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Spending Time with Roger After Dark

RAD offers an alternative place to hang out Friday nights, away from the peer pressure to party hard



February 18, 2014 | Leah Catania '14

BRISTOL, R.I. – For many college students, life on campus bears more freedom than they may be used to. Far from the restricting eyes of parents and without the all-encompassing responsibility of the “adult” world, it’s no secret that some see the social environs as a carte blanche, of sorts. Still, there is a healthy percentage of students who seek a sober social life when their peers have abandoned the dorm for a slightly wilder party.

Roger After Dark (RAD) was founded for Roger Williams students in search of substance-free alternative social outlets. This student organization hosts events on Fridays from 10 p.m. to midnight in Global Heritage Hall. Sarah Santiago, coordinator of residence life, serves as co-coordinator for the group, which by all accounts is thriving. Here’s her take on RAD’s activities, goals and future plans:

- **Origin Story:** Launched in fall 2012 by the RWU Alcohol & Other Drug Task Force – a group of staff and students who create and review University alcohol and drug policies – RAD was formed in direct response to providing an alternative to the party culture that plagues some campuses.
- **Do I Stay or Do I Go:** Classes have wrapped for the weekend and it’s Friday night – for many students residing on campuses across the country, it can feel as if they only have two choices: go out partying or stay in their dorm. But at RWU, RAD delivers a fun, comfortable and safe place to hang out on Friday nights.
- **The ‘Place to Be’ Scene:** With one and a half years under its belt, RAD has established its events as the place to be where students can enjoy substance-free entertainment.
- **If You Build It, They Will Socialize:** “Yes, we give them things to do, and yes, we feed them, because that brings a lot of them in,” Santiago says. “But we really just want a place for people to be.” RAD events often have a theme, activity

or food to lure in a crowd – but the mission is just to offer a place for students to socialize.

- **You'll Never Walk (or Dance) Alone:** There's no need to worry that you'll show up for an event, only to find lackluster turnout. Each RAD event averages an attendance of 75 to 100 people. Pretty popular for a substance-free Friday night!
- **Superheroes and Mad Scientists:** On any given Friday night, RAD organizes activities from the low-key – watching a movie to singing karaoke and playing trivia and board games – to the wild. During superheroes night students danced up a storm, while on mad science night they explored hair-raising experiments.
- **Buddy Up:** RAD teams up with a club or organization for each event, leveraging its larger-than-average budget – as a substance-free group, RAD is funded by alcohol and drug violation fines via the Kelly Fund – and established identity to bolster other clubs and organizations' own presence on campus.
- **#Winning:** At last year's National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) regional conference, RAD was named Rhode Island's New Program of the Year, as well as the Outstanding Program of the Year by the Massachusetts College Personnel Association (MCPA). Santiago emphasized that the latter award was quite the achievement for RAD – it's one thing for a Rhode Island-based organization to be welcomed into the MCPA, but even more exceptional to actually be given an award as a school from a different state.
- **Get Pumped for Johnny Cupcakes:** This Friday, February 21st, RAD will co-sponsor a highly anticipated event with Hawkward, Campus Entertainment Network, and Student Programs & Leadership. At 9 p.m. in the Upper Commons, learn entrepreneurial tips from Johnny Cupcakes – the young mogul who turned a business selling cupcake-character t-shirts out of the trunk of his car to a nationwide sensation. The fun continues from 10 p.m. to midnight in the GHH Atrium, where students will sing karaoke, listen to a performance by student a capella group Hawkward, and design their own t-shirts.
- **Substance-Free Off Campus:** For substance-free fun off campus, Santiago suggests checking out the Newport Winter Festival, which runs through Sunday, February 23rd, with a full slate of events from live music, to stand-up comedy, and a polar plunge amid other family-oriented activities.

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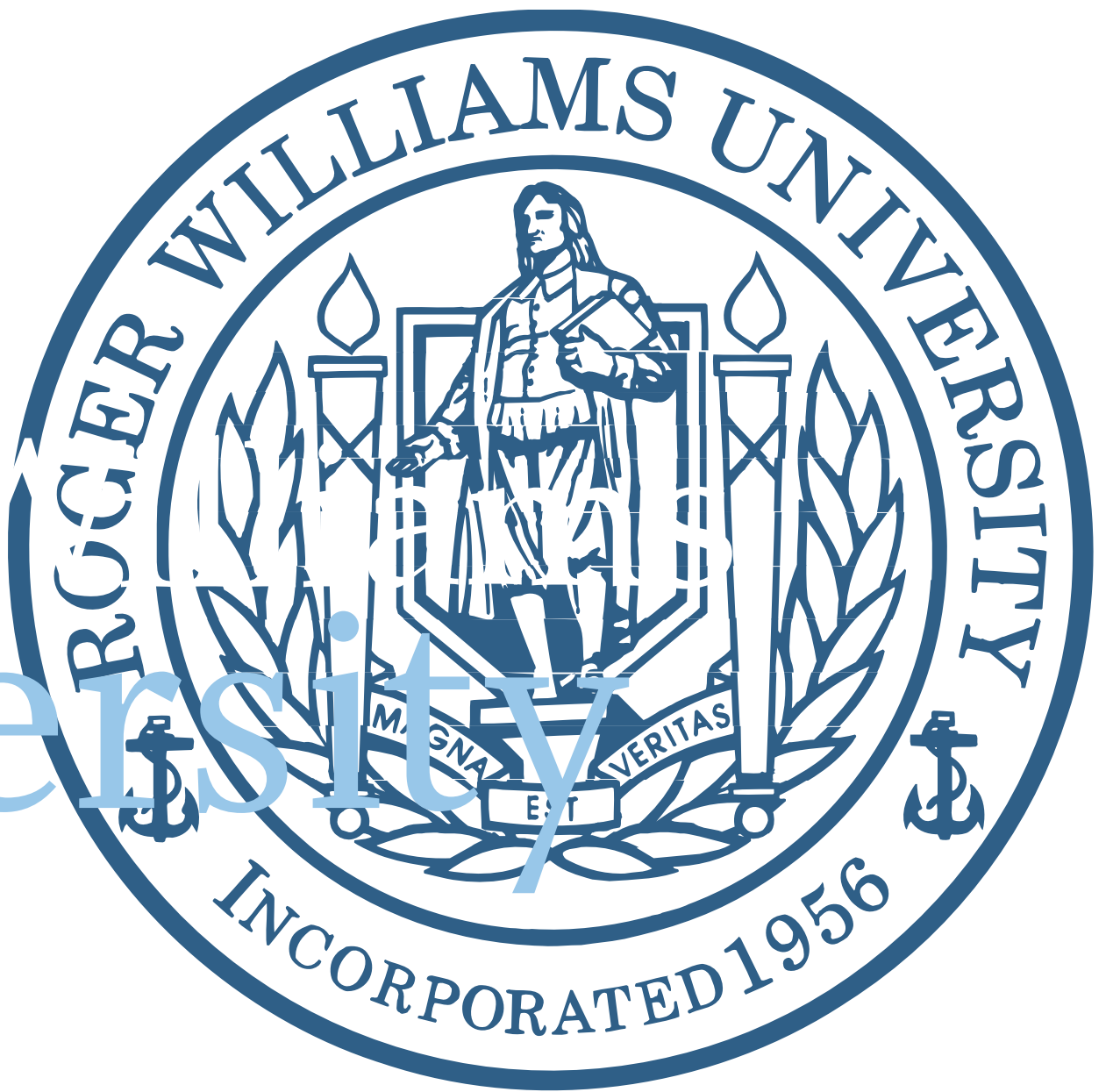
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