RESIDENT / COMMUNITY ASSISTANT POSITION DESCRIPTION

The role of the paraprofessional staff is a vital one. For many students the RA/CA is the highest-ranking University official with whom contact is made. Impressions about the college experience, and about the quality of life at Savannah University, are based to a large extent upon the residence hall experience and staff. That's precisely why there is a very manageable student/staff ratio within the residence halls.

Resident/Community Assistants are graduate or undergraduate members of the Residence Life staff who are under contract to the Director of Residential Services and Programs. They report to and are directly supervised by a Resident Director. Resident/Community Assistants have the most frequent and direct communication with resident students; therefore, they have an outstanding opportunity to contribute to the development and education of individuals. They also have a great responsibility in implementing programs and enforcing policies through which the goals of Residential Services and Programs can be accomplished. It is our expectation that the Resident/Community Assistant is sincerely interested in and supportive of the welfare of the students at Savannah State University.

I. Qualifications for Selection:
- A Savannah State University student enrolled full-time in an undergraduate or graduate degree program.
- Leadership potential as evidenced by previous leadership experiences, recommendations, and staff evaluations.
- High level of maturity exhibited in sound judgment, emotional stability, flexibility, and willingness to accept responsibility.
- Strong interpersonal skills through proven ability to interact effectively with others and as perceived through the interview process and the paraprofessional class.
- Good conduct standing with the University (not currently on disciplinary probation).
- A 2.50 accumulative grade point average as well as a 2.50 grade point average the semester preceding employment is required. Candidacy may be terminated if second quarter grades do not raise the accumulative GPA above a 2.50. A minimum of 31 semester hours of credit must be earned by the semester of employment.
- Satisfactory completion of all paraprofessional training courses is required for employment.

II. Responsibilities:
Resident/Community Assistants are there to support the Department of Residential Services and Programs in attaining its goals for the residential students. Our primary goal is the development of an environment conducive to the academic and personal growth of students living in the residence halls. The following is a summary of the significant expectations for which Resident/Community Assistants are responsible.
Student Relationships:
Resident/Community Assistants strive to help each student develop to their full potential as a person, a student, and a member of their floor, hall, and University communities. In their multiple roles as peer, facilitator, administrator and disciplinarian, Resident/Community Assistants model appropriate respect for the health, safety, welfare and rights of all members living in the residence halls.

Each Resident /Community Assistant is expected to:
- Meet and become acquainted with each of their residents.
- Assist students with personal, vocational, social, academic and general concerns or refer students to other resources when appropriate.
- Spend sufficient time on the floor section to assess student needs, and ensure that the information is accurately transmitted to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner.
- Continually model appropriate behavior through academic and personal goals.
- Maintain confidentiality of information when ethical and appropriate to do so.

Student Conduct:
Resident/Community Assistants are responsible for responding to student behavior so that an atmosphere conducive to study is maintained and the physical facilities are protected for student use in the future. Resident/Community Assistants are responsible for maintaining consistent policies throughout the residence hall and for impressing upon residents that they are responsible for their own actions.

Under no condition should Resident / Community Assistants tolerate immature behavior or improper conduct.

Specifically, a Resident /Community Assistant is expected to:
2. Know the procedure for handling violations of University and residence hall regulations.
3. Respond to problems calmly and reasonably.
4. Discuss with the Resident Director the best way to handle specific problems.
5. Recognize the importance of making decisions that are consistent with the expectations and procedures of the Department of Student Affairs.
6. Abide by all policies as well as enforce them. This means that under no circumstances should a Resident/Community Assistant ignore the violation of a regulation or policy by a resident, nor violate regulations or policies that residents are expected to follow.
C. Programming:
Since a balance of activities in the residence hall contributes to a feeling of "community", Resident/Community Assistants are responsible for actively assisting individuals, floor sections, the hall/complex council, other staff members and the Resident Director with the continual assessment of programming needs and the successful implementation of programs and activities.

Specifically, each Resident/Community Assistant is expected to:
Attend hall council meetings to demonstrate support, and when appropriate, offer assistance.
Identify potential hall leaders and direct their involvement at the floor and hall levels.
Encourage the active involvement of residents in planning and implementing hall activities.
Assist the Resident Director in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a balance of the programs and activities.
Promote activities which contribute to a beneficial living/learning atmosphere on the floor section.

D. Administration - Documentation:
The smooth operation of residence halls is dependent upon the cooperative efforts of all staff members. Resident/Community Assistants are called upon to provide administrative support which is important to the operation of the hall. A Resident/Community Assistant is expected to:
- Attend all weekly/biweekly staff meetings.
- Complete all assigned administrative tasks thoroughly, accurately, and on time (such as: mail duty, furniture inventory, et cetera).
- Assist the Resident Director with periodic room inspections and the proper check-in and check-out of residents.
- Assist the Residential Custodial Services (RCS) staff in identifying facilities in need of repair or special attention.

E. Communications:
Resident/Community Assistants play a crucial role in setting the tone of how the University and the Department of Residence Life is perceived by students. Resident/Community Assistants should strive to represent the University and the Department of Student Affairs and Residential Services and Programs positively to students, parents, and the general public.

A Resident/Community Assistant is expected to:
Meet regularly with individual residents and groups to explain and promote policies and programs, assess needs and community goals, and learn of ideas or concerns.

Check staff office mail box daily and post University and Residential Services and Programs information in designated areas.
Respond to all messages/notes in a timely manner. Use the appropriate chain of communication: Immediate supervisor, Office of Residential Services and Programs, and the Office of Student Affairs, when transmitting ideas, needs or concerns about residence hall living.

Maintain regular contact with the immediate supervisor and discuss job-related as well as personal concerns relative to performance.

F. Self-Development:
Resident / Community Assistants have the opportunity to grow in their position while on the job. While the Resident / Community Assistant must assume the major responsibility for self-development, he/she is expected to:
- Participate in Orientation: During both Fall and Spring semesters, fulfill the requirements of the training sessions.
- Participate in in-services each semester as required.
- Be evaluated formally by the Resident Director with continued employment based upon positive evaluation.
- Be evaluated by residents on his/her floor section(s) and/or building(s) through the use of the Community Life Assessment.

G. Recruitment and Selection of Staff:
The input of Resident / Community Assistants is considered to be a valued source of information in the selection of staff. As a paraprofessional staff member you may be asked to participate in the interview process.

III. Terms of Employment:

A. Period of Employment:
The period of employment will be announced through the Office of the Director of Residential Services and Programs and is for the academic year. All Resident/Community Assistants are required to assist in the opening and closing of the halls for each academic term and for school breaks/vacation periods. This requires returning to campus approximately one week before the residents return for Fall Semester and remaining until the residents leave for vacation and closing for the academic year. Continuation of employment depends upon successful completion of tasks, positive semester evaluation by the Resident Director, and exhibition of growth in and continual enthusiasm for the position.

B. Time Off:
Resident / Community Assistants are permitted time off only if he/she has made arrangements to have shift coverage during absence. All Resident / Community Assistants are expected to be in the Residence Hall in which they live seven days a week, unless they have been approved for time off or has notified Resident Hall Director prior to leaving.
C. Living Arrangements:
Resident/Community Assistants will be assigned to a staff room. Every staff member is subject to the visitation policy of those halls; however, guests must be escorted within the building.

D. Remuneration:
There are regular pay periods Fall and Spring semesters. The final paycheck of each semester will be held by the Resident Director until all responsibilities of the position are completed to his/her satisfaction.

F. Time Commitments:
1. Work Load:
   It is recognized that a Resident/Community Assistant position require a great deal of time commitment and due to the special nature of the position, no minimum or maximum number of hours can be designated. He/she will be expected to devote the time necessary to fulfill his/her obligation to the position. This includes specific staff duty assignments, weekly staff meetings, in-service training and significant time on his/her floor section or in his/her designated buildings. Resident/Community Assistants are required to work one hour in the office daily as well as one night of the week: 5pm-12am at University Village and University Commons & 6pm-12am in traditional halls (it is understood that your duties extends until 8am the next morning should emergencies need to be addressed), and one week end of the month (schedules may vary in each residence hall)
2. Course Load:
   Any undergraduate Resident/Community Assistant must carry a minimum of twelve (12) and a maximum of eighteen (18) hours per semester. Any exceptions must have the recommendation of the Resident Director and the written approval of the Director of Residential Programs and Services. No exception will be made for first semester Resident/Community Assistants. Graduate students who are Resident/Community Assistants must carry a minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of thirteen (13) hours per semester. Requests to take more or less than the prescribed hours must be made in writing to the Director of Residential Services and Programs. Approval will be granted on the basis of the rationale and previous performance of the Resident/Community Assistant.
3. Additional Work and Extracurricular Activities:
   It is important that Resident/Community Assistants remember that their position is demanding and thus their other activities will have to be limited. Resident/Community Assistants are not permitted to hold other compensatory positions while employed by Savannah State University, nor may they hold jobs outside the University. Other extracurricular involvement which does not interfere with the performance of the job is permissible.
4. Academic Commitments:
Every effort will be made by the department to accommodate academic requirements while in the position (e.g. student athletes, S.S.U. Marching Band). This can be especially problematic during Fall Staff Orientation. Prior to accepting a position, a discussion regarding academic time commitments should take place with the Resident Director for approval.

Academic Performance:
To retain the position, Resident /Community Assistants must maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and receive at least a 2.5 grade point average each semester. If either grade point average falls below these standards, the Resident / Community Assistant will be terminated.

No Resident / Community Assistant will be retained in employment if:
His/her semester GPA falls below a 2.5 and/or if his/her cumulative GPA falls below 2.5.

H. Evaluation:
Formal written evaluation of Resident / Community Assistants by their Resident Director will occur at the end of the fall and winter semesters and by their residents once during the year through the use of the Community Life Assessment. Informal evaluation or feedback should be ongoing between the Resident Director and the Resident / Community Assistant.

I. Termination of Employment:
A Resident/ Community Assistant who is removed from his/her position will be reassigned to a room which is not on their floor section or in their perspective building. A student who has been removed from his/her Resident / Community Assistant position may not reside in a Resident / Community Assistant room. Housing arrangements will be made at the discretion of the Director of Residential Services and Programs. A Resident / Community Assistant who signs a contract and then decides not to be a Resident / Community Assistant forfeits his/her housing assignments and will receive another assignment when and if a space becomes available.

J. Savannah State University’s Department of Student Affairs Statement on Alcohol:
The Department of Student Affairs supports Savannah University in its commitment to maintaining a campus free of illegal drugs and the unlawful or irresponsible use of alcohol. To achieve this goal, Residence Life staff is expected to perform many duties and fulfill the vital roles of student, helper, administrator, floor member, and programmer.

Student Role:
All staff members are encouraged to educate themselves about issues on and off campus and current events that regard alcohol use. Staff members of legal age are expected to be responsible in their use of alcohol as with any other student. As a student of Savannah University, RAs and CAs are expected to abide by the terms of the Student Code of Conduct and state laws.
Floor/Apartment Member Role:
RA/CA staff are asked to use care and thought when choosing attire and room/apartment decorations, recognizing inconsistent messages that might be sent. In addition, staff is asked to foster understanding about the direct and indirect effects of alcohol use on the community.

Helper Role:
RA/CA staff is expected to identify and address illegal and/or irresponsible alcohol use by students or staff.

Administrative Role:
RA/CA staff is expected to (a) inform and interpret University alcohol policies to students and their guests, and (b) enforce University alcohol policies and procedures by confronting and documenting violations.

Programmer Role:
RA/CA staff is expected to provide activities that do not include alcohol. Alternative activities include, but are not limited to, providing educational opportunities about alcohol related issues.

Staff Member Role:
As mentioned above, staff members are expected to adhere to University policy and state law. Staff members are asked to be proactive in their approach to alcohol use (including of age misuse) by (a) confronting other staff members directly about potential problems, (b) bringing issues to the supervisor, and (c) being a role model to peers. Also, staff should be sensitive to the nonverbal messages that could be sent by dress, room decorations or other forms of expression. The employee/student is advised that depending on the nature of the contract for employment with Savannah State University, your personnel file may be subject to an open records request and may be disclosed pursuant to law.