RESIDENT ASSISTANT POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Resident Assistant (RA) – Office of Housing and Residence Life
Reports To: Area Director
Supervises: N/A
Contract Date Range: August 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Rutgers University - Newark residence facilities exist to provide an opportunity for students to extend their learning experiences beyond the classroom, library and laboratory. The Office of Housing & Residence Life attempts to create a group living environment in which each student is offered an opportunity to develop as an individual in an atmosphere which encourages emotional and intellectual growth as well as self-government. Additionally, the Office of Housing & Residence Life is committed to creating an environment which values and promotes an appreciation for diversity of lifestyles, cultures and people.

Since an RA has the opportunity to work closely with students over an extended period of time, they are in the unique position of being able to positively influence student growth. RA's work to create a positive environment by fostering a sense of community within the residence facilities, by providing help and assistance to students, and by working with students and staff to ensure the best possible operation of the residence facilities.

I. QUALIFICATIONS
   A. Personal qualities of maturity, self-reliance, motivation, initiative, responsibility, self-esteem and integrity.
   B. Strong interpersonal skills.
   C. Leadership potential.
   D. Good conduct standing with the University and the Office of Housing & Residence Life (no current disciplinary probation or outstanding judicial fines).
   E. Have and maintain a minimum of 2.50 Cumulative GPA at the undergraduate level and 3.0 at the graduate level and maintain a minimum of a 2.00 Semester GPA for any semester while serving as a Resident Assistant.
   F. Be a full-time, matriculated, confirmed Rutgers University – Newark student. Resident Assistants are specifically required to make appropriate academic progress by completing and passing at least 12 credit hours per semester while they are employed.
   G. PLEASE NOTE: Candidates for the RA position would need to meet the academic requirements detailed in “E” & “F” during the Fall Semester immediately preceding a Spring appointment or in the Spring Semester immediately preceding a Fall appointment. Candidates being considered for a Fall Semester appointment may generally be given the first Summer Session at Rutgers Newark to bring their Cumulative GPA up to the requirement if they do not meet the requirement at the end of the Spring Semester.
   H. Be at least of sophomore standing at the time the agreement becomes effective.
   I. Must have personal cell phone for contact in case of emergency.
   J. No prior housing/on-campus living experience required.
II. TERMS OF AGREEMENT
   A. Period of Agreement
      1. The period of employment is for the entire academic year, including Fall Training which is held prior to the Fall Semester and closing the facilities which occurs after the last day of final exams.
      2. An RA has the option to re-apply for another year. Reappointment is contingent upon the staff member’s continued ability to meet all qualifications, successful completion of tasks, positive written evaluations by their supervisor and exhibition of growth in the position.
         a. For returning staff members who are not able to commit for the entire academic year, placement is based on the needs of the department and cannot be guaranteed. Exceptions must be submitted in writing to the Director of Residence Life for review.
         b. For all staff members who terminate their contract prematurely they may be responsible for paying for the time they spent as a Resident Assistant.
      3. The RA will report prior to the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester and each vacation period to participate in all scheduled training and to assist with the check-in of students. Similarly, RA’s will be required to remain in the halls at the end of semester and vacation periods until all assigned duties have been completed. Specific dates for arriving and departing will be established on a year to year basis.
      4. The residential facilities remain open for student use during vacation periods in the academic year. During these times it is necessary to have staff on duty to handle emergency situations. Staff members assigned to these locations must agree to work on a rotating basis during these periods. Staff will be compensated with a meal allowance for each day on duty in the event that the dining hall is closed.
   B. Time Off
      1. Resident Assistants are permitted to be away from campus two evenings or one weekend per month on a non-cumulative basis. This time must be pre-arranged and approved by supervisor.
         a. A weekend is generally defined as extending from 6:00 p.m. Friday until 5:00 p.m. Sunday.
         b. Restrictions may be necessary for special weekends during the academic year.
   C. Living Arrangements
      1. For the period of employment, Resident Assistants must reside in University Housing.
      2. The Office of Housing & Residence Life will make final building and floor assignments according to experience, abilities and Department needs and objectives.
         a. The Office of Housing & Residence Life has the right to re-assign an RA to another room/section/building at any time if the situation warrants. Prior consultation, if possible, will be attempted.
   D. Remuneration
      1. Resident Assistants receive room and partial board, an allocation of raider dollars, and a book stipend each semester.
2. Resident Assistants may not accept remuneration beyond that provided by the Office of Housing & Residence Life for services they perform in their capacity as a Resident Assistant.

E. Time Commitment

1. Work Load
   a. Because of the nature of this position, it should be understood that work as a staff member in the residential facilities is not easily translated into hours worked per day or week.
   b. As a general guideline, Resident Assistants should anticipate a minimum of 25 hours per week of regularly scheduled responsibilities (e.g. time on floor, staff meetings, staff duty and other advisory responsibilities). The concentration of these hours will be during the evening. In addition to these responsibilities, RAs will also be required to complete other duties as assigned by any supervising officer (e.g. Dean, Director, Area Director, Grad Assistant, AAD, etc...)
   c. Prior to mid-term and final exams each semester, the Resident Assistant should expect to need to devote an increased amount of time as student pressures become apparent.

2. Course Load
   a. Resident Assistants should be matriculated as full-time Rutgers University – Newark students. Undergraduate students should carry no less than 12 and no more than 18 credit hours per semester, and graduate students no less than 6 and no more than 12 credit hours per semester.
   b. Tuesday and Thursday 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM classes should be limited and must be approved by your supervisor before registering for classes.
   c. Request for exceptions must be submitted in advance of the beginning of the affected semester and in writing to the supervisor and Director of Residence Life.

3. Additional Work and Extra Curricular Activities
   a. Resident Assistants should hold the position as a significant and primary responsibility. Thus holding positions outside of the Office of Housing & Residence Life is discouraged. However, if a Resident Assistant does wish to hold an outside position or commitment, that request must be submitted in writing to the appropriate supervisor. Permission to hold an outside commitment must be granted from the supervisor and confirmed by the supervisor and Director of Residence Life and must be obtained PRIOR to any outside commitment being made. Staff that fails to obtain permission prior to assuming an outside commitment should expect to be asked to make a choice between the Resident Assistant position and the outside commitment.
   b. Resident Assistants must limit the outside commitment to 15 hours per week, and must be approved by your supervisor.
   c. "Outside Commitment" includes but is not limited to part-time jobs, internships, student teaching, Greek organizations (Fraternities and Sororities) etc...
   d. Resident Assistants may not hold a major campus office during the period of their agreement with the Office of Housing & Residence Life. This includes, but is not limited to an executive position such as a President or Vice President of a...
club or organization. The RA position must take priority over all other areas of extracurricular involvement.

e. If the Resident Assistant’s involvement in other activities does not allow time to adequately perform his/her duties, the RA will be expected to give up some of the outside commitments or the Resident Assistant Position.

f. In as much as The Office of Housing & Residence Life is willing to review requests for exceptions, all such requests must be submitted in writing to the Supervisor and Director of Residence Life, prior to any outside commitment being made.

F. Academic Performance

All Resident Assistants must maintain at minimum an overall 2.50 GPA at the undergraduate level and a 3.0 GPA at the graduate level. Resident Assistants must also maintain a minimum of a 2.00 Semester GPA for any semester while they serve as a Resident Assistant.

Resident Assistants are also required to make appropriate academic progress by completing and passing at least 12 credit hours (undergraduate), 6 hours (graduate) per semester while they are employed.

Should a Resident Assistant fail to maintain these standards, in most cases, s/he will be placed on position probation for a specific period of time (usually one semester). During this period, a specific contract may be drawn up between the Resident Assistant and the supervisor. If, after this period, conditions of the contract have not been met, the Resident Assistant may be removed from the position.

a. The above applies only when the GPA or the credit hours completed are close to the requirement. In all other cases, the Resident Assistant would most likely be terminated.

b. Also note that once an RA has been placed on probation due to academic performance related issues, that probation would most likely not be repeated should the RA’s academic performance fall below standards for a second time.

G. Evaluation

Several evaluations of Resident Assistants will take place throughout the year. These evaluations will be both formal and informal, and are designed to facilitate improvement in the Resident Assistant’s performance.

1. Informal evaluation and feedback should be ongoing between the supervisor and the Resident Assistant.

2. Periodic, formal, written evaluation of the Resident Assistant by their residents and their supervisor will take place during the Fall Semester.

a. Serious failure to meet expectations of students and/or staff members may necessitate position probation or termination from the Resident Assistant position.

H. Termination of Agreement

1. If a supervisor is concerned about a Resident Assistant not fulfilling their responsibilities and/or meeting the guidelines of the position description and is considering termination, s/he shall consult their supervisor and will specify the nature of the problem(s).
2. The supervisor will call a conference to inform the RA of the unsatisfactory performance.
3. At this time, the RA will be given an opportunity to react and discuss the problem(s).
4. The supervisor will provide a written summary of this conference to the RA, with a copy to their supervisor.
5. If appropriate, action may be taken against the RA, which may include but is not limited to:
   a. A written warning in the staff member's file;
   b. Probationary Period
      1. If either a or b are utilized, a second evaluation conference will be held with the supervisor.
6. If, after this probationary period, the staff member has not demonstrated an improved performance, actual termination may take place.
   a. The RA will be notified in writing of his/her pending termination at least two weeks before actual dismissal, in most cases. At the end of the two-week period, the RA's responsibilities will be relinquished immediately and s/he will vacate their assigned living space.
   b. If approved to remain in University Housing, the RA will be relocated to a space other than their present assignment.
   c. The RA has the right to discuss this dismissal with the appropriate full-time staff.
7. Exceptions to these procedures would occur if there has been a gross misconduct or neglect of duty on the part of the Resident Assistant. This would warrant immediate termination.
   a. If immediate termination results, the RA will not be given two weeks of notice; s/he will be required to move and/or vacate immediately.
8. Actions, which will most likely bring about termination of a Resident Assistant:
   a. Drinking while underage or with underage residents or guests while in the residence facilities
   b. Drinking while on duty or coming on duty in an intoxicated state
   c. Drinking or possessing alcohol in facilities designated as “alcohol free”
   d. Any type of abuse of residents, guests, or other staff members
   e. Loss of master, sub-master or negligence (as determined by supervisor) with keys
   f. Possession and/or use of any drug; other than prescribed or over the counter medications
   g. Possession and/or use of a weapon or ammunition in the residence facilities
9. Other possible serious performance problems:
   a. Being aware that an illegal activity is taking place in the residence facility and not taking appropriate actions
   b. Refusal of supervisor's request
   c. Breaches of confidentiality
   d. Withholding information from the appropriate individual on a staff or student issue
   e. Misuse of a master or sub-master key
f. Violation of University or Residence Life Terms of Occupancy or other performance problems

Please note that this list of performance problems is not all-inclusive. An effort has been made to be as specific as possible about performance problems viewed as serious, however, it is possible that a staff member's appointment could also be in jeopardy for a reason not stated above.

For Resident Assistants alleged to have violated Residence Life Judicial Policies and/or the Student Code of Conduct, the Office of Housing & Residence Life reserves the right to temporarily remove or relocate a Resident Assistant from the residence and/or dining facility as well as suspend a Resident Assistant from their duties pending an investigation and/or hearing when, in its sole discretion, the University deems it appropriate to do so.

10. Should an RA at any time decide to resign, s/he will discuss this with the direct supervisor and will notify, in writing, the Office of Housing & Residence Life at least two weeks prior to his/her resignation.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Resident Assistant working for the Office of Housing & Residence Life is expected to conduct him/herself maturely and to be attuned to the goals and objectives of the Residence Life program. The primary goal is the development of an environment conducive to the academic and personal growth of students living in the residential facilities. The following is a summary of the significant expectations for which Resident Assistants are responsible.

A. **Community** - Fostering a sense of community involves promoting a group experience, which encourages a sense of belonging in the facilities. In order to accomplish this, staffs are expected to organize a wide range of educational, cultural, recreational and social activities and contribute actively to them. Increasing a sense of community also includes encouraging residents to assume responsibilities for their actions. Staff members are responsible for interpreting, explaining and enforcing Residence Life regulations. In general, staff responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. **Possess and express interest in each student assigned to your floor:**
   a. Regularly visit each resident and each room
   b. Know the name of each resident on the floor and some general information about each person
   c. Initiate an interaction with each floor resident weekly

2. **Take an active role in programming:**
   a. Promote informal small group interactions on the floor
   b. Identify needs of the residents and coordinate developmental program(s) each semester based on these needs and upon the requirements set up by building supervisor
   c. Identify and utilize the skills of students on your floor (leadership, organization, promotional and interpersonal) for program development and implementation

3. **Enforce Residence Life policies and procedures:**
a. Become familiar with all policies and procedures, understanding the underlying rationale;
b. Be able to explain policy, procedures and penalties
c. Respond to behavior problems and emergencies quickly, calmly, consistently and effectively
d. Consult with your supervisor regarding appropriate methods to deal with problems encountered
e. Record and communicate incidents in an accurate and timely manner
f. Follow all University and Residence Life policies and procedures

B. **Helping** - a vital function for Resident Assistants is serving in a helping relationship with the students on their floor. Helping involves caring about and being open to the needs of the men and women in the Residence facilities, being aware of their concerns and being perceived by them as receptive. Helping also involves staying well informed about the University and conveying appropriate information to the residents. Encouraging academic achievement is a third and important component of the helping function. In general, staff responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. **Assist students in meeting their academic responsibilities:**
   a. Plan and implement programs that focus on study skills
   b. Become aware of students who are experiencing academic problems and act on that information
   c. Become familiar with referral resources for academic concerns
   d. Communicate with your supervisor regarding students who are experiencing academic difficulties
   e. Model effective study skills
2. **Act as an information source:**
   a. Utilize referral techniques when appropriate
   b. Keep basic information resources in your room (course descriptions, campus phone book, schedule of classes, etc...)
   c. Be familiar with University policies and procedures
   d. Keep bulletin boards current
3. **Develop and maintain helping relationships with students on your floor:**
   a. Be available to talk with students on a one-on-one basis
   b. Be aware of physical and psychological needs of residents
   c. Become familiar with all University counseling and referral resources
   d. Be an understanding listener without being judgmental
   e. Determine your own level of ability to assist someone and be aware when you need to refer
   f. Act as a mediator in roommate problems and disputes

C. **Operational** - Working with students and staff to ensure the best possible operation of physical facilities is the third function of a Resident Assistant. RA’s work closely with the Office of Housing & Residence Life in coordinating administrative responsibilities such as check-in, room changes, occupancy reports, etc. In general, staff responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. **Provide for ways to develop the health and safety of the living environment:**
   a. Be on duty as required. Duty is assigned on a rotating basis
b. Be aware of and carry out procedures for emergency situations including fire drills 

c. Assume duties as assigned for the residence facility under the direction of the supervisor 

d. Resident Assistants are not allowed to leave the premises during a natural disaster, unless prior arrangements were made beforehand and approved by your supervisor. 

2. Fulfill Residence Life and Housing Office responsibilities: 

a. Complete housing reports accurately and on time 

b. Assist with check-in procedures 

c. Sponsor hall orientation meetings at the beginning of the academic year and in January for new residents to provide information as outlined during training 

d. Report maintenance problems and follow-up as necessary 

e. Facilitate room changes for students entering or leaving your floor 

f. Implement directives 

g. Assist in the Resident Assistant selection process 

3. Improve your performance as a Resident Assistant: 

a. Participate in all staff training and staff development workshops 

b. Meet periodically with your supervisor in order to evaluate your performance and personal growth 

c. Develop a working relationship with other Office of Housing & Residence Life staff members 

d. Attend all staff and related meetings 

e. Familiarize yourself with all areas in the manual for Residence Life staff 

IV. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT 

Being a Resident Assistant provides many opportunities for personal growth. While the RA must assume the major responsibilities for personal development, s/he is provided with training, supervision and numerous opportunities for learning. To this end, Resident Assistants are expected and have the opportunity to do the following: 

A. Resident Assistants must attend, in their entirety, all fall, winter and spring training programs. RA’s are also expected to demonstrate participation and initiation in such training programs. 

B. Resident Assistants will attend and participate in on-going staff development training opportunities. They may be held several times each semester as deemed necessary. The Office of Housing & Residence Life will provide the staff development and training dates in advance but reserves the right to increase the number of staff development workshops and/or change the day and time of these sessions at any point throughout the year if deemed necessary. 

C. Attend weekly staff meetings and/or other meetings deemed appropriate by the supervisor 

C1. Staff Meetings will be held on either Monday or Tuesday, schedules should accommodate weekly staff meetings. 

D. Consult with the supervisor regularly to discuss performance and personal concerns. 

V. MISCELLANEOUS 

A. Each Resident Assistant will support the Office of Housing & Residence Life’s commitment to promoting cultural and social diversity. As such, they will not engage in any type of behavior
which is, or perceived to be, discriminatory or offensive. Further, they are expected to challenge themselves, their fellow staff members and residents to do the same.

B. Any Residence Life Staff Identification card issued to Residence Life Staff members remains the property of Rutgers University – Newark Housing & Residence Life and must be returned at the end of that individual’s period of employment.

C. Occasionally, Resident Assistants are appointed during the summer, and the Office of Housing & Residence Life will determine the necessity for summer staff. Summer positions are, therefore, not automatic.

D. Resident Assistants interested in serving in this leadership position during the following academic year must re-apply, meet all appropriate qualifications and receive the enthusiastic endorsement of their current supervisor prior to being reappointed to the position. Resident Assistants that are reappointed will not necessarily receive the same placement from year to year.

CONCLUSION
The Resident Assistant will carry out, accurately and punctually, all duties as described in this position description. The position description is not an all-inclusive statement of the responsibilities of the Resident Assistant. Special circumstances may necessitate the assignment of additional responsibilities for a period of time.