which we have touched on already in our presentation. Our formative assessments would include the brief pop-up questions for understanding that we would add at key points throughout each module. In addition, we would include learner self-evaluations, such as brief reflective learning prompts after certain topics, to get a better idea of how our learners are engaging with the material. Finally, the questions submitted to us, by learners in the course, would provide us an idea of what they are understanding, and what they may need some extra help with.”

“And we can’t have formative assessment without some summative assessment too, so that we can get an idea of what our staff have learned directly after and long after they are done with the course,” Megan explained. “Our techniques for summative assessment would include the quizzes at the end of each module.

“These quizzes would be more of a review tool for the learners, not a punitive thing--we would allow those in the course to take the quizzes again, until they achieved a score of at least 80% correct answers, so that they could review the course and review material they may have forgotten,” Eleni added. “Not to mention, we’re going to assign the student staff to create their own PD trainings for each month, based around topics from the online course. And of course, we’ll gather feedback about the course on surveys administered afterwards, to see what kinds of feedback for improvement our student staff have. That way, we can continuously improve our virtual training, from year to year.”

“Very well done, Eleni, Andrew, and Megan,” Jonathan said. “You clearly put a great deal of thought into this process and what it would look like.”

“I like the looks of the Canvas model from your mockups in the presentation,” Kelly added. “I thoroughly appreciate the fact that you kept the ‘Netflix mini-series’ idea going with the inclusion of videos in modules paired with the written content and assessments. This sort of setup would cater to most of the different types of learners that we typically see on staffs like this.”

“Additionally, you left it completely self-directed,” chimed in Mark. “Multimedia delivery on a asynchronous model definitely seems the way to go with this sort of thing.”

“You all did a great job,” Kelly commended. “I look forward to developing this more with your team and implementing this for training this coming summer.”

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