



The Role of a Resident Assistant

2012-2013

Overview

The Resident Assistant (RA) position is of crucial importance to the overall success of the Office of Residence Life and The University of St. Thomas. Resident Assistants are expected to promote individual growth and develop a sense of community among residents, which expands outward from each individual facility to the University campus. Resident Assistants are responsible for the development and implementation of programs and for the enforcement of University and Residence Life policies, rules, and regulations. It is expected that Resident Assistants be sincerely interested in the spiritual, academic, and social welfare of students and the University.

Terms of Service

Employment begins on the first day of staff training and ends two days after spring graduation. Resident Assistants are expected to assist in the staff selection process, opening and closing of all housing facilities, and the check-in/check-out of residents. Resident Assistants will be assigned to work during the Thanksgiving, spring, and Easter breaks on a rotating basis and in numbers deemed necessary to maintain safe and comfortable living environments within the residence halls.

Remuneration

Staff room scholarship

Staff meal plan scholarship

University Bookstore Discount

Time Commitment

A. Work Load

It should be understood that student personnel work in housing is not easily translated into hours worked per day or week. A Resident Assistant can expect to be on duty at the Guinan Hall front desk or Residence Life office and on call at least once a week. Resident Assistants should be available to assist their assigned residents most evening hours and at various times on weekends.

B. Course Load

Resident Assistants should carry a course load of at least twelve hours and no more than seventeen hours per semester. An academic load of twelve to fifteen hours is recommended for the first semester of employment as a Resident Assistant to allow student staff to adjust to the Residence Life position and proper time management.

C. Additional Employment & Extracurricular Activities

As the Resident Assistant position is time-consuming, it is important that RAs remember that additional activities must be limited and non-academic activities come secondary to the position. RAs are not permitted to have other compensatory jobs without the approval of the Director of Residence Life. RAs can work no more than 10 hours per week at another compensatory job.

D. Time Off

Resident Assistants are expected to notify the Residence Life administrators when they will be out of campus housing for an overnight period. RAs should schedule time off at least two days in advance of their expected departure. Whenever possible, Resident Assistants should provide the Residence Life administrators with a telephone number where they can be reached in the event of an emergency.

Academic Performance

Resident Assistants are expected to maintain at least a 2.75 cumulative grade point average and a 2.5 semester GPA. Should a RA's G.P.A. fail to meet this standard, the RA will be placed on probation for a period of one semester. An RA placed on academic probation will be required to attend regular meetings with the Residence Life administrators and participate in academic counseling as deemed appropriate by the Residence Life administrators. Should a Resident Assistant fail to meet the G.P.A. requirements after having been on probation, the RA will no longer be eligible to serve as a member of the Residence Life staff.

Evaluation

Formal written evaluation of the Resident Assistant's job performance will occur at the beginning of the spring semester. Residents will be surveyed in November to determine their level of satisfaction with the performance of staff. In addition, staff will be given the opportunity to provide written evaluations of their own job performance and that of their co-workers. A poor evaluation will be considered cause for placing a Resident Assistant on probation or for dismissing an RA from his/her duties as a Resident Assistant.

Responsibilities

Resident Assistants should strive to carry out the goals of the Office of Residence Life. In their multiple roles as friend, advisor, and administrator. Resident Assistants should demonstrate daily their concern for the health, safety, welfare, and individual rights of every person living in the residence halls. More specifically, Resident Assistants are expected to:

- A. Be positive role models in academic and personal behavior. Resident Assistants should be of high moral character. They are expected to abide by city, county, state, and federal laws as well as University and Residence Life policies, rules, and regulations. Furthermore, Resident Assistants must actively and genuinely support the University's Catholic mission and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- B. Demonstrate interest and concern for each resident living on the assigned floor. RAs should know their residents by name; their residents' room numbers; their residents' backgrounds, special interests, special medical needs, and academic goals. Resident Assistants should visit with their residents in the residents' room a minimum of once every week. In addition, Resident Assistants should be available in their own rooms during scheduled hours to meet with residents.
- C. Recognize their own counseling skills and limitations and report to the Residence Life administrators all matters affecting the safety and well-being of residents. RAs should maintain confidentiality in regard to all matters concerning residents while at the same time working in coordination with the Residence Life administrators to find appropriate solutions to resident concerns.
- D. Be thoroughly familiar with referral services available to students including: All Student Affairs Departments and Department Directors, Academic Advisors, financial aid officers, academic Deans, tutorial services and Campus Safety Officers. In addition, RAs should be knowledgeable of off-campus community services such as clinics and counseling resources.

Spiritual, Social, Intellectual, and Leadership Growth and Development

The extent to which a true community environment may be achieved in housing will be dependent on a number of factors. One of the most important factors (if not the most important) is programming for our residents. Success in this regard will be dependent on community involvement in planning and implementation, advance notice, and a commitment to meeting the needs of residents. Resident Assistants are expected to assist with the development and implementation of major programs for all residents and the development and implementation of

programs for their assigned residents. Participation by residents in a program of hall government also enhances the campus living environment. Resident Assistants are expected to actively assist the Residence Council in accomplishing their goals and objectives. More specifically, RAs are expected to:

- A. Schedule study breaks, mixers, holiday parties, and other programs for their residents throughout the academic year.
- B. Maintain a feeling of community by holding regular meetings for their assigned residents.
- C. Encourage participation in worship services, campus activities, leadership opportunities, intramural sports, and academic & spiritual clubs/organizations.
- D. Encourage resident participation in programs by personally inviting residents to attend and participate in programs.
- E. Identify and involve potential leaders in staff, the Residence Council, Judicial Board and individual floor communities.
- F. Serve as an active supporter for the Residence Council.
- G. Attend all residence hall functions except those that conflict with class schedule.

Policy Enforcement and Crisis Intervention/Emergency Response

Resident Assistants are responsible for facilitating mature student behavior to the extent that an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of academic, spiritual, and social goals and objectives is maintained at all times. Resident Assistants are responsible for consistent and fair policy enforcement and for impressing upon residents that they are responsible for their own actions and behavior. Under no conditions should RAs tolerate behavior lacking in respect for the worth and dignity of another or the destruction or abuse of property. Resident Assistants are expected to:

- A. Be thoroughly familiar with University and Residence Life policies, rules, and regulations.
- B. Be prepared to confront all violations of policies, rules, and regulations.
- C. Report all violations of policies, rules, and regulations to the Residence Life administrator(s).

- D. Document all violations of policies, rules, and regulations, and submit supporting written documentation to the Office of Residence Life.
- E. Respond calmly and rationally to cases involving violations of housing and University codes of conduct.
- F. Immediately and effectively respond to emergency/crisis situations affecting the emotional, mental, physical, and psychological well-being of residents.
- G. Serve as an excellent role model by maintaining the highest ethical standards and a lifestyle conducive to excellent physical, psychological, and emotional health

Management

The successful operation of the Office of Residence Life is dependent upon the cooperation and support of all staff members. Resident Assistants are expected to maintain positive working relationships with their residents, fellow students, peers, Area Coordinators, Desk Coordinators, Office Managers, Kitchen Managers, Residence Council President and representatives, and the Judicial Board, and all other members of the Student Affairs team. Resident Assistants will be required to:

- A. Complete all assigned administrative tasks thoroughly, accurately, and on time.
- B. Post &/or deliver all notices received from the Office of Residence Life. All postings must be removed from housing/University property by staff within a reasonable period of time (one day after activity or one week after policy implementation). Staff mailboxes and emails must be checked daily in order to assure proper and timely communication.
- C. Report maintenance and housekeeping concerns promptly and accurately to the Office of Residence Life.
- D. Document resident health, well-being, and safety concerns and submit all such documentation to the Office of Residence Life.
- E. Maintain all safety equipment in assigned area in proper working condition and immediately report malfunctioning safety equipment and other safety hazards to the Residence Life administrator(s).

- F. Maintain name tags on resident doors, and maintain current hall decorations.
- G. RAs who have been assigned Sophomore Advisors are expected to meet weekly with their Sophomore Advisors and include their Sophomore Advisors as much as possible in the development of programs, in concerns about residents and all other hall decision-making.
- H. Maintain confidentiality in regard to all matters concerning their residents and the operation of the Office of Residence Life and Residence Life Staff.

Communication:

Resident Assistants play a crucial role in determining community perception of the Residence Life program. RAs are representatives of the Residence Life program and of the University of St. Thomas. As such, they are expected to listen and respond to concerns and complaints about the University and the Residence Life program. RAs should respond to complaints in a mature, rational, and calm manner. Complaints, concerns, and suggestions reported to RAs, should be shared with the Residence Life administrators. Resident Assistants should maintain positive and productive relationships with all staff members. A Resident Assistant who has a problem with another staff member, should discuss his/her concern with that staff member or an Area Coordinator. Resident Assistants may not, under any circumstances, share information about one resident with another resident. It is expected that RAs will at all times maintain confidentiality in regards to information shared with them by residents. It is further expected that RAs will not share information gained from other staff members with residents, unless otherwise directed by the Residence Life administrators. Any RA having knowledge of a staff member knowingly or maliciously violating confidentiality has an obligation to report that breach of conduct to the Residence Life administrators. Residents must perceive the staff as being worthy of their trust.

Training, In-Service and Staff Development

The Resident Assistant position provides numerous opportunities for personal growth. RAs are encouraged to challenge themselves by using the opportunities available to them to develop their leadership abilities and become active, involved, assertive members of the staff and community. While the RA must assume major responsibility for self-development, she/he is expected to:

- A. Participate in all training sessions.
- B. Participate in all in-service training programs and staff meetings.

- C. Attend all weekly staff meetings, one-on-ones, and other meetings deemed necessary by the Residence Life administrators.
- D. Meet with the Residence Life administrators frequently to discuss performance and personal concerns.
- E. Schedule and attend a formal evaluation time with the Residence Life administrators in January.
- F. Be involved in staff training and selection as deemed appropriate by the Residence Life administrators.
- G. Read all materials distributed by the Residence Life administrators, Administrative Assistants, VPSA, University President and all other University administrators, faculty, and staff.
- H. Periodically review this job description to evaluate his/her job performance.

Termination of Employment

In the event that the Residence Life administrator(s) or the Assistant Vice President of Campus Life should come to believe that a Resident Assistant is not fulfilling her/his job responsibilities, immediate action will be taken to assist the staff member in his/her continued paraprofessional and personal growth and development. In such a case, the staff member will be required to meet with the Residence Life administrators. The RA will be formally notified that his/her job performance is considered to be substandard. The RA will be given the opportunity to respond to concerns expressed by the Residence Life administrators. The Residence Life administrators may then chose to discuss the RA's situation with the AVPCL, Area Coordinators, and/or other University personnel as deemed appropriate and necessary by the Residence Life administrator(s).

Possible action that may be taken when an RA is found to have neglected her/his duties/responsibilities includes:

*Probation for a period not to exceed one semester. The Director will provide the RA with written expectations for the probationary period. The RA will meet at regularly scheduled intervals with the Residence Life administrator(s) to evaluate his/her job performance. If at any time during the probationary period, the Director is not satisfied with the job performance of the RA, the Director may remove the RA from his/her staff position.

*Termination may occur during or after probation should a staff member fail to meet the written expectations of the Director. Termination may automatically occur if it is determined that there has been gross neglect of duty on the part of the RA. Gross neglect may range from dishonesty to failure to report a safety concern.

A Resident Assistant who is removed from her/his position will be assigned to the floor of another RA. A Resident Assistant removed from his/her job may not reside in a Resident Assistant room and will be assessed room and board fees for post-termination contract term. Housing arrangements for a Resident Assistant who has been removed from his/her job will be at the discretion of the Director of Residence Life. In the event that the only available space for the terminated employee is the RA room, it will be necessary for the RA to relocate to off-campus housing. In this situation, the terminated employee will be permitted to remain in University housing no longer than seven days after receiving notification of job termination from the Director of Residence Life. In the event of gross neglect and at the discretion of the Director, the RA may be required to immediately vacate University housing. Under such a condition, the RA may be required to forfeit her/his security deposit to the University.

RAs possess the right to appeal termination. Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the Director of Residence Life within five business date of the date of notice of termination. A committee of the Student Affairs Staff will hear appeals. RAs will not be allowed legal or other representation at their appeal hearing. Appeal rulings are final and there shall be no other recourse available to the RA. Housing will be available to the RA during the appeal process at the discretion of the Director of Residence Life.

A Resident Assistant who contracts for a staff position and later decides he/she no longer desires the position, will automatically forfeit his/her assigned room and will be assigned campus housing at the discretion of the Director of Residence Life.